

The woman at the well Part 2

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[0 : 00] But you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem. Jesus declared, believe me woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father, neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.

You Samaritans worship what you do not know, we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming, and has now come, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks.

God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth. The woman said, I know that Messiah, called Christ, is coming.

When he comes, he will explain everything to us. Then Jesus declared, I who speak to you am he. And then verse 39, many of the Samaritans from the town believed in him because of the woman's testimony.

He told me everything I ever did. So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words, many more became believers.

[1 : 08] They said to the woman, we no longer believe just because of what you said. Now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the saviour of the world.

And I think that last statement proves the high regard they had for her. We no longer believe just because of what you said.

They had such a high regard for her that they believed that there was a prophet that had come, and that maybe even the Messiah has come when they believed her. And that gives an indicator of how they really thought and how they really felt about her.

So the Lord has travelled to Samaria, and he's met the Samaritan woman by the well. And this spoke together about living water, and they spoke together about thirst, and that's all wonderful, and maybe she was impressed by it or a little bit confused.

But she really doesn't quite understand it all because her understanding of the revelation of God only goes up to Deuteronomy, and the things that Jesus is talking to her about extend beyond that.

[2 : 25] And so he very kindly, and I think carefully, spoke to her directly into her own history and her own life, and that really got her attention.

And from that moment, she knew that she was with someone who wasn't just passing through or fancying a chat or theological discussion or trying to convert or anything like that.

This was, she was in the presence of a prophet. And she says, I see you are a prophet. And with that awakening, in which she now begins to rightly perceive who the Lord is, I see, I perceive that you are a prophet.

We are allowed then to see what is in her heart, and this bubbles up right away. And what is it? It's worship. She talks about worship.

That's the very first thing that comes right up out of her heart. Worship. Verse 20, Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.

[3 : 32] Now, it might be easy to think that this was only a deflection technique. We can be good at that, can't we? Well, we don't want to talk about a certain thing. We can change it to anything, the weather usually, or something else.

Never mind me. How are you? Yeah? You don't want to talk about how you're feeling. Never mind me. How are you? How was your day? And then you just let them talk, and you deflected it. It's a great technique, and it might be easy to think that this was a deflection technique, that she didn't really want to talk about her history and her present circumstances.

And that is an attempt to steer the conversation away from her personal life. And perhaps there was some part of that. Maybe there was some pain in her life because of these five husbands.

We don't know the circumstances behind all that, just that she's had five husbands, and she's with someone now. She has now someone that she's intimate in a relationship with, either betrothed or and not a husband yet, or other circumstances like that.

And there may have been some pain and discomfort, and who would blame her not wanting to talk about these things? Even though the Lord does not offer her any rebuke.

[4 : 50] But let us notice two things here. We aren't told her motivation why she says, I see your prophet.

I see that you are a prophet. We aren't told her motivation why she moves onto this subject. And the Lord doesn't press the issue, but allows the conversation to develop.

What we can be confident of is that after the Lord demonstrates his insight into her history and present circumstances, her eyes are open to a new perception of who he is.

We don't know why she didn't really want to talk about these things. The Lord did impress it, but we're confident that the insight he had into her life opened up something of her perception of who he is.

And I think that his penetrating gaze achieved this. And with that awakening in her came a freedom to talk with him about what was most important and meaningful to her.

[5 : 58] Now if we recall in John 3 when the Lord and Nicodemus met, the curious Nicodemus begins with how he knew that the Lord was a teacher sent from God. Do you remember this?

You're a teacher sent from God because he would not be able to do the things he saw him do unless God was with him. Which when you take a second look at that statement from Nicodemus, I know that you are a teacher sent from God because no man can do the things you do unless God is with him.

it's very similar to the Samaritan woman's response because after seeing what the Lord has done for her, after seeing what he knows, sees in her, she then says, I know that you're a prophet come from God.

Nicodemus says, I see what you've done, you must be a teacher come from God. I hear and see what you know about me, you must be a prophet come from God. But how does the Lord respond to Nicodemus when he says these things to him?

He responds with what it means to be spiritually reborn. It's as if that same penetrating gaze saw within Nicodemus that beyond the polite compliments and introduction that Nicodemus offered, which were both true and kind, deep down in Nicodemus there was a personal issue for him.

