



Lesson 10 February 6th, 2021

Called to Evangelize

Study Scripture – John 4:25-42

Background Scripture – John 4:1-42

Key Verse:

From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all the things that I have done".

John 4:39

INTRODUCTION

In our Lesson Study we will look at a person and a people with false hopes.

It is very important for us to consider the false hopes that we have. Then when we are awakened from these false hopes, we may be in a position to understand the needs and the spiritual thirst of other persons and go to the source where those needs, and those false hopes are met and removed.

Our Study therefore looks at a woman who became a life giver not by having children but by evangelism. When awakened she testified to her village about what the Lord Jesus Christ had done for her and in so doing had a powerful positive and life changing influence on the people in the village.

Our Study points us to the one who understood women. He was prepared to leap over the areas that separated Him from this woman and rejected the idea that women are totally unable to understand complicated subjects like theology and religion.

But note this that Jesus applied His often taught principle, "I did not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners".

There is also a principle in the physical world which also applies to the spiritual world. The physician often has to hurt us in order so that he can heal us, and so it is generally always necessary for the Lord to make us feel pain in order to heal us. The Lord Jesus Christ therefore has first to bring us to an understanding of who we really are so that the world and we can respond to His offer of mercy and grace.

Our Study really will show that the world including us do not understand ourselves and do not understand the peril we are in and that our eternal destiny is at stake.

Like the woman who is at the center of our Study our focus is on physical food and drink and the needs and things that we think that we need and so the focus is generally never really on spiritual things and spiritual needs.

Jesus Christ must point to and create an awareness of these needs in order to save us. In life, in order to cure our sicknesses generally that involves physical pain, and that applies also in the spiritual world. It is necessary for the Lord to hurt us in order to heal us, says one writer.

It should be pointed out that the woman at the center of the Study understood the problem of thirst in her life and so she came often to draw physical water from the well. But as one writer stated:

“In her conversation with Jesus she was able to understand that her physical thirst was figurative of a deeper internal problem. She had a spiritual thirst, a hunger for wellness in her soul that no one had helped her see before. Her problem was in her belief that if she found the “right” man in which to commit herself, he would take away her sense of inadequacy. Jesus’ diagnosis, however, was that she needed God, that her inner thirst was a problem that only he could abate. He had the information and understood the requirements to fulfill her desires, giving her a glorious testimony for others as well”.

So, what do you know about the Lord Jesus Christ?

Do you believe that He is without prejudice and that there is no class of people that are beyond His concern?

Do you feel that you are not qualified to associate with Jesus or with other Christians because of your past pain or failure, not feeling welcome because others considered themselves to be too godly and upright to associate with you?

Do you not understand that Jesus can peel away the things that you have created to cover over the problems in your heart and then make an offer to you that will deal with the heart of your problem?

It is hoped that after this Study we will discover what God has in His heart for our world, regarding the right relationship between Him and mankind, and between men.

The world was and is full of serious needs, and God, because of His great love for the entire world, sent Jesus to fulfill His promise of meeting the spiritual needs of all the people on the earth. When He does that with you will respond for this act of God means you are called to evangelize.

The world was in a desperate situation and the people had no ability to help themselves. Sin had proven to be so destructive, that it dominated men and brought them under the just wrath of God against sin.

It should be noted carefully that the story presented in this Study Scripture deals with several issues, among which are that of race prejudice and race hatred.



It also helps us to understand the bigotry and the prejudices in our own society. We cannot avoid the existence of bigotry and prejudice in Christian circles, and when we look carefully at what is around us and what we give tacit acceptance to we should be ashamed. We will see how we ought to deal with those we consider to be moral outcasts and instructs us in the right way to approach and to deal with such a person.

We often because of our ignorance of the teaching of Scripture do not consider the deepest needs of the persons around us and what is really going on in their minds. As a result, our presentations to them miss the mark, and even when they are attracted to what we are saying and might even join into association with us, the result is a skin-deep relationship which leaves them in bondage to their old unacceptable habits and way of life. They are not truly and deeply changed by our message, and so the old habits of the “flesh”, and huge swaths of the worldly way of life remain and corrupt both us and them.

But note the difference in how Jesus behaved. Jesus was moved with compassion when He saw the distress and hurts that afflicted the people individually as well as corporately. When He looked at them, He was not overwhelmed by the magnitude of their needs, becoming dispirited and saying that the problem was too great and that nothing could be done.

Rather, He saw a bountiful harvest of souls for the kingdom. He knew that the Gospel of the kingdom would bring hope to the distressed people, for that would free them from the bondage of sin. He knew that He was the Messiah and that His mission to save men would be successful.

You also have a task. You too will be successful. This is so because you are called.

