

Text: John 4

Study Outline

## I. Jesus was Intentional (vs 1- 6)

**4** Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John <sup>2</sup> (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), <sup>3</sup> He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. <sup>4</sup> But He needed to go through Samaria.

<sup>5</sup> So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from *His* journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

- a. He left Judea, departed for Galilee. **Why did he leave Galilee? (vss 1-3)**
- b. But he needed to go through Samaria. **Why did he need to go through Samaria? (vs 4)**
- c. Historical context: first century Jews and Samaritans had been divided by centuries of hostility and deep prejudice. They shared a common heritage each maintaining they were the bearers of the true faith of ancient Israel.
  - i. They differed radically in regard to the relative sanctity of Jerusalem and mount Gerizim (see 4:20) and also held different legal and scriptural traditions.
  - ii. Samaritans were considered heretics, foreigners, and unclean by the Jews, who avoided contact with them.
  - iii. In 2 Kings 17:24ff, we learn that when the Assyrians conquered the region in 721 BCE, they brought colonists from five foreign nations into Samaria. Samaria intermarried with five foreign peoples and accepted their idols. And even now, Samaria like Judea at the time was colonized by a 6<sup>th</sup> rule—the Romans, plus

the Samaritans incorporated a lot of traditions from these other nations into their worship and the Jews considered them to lack the full integrity of the covenant relationship<sup>1</sup> .

- d. For Jesus to go through Samaria, Jesus had a purpose in mind.
  - i. As we just read, the tension/conflict between the Jews and Samaritans was long standing.
  - ii. Most Jewish travelers took a route that caused them to avoid going through Samaria.
  - iii. Jesus deliberately or intentionally crosses ethnic and religious boundary.
  - iv. Verse 4 says Jesus found it necessary or needed to go through Samaria—"not a geographic necessity," as most Jews avoided that route, "but a theological necessity,"<sup>2</sup> ushered in by a woman, an ethnic woman
- e. According to vs 6, Jacob's well was there – the place of cultural and religious history and significance for the Samaritans.
- f. Jesus sat by the well because he was weary from his Journey. (Personal note, be intentional about getting rest, taking care of self.)

## II. Jesus was Intercultural (Vs 7-9)

<sup>7</sup> A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." <sup>8</sup> For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

<sup>9</sup> Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

- a. The cultural norms of the day precluded Jewish men from interacting with Samaritans, especially Samaritan women.
- b. Vs 7: A woman of Samaria came to draw water, and we know from vs 6 that it was about the 6<sup>th</sup> hour which would have been 12 noon.

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<sup>1</sup> Frances Taylor Gench, "The Samaritan Woman," in *Back to the Well*, (pp. 109-135). Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

- i. Abraham’s servant met Rebekah at the well in the evening, “the time when women went out to draw water.” (Gen 24:11)
- ii. Rachel came to the well to water her father’s sheep at “High day” (Gen 29: 7) (early in the day), (broad daylight, NLT), It is now only the middle of the day (CEB, NET)
- c. The woman of Samaria knew the cultural codes, the norms and knew Jews don’t interact with Samaritans. (vs 9)
- d. Jesus did not allow race, class and gender to become barriers to His talking with and interacting with her. He did not let stereotypes prevent him from talking to her.
- e. Jesus asked the woman to give him a drink (vs 7)—Jesus valued what the woman had. When you encounter someone from a different cultural background, can you value the gifts they bring from their culture?

### III. Jesus was Interactional (vs 10-16)

<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered and 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.”

<sup>11</sup> The woman said to Him, “Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? <sup>12</sup> Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?”

<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”

<sup>15</sup> The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.”

- a. Vs 10—Jesus and answered and 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.”
- b. Vs 11—The woman of Samaria asks two questions

- i. You have no bucket and this well is deep. So where are you going to get this living water?
- ii. Are you greater than our father Jacob who gave us this well (vs 12)?
  - 1. By offering Jesus living water, Jesus was intimating that he was on par with the patriarch Jacob who gave them this well.
  - 2. According to Biblical scholar, Dr. Sandra Schneiders<sup>3</sup> in her book, *Written that you may believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*: In Samaritan theology they held to tradition that traced back to Mosaic-patriarchal tradition as opposed to the Davidic-monarchial tradition of the Jews.
  - 3. For the woman Jesus' claim to be on par with the patriarch Jacob had enormous implications .

#### **IV. Jesus was Prophetic (vss. 16 – 21)**

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.”

<sup>17</sup> The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.”

Jesus said to her, “You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ <sup>18</sup> for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.”

<sup>19</sup> The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. <sup>20</sup> Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.”

<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. <sup>22</sup> You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. <sup>23</sup> But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship

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<sup>3</sup> Sandra M. Scheiders, *Written that You May Believe, Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*. New York, Crossroads Publishing Company, 2003.

