

AM John 4:1-15 Hope for the hopeless

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 September 2023

Preacher: Rev Kenny Macleod

[0 : 00] We take a reading this morning from the Gospel of John, that is John, one of the Apostles of Jesus. You'll find this as we have it on page 1071, 1071 in our Bibles.

I'm going to read verses 1 of chapter 4 down to the verse mark 15. Now when Jesus learned that Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John, although Jesus himself did not baptize but only his disciples.

He left Judea and departed again for Galilee and he had to pass through Samaria. So he came to a town of Samaria called Syca near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.

Jacob's well was there, so Jesus wearied and as he was from his journey was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour, that is about twelve noon in our time.

A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, give me a drink, for his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, how is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?

[1 : 19] For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered her, if you knew the gift of God and who it is is saying to you, give me a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.

The woman said to him, sir, you have nothing to draw water with and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob?

He gave us the well and drank from it himself as did his sons and his livestock. Jesus said to her, everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.

The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. The woman said to him, sir, give me this water so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.

Amen. May God bless to us the reading of his own word in regards to meeting this woman. And in the gospel of John, his gospel, he writes it with a definite purpose in mind.

[2 : 36] And it is not just to give us information to tell us about God. No, it is more than that. It is so that people will hear about Jesus and that people's lives will be transformed by what they heard.

John himself says in John 20 verse 30, Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

So what John wants us to do is to see that who he's telling the people about, that this is Jesus, this is God's Son, and it is only through Jesus does salvation come to people.

It's an evangelistic purpose that he is writing this, not just for information, but for transformation.

Now, there are three things that highlights this especially.

These essential expressions are highlighted in the previous chapter, John chapter 3 verse 15 where it says that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

[3 : 53] So that means if we put our trust in Jesus, it means that our life will never end. Although we die to this world, yet our souls will go to be with Jesus in heaven.

That is what he's teaching. Notice again verse 17 in John 3, For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

And here we are seeing John saying that it is only through Jesus that we are saved. But yet there is a warning as well, a solemn warning that we're told in verse 36, Whoever believes in the Son, that's Jesus, has eternal life.

Whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life. But the wrath of God remains on him. So, to refuse Jesus means that we are rejecting God's offer of salvation.

He is giving us his Son, but for us to reject it means death for us. Well, we saw as well in chapter 3 that Jesus came, remember he came and Nicodemus came to him by night.

[5 : 05] And it's interesting the situation here is that in chapter 4, the woman comes at midday. So, John wants to paint a contrast between the person who came in chapter 3, who was a ruler, a religious man, a ruler in Israel who was highly thought of and respected.

But at the other end of the spectrum in chapter 4, he wants to show us a woman who was discarded, who was an outcast in society, whom people had turned her back on, even her own husbands.

We'll see something of that in a moment. And how Jesus came to that woman as well. So, what we have are the opposite ends of the spectrum of life.

You've got the very top with Nicodemus, and you've got the lowest with the woman of Samaria. But you know there was something in common in regards to both of them.

They were united because the main aim for Christ coming into the world is to save sinners.

Nicodemus needed to be saved, and so did the woman, and everyone else in between in life's social ladder.

[6 : 22] Both ends of the spectrum are here in Dumfries. There are rich people in Dumfries, plenty of money they need to know, and they need to be saved so as to go into heaven.

There are also poor people in Dumfries, and we have them, plenty of them in Glasgow as well.

They need to be saved, but the whole range from top to bottom need to be saved.

We all need the Lord Jesus Christ. And that is exactly what these two chapters are tackling.

Tackling every sphere of life.

And John is saying that no one is excluded. The gospel of Jesus Christ is for everyone. Now let's look at the setting here in chapter 4. We're going to look at this again this evening because we're not going to be able to manage to see it all in one sermon.

So you need to come back tonight if you want to hear part 2. And that's important. And it's important for us to understand what God is saying to us here through Jesus.

[7 : 25] So first of all we notice, notice it says in verse 2, in verse 3, He left Judea and departed again for Galilee. And He had to pass through Samaria.

