

## Week 12

### **John 4 LIVING WATER**

John 4 begins with a commentary by John the author, about Jesus activities at the time he was writing.

John corrects the “local gossip” which the Pharisees had heard about Jesus baptizing. Jesus was not baptizing, He was preaching, His disciples were baptizing. This time period was the end of Jesus visit to Jerusalem where He had the conversation with Nicodemus. Jesus then began travelling back to Galilee and John said “He must go through Samaria”. At the time of Jesus the land of Israel was divided into 3 parts; Galilee in the north, Judea in the south and in between was Samaria. Because John is always careful to document time, we know that Jesus must have stayed in Judea for about 6 months, because of the later time reference to the harvest.

Samaria was the shortest route but Jews generally avoided it because of their racial prejudice against the Samaritan people. They were the part of the kingdom of Israel, which had split from Judah, and led by Jeroboam had set up a new religion away from Jerusalem and involved themselves in idol worship and occult practices. This occurred in 965 BC. Later, after repeated warnings by God through His prophets, Israel was attacked by Assyria and its people carried away to captivity, scattered all over the world. These people then intermarried with pagans, something God had explicitly forbidden and so their descendants, who lived in Samaria, were of mixed races

V5-6 So He came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph and Jacob’s well was there. So Jesus, being wearied from His journey was sitting by the well. It was about the sixth hour. This had been two days of walking and He was weary, showing His humanity. The time was about noon.

V7 There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink”. This woman had a bad reputation, as we will soon see, so it is reasonable that she came alone to the well to avoid contact with other people who did not approve of her. Women

normally came to the well in the evening when it was cool and they came in groups, a time of socializing.

Jesus was thirsty; another sign of His humanity and it also provided a way of interaction with this woman.

V9 Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?” For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

Why this response? Jewish men did not speak to women, especially those who were alone. Jews did not speak to Samaritans, this whole encounter was unexpected.

V10 Jesus said to her “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is Who says to you, ‘give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.” Notice the extraordinary offer Jesus makes to her.

V11 She said to Him, “Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do you get that “living water”? This woman did not know about the gift of God and she did not know the giver of the gift of life. She did know that He had no container with which to give her the gift of “living water”.

What did Jesus mean by “living water”? There are many Old Testament references to living water as a symbol, of eternal life.

Jeremiah 17:13 O LORD, the hope of Israel, all who forsake you will be put to shame. Those who turn away from you will be written in the dust because they have forsaken the LORD, the spring of living water. As she tried to understand what He was saying and Who He was claiming to be she asked;

V12 You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?”

V13 Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again;

V14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life”.

People always get thirsty again; more water is needed every day. Physically we need a great deal of water every day to survive. But also we need the living water Jesus can give us to survive spiritually. The wells of this world do not satisfy; you have to return again and again.

In Jeremiah 2:13 we read; “My people have committed two sins; they have forsaken Me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns which cannot hold water.

A cistern is a water tank which can be under ground or above; they catch rainwater and run off. Sometimes they are located near roof gutters to catch that water. Cisterns hold dead water, standing water, not the living water running fresh from a spring. Have you ever seen a cistern or any standing water that tempted you to take a drink? What about the bugs and the algae? This is essentially dead water.

By contrast “living water” is that which the Messiah brings, His truth, His love, satisfaction now and ultimately eternal life; the only satisfaction of the deepest desires of the soul. And He offers it to you and to me and to this immoral woman. The water Jesus gives will quench spiritual thirst completely and eternally.

V15 The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw”. She took this literally and was eager to receive this gift after all it is hard work to carry heavy jars of water home every day.

Clearly she was confusing spiritual water with physical water and many Christians do the same thing. The wonderful idea here is that Jesus asked her for a small thing, a drink of water, but it was an invitation from Him for a wonderful gift. It is true that He always gives more than we can ask or think. Just think about this, her response in giving Him a drink of water resulted in her receiving the gift of eternal life. I am just wondering how many works you have done to try to earn eternal life when there it is, a free gift.

V16 Jesus said to her “go call your husband and come here”.

V17 The woman said “I have no husband”. Jesus said to her, “You have correctly said “I have no husband’; v18 for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly.”

