

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Living Water

Scripture: John 4:1-26

Code: 1507A

Now, as we come to chapter 4 in John, we are reminded that we have seen clearly what the purpose of John is in writing this gospel. John's single purpose to reveal Christ as God in a human body. John does that all through this gospel. And we've said this each time because it's true each time. This is not primarily the story of the conversion of a Samaritan woman. It doesn't even tell us as such that she is converted. It's implied. So the key to chapter 4 is not the conversion of the Samaritan woman, the key to chapter 4 is verse 26 where Christ says, "I am Messiah." That's the key because John's purpose all through his gospel, John the Apostle, is to proclaim Christ as God. And it's no different here.

He's been telling us the genealogy of Christ as the eternal God, the person of Christ in all of His creative glory. He's been telling us about the various things concerning Christ's testimony. How His early disciples received it. How by His miracles at Jerusalem and in Cana of Galilee He declared His Messiahship. How by the very words of John chapter 3 where He makes a discourse on the new birth and salvation, He is declaring Himself to be God. It all focuses on Christ.

And as we come to chapter 4, again, the focus is not on the woman, the focus is on Jesus Christ...God in a body. So as we come to this chapter, the first part of it, we shall see as He reveals Himself in Samaria, initially to a woman at a well and then to people from Samaria, particularly from the village of Sychar.

It's also interesting to see in this story that Jesus isn't too particular about the type of person that He deals with. He loved all men, equally. He knew no favorites, played none. God is no respecter of persons. And in this account, we see Him dealing in love with a woman that no one else could deal with in love because she was a total outcast. And yet that was no problem to Christ because His love wasn't determined by the object, it was determined by the character of His love. That's the difference between human love and divine love. Human love says, "I love you because I like what you are." Divine love says, "I love you, I don't care what you are I just love you because that's the character of love." And divine love splatters on anything that gets in its way, it doesn't matter what it is. Human love says, "You I love, you I could take later, You I love," see. And Christ is here exhibiting again the character of divine love which is indiscriminate. And if it happens to be a prostitute like this woman who falls under that love, that's the way it is because it's the character of His love to love.

Scarborough, who wrote a book some years back called, "How Jesus Won Men, finds a lot of his information from this chapter as to the approach of Christ. Paul Little's book entitled "How to Give Away Your Faith," draws the first couple of chapters from this encounter of Christ with a Samaritan woman as to the approach in personal evangelism and witnessing. He meets her at the point of her need. He takes the conversation from the physical, turns it to the spiritual, etc., etc. It's a great pattern for evangelism, you can learn from it.

We also find here a very fascinating person. This woman is very interesting. We don't know any details about her life except that she was messed up with men. That's the only detail we know. That was all that really needed to be known as an illustration of her sin. But she's fascinating.

She was a Samaritan. And in that in itself will provide some interest for us in a few minutes. But she's just about...is just about the opposite of Nicodemus. And it shows the gamut to which Jesus went. Nicodemus was a Jew, she was a Samaritan. Nicodemus was a man, she was a woman. Nicodemus was learned, she was ignorant. Nicodemus was high class, number one, she was the lowest, the outcast not of Israel but of Samaria, which is even worse than being an outcast in Israel. He was wealthy, upper class, she was poor. He recognized Jesus and said, "You must be divine, nobody could do the things You do except God be with Him." She didn't know who Jesus was, thought He was a curious traveler and couldn't figure out what He, a Jewish rabbi, was doing even talking to her. And so you see a very distinct difference between Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman.

But again you have the same potent powerful Christ who overcomes the indifference, the materialism, the self-centeredness of this woman, the immorality, the religious prejudice and all these things, and leads her to a knowledge of Himself. Let me say it again. This is not the story of a Samaritan woman, this is the story of the unfolding of the revelation of Jesus Christ, it just so happens to take place while the Samaritan woman was there. The story is Christ, don't ever forget it. God's glory is first. And the unfolding of Messiah is what matters here.

