

Encountering the Friend of Sinner

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- [0 : 00] Throughout the Gospels, we read that Jesus routinely acted in ways that were culturally shocking and even provocative, especially for a Jewish rabbi.
- The religious leaders of the Jews, as we've already talked about this morning, tried to enforce a strict ceremonial code and code of purity on the people.
- Yet, Jesus publicly embraced and identified with those whom the religious leaders of their day routinely considered unclean. This was unusual. This was shocking, provocative.
- In fact, it actually built up quite a bit of animosity against him. Jesus was known to physically touch leprous people.
- He enjoyed meals with people who were considered to be the lowest of society. He showed compassion not only on the Jews, he showed compassion on Gentiles as well.
- [1 : 03] Because of this unusual behavior, Jesus eventually became known by his detractors as the friend of sinners. We see that in Luke chapter 7.
- They called him the friend of sinners. Of course, they didn't mean that as a compliment. They meant that as an insult, not a praise. But it is actually a wonderful way, a wonderful way of describing the person and the work of Jesus Christ.
- He truly is, in every sense of that phrase, the friend of sinners. Now, it is important for us to at least understand that Jesus, the friend of sinners, does not show kindness and compassion in order to affirm people in their sin.
- He shows kindness and compassion in order that he might rescue them from their sins. We see this all throughout the New Testament as well. In Luke chapter 19 and verse 10, after being criticized for entering the house of a chief tax collector named Zacchaeus.
- Maybe you heard that story as a kid. You sang this song. Zacchaeus was a wee little man and a wee little man was he. Do you know that song? We're going to teach Gus that song soon. So Gus can sing that song with us.
- [2 : 21] Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector. People hated him. He had extorted the people. He robbed them. Jesus actually has dinner with them and everybody gets really upset about that because they didn't like that Jesus was spending his time with people like Zacchaeus.
- And in response to that, Jesus says that his entire purpose in coming was to seek and to save those who are lost.
- So he doesn't show kindness and compassion to Zacchaeus in order to say, Oh, Zacchaeus, it's okay. They're just a bunch of haters. You just keep doing what you're doing. You be you. That's not why Jesus shows kindness.
- Jesus shows kindness to Zacchaeus in order that he might rescue Zacchaeus in order that he might save him. On another occasion, Jesus was having dinner with a group of tax collectors and sinners and prostitutes.
- The Pharisees noticed this. They didn't like that very much either. And they criticized Jesus for doing that. And here's what he said in response. Those who are well have no need for a physician.

[3 : 24] Only those who are sick. And he says, I came not to call the righteous, but to call sinners. He's the friend of sinners. Now, our culture insists that to be a true friend, to be a loving friend, you must accept and affirm everything that a person says and everything that a person does, regardless of whether or not you agree with it.

Jesus actually shows us a better way, though, doesn't he? According to Jesus, loving friendship shows kindness and mercy while also calling those people that you love to turn away from their sin and unbelief.

That's why Jesus is the friend of sinners. That's what we see characteristic of his life and his ministry in the New Testament. And the text that we're examining today here in John chapter 4 on this friend day records one of the most incredible interactions with Jesus and someone else.

The story's commonly referred to as the woman at the well, simply, is what we normally call it. I think there's a better way to describe it, and it's the title of the message today, Encountering the Friend of Sinners.

Encountering the Friend of Sinners. The text, as you just saw when we read it, it shows the Lord's compassionate heart. It reveals what takes place when he confronts us, each of us.

[4 : 52] And my prayer leading up to this day and even now as we begin is that through this text, you too will have a life-transforming encounter with Jesus, the Friend of Sinners.

Here's the first thing I want you to see in the text. Jesus crosses traditional boundaries. Jesus crosses traditional boundaries. Look again with me at verse number one. Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he 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 Sychar near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well.

It was the sixth hour. Now these verses right here, these first six verses, they may seem like nothing but a dull set of facts from someone's travel journal. But when it comes to the Bible, there's no such thing as filler text.