In this story Jesus shows that He knew the deepest needs of a woman of Samaria that He encountered at the well that was off the beaten track and to which she came at noon, the wrong time for then it was hot and not frequented by other women. To be helped this woman needed to understand the nature of her thirst.

Consider carefully who this person was and what she was about. We know she had marriage issues which indicated a deep need. She had been married five times and was now with a sixth man. Though we do not know how and why she got married and how they ended, we can imagine that she was extremely disappointed, suffered a lot of hurt, loss, and condemnation, both from herself and from those in her village. We therefore are looking at a very needy and a very thirsty woman.

We will learn several things today.

First, Jesus knew how to avoid confrontation and He would not do anything before the time was right.

Second, when Jesus intended to go anywhere, He would choose the most direct route, irrespective of whether prejudice or custom decreed otherwise.

Third, Jesus often chose the spots that were very important from which to deliver His witness. In this case He stopped at the historic spot of Jacob’s well, at the foot of Mount Gerizim; the



place where God had commanded Israel to annually read the Law of Moses, the blessings of the law. This spot would also be close to Mount Ebal, where the curses of the Law on the disobedient were to be read.

Fourth, it was here that Jesus crossed the barriers of racial prejudice and came into close contact and interaction with a despised woman from a hated race that was rejected by Jews. Fifth, he did not choose any ordinary woman but obviously one that was a moral outcast and He showed us how we should approach such a person.

This encounter led the woman to be a giver of life by her evangelism, very successfully and boldly testifying to her village that Christ had done great things for her.

Sixth, Jesus settled the question as to the proper place and manner of worship. He clearly pointed to the source of instruction about what God wants from men regarding worship and denied that God had given contrary instruction to anyone else.

Seventh, we learn that Jesus sometimes spoke figuratively and often times when He did, men took him literally. The Jews made this mistake in the incident about the temple in Jerusalem. Nicodemus also misread similarly. Now this woman will misunderstand what Jesus is telling her and will be puzzled by His words.

Obviously, people in the 'flesh' have great difficulty understanding spiritual things. Thankfully as we shall see, all is not lost, for the Spirit of God will call and direct His people whom He has chosen.

Eight, it is undeniable that all men have a spiritual thirst, a deep internal problem, a hunger for wellness in the soul. They will do all kinds and various things to meet this hunger, but all such means will prove inadequate and problematic.

Ninth, the diagnosis of Jesus is that both men and woman need God and that only He can quench this inner thirst.

Tenth, Jesus is always accessible, and everyone can feel free to approach Him closely and hear what He has to say.

Eleventh, Jesus Christ is without prejudice toward anyone. There is no category of people or any individual person with which He is not concerned. Jesus is not prejudiced. Any follower of Christ therefore who is prejudiced against others on any basis is not following Jesus Christ. Whether it is skin color, sex, nationality, class, or on any basis contrived by men, this is contrary to Scripture,

There are undoubtedly many other lessons, which will emerge as we read through the Lesson Study but let us simply remember that Jesus is the only one with Living Water and that all men need this Living Water.

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS



Jesus' ministry had attracted many people and many repented of their sins and were baptized. Jesus' ministry was now attracting more attention than that of John the Baptist and many of John's disciples became followers of Jesus. John (author) tells us that Jesus Himself did not perform the actual rite of baptism but entrusted that task to His twelve disciples. One can imply from this that even Judas might have baptized some people.

This increasing popularity of Jesus attracted the attention of the Pharisees, who were apparently not only antagonized by John the Baptist and his popularity but were now increasingly chagrined by the response of the people to Jesus. They would soon begin to persecute Jesus, even seeking to kill Him. (see Chapter 5.)

Jesus reacted to avoid confrontation and left Judea and headed for Galilee.

The most direct route from Judea to Galilee was about seventy miles or two and one-half days walk but that route would take Him through Samaria or what we know today as the West Bank. Even if there was an emergency Jews would never go through the territory of the Samaritans.

The Jews considered the Samaritans to be people who had a mongrel faith, who were descended from poor Jews who had intermarried with the pagan tribes during the time of the Exile. They were considered to be part Jewish and part Assyrians and as such a kind of subspecies. Since they were part Jewish, with claims to access to God, they were hated even more than Gentiles.

These people therefore were always rivals to the observant Israelites. They built a temple on Mount Gerizim, to rival the one in Jerusalem and refused to accept much of Jewish tradition or practice. They left out much of the traditional Jewish Scripture and mixed what they retained with ideas and practices from other religions.

'Real' Jews wanted nothing to do with Samaritans. They would never associate with them, participate in table fellowship with them, would not speak to them, would not intermarry with them, would not accept them in any synagogue or in the Temple and would follow strict laws which forbade them to eat or drink anything from implements used by a Samaritan.