And incidentally, the disclosure of Messiah here is the first time and of all places to this obscure woman in Samaria. And people have gone around in circles asking themselves why Jesus if He was Messiah didn't go to downtown Jerusalem, go in the temple and tell the leaders that He was. Why does He reveal it to this obscure woman? Well, I don't know the mind of God but I do know one thing, He chose to hide these things from the wise and prudent and reveal them unto babes. And I know something else, that when He finally did reveal it to Israel, they didn't believe it anyway.

Now it's difficult to outline this because it is dialogue, but let me give you four nails to hang these thoughts on. We'll divide it into four elements: the circumstances, the contact, the conviction and the Christ...the circumstances, the contact, the conviction, and the Christ. These four elements are involved here.

Notice the circumstances that led to this confrontation, verses 1 to 6. We'll read the first three:

When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus baptized not but His disciples) He left Judea and departed again into Galilee.

Now word was out that Jesus was really successful. The word was out that the people were flocking down there to Jesus. And this is what was so hard for John the Baptist's disciples to understand, why are the crowds leaving you, John, and going down there? And you remember, John said, "He must increase and I must...what?...decrease." That's the way it has to be. They're supposed to be going there, that means I've done my job. This is my joy. That's what he says at the end of chapter 3. This is what makes me happy...my joy is fulfilled, verse 29 of chapter 3.

So, the crowds were moving to Jesus. Well, this really upset the Jewish leaders. The Jewish leaders didn't like John the Baptist to start with, much less Jesus. You say, "How do you know they didn't like John the Baptist?" Well, some time at your leisure, read Mark 6 and find out what they did when John the Baptist got his head cut off, they rejoiced. That was a great day in the minds of Jewish leadership when John the Baptist lost his head because they got rid of a religious renegade. And if there's anything that's intolerable, it's someone preaching the truth in the midst of all this error. Because of their hypocrisy they could not tolerate anybody telling the truth. They had...they were like religious watchdogs, when anybody walked in their territory, they barked. And John the Baptist came proclaiming the truth and they didn't like it, especially all this stuff about repentance. And if they didn't like John the Baptist, you can imagine what they thought of Jesus Christ. They didn't like Him so much so, as we trace the life of Christ through its one constant conflict with the Pharisees from the beginning to the end, until they are finally part and parcel of His death.

And so, they didn't like Christ. And when Christ knew that they were antagonized because He was having these people come out there and He was being so successful, He felt now is My time to depart into Galilee. And you say, "Well, was He afraid of them?" No, of course He wasn't afraid of them. You say, "Well, didn't He think He could handle them?" Do you really believe that? Well then, why did He leave? Well, negatively He left because it was...now watch this one...it was not God's time for a confrontation, not the right time. Negatively He knew that the Jewish leadership was after Him and He wasn't ready yet for a confrontation. It wasn't God's time. So He just left.

You say, "Well, just left for negative reasons doesn't make much sense." No, that's right, it doesn't. So He left for positive reasons, too. Verse 4...verse 4, here's the positive, beautiful verse, "And He must needs go through Samaria." He didn't just go away because Jewish leadership was antagonistic, He went away because He had to be somewhere else.

What do you mean "He must needs go through Samaria"? Is that a geographical necessity? No...not a geographical necessity, it's a divine spiritual necessity. Well, the simplest thing, it would have been a geographical necessity because like, if you can imagine a map, this would be Israel in the south, here's Galilee in the north and in the middle is Samaria. Just kind of stacked on each other. Now if you're going to go from down in Jerusalem up to Samaria...up to Galilee where Nazareth was, and Canaan, these places, you'd have to...the simplest thing would be right straight through Samaria...the simplest way to go. But the Jews never went that way. The Jews had their own trail and it went up to the top part of their land, went over the Jordan, up the other side, back across the Jordan at the top and into Galilee so they didn't have to touch a foot in Samaria. Because there was no love lost between the Jews and the Samaritans. There was hatred and bitterness, stemming clear back to 450 B.C. and this bitterness had gone on and on and on and so when Jews went north, they didn't go straight to Galilee, they went around the Jordan...crossed the Jordan two times and up the east side and then back in.