There's no such thing as filler information. Everything that's here for us recorded in the scriptures has a distinct purpose in the message of God. And we need to pay attention to God. And we need to pay attention to it in order to understand what it is that God wants us to know.

[6 : 11] There's critical contextual information here. Jesus' home and headquarters was in the Galilee region, a city called Capernaum. But where he was in chapter 3 was Judea, Jerusalem, the area around Jerusalem.

Now it's time to go back to Galilee. But the only way, or at least the shortest and easiest way, to get from where Jesus was serving in Judea to where his headquarters were or his home was in Galilee, was to cross through this region called Samaria.

The problem is the Jews and the Samaritans hated each other. They didn't get along at all. This is Israel-Palestine is what this is.

They wanted to avoid each other at all costs. They hated each other. There was constant in the first century, even during Jesus' time, there was constant fighting, breaking out between these two groups, so much so that Rome, who's ruling the world at that time, sends a group of soldiers into Galilee to crucify people because of this fighting between the Jews and the Samaritans.

Okay, this is a big problem, right? Strict Jews would not even walk in Samaria. They believed just to walk on the dirt of Samaritan soil was enough to make you unclean.

[7 : 27] That's how much they despised these people. So they would take the much longer and arduous route around Samaria to get from the area of Judea back up to northern Israel in Galilee and around the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus doesn't do that, though. Jesus chose to travel directly through the area. He quite literally crossed a boundary that many were unwilling to cross, knowing that a divine encounter with this woman at the well was going to take place along the way.

So they make it as far as Sakaar before stopping for their midday rest. Exhausted from the travel, Jesus sits by the well while his disciples go into town to grab some food.

And that's where we come to verse 7. A woman from Samaria came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, Give me a drink. For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

And the Samaritan woman said to him, How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with Samaria.

[8 : 36] Well, Jesus doesn't only cross geographical boundaries, does he? He initiates a conversation with someone that most Jews, especially Jewish rabbis, would have loathed to involve themselves with.

Notice first that he crosses cultural barriers here. He crosses cultural barriers. Even the woman is shocked that Jesus is talking to her.

Did you see her reaction in verse 8? Jesus says, Can I have a drink? And she says, Why are you even talking to me? What a reaction that is.

She's so taken back that Jesus, a man from the Jews, would even speak to her. Let alone be willing to drink water from her instruments that she brought to the well that day.

This would be similar, like I said a moment ago, to a modern rabbi speaking with and asking for help from a Palestinian who could be sympathetic to the ideologies of Hamas.

[9 : 40] Jesus, it's the equivalent of what's happening right here. Jesus crosses cultural barriers to serve us, to save us, to help us.

Not just that, though. Jesus crossed a gender barrier to engage with this woman. Earlier versions of the Talmud show us that a routine prayer of blessing in the morning for Jewish men was to pray and thank God that he did not make them a Gentile, a slave, or a woman.

There's huge divides of superiority and inferiority in Jesus' world. Jewish rabbis did not concern themselves at all with even teaching women.

They didn't want to do that. But if you follow through the Gospels, we see Jesus shows another way, doesn't he? So many of Jesus' followers are faithful women that he loves and he shows compassion on and that he teaches.

And interestingly enough, when the disciples return, they're not shocked that Jesus is talking to a Samaritan. What they're shocked by is that Jesus is talking to a woman.

[10 : 51] Look at verse 27. Just look down in the passage. Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman. But no one said, what do you seek or why are you talking with her?

This is interesting, isn't it? Jesus crosses cultural barriers. Jesus crosses gender barriers. Number three, Jesus crosses social barriers to care for this woman.

Now, we won't find out until later in the chapter. But it is significant that this woman is going to draw her water in the middle of the day. Because that's not when women drew water. It's hot.

It's a half mile at least to walk from the town of Saqqar to where Jacob's well is. It's hot. She's alone. That's unusual, isn't it? Women went in the early morning or in the late evening.

They went in groups together for safety and to socialize and to enjoy time together. But this woman doesn't do that, does she? She'd become a social outcast.

[11 : 52] Not even welcome among her own people. And as we'll find, due to her checkered past, she'd lost friendships. Probably had even elected to avoid the crowds as much as she possibly could.