[7 : 21] How may I enter the kingdom? That's what he really, deep down, wanted to know. And was struggling with.

And perceiving this, that that's where it was, deep down, that's what it was, the Lord redirects the course of their conversation to what was really needful for Nicodemus to hear.

He didn't talk about teaching, he didn't talk about miracles, he didn't talk about what it was to be sent by God, he talked about something that he could see what was really going on, and it was, how can I enter the kingdom?

John 2, verse 23 says, for he knew what was in a man, he knew what was in Nicodemus, he knew what was really in the heart of the Samaritan woman, and he knows what is in all our hearts, knows what's really there.

But notice in his conversation with the Samaritan woman, when she brings up the topic of worship, he doesn't interject, he doesn't redirect the conversation to another matter, but continues with it.

[8 : 25] For worship was in the depths of her heart, and she wanted to know what was right and true. She may have been married five times, she may be in possibly a complicated relationship now, there may have been lots of things going on in her life, but she wanted to worship, she wanted to be a worshipper, she wanted to, and the Lord could see that, and under all those layers, that maybe other people defined her, as even to this day, he could see that in her heart was a worshipper, that was in her heart, and I wonder, what did others see, what did they think about her, what did others think they knew about this woman, as they saw her go about her daily business, as they chatted to her about the weather and about what's going on and what's happening in life and so forth, did they see that this was in her heart, that's what was really deep down, yet as the Lord sees her, he sees her clearly and as she truly is, isn't that amazing, he saw her truly as she is, he sees her past, he sees her present and beneath all that deeper still, the desire to be a worshipper,

she looks maybe pretty ordinary, maybe you couldn't spot her from another woman among all her neighbours, there was nothing there that he could, unless she knew her personally, but he could see her clearly, she wanted to be a worshipper, a true worshipper, it reminds me of a story in C.S. Lewis' book, *The Great Divorce*, and the main character in it sees this wonderful, like he thinks it's a river of light, anybody read this book, *The Great Divorce*, C.S. Lewis? And he, it's nothing about divorce and marriage, it's about a divide between heaven and hell, and he sees a great train of light and he thinks, oh it's a river, but he sees it's a procession and it's all these people, like angelic beings and they're all processing and celebrating this amazing woman and he thinks it must be a great woman, it must be for someone to have all that pomp and all that celebration and someone so spectacular, it must be somebody like Mary, the mother of Jesus and his instructor, George Macdonald, who's with him, says, no, her name is Sarah Smith, she's one of the great ones here, she was from Golders Green, just an ordinary power, you would never have heard of her, that's what he says, you never have heard of her, her name's Sarah, Sarah Smith, she lived in Golders Green, but she's great here, and maybe this smarter woman just looked very ordinary, but she was great, there's something about her that was great, and the Lord saw it and it was, I want to be a worshipper, Psalm 139 verse 1, oh Lord, you have searched me and you know me, he searched and he knew her and he knows us too, and those things beneath many layers, we may be carrying lots of layers, lots of them, and we carry those and ponder those things in our heart, beneath all those things, and you know those things that we carry are really in our heart, they're the very things that he wishes to talk with us about, the very things, he might talk about the things on the different layers, like for her was the relationships, for her was about thirst, for her was about living waters, these are different layers, important layers, but write down what's really at the bottom, what's really there, he wants to know what that is, and the things that we have there, that's the very things he wants to talk with us about.

So, for her, it was worship, for us, it could be something else. Just be assured of that, when you come to the Lord in prayer, together, only by yourself, he's eager to hear those things, he wants to talk about those things.

[13:09] There's even a scripture, so come let us reason together, you know, let's talk together. Now, in verse 20, she begins with what she knows and what she has been told, and what she knows is that her fathers or ancestors worshipped on this mountain, and she's probably pointing to that mountain as they speak.

My father's worshipped on this mountain, my ancestors, and the mountain that she's pointed to or looking at was Mount Gerzin, which they could see from the well, it was right there, and what she has been told is, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem. What she knows is that she is to worship like her fathers, her ancestors did on that mountain, and what she's been told is that no, there's another place, it's in Jerusalem, and maybe she signaled, just as I did there now, to the direction where Jerusalem was.