And so, when Jesus said, "I must needs go through Samaria," He was really saying something. Right there He was shattering a lot of barriers because that was an abnormal movement for a Jew. But it wasn't the geographical necessity that compelled Christ to go there, it was divine necessity. You see, it was predestined, it was foreordained that our Savior should go through Samaria because there was some chosen sinners there. The whole machinery of grace began to move when Jesus Christ started toward Samaria. The wheels of salvation begin to turn as He moved there, He was on time. God's divine clock said: Now, Samaria, Go. And He went. And had He arrived at that well two hours late, there would have been no woman, but He always did everything in the fullness of...what?...time. He was on schedule.

And He moved out. And He had to go there because there were some that the Father had given Him from all eternity that needed to be saved. And divine timing brought Him to Samaria and brought Him to the well...a half mile south of Sychar and brought that woman there, too. There are no accidents in God's economy when it comes to salvation. And so, perfect timing and Jesus moved out.

And, "He must needs go through Samaria." Verse 5 and 6 says that "He cometh to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near to the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there." Now He comes to Jacob's well which is about a half mile south of Sychar where the road forks like this, one goes northeast, one goes a little northwest. He came to this place, a very, very familiar place to Jews and also to Samaritans, a place with many memories because that's the ground initially that had been purchased by Jacob and bequeathed to Joseph. You remember when Joseph died in Egypt, they took his body and buried it there so his bones were buried in that place by that well that Jacob had built there. So it was a place of many memories.

So, Christ came to this place, a plot of ground that Jacob had purchased and given to Joseph. Joseph was buried there and the well was there. Now verse 6 also says, "Jesus therefore being wearied with His journey, sat by the well and it was about the sixth hour." Here you have a beautiful, just a glimpse of the humanity of Christ. You say, "Did God get tired?" No, but Jesus did in His humanity. Jesus Christ the perfect man, 100 percent man was weary. The writer of Hebrews says that He was touched with the feelings of our infirmities, that He knows what we know. He's gone through what we went through. And here we see Him tired, hot, thirsty, sitting by the well.

And it was about the sixth hour...incidentally, there's a conflict in terms of the time that John uses, whether he uses Jewish time or Roman time. In one of the messages past, we told you that we feel he uses Roman time. Roman time begin at 12 P.M. or 12 A.M., so consequently that would make it six o'clock. That also seems to fit well because the early evening, six o'clock or so, was the time that most people came to the well to get their water. And so it would seem to fit. It's also the time when people in the city would be able to be finished with their work, and as we see later in the chapter, they came running out to Christ. And so this would fit perfectly that it would be early in the evening, about six o'clock, about the sixth hour, counting from noon. That would make it a long hot journey with the sun rising higher and higher and Christ becoming more thirsty and more tired all the time.

Finally, He arrives at the well and He sits down. There's a great truth here. Just this little thought, and I've had so many thoughts on this chapter, like I say, I can't even give you the...the beginning of what has gone on in my heart and mind. What a tremendous thought it is that Jesus Christ just came there and sat down. Why? Because He was in God's place at God's time waiting to do God's will. Tremendous thought. Listen, that's what God wants out of every believer, to be God's man in God's place at God's time with a mind to do God's will. And you know what? Most of us want to be where we want to be when we want to be there with a mind to do what we want to do. And few Christians are sensitized to the Spirit of God to sense the prodding of the Spirit of God to be somewhere when God wants them to be there to do what God wants them to do.

You say, "Well, man, you're talking about vague things. I mean, how can you know where God wants you to be?" Listen, if God wants you to be somewhere to do something for Him, do you think He'll let you know? It would be pretty silly for God to want it and not let you know.

You say, "But I can't read it." Well, then, it's because you're too crusted with what you want to do and you can't be sensitive to what the Spirit's telling you. Listen, there's tremendous truth in the statement that God wants His man in His place and His time with a mind to do His will. I mean, this is just availability, isn't it? Most of us are so plugged with our own life, just from one end to the other, jammed into a mold that if God stood on the edge of heaven and hollered at us, I doubt that we could hear. Just to be available to God's Spirit, to be His man in His place at His time with a mind to do His will.

Do you even think like that? Or do you classify everything you do in terms of what you want to do so that if the Spirit of God tries to get in you feel it's an intrusion? I'm not here to do that, I'm here to do this, see.

