

## SESSION SIX

### The Savior of the World: *Finding Freedom (John 4:1-42)*

“When you come to where I am, there is only one thing that matters, that is your relationship to him [Christ] and your knowledge of him. Nothing else matters. Our best works are tainted. We are sinners saved by grace. We are debtors to mercy alone.”

~ Rev. Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, some of his final words prior to his death

#### I. Jesus and the Samaritan Woman (4:1-42)

##### A. Setting the Scene (4:1-4)

4:4 . . . *it is necessary to pass through Samaria*. While traveling through Samaria was the most direct route, Jews only traveled this way during times of emergency or urgency. While this detour was unnecessary geographically, it was theologically essential.

##### B. Conversation with a Samaritan Woman (4:5-26)

4:7 . . . *Samaritan woman came to draw water* . . . The socio-ethnic, gender, and moral barriers should not be missed. This woman's marital status would have made her impure. The Jewish religious community would have forbidden any interaction with such a woman of ill repute (Ps 1:1; 119:63; Prov 13:20; 14:7; 28:7).

Second, Jewish men were to avoid unnecessary conversation with women. One commentator notes that the sage “ . . . worried about sending the wrong message to onlookers, if one talked with even one's sister or wife in public, someone who did not know that the woman was a relative might get the wrong impression” (Keener, *Gospel of John*, 1:597).

However, the greatest offense in the narrative is that Jesus, a Jew, is talking with a woman who is a Samaritan. Ethnically, she was unclean. This Jewish perspective on Samaritan women stemmed from their deeply rooted tensions with Samaritans for centuries. Samaritans descended from two groups—Jews who remained in the land after the Assyrian deportations in 722 BC, and the foreign colonists relocated in the land from Babylonia and Media. The Samaritans refused to worship in Jerusalem and created great havoc when Jews returned to the land. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, the Samaritans helped the Syrians in their wars against the Jews. In return, the Jewish high priest retaliated and burned the Samaritan temple in Mount Gerazim in 128 BC. This political and theological division fostered extreme racism. Thus, Jews avoided any social engagement with Samaritans. In fact, bread from Samaritans was equated with eating pork, and accepting drink from any Samaritan was forbidden.

4:10-11 John's use of “misunderstanding” is utilized again as Jesus speaks of spiritual water (figure for the Holy Spirit, see 7:38-39), while the woman envisions physical water.

4:14 . . . *fountain of water springing up to eternal life* . . . This verb speaks of quick movement, such as jumping, on the part of human beings. This is the only time this term is used of water. However, it is used to describe the “Spirit of God” as it falls on both Samson and Saul (Judg 14:6, 19; 15:14; 1 Sam 10:6, 10) and in the Spirit’s activity in Isaiah 35:6. Likewise, the context of Isaiah 35 not only reiterates this link John is making between “water” and the “Spirit,” but it also highlights the fact that this outpouring of the Holy Spirit marks the Messianic Age (also, see Isa 44:3-5; Ezek 39:29; Joel 2:28-29).

The Samaritan woman leaving her water pot indicates that she has received this living water—water that does not need a physical vessel to transport!

4:19 . . . *I see that you have the prophetic gift*. While this phrase could be rendered “I see that you are a prophet,” the predicate nominative (“prophet”) is most likely qualitative rather than indefinite.

4:20 . . . *worshiped on this mountain* . . . The Samaritans regarded Mount Gerizim as the holiest of mountains--the location of true worship.

4:24 . . . *God is spirit* . . . D. A. Carson aptly writes: “‘God is spirit’ means that God is invisible, divine as opposed to human (cf. 3:6), life-giving and unknowable to human beings unless he chooses to reveal himself (cf. 1:18)” (*John*, 225).

The association of “spirit” and “truth” occurs frequently in the Old Testament (see Neh 9:20, 30; Ps 33:6; 147:18; Isa 59:21).

#### C. Jesus Interacts with the Disciples (4:27-37)

4:27-37 Another Johannine “misunderstanding” is incorporated into the text as the disciples believe Jesus is referring to physical food.

#### D. The Samaritans Believe in Jesus (4:38-42)

4:42 . . . *Savior of the world* . . . This title recalls the John 3:17 – “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world should be saved through him.” Ironically, His own rejected Him (1:11), but the Samaritans received Him.

## II. Intersect

- A. Similar to the Samaritan woman, it was Jesus who sought us and brought us out of our sin and shame. The Gospel makes a change and affects our very being.

Ephesians 2:1-5 -

- B. The Gospel fills the void of our soul with true love, hope, peace, and joy.

Romans 15:13 –

- C. The Gospel is never self-contained. A truly repentant heart never hoards but overflows with joy!

2 Timothy 1:8-14 -

“ . . . to ignore, euphemize, or otherwise mute the lethal reality of sin is to cut the nerve of the gospel. For the sober truth is that without full disclosure of sin, the gospel of grace becomes impertinent, unnecessary, and finally uninteresting.”

~ Cornelius Plantinga