The feeling was mutual. Samaritans would not be expected to assist or help Jews in distress and Jews would not help a Samaritan in distress.

Note that this intense, strong and bitter prejudice against the Samaritans came because Jews felt rightly that they had a pure faith, while the Samaritans had a mongrel faith. The Samaritans were clearly in the wrong, for they had corrupted many truths of God.

Note also that they still held on to many truths, believing in God and looking forward to the coming of the Messiah who would teach them all things.

The problem of the Jews was that they had walked away from witnessing to the Samaritans, considering that their religious errors had irretrievably placed the Samaritans totally beneath them. They considered them to be lost, foolish, moral outcasts, without hope. The Samaritans had problems that could not be cured. Jews therefore would keep away from them and avoid any possibility of contamination.

Jews felt so deeply about the Samaritans, that they would always travel to Galilee via a very dangerous, vulnerable to robbers, hot desert road that went through Jericho and up the Jordan



Valley. This route was twice as long as the direct route and the terrain more difficult, the temperature was much hotter and the road much more uncomfortable. Still Jews chose that route.

Jesus however ignored the narrow-minded prejudices of his society and went straight through Samaria.

People needed Him and He had to carry the message of the gospel there also. There was darkness in Samaria, and He had to bring the light to them. Let us remember that Jesus did nothing by chance but always knew what He intended to do.

Jesus and the disciples traveled through the hot sunlight and it was about six o'clock in the evening (some believe this encounter was at noon) when He reached the city of Sychar, near where Joseph's tomb was located. There Jacob had dug a well to water his flocks. Jesus sat down at that very ancient well.

Note that Jesus was tired, and He sat down. Jesus had walked a long way in the hot sun and so, like every other human being He would be tired.

John thereby stresses Jesus' humanity. Our Saviour was made like us, experienced everything that we experienced, yet without sin, understands us completely and can sympathize with us and therefore He fully qualifies as our Redeemer.

Obviously, this was an historic place of meeting.

In the distance to the east, was Mount Gerizim, where the blessings of the Law were to be read annually as commanded by God. In full view to the West was Mount Ebal, where the curses of the Law were read to those who were disobedient. Here Jesus sat down and rested, waiting for the special woman that He would save from sin and transform her into a great evangelist to her people.

When it refers to the woman coming out of Samaria, it means that the woman lived in the country of Samaria and not in the city of that name. The path that Jesus follows when He goes anywhere is deliberate, in the sense that He is seeking to do the will of His Father and so His movements have purpose.

The woman coming out to where Jesus was would have been led by the Holy Spirit, for the express purpose of bringing her and those around her who would listen, to accept the words of salvation, recognizing Jesus as the Messiah they had long expected.

Why was this particular woman chosen? She was known as a lewd woman with little morals and was infamous to the Samaritans around her area. This is one individual that might not be considered worthy to be saved; of course no one is worthy of being saved! God chooses whom He will save, and His decision is not based on race, creed, status or any other variable man might find favorable.

When we look at the story, we realize that though it was necessary for the woman to draw water for her family, it was peculiar that she came to this particular well all by herself, at this time of evening (or noon). Note that the sixth hour by Jewish reckoning was noon, but according to Roman time which John most often used it would be about six o'clock in the



evening. In that region and culture, women in the community would either go to get water early in the morning or later in evening and they would always travel in groups. This woman was alone.

In addition, we know there were wells closer to the village than Jacob's well and she would have to have traveled some distance to get this water. She was obviously a loner, an outcast in the community, who would draw water when no one was there to harass her. Jesus would have seen that her history was sorrowful. This was a sinner whom Jesus had come to call to repentance.

The purpose of the woman coming to the really deep well was to take water from the well to use in drinking, cooking and other household purposes. On this occasion however, upon arrival at the well, a new significance would be attached to the water in the well.

At the well, Jesus made a request of the woman. Here we see that Jesus suffered from thirst and exhaustion as any man would under the circumstances. He could have easily requested a horse or some other mode of transport to get Himself from place to place but He humbled Himself so that He might set the example for those that would follow.

It is important to realize that Jesus is both God and man. This is shown briefly in this passage. The other aspect of this request from Jesus is that it allows Jesus to open some dialogue with the woman.

Jesus had traveled a lot with His disciples. His movements were mostly in the daytime and thus under the heat of the desert sun. His disciples would see to His needs in terms of food and water and they were off into the next town to buy food.

Jesus wearied, took the time to rest but even then, He does not waste time but uses the time to witness. Not only did Jesus use this opportunity to do the work of His Father, that is to witness but also, He was conversing with a Samaritan, literally an adversary of the Jews.

