

Jesus Is... #8 The Saviour of the World

Message #1 – The solution is better than man’s condemnation (Jn. 4:1-15)

“Now when Jesus learned that the 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 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 about the sixth hour.”

“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?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “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.” 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.” (John 4:1-15)

- I. Being despised:
- II. John 3:16-17 practically applied
- III. A Despised Region: Samaria

“Jews have no dealings with Samaritans” (4:9) explains to John’s readers ...that Samaritans were considered by many Jews to be in a continual state of uncleanness, thus [most Jews] would have thought that drinking water from this [Samaritan] woman’s water jar would make a person ceremonially unclean. The verb in the phrase rendered *“have no dealings”* can also have a more specific meaning of ‘share use of [things]’.” ESV

- A. Where it was located?
- B. Who lived there? (2 Kings. 17:24, 33; Neh. 13:23-28; Deut. 18:18)
 - 1. Transplanted people (conquered by the Assyrians)
 - 2. Mixed religion (Pentateuch & false gods and built a rival temple)
 - 3. Mixed blood (Marriage of Jews & Gentiles)
 - 4. Expected a Messiah

The Samaritans were a racially mixed group of partly Jewish & partly Gentile ancestry, who were disdained by both Jews & non-Jews (2 Kings 17:24-31 describes how the king of Assyria brought foreign people to settle in Samaria in 722 BC; over time they had intermarried with some Jews who remained in the area). Many inhabitants of this region between Judea & Galilee were descendants of the OT northern kingdom of Israel, although from the Jewish perspective these Samaritans had assimilated strongly into non-Jewish culture & had intermarried with Mesopotamian colonists. The Samaritans had their own version of Moses’ Pentateuch, their own temple on Mount Gerizim (see 4:20), & their own rendering of Israelite history. Copies of their Pentateuch in Hebrew (& in Targumic Aramaic) remain extant, as do their basic historical narratives. Tensions often ran high between Jews & Samaritans; thus historian Josephus recounts fighting between Jews & Samaritans. ESV

- IV. Jesus travels to a despised region (Samaria) (Jn. 4:1-6)

Jesus *‘had to pass’* (4:4) this way because of geography (it was the shortest route), but the words may also indicate that Jesus’ itinerary was subject to the sovereign & providential plan of God [ESV]

V. Jesus engages a despised woman (Jn. 4:7-19)

Jesus' words about *living water* (4:10) involve a double meaning. Literally, the phrase refers to fresh spring water (Gen. 26:19), but Jn. 7:38-39 identifies this '*living water*' as the Holy Spirit within a believer. [ESV]

A. She came to the well at noon—

“The *well* today is still 100+ feet (31 m) deep & was probably deeper at that time” [ESV]

B. Jesus engages the despised woman – tough nut to crack – 5 husbands!

1. Brushes Him off (Jn. 4:7-9)
2. Disbelieves His solution (Jn. 4:10-12)
3. Desires His solution (Jn. 4:13-15)

“*The water that I will give him*” (4:15) is the “*living water*” of v. 10, identified in Jn. 7:37-39 as the Holy Spirit dwelling within believers. ‘*Never be thirsty again*’-- a person’s deepest spiritual longing to know God personally will, amazingly, be satisfied forever. The phrase *will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life* is reminiscent of Isa. 12:3—“*With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation*” ESV

Ephraem the Syrian Quote: "Jesus came to the fountain as a hunter... He threw a grain before one pigeon that he might catch the whole flock...At the beginning of the conversation he did not make himself known to her, but first she caught sight of a thirsty man, then a Jew, then a Rabbi, afterwards a prophet, last of all the Messiah, She tried to get the better of the thirsty man, she showed dislike of the Jew, she heckled the Rabbi, she was swept off her feet by the prophet and she adored the Christ.' [cited by J. A. Kennedy, *Commentary on John*, p. 61] That imaginative description grasps the essential burden of the chapter, namely to reveal Christ in action and the growth of faith response to the revelation." [George Beasley-Murray, *John*, p. 66]