In Jerusalem was a temple, which hundreds of years before her ancestors offered to assist in the work to build the temple after the earlier, attempted to interrupt it, and we can read that in the book of Israel, but they were refused, and so they chose Mount Gerizim to build their own temple, which at that time, she was speaking with Jesus, had been destroyed about a hundred plus years before that, but they went to that mountain, they built their own temple, the mountain on which, on it or near it, we read in Genesis 12, in Genesis 33, Abraham, her ancestor, Jacob, their ancestor, built altars to worship God, it was near that area, on the slopes, on that mountain, they chose that because that's where they did that, it's the mountain in which, in which Deuteronomy 11, on first entering the promised land after the exodus, the Israelites performed ceremonies of blessings, and received instructions from the prophet

Moses, remember her revelation only goes up to Deuteronomy, it's what she knows, it's what her ancestors knew, it was two rival places of worship, that had been created but the temple in Jerusalem was still there when they were speaking, while the Samaritans had been destroyed, yet the mountain was still there, and they still went to that place on those slopes, and went to worship, now when she says our fathers, the phrase is an inclusive one, and she is basically identifying herself with them, and the word worship, or worship describes a deep reverence to God, it can even be that a bowing down, or a prostrating, a lying down face on the ground to God, and so she is letting the Lord know that she is gone, see that mountain, I have gone to that mountain, like my ancestors did, and I bowed down to myself in reverence before God,

[16:16] I have worshipped him there, do Jews claim that the place for this must be in Jerusalem, the word here, claim, reflects a verbal communication, it can simply mean speak, claim can be just speak, but like here it can be much meatier, it can mean a command or to teach, and the word John uses for must, speaks of what is necessary, dutiful, and proper, and so she is saying, on one hand, I have followed the tradition, an example of my ancestors, and I have revered God on those slopes of the mountain before us, but on the other hand, others have taught, commanded, it, that the proper place, is not here, but another place, in Jerusalem, and as a worshipper, I would like to know what, from you the prophet, who's right, and where's right, and how does he respond, believe me woman, a time is coming when you will worship the father, neither on this mountain, nor in

Jerusalem, and I think, that is a very powerful, take a moment, just to reflect on those words, is a very powerful reply to her, actually, it's a powerful declaration to her, he's declaring something to her, he's not just speaking, saying something, he's declaring something, because he says you, let me read it again, believe me woman, a time is coming when you will worship the father, neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, this is not a generic you, this is not you, you lot, them, you, personal, it's personal to her, you, she, you will one day, he said to this smarter woman, you, one day, will worship, and perhaps point to the mountain, and then signalling in the direction of Jerusalem, not here, not there, one day you will worship, but not necessarily here or there, and she won't just worship God, but she will worship

God as father, he says father three times, and is replied to her, she identifies with her fathers, Jesus says, the God that you bowed down, the God that you revered, the God that you prostrated before, the God that you went to those slopes and offered that worship to, he, you, he will be as a father to you, the God that you revered, the God that you worshipped, the God you followed to those slopes and worshipped, he will be as a father to you, you will worship him as a father.

The Lord continues and teaches her that due to the limitations of the revelation of God, she and her ancestors accept it. They worshipped what they did not know. There's lots of things they didn't know.

Whereas the Jews with a fuller revelation worshipped what they did know. There were things that they did know. And because of this, the Lord could confidently say that salvation was from the Jews, both in terms of revelation and in that the Saviour would be born a Jew, born in Bethlehem, the house of David.

[19:52] But a new day was coming and was arriving that the place of worship would not be an issue. The worshippers will not be confined or defined by the places or the history of those places any longer.

They will worship the Father. They will worship God as Father in spirit and in truth. Not defined by the walls.

Not defined by the tradition. They will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. In spirit because it will come from within. When he says, they talk about spirit here.

Spirit and truth, it's the human spirit. It's the spirit. The innermost being. Who you really are. In spirit because it will come from within and it's truth because it's going to be authentic.

It's going to be deep down. It's going to be real. You know when someone's talking or when yourself, you know when someone's being real to you. It's coming from within and it's real.

[20:57] You can tell when it's not. And this worship, he's saying there's coming a time when the places won't matter so much anymore. It's going to come when people will actually worship from within and it's going to be real.