Now Jews and Samaritans really didn't socialize or maintain any great commerce together. However, when need arose, there were times that they bought and sold food to one another, that part was lawful. Christ, and His disciples did not really heed the traditions that most held in that respect.

Christ here showed that He had no prejudice but quietly humbled Himself, making request to an individual other Jews might not have even spoken to. He was perfectly able to get the water Himself, but He made the request for assistance.

Note however that Jesus did not feel restrained by the many barriers that had been erected to separate Him from this woman.

First, He was a Jew and should not be speaking to Samaritans.

Second, He was a Rabbi, and a Rabbi was expected to follow the strict rule of never talking to a woman in public.

Third, since women were not expected to understand complicated subjects like theology and religion, He should not even want to discuss those kinds of matters with her.



Fourth, if He suspected she was an immoral woman, He should never want to associate with her and run the risk of being made unclean.

Fifth, a man could place himself in a compromising situation and as a Jew, speaking to a Samaritan woman, He could be accused of all kinds of things.

The woman did not deny Jesus but even before she began to act, she expressed great surprise at Jesus' behavior and she plainly asked Him why He was asking her for water. After all, Jews and Samaritans are not on the best of terms, usually feuding with one another at every opportunity.

The woman clearly recognized Jesus as being a Jew, most likely by His attire and dialect. For Jesus to ask what He did, she was most likely shocked to the point of absolute disbelief, perhaps even thought He was joking.

At this time, under Roman occupation, the Jewish nation was at its lowest point and was not looked upon with any great favor, by the Romans or anyone else and thus were mostly treated with disdain by others. Still, in their minds the Jewish people always held themselves up to a high degree and felt the other nations were just heathens, inferior people. Jews regarded the Samaritans as worse than Gentiles, regarding them as reprobates and heretical.

The Samaritans were most likely delighted with the state in which the Jewish nation had fallen. So, for Jesus, a Jew to ask anything of a Samaritan was quite a shock. The woman could not believe that any Jew could humble themselves that much, to make such a request. She believed Jesus to be like other Jews.

She would not have understood that Jesus was anything but typical, in respects to His behavior to others. As Jesus exemplified the best characteristics that a human being can have, so must we also exemplify the same characteristics.

By asking a Samaritan woman for a drink Jesus indicated that He was an unusual man. He had placed Himself in her debt and had made Him accessible so that she would feel it was okay to approach Him, question Him and hear what He had to say. She is initially surprised, and she finds that He is open and available for conversation.

In response to the woman, Jesus doesn't even acknowledge this feud between Jew and Samaritan. This shows us that the best way to deal with certain prejudices or misconceptions is to ignore them altogether. Giving them attention usually tends to inflame the situation. He tells her that there is a gift from God that He has, and that if she had known with whom she was speaking, her entire demeanour would change. He is not just a weary and poor traveler before her.

Clearly, the prophecies about the Christ meant something to her but she did not recognize Jesus as Messiah at this stage. Jesus told her there is something of value spoken of by the Scriptures, and that God was prepared to offer this gift to her.



Jesus mentioned the Gift of God. It might be that if she had known more of Jewish prophecy or teaching, she might have taken another direction with Jesus. Still, even Jews did not recognize Jesus, so we cannot blame her too much for that.

Jesus indicated that this Gift of God was before her and there was an offer being made to her. All that she needed do was accept it. Jesus indicated just what could be done if she accepted what He was offering. Jesus was offering 'living water'. Living in and of itself implies some vital force or action but when applied to an inanimate object, clearly there is some significance to the offering and the power in what it could do in the life of someone.

The woman was obvious puzzled why this Jewish man would break His extremely strict taboo, of using a Samaritan's food implement. Now the man went even further; speaking enigmatically (mysteriously) but suggesting that He had much more to offer her than she had to offer Him; and that if she knew who He was, she would be asking Him for this unimaginable gift that He had to give away, instead of reacting in such a manner at a simple request.

Note that when Jesus spoke to her about "living water", He obviously wanted to be somewhat ambiguous, to draw something out of her.

The phrase 'living water' literally and simply meant 'running water'. Since they were at a well, it was logical for the woman to think that Jesus was saying that He had access to or control of 'running water', but this was clearly impossible, since the only water that they were near to was water in a well, which could not really be called a stream of running water.

Jesus clearly meant it in the spiritual sense, indicating that He could give life to her soul and meet all the needs that she had. Like the Jews at the first cleansing of the Temple in Jerusalem and Nicodemus at the midnight meeting, she took Jesus literally, though He was speaking figuratively.