Message #2 – Longing for inner satisfaction & Jesus helps us get it (Jn. 4:16-18, 29, 42)

- 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.” (John 4:16-18)
- So the [Samaritan] woman left her water jar & went away into town & said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me all I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” They went out of the town & were coming to him. (Jn. 4:28-30)
- Samaritans from that town ...said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, & we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.” (John 4:41-42)

I. A Samaritan doing life in her culture & practicing her religion – Immersed

“*Our fathers worshiped on this mountain*” Mount Gerizim (Deut. 11:29; 27:12) was the OT setting for the pronouncement of blessings for keeping the covenant. The Samaritans’ version of Deut. 27:4 named Mount Gerizim (rather than Mt. Ebal) as the place for the altar; this is where the Samaritans had built their temple. ...A Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim was recorded in Josephus (*Jewish Antiquities*). It was destroyed by the Hasmonean [Jewish] leader John Hyrcanus during his reign (134–104 BC.). This temple has been identified by some with a large Hellenistic-era structure made with unhewn stones atop Tel er-Ras at the northern spur of the mountain, although many have suggested that a more probable location is beneath the old Byzantine (4th–7th century AD.) church atop the mountain itself. Despite the destruction of this temple, Samaritan sacrificial worship has continued atop Mount Gerizim even until the modern era. [ESV]

II. People value their culture & its religion

III. The Samaritan woman had no inner satisfaction

A. She had had 5 husbands and now had a live-in boyfriend (Jn. 4:18)

The woman had had *five husbands* who had either died or divorced her. When Jesus says “*the one you now have is not your husband,*” he implies that merely living together does not constitute a marriage. A marriage requires some kind of official sanction and public ceremony at which a man and woman commit to the obligations of marriage and the community then recognizes that a marriage has begun. [ESV]

1. Victim?
2. Progress?

B. Jesus does not condemn her, but offers her the solution (Jn. 4:14)

IV. The satisfied Samaritan woman drank & told others (Jn. 4:15, 29)

A. Woman:

1. “Give me this water” (Jn. 4:15)
2. “Come and see” (Jn. 4:29)
3. “Can this be the Christ?” (4:29)

“The woman said to him, ‘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*.’” (John 4:25-26)
“On the woman’s affirmation of this hope in a Messiah, Jesus reveals himself to her—“I am” which may be completed by “he”—“I am (he);” for [John, the writer] however, the formula has the overtone of the absolute being of God—the “I AM” [George Beasley-Murray, *John*, p. 62]

B. Other Samaritans:

- “This is indeed the Saviour of the world.” (Jn. 4:42)
- *Saviour of the world*: Jesus is the Saviour of the *world*, not just of Jews. Jesus’ large-scale harvest among the Samaritans marks the first indication of the universal scope of his saving mission. The early church engaged in a Samaritan mission as well (Acts 8). Hence the pattern of Jesus’ mission according to John—from Judea (Nicodemus, Jn. 3), to Samaria (Jn. 4), to the Gentiles (Jn. 4:46-54)—anticipates the post-Pentecost mission of the early church (cf. Acts 1:8). [ESV]
- *Saviour of the world*: John was “writing at a time when the title was applied to certain deities in the pagan world and was claimed by the Emperor of Rome. [Here John] was affirming in the Samaritans’ confession of Jesus in these terms both that the title rightly belongs to Jesus alone, and also that, as Redeemer and Lord, Jesus fulfills the hopes of Samaritans, Jews and the world of nations.” [George Beasley-Murray, *John*, p. 65]
- John “chapter 4 is also unique among the four Gospels in its depiction of the compassion & patience of Jesus in dealing with the Samaritan woman, his willingness to minister to a Samaritan community, and the confession arising from their experience of him: “*this man is indeed the Saviour of the world*” (4:42). It is a great insight from a little people.” [George Beasley-Murray, *John*, p. 66]