And yet Jesus has no concern to talk with her. She crosses geographical boundaries. She crosses cultural boundaries, gendered boundaries.

She crosses social boundaries. What do we learn from that? There is no boundary Jesus is unwilling to cross to meet you with his mercy and grace.

Not one. You know, sometimes we get this idea with Jesus when we begin to understand our sin and our unworthiness of the Lord's grace and mercy. And then we hear that Jesus is a Savior and that he'll provide for us salvation, all these things.

We get this idea of Jesus that when he comes to help us and to meet with us and to save us, that he kind of pinches his nose and he closes his eyes and turns his face away and just kind of like does his thing and then quickly moves away from us.

[12 : 58] Like he's disgusted by us. That's not at all the picture that we have of Jesus in the scriptures, is it? Because Jesus is willing to cross any boundary there possibly is to save someone, to help someone, to care for someone.

There's no sin too great for him to forgive. It's amazing. He cares for us even when no one else does. And there's not a thing about you or anybody else in this life that will disqualify you from the steadfast love of the friend of sinners.

Galatians chapter 3 tells us plainly, That's the geographical, cultural boundaries.

There's neither slave nor free. That's the social boundaries. There's neither male nor female. That's the gendered boundaries. For you are all one in Christ. Jesus, isn't that amazing?

Now there's another thing that we take away from this, isn't it? Isn't it there? This means that it's equally true that there should be no boundary we as Christians are unwilling to cross to show mercy and grace to others as well.

[14 : 15] If the one we say we're following, the one that we've committed our lives to love and to serve and to follow and to be disciples of, was willing to cross all of these boundaries, surely we can also cross those boundaries to show kindness and compassion and love to others who are not like us, who don't look like us, who don't think like us.

This is one of the ways that Christians so easily behave in a way that is antithetical to Christ himself. But with Christianity, there is no compatibility with any form of prejudice at all.

Shame on us when we begin to cut people off that really need to hear the gospel of Christ. They really need to experience the love of Christ, but we cut them off because there's so much about them that we don't like.

If Jesus is the friend of sinners, we should be too. So first, we see Jesus crosses traditional boundaries. Number two, Jesus extends an extraordinary offer.

Jesus extends an extraordinary offer here. Being the incredible teacher that he was, Jesus used this illustration of drawing water from a well to introduce the gospel message to this woman.

[15 : 36] And she doesn't get it at first. Jesus made her an extraordinary offer of divine grace. Look at verse 10. Jesus answered her, If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that's saying to you, give me a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.

This is interesting, isn't it? Now, how many of you, your mind immediately goes to living water. What is this living water? How can I get something? But I want you to notice something.

Jesus isn't concerned first for her to understand the living water. She misses it at first. She's going to get it by the end.

But Jesus immediately introduces his identity as the crucial matter for her to understand. Do you see that in verse 10? If you knew the gift of God and who it is that's saying to you, what's the first thing he wants her to understand?

Who he is. His presence with and before her was the gift of God that Jesus wanted her to see. But she seems to have missed that part, at least at first.

[16 : 47] And she focused only on what he could give. Now, isn't that our tendency? Our tendency, typically, is to focus more on what Jesus might give us than to concern ourselves with actually knowing him.

Far more concerned with getting something from Christ than we are actually knowing Christ, which is why, like this woman, we think often in terms of physical satisfaction when what Jesus is offering is spiritual satisfaction.

The truth is that you have to get a grip on who Jesus is before you can ever begin to grasp what he came to give. And he's getting at that here. But notice her response in verse 11.

She's only thinking in terms of the physical. The woman said to him, Sir, you have nothing to draw water with. And the well's deep. Where do you get that living water? How are you actually going to do this?

She's skeptical. Even sarcastic, I think we could say she's being a little sarcastic in these verses. Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us this well and drank of it himself, as did his sons and all his livestock.

[18 : 01] Again, she's only thinking about the physical when Jesus is trying to teach a lesson about the spiritual. The first thing she says is, How are you actually going to do this?

