

Jesus and the Woman of Samaria

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[0 : 00] into the chapter we read in John's Gospel, John chapter 4. Excuse me. And just looking at that section from verse 7, there came John chapter 4 at verse 7.

I'm not going to read all of it, just two or three verses. There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, give me a drink.

Then, verse 10, Jesus answered that if you knew the gift of God 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.

Then in 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 of water welling up to eternal life and so on.

Now, our meetings with people in this world have the potential to either help or hinder, to encourage or to discourage, to lift our spirits or to crush our spirits.

[1 : 19] Very often when we go away from having met with someone, we either feel the better for that meeting or the worse. Well, a meeting with Jesus never left anybody the same.

And the Bible gives many instances of great encounters that Jesus had with people. And Jesus always was there bringing and enriching people's lives in so many different ways.

In the previous chapter, Jesus meets with Nicodemus. Nicodemus, as we know, was a learned man, a religious leader, somebody who had a very high profile in the community, somebody who would have been very much respected.

But for all his religious teaching, for all his high moral standing, and for all his righteousness and his abilities, Nicodemus still needed Jesus.

Here in this chapter, we meet a woman whose life is full of many issues, incredibly loose morals, and a very poor understanding of the way of salvation.

[2 : 36] And this woman also needed Jesus. And we could go through all the different people that Jesus met, in his time in this world. And we would say of them all, they all needed Jesus.

And it's the same tonight. You need Jesus, and I need Jesus. Let's make no mistake about it. He is the one person that you and I need for our lives.

And to reject Jesus, to push him away, to say he's an irrelevance, is the greatest insult and the greatest tragedy that could come into our lives. And I don't believe that there is anybody in here tonight who's actually saying that Jesus is an irrelevance.

I don't believe you would be here if you were to think in that way. But so often we do not see the burning need. We don't see the urgency.

And we sometimes don't see the incredible benefit that is to be derived from having Jesus as our Savior. Now, this lovely incident that we have before us here is quite remarkable, I think, on many fronts.

[3 : 45] And I suppose one of the most remarkable things of all is that it has taken place at all because the Jews hated the Samaritans with a passion. Now, I mentioned this before because I've looked at something way down, much further on in this chapter.

But I remember mentioning before this about how the Jews hated the Samaritans with a passion. The Samaritans, of course, they were part Jew and part Gentile and sort of had come out from the time of the captivity of Israel when the ten northern tribes were captured by the Assyrians.

So this was, if we were to trace their history, it goes back to theirs. So they were a mixed race. But the Jews looked upon them as being an unclean race. And if you mingled with the Samaritans, you became unclean.

And the hatred of the Jew for the Samaritan was so awful that some Jews hated the Samaritan so much that we read, again in history, that some of the Pharisees prayed that no Samaritan would be raised in the resurrection.

It's quite extraordinary. Today we talk of people being racist. Well, here we see it at its very, very worst, this idea that that's what some of the Pharisees prayed, that no Samaritan would be raised at the resurrection.

[5 : 20] But we find that Jesus is on his way, and he's making his way in this particular direction because he is going to meet somebody.

There is somebody to be saved. And you see, there are no chance meetings with Jesus. From our point of view, we have many chance meetings, many unexpected meetings.

And there are many things and meetings that we've had with people that have had sometimes life-changing results for us. I'm sure you can look back on your own life and just how you maybe met somebody one day, and just through that meeting you got a job.

You didn't plan to meet that person, but that meeting just had opened one door, led to another thing, and before you knew it, you had a job. Another meeting may have, you may be sitting beside your wife tonight, and it was through an unexpected, unplanned meeting.

Sometimes life has the most amazing way with twists and turns, unexpected, and yet little things have turned and great issues come out of it.

[6 : 27] Well, for this woman, it certainly was a very unexpected, unplanned meeting, but it was something which radically changed her life.

And it was, as we see here, this woman's meeting with Jesus had an extraordinary impact in Samaria, because it wasn't just this woman whose life was radically changed.

You think about it. This woman had this, from her point of view, a totally unexpected meeting with Jesus. We'll see how, from her point of view, how amazing it was that it took place at all.