Now if you were to look at a map, what you have basically is Judea down there, Galilee up there, and in between the Samaria. And obviously the easiest way to get to Galilee is to go through Samaria.

But you see the Jews wouldn't go through Samaria. They would walk around Samaria because they would not be defiled, as they said, to walk through unclean people.

So they went on the outside along the valley of the Jordan Valley. And honestly the journey they say there is far worse than going and taking a straight line and going through Samaria.

But Jesus took this line and He wanted to go because He had a reason for going there. Why did the Jews avoid Samaria?

[8 : 31] We are told, notice in verse 9 of the chapter, The Samaritan woman said to Jesus, How is it that you are a Jew and ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?

For Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Why is that? Well, in the history of Israel, way back in 722, the Assyrians, that is, as we know, they are possibly north of Iran, into Iraq, where the Assyrians and into Iran.

These people were the strongest nations at that time. They came and they took Israel into exile in 722. And they deported the best of them into that land.

But what they did as well was that they sent Assyrians down to live in Samaria. Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom where all the kings in the northern kingdom were all evil.

And remember, because of that, God came and brought judgment on them and took that nation away. Okay. After that, we are told that the southern kingdom, which was Judah and Benjamin, they were taken into Babylon.

[9 : 46] And when they returned, remember, we are told they were to be in Babylon for 70 years. The Old Testament tells us. When they returned, the Samaritans were still there.

But they were a mixed race of Assyrians and Jews. So the Jewish people saw them as being different. They saw them as being tainted.

And they would have nothing to do with them. That is why the Samaritans built a temple in Mount Gerasim. That is the reason. Now, racial hatred.

Who would believe it? It was not that long ago in the United States that two water fountains were put in place. First of all, for white people.

And the other one, for colored people, as they said. You can scarcely imagine, scarcely imagine anything more demeaning than building your plumbing system around the race of people.

[10:56] It's incredible. It's incredible where this came from. Jesus doesn't take the long route around Samaria. No, he goes straight through the direct route, which would have been 70 miles, a journey of two and a half days.

He didn't take the longer way around. No, he had a purpose to go through there. But in doing so, can't you see what Jesus was doing?

He was cutting through ignorant, arrogant, narrow-minded prejudice. That is what he was doing. He was doing this so as to show the church. It is okay to go through Samaria. And it is okay for Samaritans to be saved.

And that is John's point. That is why he puts it here. He must needs go through Samaria. Samaria. That's the necessity of what John is doing. The gospel is not just for Jewish people.

[11:59] It's for all races in the world. And that is exactly what Jesus is doing. He's breaking down the barriers that the gospel is for everyone.

And Jesus needs to encounter this woman. It was my friend Adam from Iran who stayed with us the other day. And I said to him, isn't it interesting that Jesus went through Samaria?

Because I had this in mind because I was going to preach it here. And he said, yes, because, Kenny, there was someone in Samaria who was loved by him from the foundation of the world.

Chosen in Christ. So he had to go through to meet this woman. I wonder, has he come here today to meet you for the very first time in the gospel?

That is how ordinarily he does it. Now, we see that this woman was given great privileges that many people in Israel wasn't given.

[13:00] And that was to have quality time with Jesus. This is the longest conversation recorded in scripture that Jesus had with anyone.

And Jesus came to Sychar, a town in Samaria. And it is near the field that Jacob had given to Joseph and the well that was there.

And Jesus sat at the well. I don't know what you do when you come. And I'm sure when we think of our friends from Iran, they cannot but think about home, where they came from, or wherever we're from in the world.

Our thoughts always go back. There's no place in the world like home. And it's true for them too. But circumstances means for them that they have to come and leave home to get a better life.

And Jesus himself, as he sat there alone, I often think what his thoughts would have been to think that this was Jacob's well. A well that he had given to Joseph.

[14:04] And to think back at what took place at wells in the Old Testament. Remember Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac.

And he found Rebecca at a well. And remember the question that was asked Rebecca was this.

Will you go with this man? And you know in many ways that is the same question that the woman of Samaria was to be confronted with in Jesus.