You don't have anything to draw water with. And this well is deep. You're not just going to reach your hand in there and get water. But then we see this distinction, this defensiveness of her as a Samaritan person dealing with a Jewish man come to the surface here.

Notice what she says. This seems odd at first, doesn't it? But notice what she says in verse 12. Are you greater than our father Jacob? What's that all about? Jacob's well was a sacred site to the Samaritans.

In her understanding, when Jesus says, If you'll ask me as a Jewish man, I'll give you something that's far better than what you get out of this well, she takes that as an insult against her as a Samaritan woman.

And she essentially says here in verse 12, Who are you to say that you can give us something that's greater than our forefather Jacob gave us in this well?

[19 : 04] You see, there's defensiveness. Why? Because she's not thinking about the spiritual lesson that Jesus is trying to teach. She's only thinking in terms of the physical, right? Notice how Jesus responds. Verse 13, 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. And here's the key of water welling up to what?

Eternal life. Ah, now we see Jesus is speaking figuratively. He's not talking about water. He's talking about life. And what an amazing promise this is.

The living water that Jesus offers this woman is eternal life, which John chapter 7 tells us comes from the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those who trust by faith the person and work of Jesus.

This verse is on the screen for you to see. John chapter 7, verse 37. Jesus says this, If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

[20 : 21] And then John tells us what he means by that. Now this he said about the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, whom those who believe in him were to receive. That's interesting, isn't it? This living water, it's eternal life.

Well, who gives the eternal life? The Holy Spirit of God gives the eternal life. And who does he give the eternal life to? Those who come to faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Jesus says, I'll give you living water. What an extraordinary offer. This is equivalent to what John or Jesus tells Nicodemus in John chapter 3 about being born again.

Being born again by the Holy Spirit and having living water from the Holy Spirit. It's the same thing. This eternal life is a work of divine grace. It comes through the transforming power of God's Spirit.

And it can only be received through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. And let me just remind you, this is exactly, precisely why Jesus came.

[21 : 29] He came to give us life by suffering our death. He said as much. John chapter 10. I came that they may have life.

And that they may have life abundantly. I am the good shepherd. And the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep Jesus is. Friends, this is an extraordinary offer.

He extends it to you now through his word. We go to Genesis chapter 3 and we see that in Matthew 22 and we see, man, we're all sinners.

We're in a big mess. We've all transgressed. We've all sinned against God. What we deserve from God is justice, wrath, judgment. And yet Jesus comes and he makes an offer that says, you can skip that judgment.

I'll take that judgment for you. What an offer. Why won't you come to him? He invites you.

[22 : 38] John 7. If you're thirsty, spiritually thirsty, you need life. He says, come to me and drink. Why don't you come to him and drink?

Look at verse 15. Look how she responds. She still doesn't get it yet. She's still thinking in the physical, isn't she? You even get a sense of sarcasm here. The woman said to him, sir, give me this water so that I will not be thirsty and have to come here to draw water again.

She misses it, doesn't she? It's okay. Jesus isn't going to stop. He's going to make sure she gets it by the end. Jesus extends an extraordinary offer. Finally, I want you to see this.

Jesus delivers life-changing truth. Jesus delivers life-changing truth.

There's three categories of transformational truth that Jesus delivers in the rest of this conversation. I want you to listen carefully because this is actually the thing that ends up changing this woman's life. This is the thing that will ultimately change your life as well.

[23 : 43] Now, first thing he says is he delivers the truth about us. He delivers the truth about us. Look at verse 16. Jesus said to her, go, call your husband and come here.

The woman answered him, I have no husband. Jesus said to her, you are right in saying I have no husband for you have had five husbands.

And the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true. Jesus instructs her to bring her husband because he knew she didn't have one.

He's doing something intentional with this woman that on the surface of it, it seems actually quite mean, doesn't it? Like, why would he bring this up for this woman? This is not going to do anything but make her feel bad about herself.

Why would Jesus do this? I thought Jesus was supposed to be loving and compassionate. Why does he now confront her? It's almost as if he's irritated to throw back in her face the brokenness of her past.