Him. <sup>24</sup> God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

- a. Go call your husband—You have to interpret this statement within the patriarchal system that existed then.
  - a. The woman had not authority to divorce a man.
  - b. The woman had not authority to even choose whom she married.
  - c. Some have speculated that she could have been caught in a web of the ancient law of the levirate marriage-- a pattern in which she was subject to ancient marital laws in which she had little to know say
  - d. Men could use the slightest grievance to divorce his wife.
  - e. Jesus did not come to judge her, name call or shame her
  - f. He asked a question about her circumstances within a patriarchal system to which she responded truthfully
- b. Another interpretation: If everything Jesus referred to up to this point was spiritual, could it not be that this statement was also spiritual? Could the 5 husbands
- c. 5 husbands if interpreted spiritually could have referred to the 5 belief systems in Samaritan theology that I referred to earlier. Just suppose.
- d. And the one she had now who is not your husband could have referred to a number of living arrangements, but most scholars agree it referred to her living with a man outside the bonds of marriage
  - a. But note, Jesus did not judge her for it, did not shame her because of it, and did not reduce her identity to her sex life.
- e. Her inquisitiveness continues (vs 20) about worship
  - a. Should worship occur on this mountain or in Jerusalem
  - b. Jesus came to open up a new way that was inclusive of Jew and Gentile and Samaritan.

#### **V. Jesus was Clear In His Identity (vss. 25 – 26)**

<sup>25</sup> The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.”

<sup>26</sup> Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am *He*.”

- a. I (who speak to you) am He.

- b. Generally accepted that there are 7 “I AM”s is John—I contend that this woman of Samaria actually is the first to elicit an “I Am” statement from Jesus.

## VI. Jesus Kept Focused On His Purpose

<sup>27</sup> And at this *point* His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, “What do You seek?” or, “Why are You talking with her?”

<sup>28</sup> The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, <sup>29</sup> “Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” <sup>30</sup> Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

<sup>31</sup> In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.”

<sup>32</sup> But He said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.”

<sup>33</sup> Therefore the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought Him *anything* to eat?”

<sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. <sup>35</sup> Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! <sup>36</sup> And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup> For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ <sup>38</sup> I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.”

<sup>39</sup> And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all that I *ever* did.” <sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. <sup>41</sup> And many more believed because of His own word.

<sup>42</sup> Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed <sup>[a]</sup> the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

- a. Notice the disciples enter the scene with Jesus, they are marveled at what they see, but dare not ask Jesus.
- b. The Woman of Samaria departs the scene, leaving her waterpot behind, and goes to tell the people of the village about Jesus, notice her words.
  - i. Come—she provides an invitation
  - ii. She gives reasons for them to come –she testifies as to what he has done in her life—for her revealing her story, and accepting her in spite of the story, is a powerful witness,
  - iii. She asks, could this not be the Christ—the Samaritans were expecting a Prophet and she gave witness to the prophetic activity of Jesus in her life.
- c. As the woman goes out and evangelizes, Jesus gives the whole point of their being in Samaria—look around, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white or ripe for harvest.
- d. Then Jesus speaks of the “team” nature of harvesting and of evangelism or missions work—do your part – you sow another may reap, you may reap from what another has sown.
- e. And here comes the fruit
- f. Many believed in Jesus because of the word of the woman who testified.
- g. The Samaritans urged him to stay and he stayed two days.
- h. Many got to hear the word of Jesus and believed, and of course some had to give the woman a back handed compliment, we believe, not because of what you said, for we have heard him for ourselves and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world. Patriarchy raises its head again.

## **VII. Jesus Returns to Galilee (vss 43-45)**

<sup>43</sup> Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee. <sup>44</sup> For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. <sup>45</sup> So when He

came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast.

- a. The Galileans welcomed Him
- b. They received Him , having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast, for they had also gone to the feast

### VIII. The Nobleman's Son Healed (vss 46-54)

<sup>46</sup> So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain <sup>[a]</sup>nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. <sup>47</sup> When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. <sup>48</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you *people* see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe."

<sup>49</sup> The nobleman said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies!"

<sup>50</sup> Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives." So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way. <sup>51</sup> And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told *him*, saying, "Your son lives!"

<sup>52</sup> Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." <sup>53</sup> So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives." And he himself believed, and his whole household.

- a. Jesus returns to Cana of Galilee. Why is it significant for the author to mention that it was in Cana where Jesus made water wine?
- b. The nobleman was a royal official and he came to Jesus to implore Him to heal his dying son.
- c. In vs 48, Jesus declares, "Unless you see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe." With this testament in mind, what is the purpose then of signs and wonders in John? And now?
- d. Vs 54-The healing of the nobleman's son is the 2<sup>nd</sup> sign (or miracle) that John includes in this Gospel.