Will you go with this man? And that is the same question that meets with us every day we sit under the gospel of Jesus Christ. Is will you go with this man?

We also see that that is where we read. I want to read you just briefly. And this is why I think it's going to take a lot longer to go through this. I want to read you that situation when the servant met with Rebecca.

And we see this in Genesis chapter 24. And I want to read verses 12 to 14. Don't worry if you don't, if you can't look it up. And this is him praying to God.

[15:12] The servant praying to God at the well. And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham. Please grant me success today. And show steadfast love to my master Abraham.

Now that is the hesed. The steadfast love of God. And he's wanting it not for himself, but for Abraham. Behold, I am standing by the spring of water.

And the daughters of men of the city are coming out to draw water. Let the young woman to whom I shall say, Please let down your jar that I may drink.

And who shall say, Drink, and I will water your camels. Let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this I shall know that you have shown hesed.

He said, Steadfast love to my master. Heseed is a covenant love that God has with his people. And that is what the signs of baptism in what we have.

[16:15] A Christian couple bringing their child to be a covenant child within the visible church of God. But isn't it interesting that what he requested was a drink of water.

The very thing that Christ requested of the woman at the well. Will you give me a drink? I am thirsty. Well, there was, we put, and the question was asked.

But remember Jacob himself. Wasn't it at the well that he met? Wasn't it at the well that he met Rachel? And that is where the bridegroom found his bride.

Oh, there was a roundabout way about it. Of course there were, remember, poor Leah was given to him first. And what a raw deal, poor Leah got in many ways.

But until the fourth child when she called him and realized that it was God that she was needing to please and not Jacob. But anyway, that's aside.

[17:18] But we're thinking of the bridegroom. Jacob finding his bride, Rachel. And John the Baptist said of Jesus, remember, he spoke of Jesus as the bridegroom.

What is he doing at Jacob's well? He is there to meet his bride, the woman from Samaria. Isn't it incredible? A woman who was looked down upon as being a nobody.

But yet, she was the bride of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was no chance meeting. Oh, it was ordained from all eternity.

Interesting approach, isn't it, to this woman. He doesn't go in all guns blazing, eblazing. No, he just simply asks for a drink. And how beautifully Jesus overleaps barriers.

You know, we put barriers up. Adam, again, was speaking about the beautiful gospel of Jesus Christ. There is nothing in this world as beautiful as God's word.

[18:26] But you know, sometimes we stop people because I don't like that and I don't do that. So I put a barrier up. What is Jesus doing here with this woman? He's breaking down, overleaping all the barriers.

Jews don't speak to Samaritans. And him being, he was known as a rabbi. Do you know that rabbis were instructed to never speak to a woman in public?

They weren't even supposed to speak to their wives in public. But yet, we find here that Jesus speaks to a woman. Notice the Samaritan woman, she resists him.

Notice it says in verse 9, she resists him like this. She said to him, how is it that you are Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria? And then in brackets, John puts, for Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans.

Oh, she went. It's interesting in her situation, what she was like in regards to her and in her situation, what Jesus was doing here.

[19:30] And he speaks to her. But yet, she puts up the resistance that she puts up here. And it's interesting that she came here that morning.

And she knew, and she's resisting a man. She had six men. In her life. But she's turning the most important man ever.

Jesus' call, and she's restricting it. No wonder. I'm sure she was suspicious of men. Because of her life.

There's nothing special. Nothing special about Jesus. We are told in Isaiah 53 that he grows up like a root out of dry ground.

With no form or comeliness. So for us to desire him. Nothing special about him. But you know, we see that Jesus doesn't give up.

[20:28] And we are so thankful that he doesn't. When we think back to the rejections of our own lives of Jesus Christ. And saying, no. Not for me. Not yet. Maybe. Not now.

Bad timing. Aren't you thankful today? That he never gave up in seeking after you. Notice what he said in verse 10. When she rejected him.

If you knew the gift of God. And what it is. That it is. And who it is. That is saying to you. Give me a drink. You would have asked him. And he would have given you living water.

What is Jesus doing here? Well, he's just speaking to her the Bible. That is the word of God. That is the most important thing that we can have in this life.

