

John 4: 4-21

Jesus and the Woman at the Well!

Most people have heard and know about the story of Jesus and the woman at the well. Some very important details about this story are sometimes neglected. First, this story takes place near the beginning of the book of John, very early in the earthly ministry of Jesus. Second, it is a Samaritan woman! For generations, the Jews had despised the Samaritans! Third, this was no ordinary well—it was Jacob’s well—that is, the well of Jacob, the father of Joseph and his brothers, who sold him into slavery to Egypt. Pastor Steven Furtick reminds us that this opens the historic story of Jacob, a father who spent 22 years thinking his favorite son Joseph was dead!

Also, notice that Jesus did NOT find this Samaritan woman by accident! Jesus went WAY out of his way to go into Samaria. While his conversation with the woman was all about water, he was at this well with nothing to draw or hold any water. In his conversation with the woman, Jesus knew ALL about her lifestyle.

“4 Now [Jesus] had to go through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. 7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, **“Will you give me a drink?”** 8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

9 The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

10 Jesus answered her, **“If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”**

11 “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?”

13 Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

15 The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

16 He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”

17 “I have no husband,” she replied.

Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. 18 The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

19 “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. 20 Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

21 “Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

25 The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

26 Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”

New International Version (NIV)

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In relating this story to today, notice from Jacob's story, that sometimes God's stories in life take many years (in Jacob's case, over 22 years!) to develop. NEVER give up on God's plan for your life! Jesus really wanted to talk with this Samaritan woman of questionable character and lifestyle, and he went out of his way to find her. Likewise, Jesus really wants to talk with US, in spite or perhaps because of OUR questionable character and lifestyle.

In the last few verses, the woman recognized that Jesus was a prophet. Although the Samaritans had some differences in theology with the Jews, she acknowledged that the coming Messiah would explain "everything." To this comment, and so EARLY in his own career, Jesus revealed himself to her, saying "I am he."

Do you think this was the first time Jesus revealed his identity as Messiah? To this woman of ill repute? Likewise, the Resurrected Christ first revealed himself to Mary Magdalene at the tomb!! I posed this question to one of our family Bible experts Irma Williams (also a cousin!). Irma replied, "It does seem that the teachers are saying this is the first time Jesus revealed Himself as the One! Another interesting thing is that our Sunday School teacher, Dr. Black has read Jewish history and he says the Jewish literature tell her name was Photima (I think I remember that correctly) and that she and her sons went to Africa to be missionaries."

It seems to be a pattern in Jesus' life, to reveal Himself to unlikely people: at His birth to lowly shepherds, on this occasion to the Samaritan woman, after the Resurrection to Mary Magdalene, after His ascension to a man like Saul, who became the Apostle Paul, and today to ordinary folks--like you and me!

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