And so, the circumstances set it up and Christ was in God's place, God's time, with a mind to do God's will. Now notice the contact, and this is how He initially contacts the woman. Verses 7 and 8, "There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water." You say, "What in the world is she doing a half a mile away from the village?" Well, she had to come a long ways. Why? No water? Plenty of water. Water coming out of the springs in the Judean hillsides all over the place. Why did she go a half mile away? Because she was an outcast. Very likely because of the background that she had, the other women didn't want her around. And she had to go a long way to get her water. Later on she says, "I'd like the water you have to give me, stranger, because I'm getting tired of coming out this far." He's talking spiritual, she's physical, see.

But, you see, at this point this woman was ostracized from society and so she is isolated. She comes out a half mile, perhaps, to get water. Now Jesus begins to break down barriers in verse 7, "Jesus saith unto her, Give Me to drink." Verse 8 says, "The disciples had gone away into the city to buy food." Now it's not that Jesus can't get water unless somebody gets it for Him, that's not it. The idea is He just didn't have any utensil. Later on she says, "You don't have a bucket, where are you going to get this living water you're talking about?" See, she's still thinking physical, you don't get living water in a bucket.

But He says, "Give Me to drink." And with that, He just shattered her mind. "Give Me to drink." You say, "Why is that such a shattering thing?" Well, look at this, in verse 8 it says the disciples were gone into the city to buy food. What city? Sychar. What kind of city? Samaritan city. Can you imagine the shock of those Samaritans when a little band of Jews came parading into their city? It's a little out of the ordinary. And I can imagine the buzzing was going on: what are these Jews doing in our city? They hate us.

You see, the Jews seriously resented the Samaritan because inter-marriage destroyed the heritage...broke into the line. And here comes these disciples. You say, "Well, didn't the disciples feel strange about it?" You know, this tells us something very beautiful, it tells us that somehow in just the few months that Christ had been with them He had already communicated to them His love, hadn't He? He'd already communicated there are no barriers. He had already let them know what Paul said in Galatians 3:28 when he says, "In Christ there's neither bond or free or male or female or Greek or Jew, or anything else, all are...what?...what?...no racial barriers." They got the message. They were breaking barriers just walking into that village. They're gone. I don't know what happened in there, but I imagine it was interesting. I wish sometime that the Bible had told us that, but at least we'll be able to find out in heaven: what did you do when you got into that village?

But meanwhile, back at the well, verse 7, Jesus asked this lady for a drink. And, of course, this must have just shattered her for three reasons. Number one, just unwritten law, men did not speak with women. That was just a law. In public, in outside, you did not speak with women. Now, of course, we're in a different day and that's not true today, except at a couple of Christian schools, one of which I attended. But anyway, for the most part, for the most part today you're allowed to talk to women. In our society we don't have that kind of a standard but in those days they did. Men in public did not talk to women. In fact, the rabbis had recorded that you not even talk to your wife, your sister or your daughter. There was provision to talk to your mother.

Second barrier that was broken, not only the male-female barrier, but the fact that He was a rabbi and religious leaders didn't hold conversations with prostitutes. In fact, they never even held conversations with women, that was...rabbis and religious leaders did not talk to women. That's why, as I've told you, there was a group of Pharisees called the bruised and bleeding Pharisees and they got that way because every time they saw women they closed their eyes and they kept running into buildings. And they became known as the bruised and bleeding Pharisees. Religious leaders did not look at women, they did not talk to women.

There was a third barrier here and the third barrier was the barrier of race. Jews didn't have any dealings with Samaritans. Look at verse 9, "Then saith the woman of Samaria unto Him, How is it that Thou being a Jew..." how did she know He was Jew? He must have had the physical features of a Jew, He was a Jew. Undoubtedly, she saw the robes of a rabbi, perhaps she saw the blue hem around the bottom of His robe. He was a Jew, it was obvious. Some people have tried to say that Christ was all different...He was a Jew, no question about it. And so she says, "How is it that You being a Jew ask a drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria?" She couldn't believe this.