But the result of it was that not only was she changed, but many, many other Samaritans were changed as well. We're told in verse 39, many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the testimony of this woman.

And verse 41 tells us, and many more believed because of his word. So, it doesn't tell us how many, but it tells us many.

[7 : 37] Out of that one meeting with this woman at midday, many, many, many lives in Samaria were changed. And so we find here that Jesus meets with this particular woman.

And this really, it paints for us a beautiful picture of Jesus. And I think one of the things that it highlights is the humanness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we're going to put away forever from us the thinking that Jesus somehow had a superior human nature to ourselves. Yes, he was someone who was free from sin, but the effect of sin was such that it affected his human nature in exactly the same way as I wish.

And Jesus got tired, just as you and I do. Jesus experienced the whole range of human sufferings and pains and wearinesses that you and I do.

You know, sometimes people have this idea that Jesus, as he walked through this world, that it was easy for him, that he kind of, it was like you would almost see some passion, some super passion walking through and everything is just bouncing off him, doesn't hurt him, doesn't affect him, immune to everything that's happening all around.

[9 : 08] Some people have the idea that that's who it was for Jesus. Not at all. In fact, I think I've said this before, I believe it was more difficult for Jesus than it is even for you and for me.

Because Jesus saw sin and was able to appreciate, that's a word you can use, what sin was in a way that you and I cannot.

We see sin, but because we are sinners, there's a large part of us sides with sin, sympathizes with sin.

We may not want to admit it, but we can feel comfortable with sin. Jesus never, ever, ever felt comfortable with sin.

Jesus saw sin for what it was. He saw its ugliness. He experienced its pain. It was like as if you took us from the comfort zone of where we are and plunged us into some appalling situation.

[10 : 12] I've used the example before of where we, if we were plunged from here now in our own comfort zone and arrived in one of the concentration camps where all the Jews were being put to death.

And we just all of a sudden arrived there into this where we're surrounded by death and slaughter and atrocity and horror. And we would see death in all and life and sin and all its ugliness.

We would recoil. There would be no preparation for trying to acclimatize ourselves to how awful that situation would be. Well, I believe to a certain extent that's how it was for Jesus in this world.

Because he was pure and holy, without blemish, perfect, sinless, living in this sinful world with a nature that could experience pain and hurt and all these things.

So, it's little wonder that Jesus was termed a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we must always remember that this is a high priest that we have who has been touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

[11 : 22] So, this is a Jesus that we have here. The amazing thing, the God-man, as God, he never slumbers nor sleeps. But as Jesus the man, we find him tired, exhausted, he's weary.

And that's, that's, it's quite an amazing thing. Here is this humanity. The word was made flesh and dwelt among us. And so we find him that he's sitting here at this well.

That's what we're told in verse 6. So, Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey. See what it says? Wearied. Not just a little tired, weary, exhausted from his journey.

And he sits down by this well. And he's on his own because the disciples have gone into the city to buy food. And, humanly speaking, at this particular hour of the day, you wouldn't expect anybody to come to the well.

This was the one time that people didn't come to draw water. As we know, in these countries, at midday, it's boiling hot. And this would be the one time that there would be a quiet time at the well.

[12 : 31] Nobody would be there. But this woman came. And in all probability, the reason that this woman came then was because of the kind of woman she was.

Because her life, her history, wasn't a particularly good one. She had a bit of a reputation. She had gone through, I don't know how, well, we know that there's a lot of men. She had five husbands and the one she was with now wasn't her husband.

There was just this, she was, I suppose you could say, just a man-eater. She was somebody who put herself about. And no doubt, she was somebody who was talked about in the community.

And I'm sure there would be a lot of comments made about it. If she went to the well when others would be there, she would be experiencing all kinds of dirty looks and comments made about it.

So I believe she went to the well at midday knowing there'll be nobody else there. I can go and get water because there'll be nobody. I won't be hassled. I won't be bothered.

[13 : 33] And I'm fed up in this community of the way that I'm being bothered and hassled everywhere I go. And so she comes for water. But Jesus is there. And Jesus, as it is so often the case in his life, he initiates a conversation.

He is the one who initiates. And he does it at a very human level. And Jesus knows the direction he's going to lead this conversation because he's going to lead this woman to himself.