[24 : 45] Jesus doesn't do this to embarrass her. And he certainly doesn't do it to condemn her. That's the opposite of what he's doing. But he is, in fact, drawing out intentionally the reality of her brokenness and of her sin.

And he does that for a really important reason. Before anyone can understand the nature and purpose of salvation, they have to come to terms with the reality of their own sinful condition.

Think about what salvation is. That's the word we use, right? That's the biblical word. Salvation refers to deliverance from eternal judgment. That's what it means. Well, why do we face eternal judgment?

Because we're all sinners. Because we've all rebelled against God. We've all broken God's law. We need God's mercy. Jesus is bringing this to the surface because she's not going to understand living water until she understands the fact that she's drowning in her sin.

But it's not just that that he's doing. He's doing something else here, too. He's also using this moment to open her eyes to his true identity. This is important. Fundamentally, this passage is about who Jesus is.

[25 : 56] And he's opening her eyes here. He told her things about herself he couldn't have possibly known unless there was something truly significant about who he is. Now, this is a big deal to her because in verse 29, when she eventually finishes this conversation, she runs into town and she tries to get all the people in town to come out and speak with Jesus, too.

And notice what it is that she is talking about. Verse 29, Come and see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ? What's the thing that sticks with her about Jesus?

He could do something that people can't do. He knew something about me that people that don't know me shouldn't know. This opens her mind in some way to the person of Jesus.

Now, let's put these two things together. The reality of her sin and the knowledge of Christ regarding her sin. Let's think about this for just a minute. Hang with me, okay? One of the deepest desires of the human heart is to be fully known and still fully loved, right?

We want to be known. That's at the heart of friendship, isn't it? To be known and to know and to walk together with someone in love and compassion and kindness and a unique connection that's on the basis of being known, right?

[27 : 17] We want that. And we want to be fully loved in the process of that. Here's the problem. Being fully known is also one of our greatest fears, isn't it? Because to be fully known is an obstacle to being fully loved.

Sometimes this shows up in our lives in really superficial ways. Like, you know, when we're growing up, teenagers, I have a preteen daughter now and I'm not ready for that, but I do.

And she likes to wear makeup, right? And there's people that you want to wear makeup. Why? You want to cover up blemishes? To be fully known, you think, might hinder your ability to be fully loved. If they see me as I really am, they'll think less of me.

They won't want to be with me. We do the same thing when we are going out to dinner and there's going to be people in public that see us and we go through about six or seven different outfits in our closet to find out what makes us look the thinnest, right?

Nothing works for me, but that's what we try to do anyways. Why? Because to be fully known hinders us from being fully loved.

[28 : 22] Now, those are really superficial reasons that all of us can identify with, but there's much deeper reasons that we experience this. We guard ourselves in intimate relationships and in intimate friendships because we're afraid that if people really know what we're like, they won't want to be our friend anymore.

They won't want to love us anymore. If they really know what's true about what we've done or maybe what's true of some tragedies in your past, you're afraid for people to know those things because you think that they won't be able to love you anymore.

They'll only think less of you. They'll think poorly of you now, right? It's a problem, isn't it? To be fully known and to be fully loved seems to be an impossibility.

This part of Jesus' conversation with the woman teaches us that he, being one with God, the Son of God, knows everything there is to know about this woman.

He knows every thought she's ever had. He knows every husband that she's ever had. He knows the man she's living with at that particular moment in her life. He knows everything about her.

[29 : 31] The things that only she knows. He knows it all. And yet, he still loves her. She's still loved by him.

I want you to think about that. Put yourself in the sandals of this woman at the well. God already knows everything there is to know about you. Everything. You can't hide a thing from him.

Now, that strikes fear in us when we understand that one day we'll all have to stand before him in judgment. Because if he knows everything there is to know about me, then I'm toast. Until you begin to understand that despite being fully known by God, you're also fully loved by God.

Isn't this the whole purpose in Christ's coming? Since this is what the Bible tells us in the most familiar verse ever in the New Testament, in John chapter 3, God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever would believe in him should not perish but have eternal life.