Then she says, and this statement needs amplification, in a moment. "For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." There was racial hatred, bitterness. How did it start? Well, 720 B.C., it's a long time back, the northern kingdom was taken into captivity by Assyria, they were transported lock, stock and barrel, the whole civilization just picked up and put into Media in the eastern part, Assyria. Well, there were a few left there, a few Jews were left. But when all the main population was moved out, other groups migrated into that place where they had been, places...came from places like Babylon, Cutha, Ava, Hamath, Sepharvaim, places...various places around. They all moved in. And they intermarried with the Jews remaining. The Jews at that point, at that part of the kingdom were so messed up in sin and gross immorality and so forth and so on, that's why the captivity came to be. But at that time they moved in and intermarried without any kind of compunctions at all. And this is a gross crime in the eyes of orthodox Judaism. Even today, an orthodox Jew--for all intents and purposes--just sort of buries their children if they marry a Gentile, and these people are still orthodox. And I can understand how they feel because of the glorious promise to the purity of Israel made by God...but nevertheless, this barrier was there.

Now it's interesting, also, that in about 450 B.C., 200 and some years later, the southern kingdom had been taken into captivity for seven years and they came back. They came back. Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed the whole city and they started to rebuild the wall. You remember, Ezra, Nehemiah, rebuild the wall. Well, these Jews in the southern kingdom started rebuilding the wall, some of the Samaritans came down and said, "Listen, could we get in on it? I mean, after all, it's our city." Oh no it's not. "You forfeited your right to rebuild the wall when you intermarried," see. And then you remember the two guys, the two Samaritans that were just a pain in the neck of Israel, Sanballat and Tobiah who kept irritating them endlessly cause they wanted to rebuild the wall, they wouldn't let them. So this bitterness was there.

And if that wasn't bad enough, the bitterness really came to a head because a renegade Jew by the name of Manasseh--no relation to the king--married one of the daughters of Sanballat. And Sanballat was really an enemy of Israel. And then one of these Jews went and married the daughter of Sanballat and to add insult to injury, he rejected Jerusalem as the center of worship and built a new place on Mount Gerizim up in Samaria. Well, so that just cut the cord completely. And so, from then on the Jews and the Samaritans just did not have any dealings.

But I want to show you a fascinating implication in the word "dealings." Now notice it at the end of verse 9, "They have no dealings with the Samaritans." The Greek word sunchraomai...sunchraomai, verb form, here's what it means literally, listen to this: to use vessels together. You say, "So what does that mean?" It means this, do you know what really shook her up? She couldn't believe that a Jew would want to drink out of her glass. That's what really got her. Jews...and the rabbis had stated in Pharisaic law that Jews and Samaritans were not allowed to use the same drinking vessel. She says, "You mean You're going to drink out of my pitcher? You're a Jew." See. This is Jesus the barrier breaker, isn't it? Shatters every barrier. Such love...such love. So, she doesn't understand why He would even ask her this.

Then in verse 10 He says this, and she's applying, you know...she's implying, "I can't let you drink out of this, this is abnormal." Verse 10, "Jesus answered and said unto her..." Here comes one of those, what the Hebrews called a mashal(?) a veiled saying. Here comes, "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God," what is the gift of God? John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave...what?...His only begotten Son." "If you knew the Son of God and who it is that says to you, Give Me a drink...watch this one...you would have asked of Him and He would have given you living water." Beautiful approach. He turns that question right...starts out, He's thirsty and she's got the source, right? All of a sudden, she's thirsty and He's the source. The fountain comes asking for a drink and then declares that she needs a drink of His fountain.

You see, that's a...He starts with that physical thirst, turns it around to a spiritual need and says, "I've got the supply." That's a veiled statement. A beautiful...that's similar to what Jesus said to

Nicodemus, "You must be born again," see. And she may have thought there was some spiritual implications there but she was looking at it purely physically. He says, "If you know who I was, if you know this was the Messiah, the Son of God talking to you, you would have asked Me for living water." And the Old Testament promised living water. We read it this morning, Isaiah 55:1.