It is hardly likely that she understood much about spiritual reality and was resisting the truth, but her puzzlement made her ask Jesus what He meant by 'running water' or 'living water'; for He had nothing to draw water with anyway. Her question pointed out that Jesus had nothing with which to draw water and the well was deep. Where then could He get this 'living water' or 'running water'?

She might have realized that something was unusual about Jesus, for her second question attacked that issue. Was He saying that He was somebody special and powerful, greater than Jacob the great founder of the Jewish faith, whom Samaritans claimed to be the founder of their faith also? After all, they had a foundation and believed in the five books of Moses.

Jesus could now engage her directly, strike at the heart of her problem and show her exactly what He was talking about. She had a big problem in her life, and she had obviously been searching for a solution to the problem.

Jesus was about to show her, that she had met the solution to the spiritual hunger in her life, shown by her many and continuing romantic interests, jumping from one man to the other, and being dissatisfied every time.



So, Jesus told her that He was not dealing with physical thirst and what seemed to be a discussion about water was not really about water at all. She had been drinking of the water in the well for years and had to keep coming back for more. He could give her 'living water', meaning that it would be always right at hand and available, so that she would always be quenching her thirst, meeting her needs, and would always be satisfied.

Her problem was not one of physical thirst, but a thirst of the spirit. One writer notes: "All her life, the woman had believed that the remedy for thirst was to go to the well. She knew that regardless of the amount of water she drank at any time, thirst would always return. Likewise, she believed the same to be true about the thirst inside her heart. Her need for well-being could not be satisfied by the men in her life. She would go to one husband and eventually discover him to be inadequate. The heartbreak remained. In the same way she went to the well every day, she went to the next man, hoping he would meet the need of her heart. Her spiritual thirst could not be quenched."

Note what Jesus was offering her. It was not to quench her thirst but to get rid of her thirst permanently, once and for all.

Now this is very relevant to many Christians, for they never seem to learn his truth. We never seem to realize that our inner thirst, the desires that make us restless and always wanting more, never being satisfied, CAN BE MET INSTANTLY.

Jesus means that the Spirit that He gives is a life-giving Spirit. When a person truly repents, confesses his or her sin and believes in Christ and drinks of that Spirit, the quality of life is totally changed. The Scriptures call this eternal life.

It is most important for us to understand that what Jesus is offering this woman and us, is much more than a future everlasting life.

Jesus is saying something most important happens when one drinks of the Spirit. The fountain of water is right there, beside us, in us, at all times. We need to constantly drink. One writer says:

"It means refreshing, invigorating, exciting life; life that has the qualities of love and joy and peace about it.

When you lack these qualities, if you have drunk of the water that Jesus gives you, you can immediately slake your thirst-- again and again and again. It is a beautiful picture: a well springing up to eternal life."

So, let us stop making excuses for our poor spiritual life and our inability to refresh ourselves and others.

The woman was still confused and still did not understand Jesus, but His offer was extremely attractive, so she asked for the water that He offered.

Her understanding of spiritual reality was still cloudy, that she was having difficulty climbing out of her darkness. She just did not want to admit the kind of need that she had but she wanted this "living water" and emphatically requested it. So, Jesus proceeded to deal with that situation.



He told her to go call her husband and return to Him. The woman admitted she had no husband. Jesus complimented her honesty but proceeded to rebuke her, for she had had five husbands and the man she was living with, was not even her husband.

Note the step to redemption. He took her to the place where she could repent and dealt with the thing that was a hindrance to her.

This woman had thought that romance would answer her problems. She constantly sought for it thinking it would solve the ache in her heart, but it did not meet her need and she finally gave up on the formalities and simply lived with a man. She was trapped and the degeneration continued steadily.

With this kind of person, who did not really understand the ways of God properly, Jesus knew that He had to be very gentle in leading her out of her problem that was destroying her and ruining her life. He was gentle but plain and led her to see what was wrong. After five husbands, she despaired of ever finding the right one and so she just lived with a man without any commitment.

Jesus understood her cravings. He diagnosed her problem. He made her see that her problem would only be helped and cured through the Spirit. As one writer puts it:

“Wholeness could only come from God”.

The woman’s answer showed that her understanding had jumped significantly. She now wanted to learn more. At this stage of enlightenment, gently led by Jesus, she was able to perceive that Jesus was really not an ordinary Jew and her tone and demeanour changed toward Him. Now she no longer looked at Him as just a Jew. Though He was a passing stranger and had no way of getting information about her private life, He told her all the important elements in her life. He did not beat around the bush but had hit the nail right on the head. He had gone straight to the sore spot, understanding her need and showing her what had been driving her forward all her life. He showed how ridiculous her attempts at quenching her spiritual and emotional thirst had been.