For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved, fully known, fully loved.

[30 : 43] In Christ alone, can this deepest desire of being fully known and fully loved be truly satisfied? That's why Jesus brings her brokenness to the surface.

It's not to embarrass her, to criticize her, to condemn her. It's to rescue her. It's to love her. Second thing, that's the truth about us. Second thing he teaches her is the truth about religion.

The truth about religion. Look at verse 19. The woman said to him in response, Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Yeah, she's on to it now, right? And she changes the subject somewhat now, doesn't she?

Our fathers worshipped on this mountain. This would have been Mount Gerizim where the Samaritans worshipped. But you say, as a Jew, that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.

Jesus says to her, Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you don't know. We worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.

[31 : 42] But the hour is coming, and it's now here, he says, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. For the Father is seeking such people to worship Him.

God is spirit. Those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth. This is the truth about religion. Now let's think about her response first. There's two possibilities for what she's getting at here in verses 19 and 20.

She seems to be changing the subject, doesn't she? It could be that she's deflecting. She's thinking, This is awkward. I don't want to talk about this with you, so let me introduce this religious argument between the Jews and the Samaritans real quick about where we're supposed to worship.

That could be what she's doing. She could be deflecting. It's also true that she could be actually reflecting, reflecting on this dynamic of her sinfulness that Jesus has just once again brought to the surface.

And now she's seeking religious clarity. Okay, I am a sinner. That means I need to go to some temple and worship and do some type of ritual in order that I might try to receive forgiveness. So tell me, since I perceive that you're a prophet, tell me, should I do this at Mount Gerizim?

[32 : 48] Is that where I go to worship to receive forgiveness? Or should I go to the temple in Jerusalem? Is that the place that I need to go to worship and receive forgiveness from the Lord? She might be just seeking religious clarity from someone that now she's starting to trust as a religious teacher, as a prophet.

In either case, Jesus answers her that religious efforts are ultimately irrelevant to living water. They're irrelevant.

Like many people, this woman thought that genuine worship and therefore the forgiveness of sins comes through religious formalism. To put it into modern terms, she's basically asking Jesus, which church do I need to go worship in this week?

How many prayers do I need to say this week? How much money do I need to give this week? How many ways do I need to serve in the community this week? Lord, just give me all the things that I need to do so that I can get this forgiveness.

But religious commitment and experience can't possibly atone for your sin. It can't make you at peace with God. Good things that you do now cannot possibly erase the bad things that you've done in your past.

[34 : 05] And Jesus is confronting this idea. Instead, Jesus says that true worshipers, those who have received living water, worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

This is the opposite of formalism. Truth means to worship what is true about God. And the truth about God is found in the scriptures, in the word of God, in the Bible.

But God's not only looking for those who will worship him in truth of who he is, but also in the very depth of their inner being, in spirit. That's what he means here.

He's telling her this isn't about going to church. This isn't about getting out your religious to-dos and just marking off all the things that you feel like you need to do, hoping that you'll get some kind of peace from that.

That won't work, Jesus says. True worship is something that comes from the inner being in the spirit, and it is focused on the truth of who God is and what God has done, particularly through the person of Jesus Christ, his son.

[35 : 09] That's what true religion is. It's not about formalism. Charles Spurgeon, a great preacher from the 19th century, said, God does not regard our voices. He hears our hearts.

And if our hearts do not sing, we have not sung at all. Religious formalism does not make you a genuine worshiper, nor can it bring you eternal salvation.

Religious formalism is nothing more than idolatry wrapped in Christian clothing. It doesn't do anything. And as long as you're trusting in your subscription to some type of religious experience or religious work to make you right with God, you will remain lost and without God in this world.

Jesus tells her the truth about her, the truth about us. He gives her the truth about religion. Finally, he gives her the truth about salvation. Truth about salvation. Look at verse 25.

Her interest is piqued. And the woman says, I know that Messiah is coming, he who is called Christ. And when he comes, he will tell us all things.