It is God's word. In Psalm 42 it says this. As a deer pants for flowing streams. So pants my soul for you.

[21 : 28] O living God. Is that the way we are? Are we like that? Panting for God. Our hunger. And it's interesting.

How today it seems in Scotland. That we are losing our hunger for God. We are turning our backs on him. We don't need him as much anymore. And it's interesting that how the Bible speaks of men and women drawing.

And we are asked to draw from the well of salvation as Isaiah tells us. But what we do is we build, as Jeremiah tells us, we build up our own cisterns.

Broken cisterns that cannot hold any water. And as the years go by, you are finding, you are finding that there is moss growing about these wells.

And you are thinking and asking the question. What was it all for? What was it for? But the woman says, me there, she doesn't get it, does she? Notice verse 11.

[22 : 29] The woman said to him, sir, you have nothing to draw water with. And the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Now, there's a pattern here that we see in the previous chapters and into this chapter.

And it is this. The pattern is that John wants to portray Jesus as Savior. In chapter 2, Jesus spoke about destroying the temple.

And in three days, he would raise it up. And they were saying he was off his head. And he was blasphemy. In chapter 3, he spoke to Nicodemus that he had to be born again.

Nicodemus, we are not told that he went away born again. Yes, later on, we are told that he came for the burial of Jesus. But at that point, we are not told that he was born again.

Now in chapter 4, he's speaking to the woman. And he's telling her that she will never thirst again. But she's blind, just like Nicodemus. Just like all of us are blind.

[23 : 37] Until God opens our eyes to the gospel. But Jesus is patient. And he's pursuing us. And the design is this, as we saw already.

That God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world. But that the world through him might be saved. And that is what we're asking.

And it's interesting what she asks in verse 12. Are you greater than our father Jacob? Interesting his answer. As he says here.

Verse 13. Jesus says to her. Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him springs of water welling up to eternal life.

So what is he saying? Yes, I am superior to Jacob. Yes, my wells are more superior to the well of Jacob. And if you drink of this, my sons and daughters will never die.

[24 : 47] They will have eternal life. Now, when we think of what he's offering, we see this. First of all, verse 10. It is a gift of God.

Jesus answered, if you knew the gift of God. That is what he's offering her. A gift. The gospel is offered to us as a gift.

Secondly, it's living water. It is water that is fresh. It's that moment, and I think in that last few days where it was so warm, and the only water you want to drink was water that was in the fridge.

Think of water from a well that is beautifully run through, or running through rock. That it is pure as crystal. That is the kind of water that he's talking about.

It is living water. And he said, and thirdly, if you drink it, you will never thirst again. What is he on about there? He's on about our longing souls.

[25 : 49] Our souls are longing for something. Every one of us. And we will never quench the thirst that we need until we quench it in the water that Jesus gives us.

Not because we drank it once. No. Because this water, once we have it, it wells up within us as a spring of living water.

And that is the water that we live on. And we live and drink of it for eternity. It gives eternal life. That is what we are told.

Once we drink of Jesus, then we have this eternal life. It is life-giving water. Isn't it interesting when someone's ill, and the first thing we say to them, don't get dehydrated.

Make sure you drink water. And in the same way, spiritually, we need, if we are going to live spiritually, then we need to live of Jesus.

[26 : 49] Now, next thing I want you to notice, what is interesting here is this. Look at verse 14. But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him, notice he says him, will never be thirsty again.

The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. He's speaking to a woman here.

Surely he would have addressed her and said her, the water I give her. Why is he doing this? Why is Jesus doing this?

It is for the reason why the woman is at the well in the first place. Who was she there for? For the man that was at home, that wasn't her husband.

It was her duty to fetch water for him. Now, what is interesting about it, this woman came at midday. And other women, any woman went to a well.

[27 : 50] They never went to the heat of the day. No, she had to go alone. The women, other women, and you usually find when women team up, they go together. And they will go to the well together either in the morning or in the evening.

But this poor woman went alone simply because she was an outcast. She's a social outcast and nobody comes and asks her to come.

