





Everything I've Ever Done

John 4:1-42

Life of Jesus

Jesus was leaving Judaea, and heading to Galilee. To get there, he had to go through Samaria.

Samaria is where the Samaritans lived. A brief history lesson will help us better understand the interaction between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. The Jews and the Samaritans hated one another, and would have nothing to do with each other. The original dispute began hundreds of years prior when the Israelites were exiled into Babylon (2 Kings 24 & 25). There was a remnant of Israelites that remained in the land after the people were taken captive, and the remaining Israelites married with other pagan groups, and what resulted was the Samaritan race. When the Israelites later returned to the land, there was resentment among the Israelites that the Samaritan people were not pure Jews. The Israelites considered them half-Jew, half-pagan. The Samaritans considered themselves to be descendants of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, but had adopted a modified form of worship that mixed Judaism with pagan practices. This was blasphemy, and the Jews would not allow them to worship alongside them. The Samaritans then created their own place of worship on Mount Gerazim.

For all practical purposes, this was an early incidence of racism, and it would have been quite puzzling to anyone as to why Jesus would have anything to do with a Samaritan. The Jews felt that this was the land that God had given them, and these people should not have been in their land. We can see that racism and immigration have been issues for centuries.

Jesus needed to go through Samaria (John 4:4).

At this time, if a person needed to travel from Judaea to Galilee, many Jews would go completely around, and go out of the way to avoid having to travel through Samaria. However, Jesus seems to have no problem making a direct route.

On their way, Jesus came to a city in Samaria that was near a piece of land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. (Make sure the audience is familiar with Jacob and Joseph, and if necessary briefly catch them up with very light references to Genesis 26-50. Jacob was the grandson of Abraham, son of Isaac, and his son Joseph was the favored son of twelve boys, who was also a ruler over Egypt second to Pharaoh.) This is symbolic, as Jacob's well was also on this piece of land. What is interesting is that thousands of years later, people still knew exactly what had taken place at this particular place.

Jesus was tired from his travels, and at noon he came and sat down at the well. His disciples had gone into the city to buy food, and Jesus stayed behind to rest.

It helps to have an understanding of the significance of wells in the Bible. There are recurring themes in the Bible of trees, and water, and...wells.

Wells were a meeting place throughout scripture.

Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac; the servant meets Rebekah at the well. She draws water for the servant and soon becomes a wife for Isaac.

Years later, Isaac's son Jacob meets his future wife Rachel. He rolls away the stone from the well and draws water for her.

Hundreds of years later, Moses meets his future wife after drawing water for her at a well.





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We can see a pattern in scripture:

Someone journeys to a foreign country.

A man and woman meet at a well.

One of them draw water.

The woman hurries home to tell news of the visitor.

The visitor stays (often a meal is mentioned).

The two parties are joined by marriage.

This well pattern is repeated in scripture, and is a theme of people from two different cultures who do not know one another. The stories focus on the family of leaders from that nation. And the result is that the marriage, or union, will result in leading the nation in a covenant relationship with God. This well picture goes back to the garden of Eden, where a man and a woman were together near a life giving water source.

As with so many things in scripture, Jesus has come to fulfill or mirror an event that has taken place. And this story does just that, with some changes.

Jesus is now sitting at the place where some of these interactions have taken place centuries before.

He is sitting at Jacob's well.

A woman from Samaria came to draw water, and Jesus asked her to give him some water.

It was noon. Generally, the women would come in groups together to get water earlier and later in the day. History tells us that going to the well was somewhat of a social event, and women would come together and draw water. But this lady was alone, and she and Jesus were the only ones there. This in itself is amazing. Jesus was always followed by a crowd, and not that many people got a private audience with Jesus.

Discuss: Why do you think this lady was alone? We find out more about her later.

Maybe she was rejected by her peers, maybe she did not have a lot of friends, we do not know.

The lady responded to Jesus, Why are you, a Jew, asking me, a Samaritan for a drink? The Jews do not have anything to do with Samaritans. Some Bible translations say that Jews would not even use the same cups and bowls.

Then Jesus said, If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is asking you for a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.

Discuss: What does this mean?

What is living water?





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Living water contains life from the source of life. Life from God, that will satisfy the deepest thirst in our hearts. Deep down everyone is searching for truth, searching for something to fill the void inside than can only be filled by the Lord. (Psalm 63:1-2) People try to fill this void with material things, with substances, with lifestyles, with power, but it can only truly be filled by a relationship with Jesus Christ, and that is what he was offering this woman.

The lady does not understand what he is talking about. She looks at what she can see, and she says, You do not have anything to draw water with. The well is deep, where will you get this living water?

Discuss: How do you get water out of a well? Talk about pails, buckets, cups.

Often there is a handle with a crank and you have to lower a pail down into the water.