But what did she understand? Well, the word for living is the word for springing or running water. And you know, this is so beautiful because she thought..."Oh, You mean You know where there's a secret brook that I don't know about? You know where there's a spring that I don't know about?" Verse 11, look at it, "The woman says unto Him, Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with the well's deep, from where then hast Thou got living water?" You don't have a bucket, that well was about a hundred and five feet deep and that was a spring well, there was a spring at the bottom. The water by the time it had sat on the top for awhile would be a little bit stagnant and Jesus was saying this stagnant unmovable water, listen, I know where you can get running spring bubbling water. She says, "Well, how can You get it, You don't even have a bucket and the well's very deep."

And then she says this in verse 12, she says, Boy, You must be something, think you can do something Jacob couldn't even do..."Are You greater than our father Jacob who gavest the well and drank from it himself and his sons and cattle." Listen, if you've got some secret way to get out spring water, then you must know something Jacob doesn't...didn't know and listen, Jacob was no slouch. Do you know something Jacob didn't know? Are you something greater than Jacob? Slightly...

She's still a little confused. Now maybe there's some spiritual thought coming in, we don't know when she began to think spiritually. That's why I say, we don't know their thoughts, see, we only know the dialogue. But she's perhaps wondering: is He one up on Jacob? Does He know something?

And then in verse 13, "Jesus answered and said unto her, (here's something else about My kind of water) Whosoever drinks of this water shall thirst again in the well, but whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst, but the water that I give him shall be in him. Oh, in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Now she knows, she's got to know something's up, something's different. But she's still confused. But Jesus says, listen, "What H₂O does for your parched dry mouth, My water will do for your parched dry soul." Kind of a nice analogy, isn't it? There's no more dire craving than thirst...none. And Jesus says, "And what water does to a parched thirst, My living water will do to a parched soul and it will spring into everlasting life."

She says, "That sounds like a winner to me." Verse 15, "The woman saith unto Him, Sir, give me this water." And then she adds, "That I thirst not, neither come here to draw." See, she doesn't get the...she says, "Listen, if You've got some kind of water like that, there's no sense in me coming out here half a mile every day." I'm sure she didn't really know all the implications but she's got to be thinking something's behind this, but she just doesn't know what it is.

But here's a beautiful truth, folks. At this point, Jesus doesn't say, "Okay, here it is," and just zap her with eternal life, which He could because in your conversion that's what he did to you, He just granted you eternal life just like that. He just recreated you, just like that, by His grace. She said, "Oh, give me this water." He could have said, "Oh, another convert, here it is." But He didn't do that, you know why? Cheap conversion...cheap. So easy to get by with a cheap presentation of the gospel. Say, man, how would you like the abundant life? Oh, I'd like it. There it is...see. How would you like to...you've tried a lot of highs, you want to really get high, get high with Jesus. Yeah, man, sounds groovy, hmh, see. Cheap conversion...something missing in that...something missing.

Conversion is not simply a recognition of a need, it's much more than that. It starts there, it doesn't end there. Jesus didn't let it happen. No cheap conversion here. You see, she hadn't recognized two things that have to be recognized before you can ever come to God. Do you know what they are? A sense of sin and who Christ is. The need is not enough. People all over this world know they have a need, that doesn't...that's no answer. You've got to be willing to forsake your sin and turn to Jesus Christ the Son of God. And she hadn't even found out who He was yet. Nor had she faced her sin, but she's about to. So, Jesus doesn't buy the cheap conversion...doesn't say, "Oh, you'd like to have what I have to offer, there you go," see. Oh no.

You know, so many people think of conversion like that. You know, they think: I want, I want, I want...that's what conversion is...I want this and I want that and I want this and I want that. That's not it. You know what it is? It's "I repent...I sorrow...I am undone...I hate my sin...I sacrifice...I give myself to Christ," that's what it is. It's not I want, I want, I want, I want. It's I give, I yield, I trust, I repent. It's a different thing. No cheap conversion here.

Now, notice the third point. We've seen the circumstances, the contact, watch the conviction Jesus goes right to the heart of the issue, sin. And as long as she's not going to bring it up, He's going to make the opportunity. Verse 16, and verses 16 to 19 are the conviction. Verse 16, "Jesus said unto her, Go call thy husband and come here."

Oh, that's a loaded one. "And the woman answers and says, I have no husband," see. "And then Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said I have no husband, for thou hast had five husbands and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband. That saidst thou truly."