So she has to go at midday on her own. This woman had five husbands. And she comes for water, not just for herself, but for the one now that she's living with.

And her focus is now on him. But you see what Jesus is trying to do is to get her focus off him. Him and onto himself.

And he's opening up her resistance. Speaking of the man who drinks the water, he says to her, You will come again. If you're going to focus on this man, then you will come again.

[28 : 58] If you focus on this life to get what you want, you will come again and drink of this water. And this whole solid process will go on tomorrow if we don't give our lives to Jesus.

In verse 16, he said to her, Go call your husband and come here. You see, Jesus knew her life. Jesus found her out. Jesus knows our lives. Knows everything about us. And sometimes you just simply want to hide and think, Lord, I'm so glad that you alone knows my heart.

For it's how evil I am. Why does Jesus do this? Why did Jesus say to her, You have five husbands? Well, for any work of transformation to happen in our lives, we need to see what we are like first before we do something about it.

We could be going through life and thinking, I'm the best thing since sliced cheese. And thinking, I've never harmed anyone. Never done anyone any wrong. And I'm the best neighbor ever.

[30 : 17] Best worker ever. That doesn't cut it with God. No, when God shows us ourselves, we see ourselves as the worst of all people.

The worst. No one is as bad as I am. And that is what Jesus was saying. Why does he do that? It is a step that takes us towards the redemption of God.

Two things take place. First of all, the repentance of our sins. And then there is the belief.

Repentance first, and then belief and regeneration in God, which is in him, his work.

And until we admit that we need Christ like this, then we will never come to this place. So he says to her, go, call your husband.

And she admits, I've got no husband. Oh, she did have five. And she's right in saying, the one I have now is not the one that is my husband.

[31 : 26] Jesus knows more about this woman than she really knew about herself. He knew that there was a thirst in this woman that we have.

And only Christ can satisfy that thirst. Only Christ can do it. All these men and her soul were still dehydrated, longing for something.

She just simply couldn't put her finger on it. But here he was, sitting with her. There's a guy called Taylor Caldwell.

Taylor Caldwell. And he's the author of Captains and Kings. He wrote about an Irishman who was chasing the great American dream. And how, oh no, about a woman who was chasing the great.

Taylor, sorry, is a woman. And she wrote this book about a man who was chasing the American dream. And they made her book, a bestseller, into a nine series program, a drama program.

[32 : 33] And someone asked her if that production would bring her solid satisfaction. Her answer was this. There is no solid satisfaction in any career for a woman like myself.

There is no home, no true freedom, no hope, no joy, no expectation for tomorrow, no contentment. I would rather cook a meal for a man, bring him his slippers, and feed, and feel myself in the protection of his arms, than have all the citations and the awards and the honors I have received worldwide.

My property and my bank accounts, they mean nothing to me. And I am only one among millions of sad women like myself.

Just like the woman of Samaria. That's the kind of woman she was. She wasn't satisfied what life had given her.

[33 : 46] But Jesus knew how to gently lead her to face the very thing that was destroying her life. And that is to find satisfaction only in Jesus.

Nothing in this life will come and satisfy us. So, gently, plainly, forthrightly, but without condemnation, he meets this woman at her point of need.

That is what Jesus does for us. And for part two, you need to come back this evening. And it would be great if you would.

But we read at the moment this woman, what does she say? She says in verse 15, the woman said to him, Sir, give me this water so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.

She still didn't quite understand what was happening. So, the next half, as we'll see tonight, we'll see how Jesus dealt with her.

[34 : 56] And in the same way, we don't even have to wait till this evening. Who knows, we might not be living this evening. The opportunities to come to Jesus now, we shouldn't put it off.

For too long we did that. And for those of us who did it for too long, we regret it for putting it off for so long. Why do we do that?

When we can come now, come to Jesus as he gently, cleanly, forthrightly comes without condemnation to accept us for himself.

This is the gospel. Jesus went to Calvary's cross to take away our sins. He died in old place. The true penalty that is due to us, he took it upon himself so that we could live.

Let us now drink of this living water. May God bless to us these thoughts.