

The Year of Discipleship in 3-D

(Further Developing Devoted Followers of Christ)



Welcome! Growing into more fully-devoted followers of Christ, may this time help all: **Grow Upward** into a more mature personal relationship and commitment to Christ Jesus faithful to God's Word!

Grow Outward to neighbor and world around, learning how to love well and to lead in what matters to God - guided by God's Word, by Jesus Himself, and by the Holy Spirit!

And, **Grow Inward** to discover a more contemplative faith, enhanced by both silence and prayer!

The Scripture for Sunday, January 30, 2022

[STUDY LESSON 21]

THE GOOD NEWS READING:

John 4:1-42

{1} Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard, "Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John" {2}—although it was not Jesus himself but his disciples who baptized— {3} he left Judea and started back to Galilee. {4} But he had to go through Samaria. {5} So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. {6} Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

{7} A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." {8} (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) {9} The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) {10} Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." {11} The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? {12} Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" {13} Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, {14} but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." {15} The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

{16} Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." {17} The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; {18} for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" {19} The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. {20} Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." {21} Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. {22} You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. {23} But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. {24} God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." {25} The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." {26} Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

{27} Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?" {28} Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, {29} "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" {30} They left the city and were on their way to him.

{31} Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." {32} But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." {33} So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" {34} Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. {35} Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. {36} The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. {37} For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' {38} I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

{39} Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." {40} So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. {41} And many more believed because of his word. {42} They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

DISCUSSION GUIDANCE AND QUESTIONS:

For an overview of “The Water of Life” theme consider watching:

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/water-of-life/>

1. Open (*or have someone in the group open*) with a prayer inviting the work of the Holy Spirit to open up the hearts and lives of any and all to shape believers into more fully devoted following of Christ.
2. Read (*or have one or more persons read*) the passage printed above (*or from a bible*).
3. What words or phrases caught your attention as you heard this passage read? Put another way, were you to choose to memorize a verse and cherish it from this text, what verse might that be and why? Take note within yourself, what sort of feelings arise in that word, phrase, or verse?
4. BACKGROUND NOTES: This text serves a distinct paradoxical perspective to the dialogue which preceded it, that of Jesus and Nicodemus. Some of those “opposing” characteristics were lifted up in last weeks notes and discussion. Numerous elements of this narrative invite further exploration. In particular: the significance of Jacob’s well and what has historically/biblically taken place there, the tension between Jews and Samaritans and Jesus crossing this boundary, the element of water and abundance, the placement and implications of the woman’s marital/relational history, the significance and conversation surrounding worship, her effective witness and testimony to members of her community, and the resultant belief that takes place not only for the woman, but also for citizens from her city, and the identifying of Jesus as the Messiah here (*John 4:25, 29*) in light of John’s overall gospel intent (*See John 20:30-31*).
5. Where, if you employ some imagination, do you find yourself in this text, in particular in identifying with any of the characters? The Samaritan woman, Jesus, the disciples, the members of her community, or some anonymous bystander, reporter of the story, or even with the author, John... What feelings or senses do you find rising up or being stimulated in your imaginary participation?
6. How do some of the ways that water and its various usages inform aspects of your faith and believing? Note some of the variations in the text: for drinking, living water, where to find this type of water, being thirsty, thirsty again, and never being thirsty, or even the fact that when the woman left, she left her water jar behind (*John 4:28*).
7. Given no formal directives from the text, how do you sense the conversation taking place between Jesus and the Samaritan woman? In other words, what possible tones might be in play? Stoic? Furtive? Distanced? Playful? Antagonistic? Defensive?
8. It could be argued much is at risk here on the part of Samaritan woman and on the part of Jesus. What might be some of the risks as you explore the text?
9. Given the distinct boundaries between Jews and Samaritans and even geographically between Samaria, Judea, and Galilee, how could this text interface with Jesus words of His instructive that God so loved the *world* (emphasis mine) as that world particularly includes those who live in opposition to God and Jesus?
10. It may be worth noting that Jesus could have (as most travelers might have done in those days as they journeyed between Galilee and Judea), gone around Samaria. Jesus, on the other hand “had to go through Samaria.” Is there somewhere or to someone, you sense you are being sent?
11. In what ways is your discipleship or following of Jesus taking you to places, activities, and living out the gospel which is new for you? Is there something your needing to leave behind? Is it calling you to go “places” you might not feel comfortable going?
12. What is your main discipleship “takeaway” from this text?
13. Can you identify any particular ways your Christian faith and following might be inspired to change in light of this passage from the Bible (and any discussion and/or reflection that may have taken place)?
14. (*Optional*) Read the passage again. Then, take some time to close (or have someone close) with prayer.