And you won't need to belong to one people or to one place to do that any longer. Worship will rise up from within, from the inner being without pretense or show or demonstrations or hypocrisy.

It will be true. God is not a mountain. He is not a building. He is not a denomination.

He is not a tradition. He's not how we did it, how we do it, how we like it. He's not a method. He's not a vibe. Let's create a vibe.

Have a great time. That's God that showed up. He's none of those things. You cannot create Him.

The best musicians, the best organizers, the best teachers, the best givers, the best attendees, the best missionaries, all of it, you cannot create Him.

[22:16] He is not anything created by human imagination or brilliance or by our hands. And see, when that happens, see, when we do start doing that, we think, it is the buildings, it is the traditions, it is the method, it is the vibe, what happens, often, unknowingly, we begin to worship the very thing that we're creating.

We can even end up worshipping the worship, worshipping how things are done and they become the idols and God has said, I will have no, you will have no other God before me. that's why in the church, Paul reprimanded the church, you know, I follow Jesus, some people were even saying. I follow Paul, I follow Cephas, I follow just somebody else to follow.

These were the idols they had created. Who do you follow? What about you? I follow Cephas. What about you? Well, I follow Jesus. The things that they were created, spirit, that's with a capital S, he is spirit, so can't be confined or defraud.

Solomon said when he dedicated the temple to him, even the heavens of heaven and so the worshippers must worship him in spirit and in truth.

[23 : 37] And here comes such a kind of worshipper that Father seeks. He's actively seeking him. That's who he's seeking in spirit and truth. And here now we discover why the Lord considered it necessary for him to do.

Why he endured the heat. Why he endured the hunger. Why he lent on Jacob's well. Why he sent his disciples away to the town to get food.

Why he stayed behind and why he chose to speak with this Samaritan woman. Because even though she maybe had never imagined it, God saw what was deep in her heart to be a true worshipper and he sought her out.

He sought her out. That's why still not only those kind of worshippers in the world, he's not only seeking that out in the world. He's not only seeking it in this country.

He's seeking it those in this place. with you, with me. Seeking such worshippers who who who will worship him way or some object rather than him.

[24 : 56] We will worship him in spirit and truth. Because it comes from within where there's no shame and no pretense. He's seeking that. He's seeking that.

2 Chronicles 16 verse 9 Another scripture is known. But we know this. For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose heart look to and fro.

I think the King James says he's looking. All the earth to strengthen those whose heart 1 Psalm 137 we read The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart.

One was David. A boy. A young lad. A shepherd. Not a kingly figure. Not an angel. But someone that the Lord could see. This is someone after my own heart.

This is someone whose heart is fully committed. This is someone I can come to. And I hear a woman from Samaria who don't even know her name. The Lord saw her sought her and found her her out.

[25 : 56] a true worshipper. That means for herself one day. She will know for herself what it is to worship God or pretense or show let the overflow of what is in her heart in adoration come out to him.

All seems too much for her. Sometimes when the Lord says something or we hear something the Lord does something sometimes we need time to process it to think it through and it seems to be too much because she responds with I know that the Messiah the prophet the Christ will do to me and to my people when he comes.

What you're saying is he'll explain it more. For any other previous to this moment he tells her clearly I'm he. Actually he is not in the original here.

It's when you speak to you am which doesn't sound to make sense but it basically echoes I am I am he's saying I am I know Moses will come the Christ John adds to his readers they'll explain that I am and she knows she's in it and she goes at that point and says come see a man who told me everything I've ever done could this be the Christ.

What follows was joy in that place for that woman for that town he stayed with him for as she wanted to explain all these things to them more to her about Lord when you said those things about my family about my past my present he'd talk about it more maybe he did when he talked about unpack that please sometimes we need these unpacked don't we unpack this Lord a bit more unpack it a bit more we've got time to talk about it together will you stay with us everybody else just uses this as a shortcut no I don't need to hear with you we can we can talk together we can unpack this some more tell us tell us about the temples tell us what it is to be free tell us what it is to be they know not only a prophet or the prophet has come to them but God the Father free Christ not just a prophet not just the prophet not just the Christ but faith for himself to be a people he will worship him let us always seek seek that and protect that and be amen there to be noach