[36 : 19] What's she saying? The Messiah is gonna come. He's gonna sort all this out for us. This dispute between the Samaritans and the Jews, he's gonna let us know what the truth is and he's gonna figure it all out and then look at what Jesus says.

I who speak to you am he. He's saying, lady, I'm him. I'm him. Listen. The truth about us is that we're sinners in need of spiritual salvation.

The truth about religion is that it cannot provide the salvation we so desperately need. But the truth about salvation is that it can be received through Jesus, the Messiah.

The Messiah. Remember, this interaction with Jesus and the woman, it's all fundamentally concerns Jesus' identity and what that means for sinners.

Jesus masterfully guides this conversation to reveal this magnificent truth. Jesus says, I who speak to you am he.

[37 : 24] And then if you were to read the story on further from there, you see suddenly the spirit opens the woman's eyes. She begins connecting all the dots of the conversation. Now she's beginning to see the truth of Jesus' identity.

She's starting to grasp this idea of living water and genuine worship. The spring of living water is beginning to well up within her, revealing itself through simple, faith in Jesus Christ, the friend of sinners.

Well, how does he provide salvation? If salvation comes through Jesus, how does he actually do that? The truth about salvation is that Jesus is the Messiah and he secures our salvation through his death on the cross.

That's the thing. Remember Genesis 3. God makes this promise that there's gonna be enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, but one day there's gonna be one from the seed of the woman who's gonna bring victory.

It's a promise. And we see all of these pictures of it through the Old Testament that's ultimately fulfilled in Jesus. He's gonna crush the serpent's head while the serpent bruises his heel. What's the bruising of the heel all about?

[38 : 36] The crucifixion of Christ. On the cross, the sinless son of God is treated by God the Father as if he were the sinner in order that the true sinners like me and you through faith in Christ might be treated by God the Father as the ones who are righteous.

We call it imputation. That's what's happening. Sometimes we think that the cross is all about God being able to kind of turn a blind eye to our sin. That's not what the cross does.

That's not what it means to be the Savior and the Messiah. What Jesus does on the cross is he doesn't turn his eyes away from our sin. The Father puts our sin on him. The wrath of God that we are destined for as sinners is then poured out on the sinless son of God so that by faith we might actually receive the forgiveness and the righteousness of Christ.

It's wonderful, isn't it? This is the ultimate way that Jesus proves himself to be the friend of sinners. John 15, Jesus himself says, greater love has no man than this that someone lay down his life for his friends.

Romans chapter 5, in this the love of God is seen. not only that Christ died for us but that while we were sinners Christ died for us.

[40 : 06] Let's bring it to a close. You've been so good. You're enduring so well. The encounter with the friend of sinners teaches us that salvation is not about who we are.

It's about who he is. Salvation or the encounter with the friend of sinners teaches us that Jesus' offer is not about physical satisfaction. It's about spiritual salvation.

He's not just trying to make your life better now. His purpose is not to make you happy now. It's way greater than that. It's an extraordinary offer. The third thing it teaches us is that receiving salvation is not about what you can do for him.

It's about faith and what he's already done for you on the cross in the resurrection to bring you life. Jesus paid the price for this living water through his death and resurrection.

And the amazing thing about it is he offers it freely to all who will turn from sin and trust in him. It's a beautiful thing to have friends.

[41 : 10] It really is. But nothing compares to friendship with the friend of sinners. Do you have friendship with him? Has your sins been forgiven?

Do you know that? Are you at peace with God, with your creator? Is what awaits you beyond this life eternal life in the presence of God? Or will you face his judgment instead?

Will you receive his friendship? That's the question. We write those letters when we're kids in elementary school. Remember doing it in fifth grade with Jennifer Muston. She sat next to me in class and she's a pretty little girl and I wrote a note one day and I said, will you be my girlfriend?

Check yes or no. And I passed it over. And she passed it back. No. She didn't want to be my friend. It's almost as if Jesus is through the cross, he's writing this note and he says, will you receive my friendship?

And he calls you to believe. Turn from your sin and believe. John 7. If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

[42 : 24] Whoever believes in me, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. Whoever believes.NINGNINGNINGNING