As a prophet, He would now tell her more that no ordinary person should know, provide answers to questions that had troubled her and her people. She now respected Him, accepted Him as her teacher and wanted to know more. She was now preparing to begin kneeling at His feet.

She requested information. She was just not only willing to listen but wanted specific answers to specific questions. She was focused.

Clearly there are many people out there searching for something to complete their lives but when they are confronted, they do not want to probe and take the active steps, necessary to make themselves whole. They shy away from opening up to God, talking to Him honestly and boldly.

But she now tried to be defensive, not making it seem that she was as bad or foolish as it appeared. She was being quite normal. She pointed Jesus to the nearby place of her ancestors, reminding Him that the Samaritans had known about God and had always worshipped Him in nearby Mount Gerizim. She could point to the nearby mountaintop.



We must realize that the Samaritans knew about and had not forgotten their past. They could point to the Fathers, making a direct connection to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; for Samaritans considered themselves to be descendants of these great men.

Clearly, she knew, and it was geared to her heart, that God should be worshiped. The worship of God in this mountain was dear to her and she sought instruction from this prophet on how to worship and please God. She wanted information on where God could be properly worshiped.

This was not a simple question, for remember that the Samaritans felt that offering sacrifices to God on Mount Gerizim, would cleanse them from sin. However, Jews had been insisting that the only place to offer the efficacious sacrifices that would cleanse the sins of any person was in the temple in Jerusalem. If one did not come to the Jerusalem Temple one could not be saved.

The woman wanted to know where she could go to be cleansed of her sins, in other words, where could she find God.

Note that the Samaritans as well as the Jews, had tied the essence of true religion and the related theological arguments, to the irreplaceable value of a specific location. For Jews, God was in the Temple at Jerusalem and if one didn't go there you were out of fellowship with God. You could not be saved.

The Samaritans simply substituted locations. God and the right kind of sacrifices were at Mount Gerizim. Going anywhere else meant you could not be saved.

Note carefully, that this woman who lived the life of immorality, still argued about the critical importance of the location of worship and where sacrifices were offered to be acceptable to God.

There was no mention of the heart condition. Neither Jew nor Samaritan seemed to realize the importance of the heart. For them both it was the carnal things, the location, the size of the place of worship, the beautiful fixtures and decorations, the moving ceremonies, the use of the right kind of incense, the proper posture of the hands and body in worship, the right kind of music, the traditions.

It sounds just like us today for we too have been deluded to concentrate on the frills and the nonsense.

Verses 24-25. Jesus told her three things. These are all very relevant for us.

The basis of the call to evangelize, our role in this lies in the fact that God is Spirit. He is not material, not like us. He has no beginning and no end. All virtues, knowledge and power lie in Him. Geography is not a relevant issue for God. He has no limits. When the people of Israel and those in Jesus' day thought that God dwelt in the Jerusalem Temple, they were not encompassing the mystery, eternity, and power of God. God is Spirit and thus able to go wherever He chooses, and He is present everywhere at the same time. Jesus tried to get this idea across to Nicodemus in John 3:8.

First, the time would come when geography and where to worship would be totally irrelevant. Temples would not be necessary to worship God.



Our body is the Temple and that this where, in our own person and heart that God wants worship. God must be worshiped, and proper worship must come from the heart. The trappings, decorations and places are irrelevant.

Jesus called on her to begin to refocus, and not be led astray.

Second, Jesus told her that she did not know too much about the truth of God. She had some truth, but this was mixed with much error. She had been misled and her people had been misled.

It is most important that we realize that when we worship there must be evidence and knowledge for us to worship. If there is none of that it is not true worship. God had determined that divine revelation and carrying the truth of the true God to the world would come through Israel. The Samaritans were making a mistake for they should not be accepting only the five books of Moses but should have been paying attention to the revelation through the prophets that God had appointed. Israel had those prophets, and the Samaritans did not have those prophets and ignoring them was a fatal error. Partial understanding is not recommended. Incomplete revelation is not a preferred state. The Jews and not the Samaritans saw the complete revelation of God the Father for they had the entire revelation of the Scriptures and therefore could see God in the most complete way possible by looking at history, portrait, wisdom, prophecy, and worship literature. Those of Israel had an insight and an anticipation of the Messianic will for it is through them that salvation would come by the anointed King the son of David. One writer points out:

“Salvation is from the Jews because they enjoyed the anticipation of Messianic hope, salvation coming through the anointed King, the son of David. He is not only a wisdom Messiah, as the Samaritans believed but also a Saviour Messiah who would provide the final solution for the sin problem. The woman had no concept of that spiritual reality”.