Now Jesus shifted the conversation to her lifestyle and He gave her the first drink of living water. Of course, He knew about her adultery and sinful lifestyle. Five husbands, now living with a man to whom she is not married, that’s a bad record. Notice, He is not judging or condemning her, just stating facts. He wants her to see her sin and her need for forgiveness and then offer her the living water of forgiveness and after that salvation. A priceless gift. So it is with the ways of the world, the “new” morality”, there is no satisfaction only the bugs of sin and the algae of bad choices, and their consequences. Just as drinking bad water can have bad even fatal penalties, so drinking from our own cistern or going our own way without God, will result in terrible consequences. In addition, the water the world offers creates more thirst, not satisfaction. Just look at the life of this woman and the consequences of the dead water of immorality she was drinking, no solid marriage, five husbands, living in sin. Just think for a minute about all the consequences of her choices; what about her, her family, her other husbands, her children; no doubt there were some children. Perhaps she had had abortions, there are always consequences from that choice. She maybe felt guilty, cheap and bad about herself, no wonder she came to the well alone. Jesus affirmed her truthfulness, notice how loving and patient He is with her. He was much sharper with Nicodemus, the self-righteous one.

We should take a lesson here from Jesus as He deals with this thoughtless and spiritually ignorant woman. He went to her, He was courteous, He was merciful, and He revealed her need to her, just as He did with Nicodemus.

V19 The woman said to Him, “Sir I perceive that You are a prophet.

V20 Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people (Jews) say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

Perhaps she was frightened at having her sinful lifestyle so exposed; perhaps it's the first time she has thought about what she was doing. She was uncomfortable; she changed the subject and started talking about religion, its outward forms and traditions.

V21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father".

V22 "You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews". Jesus responds with more living water; Jesus here condemns the false religion of the Samaritans who had no scriptural authority, no revelation from God for their ceremonies and traditions. Their religion was purely man's invention. Is there scriptural authority for your beliefs?

At least the Jews knew who they were worshiping and had divine revelation and scriptural authority for all they did in their religion.

The Jews are descendants of David, the tribe of Judah, from whom the Messiah would come. The Samaritans were mainly from the tribe of Ephraim, no promises were made concerning him, but also they were of such mixed origin, nothing could be proven there.

V23 The hour comes and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers". V24 "God is Spirit and those who worship must worship in spirit and in truth." Here Jesus revealed to her that the heart is the principle thing in all our approaches to God. So true worship depends not on where it happens but the state of the worshipers' heart. More living water from the Savior. Friend, this is the crux of the matter, where is your heart when you worship? Are you worshipping in spirit and in truth?

V 25-26 The woman said "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called the Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us".

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promises were made concerning him, but also they were of such mixed origin, nothing could be proven there.

Now the woman is brought to a state of mind in which she is ready to see Jesus and Jesus will reveal Himself to the seeker. Did you ever hear anyone say “Jesus never said He was the Messiah”-apparently they had not read John 4:26.

Jesus said to her “I who speak to you am He”.

(Messiah). The woman was told of living water and she wanted it. What was the living water the woman received?

1. Her sinful life was exposed and she could not deny it
2. She was told of the uselessness of formal religion and the necessity of “heart worship” of God. Think about how gracious Jesus was to her, no one could be much worse, Jesus did not despise her, condemn her, He made it possible for her to be converted.
3. No one is beyond help, Jesus can help you, He is willing to forgive. If you will admit your need, He will help you, He is able.

V27-30 At this point His disciples came back and we are told the miraculous story of the Samaritan woman’s conversion, her testimony to all who would listen.

Did you notice she completely forgot the water pot and left it behind, she was so excited and eager to share with others about her new life in Christ. What did she say? “Come and see”.

Are you excited about what Jesus has done for you? Have you told anyone about Him and His power to change lives? Do you ever talk with anyone about God, Jesus, eternity, heaven and hell?

V30 They (the Samaritans) were coming out of the city, and were coming to Him.

Look at the effect of her sharing; they all came out of the city because of one woman. They were coming to Jesus, because of her testimony.

If Jesus has changed your life, I encourage you to tell recalling His final command; go into all the world teaching repentance and forgiveness of sins.