But he begins it with the most basic request possible. He's thirsty. And he's saying to this woman, could I get a drink? It's as simple as that. But the woman is amazed that Jesus asks her this question.

because a Jew asking a Samaritan for anything was unheard of. Even a Jewish man asking a Samaritan man for something would be unheard of because as we said earlier on, the Jews looked upon the Samaritans as unclean.

And to have any contact with them, to engage with them, would render you unclean as well. But for a Jewish man to have contact with a Samaritan woman was completely unheard of.

[14 : 53] Particularly a religious man. Because the religious men of the day, the rabbis, weren't allowed to have any public contact with women.

It was really quite extraordinary. So, in a sense, what we find here, what Jesus is doing, is that he is crossing over every taboo that was made, as it were, by the religious leaders amongst the Jews.

But the point is that Jesus is in pursuit of a soul. And he's not concerned about man-made traditions and all these things. A soul is to be saved.

And Jesus mixed with those who were the social outcasts, those who were unclean. That's why he touched the leper. He became one with us in order to save us.

Jesus has identified with us in order to become our Savior. And when the disciples came back, they were amazed that Jesus was talking with this woman.

[16 : 04] Strict Judaism had draconian laws. Let me cite two of them. I'll give you two quotes from them. This is rabbinic citation.

One should not talk with a woman on the street. This was for, this is strict rabbinical law. One should not talk with a woman on the street.

Not even with his own wife. Isn't that extraordinary? extraordinary. So that a rabbi, if he was going down the street and he met his wife, he was to ignore her.

That was it. Not even with his own wife, and certainly not with someone else's wife, because of the gossip of men. And here's another one that says, it is forbidden to give a woman any greeting.

Isn't that extraordinary? And that was the religious law of the day for the rabbis. And here is Jesus. And you can see that he's not interested in these laws, in these man-made laws.

[17 : 08] He's only interested in the law of God. And the law of God never required that or said that. And so Jesus is out to save us all. And that is why the disciples when they came back, they were amazed.

They didn't dare say anything to Jesus, but it tells us that they were amazed when they came back. And they found him. Verse 27, just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman.

It's not just that they got a shock. It was a source of complete amazement to them. Because you just didn't do that. But again, as we say, this is Jesus seeking those who are lost.

And you know, there's something beautiful about this picture that we have here. Here is Jesus. In his human nature, he's weary and he's thirsty.

Why? Because he has become weary and thirsty in his seeking to save souls. That's why.

[18 : 16] Jesus is out here to find this woman. Jesus has work to do in Samaria, beginning with this woman. man. And in order to reach her and her in turn to reach others and bring them to him, we find that Jesus is weary and thirsty.

Isn't that wonderful? Let's not forget that picture. That is the Savior that we have. Always searching, putting himself out all the time.

And he hasn't changed. He's still seeking souls. He's still searching for souls. Looking for souls in here tonight. the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which is lost. And my dear friend, if you are lost tonight, in other words, if you're without Jesus Christ tonight, you're lost.

Don't push that concept away from you. But the great news is it's for you that Jesus has come. And I would ask you to deal with that situation and speak to the Lord Jesus even here now and say, Lord, it's for people like me that you've come.

Because all those in tonight who are saved were lost. And it was for them that Jesus came and he has saved them. But what about you?

[19 : 32] He saved others. Just as he saved others, he can save you as well. So you go to him tonight and ask him, Lord, please save me. Now this woman was spiritually empty.

She had found nothing in her religion. She had found nothing in her life that gave her any satisfaction. she opened all the different doors, she went through them and she gained nothing. There was an emptiness in her life.

She didn't realize it, but the emptiness was brought about by her spiritual condition. The spiritual fuel gauge pointed to empty.

Absolutely empty. She was running on empty spiritually. And so Jesus, as he begins to work in this woman, and he begins to lead her in the right way, he begins with a concept of water.

And he says, give me a drink, please. And of course she goes to get the drink for Jesus. And Jesus uses the word of water and the concept of water and all that water is to begin to talk about himself.

[20 : 36] And he goes on to tell this woman that she can have living water. And as we see here, that living water, he says, the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water, welling up to eternal life.