This is a warning to us. We should carefully examine Scripture and carefully avoid mixing truth with error. The Samaritans did not have a complete picture of the truth of the one true God. At the same time the Jews also sadly refused to accept what was plainly stated in Scripture about the Messiah and would create their own version of Messiah.

Much of this is happening today. Many want to reinterpret the Scriptures and come up with their own ideas, insisting that they had the right to contradict the Bible. They often talk of love without repentance and declare that they believe in Christ but do not accept that they should obey every single commandment of God and be led by the Spirit.

They do not really believe that they must demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit. They only have a form of godliness. They are quite carnal.

Note that Jesus did not say that all or any spiritual idea is equal to any other spiritual idea. He insists that some spiritual ideas are false, mixing truth with error.

Jesus insisted that thirdly, God had declared Himself over many centuries in an absolutely clear, unequivocal and never to be changed way.



True worship had been revealed to Jews. Salvation was from the Jews. The Messiah, the Savior was going to come through the Jews.

All other spiritual philosophies are without value.

The time was coming and had in fact arrived, when those who are true worshippers would worship God the Father and the Messiah whom He had sent. God would never accept worship from anyone who did not know Him and His Messiah, accepting His revelation. Those that accepted the false revelations would never be acceptable to Him.

The Messiah had come, a new age had begun, and going to a mountain to worship was not the real issue. One writer puts it very nicely:

“It is what we call worshipping from the heart. And it must be in truth. It must be honest, not a put on. It is not something you do with your body while your mind is somewhere else. The worship is what you mean with all your heart. When we sing hymns, God is not interested in our just mouthing words. He is interested in our hearts meaning what we sing.

Most of our hymns are hymns of worship, prayer and praise addressed to God. They are to come from the heart, so we are to sing with meaning. God is seeking such to worship him.

In every congregation God is looking for those who mean what they are singing, who, from the heart, are saying these things to him. That is what worship is. And the reason it is worship is because it is in line with God's own nature. God himself is Spirit, he is invisible; and we too are spirit, in the innermost part of our being. Therefore, worship is the joining together of Spirit with spirit.”

This was of course very difficult for the woman to understand but she was getting there. She now understood that to worship in truth meant one worshipped according to the entire counsel of God's word.

She declared that she knew that the Messiah, the Christ, was coming soon and He would tell them everything. She knew only about a wisdom Messiah She was prepared to wait until Messiah came, so that she could learn the full truth and experience all the beautiful promises. She was prepared to wait expectantly.

Verse 26. Jesus then issued those wonderful words, identifying Himself unmistakably as the Messiah. He would bring renewal and life to her and her people. He would give her this well of water, which would give her continuing and absolute satisfaction.

This is the first of the I AM statement in the book of John. It is amazing that Jesus had not been open about His identity in this way but now He revealed Himself completely to this marginalized woman the wife of five men and now living with another.

Jesus certainly showed Himself to be a friend of marginalized people, the sinners, the blind, and the lame but regarding the religious and political elites as His Enemies.

So, at the hour of the crucifixion and resurrection the essential way of worship would be instituted and the clear relationship between Jesus Himself, the Holy Spirit of God, and the truth of God would be clearly disclosed for one can only worship God in spirit and in truth when one is possessed by the Holy Spirit.

Ritual cannot save. Going to the altar, burning candles and incense might be beautiful but these acts cannot save. This woman was shown by Jesus that she was not completely in harmony with



the will of God and therefore Jesus climaxed His conversation and said, "I who speak to you am he". Clearly there was much for the woman to learn but she was ready to learn and to testify that she had finally found the true Messiah.

Verse 27-30. The disciples then returned from shopping for food and like the woman began eventually to talk about the need for physical food. Remember that they had been heading to Galilee their hometown and so their aim was to get there as quickly as possible for ministry and meeting friends and family. They probably did not see why Jesus had to stop to talk to this woman, but they were too shocked or afraid to ask. They might have sensed there was some purpose to Jesus' behaviour and did not want to bring any rebuke on them, so they simply marvelled.

Now Jesus would teach the disciples the joy of sharing labour in the vineyard with others. The woman reacted to Jesus' words. One writer tells us:

"Although the disciples say nothing, I bet their faces registered shock. This might have been the time for the Samaritan woman to depart. In her hurry, she leaves her water jar behind. John, the beloved disciple, give us the eyewitness detail. With her joy overflowing with joy and gladness from meeting the Messiah she runs into her village telling everyone she sees about the conservation by Jacob's well.

It is obvious that she no longer thirsts for the water in the well because her deeper thirst for love and forgiveness has filled her heart. When you are that full you have to go tell others about what you have found. And she has something new to share with anyone who will hear".