Oh, man, I imagine she just - Ah! You're right, He says. You don't have a husband. You've had five, you're living with one who's not. And I love that King James translation of verse 19, "Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet." I hope so. I mean, He has just completely read her life history...I don't know how it was really said in that day, or what the inflection in her voice was, but I imagine it was stark terror and shock. How do you know this? But notice what Jesus does? He's trying to get her to confess her sin, in a sense. He's giving her the opportunity. He says, "Go get your husband." Now

she could have said, "Oh, my life has been so fouled up and I've had five husbands." She doesn't say this. She says, "I have no husband." Well, as long as you're not going to confess your own sin, I'm going to really make it easy for you by telling you what it is.

And you know, in verse 19 she did confess, didn't she? When she said, "Sir, I perceive that You're a prophet," she was, in effect, saying You're right...You're right, that's me, that's my life. Listen, you cannot come to drink of the water of life until you face sin. That's just the way it is...another step in her growing faith. She sees her need for living water, but one step further she sees that there's sin keeping her from that living water. You've always got to take a person to the point of their sin.

There's only one step left, and that's the fourth thing in our little outline here...the circumstances, the contact, the conviction's taken place, now one thing she needs to know and that is this, the Christ. She just needs to know who He is and put her faith in Him...verses 20 to 26.

Now, verse 20 says, "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Now you read that and say, "Well, right...what does this have to do with anything? How did that get in this conversation? What is she saying there? I perceive that Thou art a prophet...then boom, out of the blue, our fathers worshiped in this mountain and you're worshipping in...what is this?"

You see, again, this is where we have to kind of play with the motives of people. But let me give you what I think this is meaning. Here's what's going on in her mind, as far as I can see it. She's saying to herself, "Oh, I'd like that living water." And then He hits her with her sin. "Oh, I have sin in my life." Now by this time she senses a spiritual need, she senses that Jesus is talking about spiritual things. And she's been convicted of her sin and she sensed her need. So she says to herself, "I've got to make it right. Now, in order to make it right, I've got to go worship God, now where should I do it? Should I go up to Gerizim or down there? Now I better ask Him because He's gotten me this far." So, she says, listen, where do you do these things? Do we worship here in Mount Gerizim or do I have to go to Jerusalem to make this right? See. That's the question on her mind, as far as I can see it. She's been brought to conviction, she's been brought to see her need. And she's saying, "Now I want to go straighten it out, now our fathers worshiped in this mountain and you say it's in Jerusalem, now where do I go to straighten it out?"

Isn't that just like the sinner? The guy who comes to the end of his rope and says: Oh, my life is crumbling, I better go to church. I need religion.

You know what? You don't need religion. You don't need religion. Religion is not the answer. So many people, they come to the end of something and they run to religion. And you know what? Religion turns them off and then they walk away and throw away the baby with the dirty bath water and they never want to see the church again and then they miss the real truth. That's why Satan

works so hard through religion...it's the greatest smoke's screen he's got.

I'll never forget a jazz pianist one time, professional pianist. I was preaching at a Hollywood Christian group with actors and actresses and movie people and he happened to be there. And I got done presenting the gospel and he came and he had tears in his eyes. He said, "Oh," he says, "I want forgiveness of sin, I want to know Christ." And he was broken, just broken. And I said, "Well, let's go pray." We got on our knees and he opened his heart to Christ and oh, it was thrilling. And he said to me...he said, "This is...this is...this is relief, this is great." He said, "I never...I never believed it could be this wonderful." And I said, "Well, what broke you, what brought you to this point?" This is what he said, he said, "This weekend I really did some gross, gross things, horrible sinful things and they just burned on my mind. So I went to my priest," he said, "I was Catholic, I went to my priest," and he said, "I told him in that little box all my sins, confession. And the priest said, 'Well, you take your beads and you go over there and you say like 30 Hail Mary's,' or whatever it is, I don't know. So I took my beads," he said, "and I went over to that altar and I said three Hail Mary's and I stood up, picked up those beads, threw them the length of the church, shouted at the top of my voice and walked out and said who am I kidding? I don't need ritual," he says, "I need forgiveness." And he said, "I just...I had to come somewhere where I could hear if Jesus could forgive me."