It's a beautiful picture that we have here. And of course, this idea of the living water, the fountain of living water, is one of the Bible's descriptions that we have of the Lord.

A fountain of living water. Not, when you think about it naturally, it's not like the water of a well. But it's like the water of a river. It's flowing, it's fresh, it's not only refreshing, it revitalizes.

And these are the pictures that we have spiritually of what Jesus does. Jesus brings us rest. A soul without Christ is restless.

Maybe not tonight, you might be here and you're maybe without Jesus, and right now you're not restless, but there are times you are, and there are times you will be. You cannot, cannot, cannot go through this world without experiencing some restlessness, because there is a void in your life that only Jesus can fill.

[21 : 53] Our souls are restless until they find rest in you, is what Augustine said, and how true it is. So there's this picture of Jesus, where he's speaking to this woman, he says, I'll give you living water, which will give you rest, which will refresh you, which will revitalize you.

You know that's what water does. If you're really hot and thirsty, you begin to get tired through the lack of water. You get a good drink of water, and you feel, oh, that's great, I'm ready to go again.

And that's kind of how it is with Jesus. There's this life, it's living. this woman, as we said, was empty.

She was tired. The sparkle of life had gone. There's no doubt about it. She felt she was isolated and marginalized.

She was, as we said, we believe she was the kind of woman that people were talking about. That's why she was there. It wasn't an easy life. She was hurting.

[23 : 03] But what she didn't realize was that at the bottom of the problems in her life was sin. Sin that had never been dealt with. And you know, my friends, that's what's at the bottom of all problems in life.

And that is why Jesus is the answer to every person's problem. Because all problems, if you strip everything away, we come to sin.

And Jesus has come to deal with sin. it may sound very simplistic, but that's the truth. There's no getting away from it. And that is why Jesus is the answer to every problem.

And so as this woman is speaking to Jesus, gradually her eyes are opening. And there's that wonderful moment in verse 25 when the woman says, I know that Messiah is coming, he who is called Christ.

When he comes, he will tell us all things. Jesus said to her, I who speak to you, am he. And you know, that was that moment when, for that woman, her eyes were opened.

[24 : 14] Because she left her water pot, she had come for the water pot, she had come to fill that water pot. And the woman who was wanting to avoid everybody, goes hammering back into town, searching for everybody.

What a change! And she's saying, come on, come with me, come see a man who told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?

Well, my friends, I hope tonight that you have come for yourself to see this Savior. As we said at the beginning, Nicodemus, he was a religious man, an upright man, a moral man, but he needed Jesus.

This woman, her morals were loose, she was ignorant of spiritual things, it's very obvious that she found life tough, she needed Jesus, and both of them found Jesus, their lives were changed, transformed.

It didn't mean that their lives forevermore were rosy, but the one thing that was all important they had, the one passion that they needed was now their Savior.

[25 : 29] And I would ask you tonight before you go away from here, to ask Jesus to deal with your soul. Sometimes I say to myself, well, there's nothing I can do, I cannot, I wish I would love if it was within my power to open people's hearts that they might receive Jesus.

I can't. but you have the responsibility yourself to go to Jesus. He will open your heart.

He will open your eyes. Will you ask him? Or are you saying, I'm afraid to ask him because if I ask him, I don't know what will happen.

I'm not ready to be a Christian. My friend, that's an awful, dangerous place to be. Please, tonight, before this night goes out, remember, Jesus came into this world to seek and to save those who are lost.

If tonight you're without Jesus, he's come. He's come for you, to people like you. Don't turn away from him, but ask him to become your Lord and Savior.

[26 : 52] Let us pray. Lord, we pray that this word may touch our hearts.

We look for God's power because we cannot work these things up ourselves. We pray that this great gift, the gift of salvation, may indeed be bequeathed to those in here tonight, who may be outside the kingdom.

Lord, draw them in. We pray that those who know this gospel and yet have not tasted that God is good, by accepting Jesus, may indeed accept him tonight by faith.

Lord, bless us and keep us. Shine thy face upon us. Be merciful to us and lead us in the way of truth. Take us to our home safely, we pray. And all we ask is in Jesus' name and for his sake.

Amen.