Verse 29. The woman was now so awakened by meeting Jesus that she left her valuable waterpot for she did not want that to slow her down given the compelling message that she had to share with the people of the town. She was now more concerned about more important things. She was accustomed to living on the fringes of her town, trying to avoid interacting with people as much as possible because of her like a reputation but she was so excited now that she was able to speak with enthusiasm and authority, facing up to everybody in the town and looking them straight into the eye. She was not hesitant like Nicodemus or hard to believe like the crowd in Nazareth. She was so persuasive that the people in the town believed this marginalized woman that she had met the Christ for He had told her like a true prophet everything about her life. No normal man could have done that.

Verse 30. The townspeople came out of the city for the woman's witness was effective. No longer did they distance themselves from her because of her reputation but her public enthusiasm was such that it was obvious that something wonderful had happened to her at the Well.

So, are you enthusiastic, full of confidence and full of energy when you witness?

Or are you concentrating on condemning those to whom you witness?

We should remind you what Proverbs 11:30 states:

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life and he who is wise winneth souls"

Are you accepting the fact that you are your brothers' keeper or are you like Cain who boldly said, "Am I my brother's keeper?"



Verses 32-38. The disciples wanted to push food on Jesus not realizing that what kept Jesus was not the earthly bread but the mission that heaven had sent Him on. So here again we have the misunderstanding of the spiritual point when Jesus spoke at the spiritual level.

Jesus showed the disciples that ministry existed outside of Galilee and that the fields outside are ripe to harvest. Jesus used two Proverbs to highlight the fact that there is a waiting time between planting and harvesting. But now it was clear that there was no time to wait for the Samaritans were coming and “the fields were white for harvest already”.

Another proverb was now used this time from Micah 6:15, “One sows, and another reaps” but there it was used as a warning that the people would not reap the blessing that they had worked for. But now Jesus gave it another character telling the disciples that they will now reap a harvest that they did not sow. They would have to join in teaching the Samaritans.

They would later also have the experience that they will sow but there would be a harvest that others will reap. Such was the experience of the Apostles for they would work, and their work would lead to the saving of many souls. They would not be there to reap the harvest. That would be our experience also as we evangelize. But remember that the Spirit will honour our faithful service and we would experience a bountiful harvest in the Kingdom of God.

Verses 39-42. So, Jesus stayed two more days teaching the Samaritans giving them the “real food” and the “real water”. And the townspeople responded to the offer of life instead of death and tragedy because they had heard the testimony of the woman at the well in Samaria and had made their choice to believe after they learned for themselves.

Now let us review the lessons when we are called to evangelize.

1. The woman testified that Jesus had told her everything that she did and so the people responded in belief for that was absolutely remarkable. This made her an effective witness.
2. She was not the ideal kind of person to be an evangelist for her character was kind of questionable and her understanding was not complete. But it was enough for her to hear the word of Jesus even though it wasn't complete, and she received it and it was enough to bring great blessings to many.
3. The woman gave personal powerful testimony. She stuck to what she knew. She therefore inspires us to tell others of our experience.
4. Note that in her testimony she lifted up Jesus. She did not depend on emotions but concentrated on revealing Christ, glorifying Him and not lifting up herself.
5. Her commitment to Jesus was staggering and it brought results. She might have been an embarrassment before, but she was willing to not let that stop her, but she was led to perform an important ministry to her community.

Jesus stayed there for two days and at the end the people knew that Jesus was the Saviour of the world and not just a wisdom Messiah. They gave one of the strongest statements of belief in Jesus' Messianic position for they stated that they believed not because of what the woman had been saying but they had heard for themselves and now knew that Jesus was indeed the Christ the Saviour of the world.



Your evangelizing is critically important, but it should aim at what the Samaritan town people said. Your aim is to have people come to understanding for themselves who Jesus is and accepting that Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed one, the Saviour of the world and that through Him alone is life eternal.

CONCLUSION

This was a very fruitful conversation. The woman immediately became an evangelist and a disciple. She told her community everything and carefully prompted them that this was really the Messiah. The Spirit of God led her, and the people responded in great numbers. The woman was reborn, and many Samaritans WERE reborn.

Do we testify about Christ? The disciples also learned that it was extremely satisfying to obey God and minister to people. Witnessing and testifying about God is better than food. It frees and satisfies, giving great satisfaction. They learned that the harvest was great, the fields were white.

One can sow and reap immediately.

The wages of sowing and reaping are tremendous

Jesus labored, and the woman labored. Jesus taught her and she went out and spread the good news to everyone she met.

The disciples came and benefited from the labor of Jesus and the woman, for they did the baptizing of the many converts.

Christ is available to all. Spend time with Jesus and let Him change you. Let us therefore labour together and rejoice together in this great work of God.