You see, when you come to the sense of your sin, you don't need ritual, folks. You don't need religion, you need Jesus Christ. Religion's a joke...and not a very funny one. And so, the unsaved person so often runs to religion. Jesus replies in a classic sense, "Listen, lady," look at it in verse 21, "Woman, believe Me, the hour comes when you're not going to worship in this mountain or at Jerusalem." What are you saying? I'm saying there's coming a day when the church is going to be instituted and you're going to worship in spirit and in truth. It's a prophecy. "Woman, believe Me, the hour comes when you shall neither in this mountain nor at Jerusalem worship the Father." Incidentally, verse 23, this is great, Incidentally, Jesus says, by the way, in the meantime, the Jews are right and you are wrong. "You worship you know not what." See, the Samaritans only accepted the Pentateuch and threw the rest of the Old Testament out. So He says, "You don't know what you're worshipping, we know what we worship for salvation came through the Jews." It doesn't mean only Jews are saved, it means salvation came through the Jews.

So, incidentally, in answer to your question, yes, the Jews are right at this time, but the time's coming, listen, the time's coming when it's not going to be there or Jerusalem. Did that time come? Sure did...sure did. Look at verse 23, this is beautiful. "But the hour cometh," and watch this next statement, "and...what?...now is." What do You mean "now is"? I'm here, I'm here, I'm here...He says. "The hour comes and now is when the true worshiper shall worship the Father in spirit, in the inner man, in the inside and in truth for the Father seeks such to worship Him. God is a spirit...classic statement on the nature of God...and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

So He says to this lady, "Don't worry about where, woman, don't worry about where. The time is coming when all that matters is the inside of your heart." What's He saying? He is saying prophetically that the old dispensation will pass, the one that was attended with places and seasons and observances and feasts and temples and sacrifices and the whole works is going to be gone and it doesn't matter where or when, it only matters in your life, in your inner man that you worship God. The veil, you remember when Christ died, what happened to it? The veil was ripped from the top to the bottom and God was, in effect, saying, "That's the end of the whole sacramental system. That's it. That's all."

And the nature of the church is: how do we worship God? Is this the temple of God? No, it is not the temple of God. We often call it the house of the Lord, in the truest sense it's not, you are and so am I. And we worship God in the inner man. What a devastating answer.

But bless her heart, she's still confused. And so she says, and I love this, she says in verse 25, "Well, I know that Messiah cometh who is called Christ, when He is come He will tell us all things." Did you get what she's saying here? She's saying, well, this is very confusing, sir, but I know one thing, one of these days Messiah is going to show up and He'll clear it all up, see. She says, "I'm not really with You all the way...I don't quite understand this, but I...one of these days Messiah's coming..." See, even the Samaritans had Messianic hope. One day Messiah is coming, He'll clear it all up.

And watch this ultimate shock, are you ready for this in verse 26? Can you imagine what must have happened to her when He said this? "He looked at her and said, I that speak unto thee am He." Whew...You're Messiah? She says when Messiah gets here, He'll clear it all up. He says that's right, you're looking at Messiah. OH what a dynamic confrontation. Jesus took her from a thirst for water on His part to everlasting life on her part.

Did she ever receive Christ? It doesn't tell us specifically. I think she did. Verse 29, "Come see a man who told me all things that ever I did, is not this the Christ?" And then, her testimony in town sent the whole village out there. I think she came to Christ. I'm sure she did. Listen, when God seeks one out like this, divinely appointed timing on the part of Jesus Christ, when He seeks one out like this, He saves that one. For God's seeking is God's saving. Jesus brought her along to full revelation, full salvation.

Oh, there's so many truths here. In closing, let me just say this. Every man, every woman, every person must recognize, first of all, his need for living water, for a spiritual resource and rebirth. At the same time, every man must see the sin of his life and face it for what it is. And thirdly, every man must behold Christ the Son of God, the forgiver of sin, the giver of living water.

This is the Messiah. John says it plain. He is. This is the Christ of God. And do you believe? Have you received Him as your Christ, as your Savior?

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