She saw that Jesus did not have anything to get the water from the well.

Then she asks him, Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well and drank from it himself, with his children and his animals?

This is a somewhat telling question. She is asking it almost with sarcasm or unbelief, but IS Jesus greater than Jacob? Yes.

Jesus says, If you drink from this water, you will be thirsty again. But if you drink of the water that I give, you will never thirst. **And the water I give will be IN YOU a well of water springing into everlasting life.**

Discuss: Wow. What is he talking about?

She takes him literally. She responds, and says, Give me this water, so I will not be thirsty, and will not have to come back here to draw water.

Then Jesus says something different. He says, "Go tell your husband to come here."

She responds, I do not have a husband.

Jesus said, You are right when you said you do not have a husband. You have had five husbands, and the man that you have now is not your husband. What you said is true.

How did he know this? Did she tell him this? No.

Discuss: Discuss her possible situation; divorce, widowed, etc.

Currently living with someone but not married.

Could this be why she was not at the well with friends?

Could it be that she did not have a good reputation?

She then responded, I can see that you are a prophet.





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Then she asks a question. She says, Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but the Jews say that Jerusalem is the place where we should worship.

Some scholars have theorized that she is trying to divert, or trying to change the subject. However, there is another possibility. It seems that she has been searching for something; possibly happiness, fulfillment, contentment. Perhaps she is beginning to see that worship could be what she is seeking? Maybe now she sees that this possibly this man can tell her the answer to a long standing dispute: where should she worship?

Jesus answers her with something unexpected.

He tells her the time is coming when people will not worship on this mountain, or in Jerusalem. He says, You do not know what you worship; we know what we worship because salvation is of the Jews.

BUT...the time is coming, and is here now, that the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for people who will worship Him that way.

God IS a Spirit and if you worship him, you must worship him in spirit and in truth.

This was a new concept.

For thousands of years the only way to worship God was to go TO the temple. God was in the earth, but he resided in the Ark of the Covenant, in the Holy of Holies. Jesus is giving her a glimpse into the new covenant. What we have now is so much greater than what was available prior to the death and resurrection of Christ (John 8:56). In the new covenant, we are given a new spirit (2 Corinthians 5:17), we are transformed by our faith in Christ, and we worship God in Spirit, not in the flesh by a physical place.

She responds, **I know there is a Messiah coming, who is called Christ, and he will teach us all things.** It seems that this was one of the beliefs that the Samaritans held in common with the Jews.

And Jesus said, I am the Messiah, and I am speaking to you now.

At this point, the disciples returned. They were amazed that he was talking to this Samaritan lady. But no one asked, What do you want, or why are you talking to her?

Then the lady left. She left her water pot. She went into the city and talked to the men. She told them,

Come see this man who told me all the things I've ever done: isn't this the Christ?

Discuss: Think about this. The Bible doesn't put all of the emotion into this. But it would seem that she dropped everything.

She left her pot, which was the whole reason she was there in the first place, to get water. It would seem that she did this in a hurry, maybe in distraction, very possibly excited. She didn't think, I need to take the water home first and then I'll go share this news. She was EAGER to share this news to the people in the city.

But, notice WHO she shared the news with. She shared it with the men. From what we know about her, it may be that she had more of a relationship with the men than the women, and that might explain why she was there at the well alone.

Or, it could be that she went to share it with the leaders of the city because it was such an important revelation.





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After she went to the city and shared her news, the men came out of the city to meet Jesus. Meanwhile, the disciples are back with the food, and they are encouraging Jesus to eat. But Jesus says, I have meat to eat that you do not know about.

Discuss: The disciples are looking around at one another asking, Did you bring him something to eat?
Where did he get food?
What is he talking about?
I didn't give him any food, did you?

Then Jesus tells them that his meat is to do the will of him who sent him, and to finish his work. He then tells the disciples to look at the fields that they are ripe and ready to harvest. He is speaking about a spiritual harvest, and bringing people into the kingdom of God. Then he tells them that there are wages that are received from bringing people to the Lord, and here is implying that this is more satisfying than eating food.

One person will sow, and another person will reap. It does not always happen at the same time. Jesus tells the disciples that they are reaping another person's harvest. It would seem that he was speaking of the Samaritans.

You could be the person who tells someone about Jesus and life in the kingdom, but you might not be the person who sees them come to Christ. It may be that you planted a seed that had to grow in their heart. It could very well be that someone else comes along later who says something that brings everything together for that person, and they are the ones that actually lead them to belief in Christ.

After this, many of the Samaritans in that city believed on Jesus because of the testimony of the woman at the well, because she told them, He told me everything I ever did.

The Samaritans asked Jesus to stay with them, and he stayed there for two days. Even more of the Samaritans believed on Jesus because of his own words. Then the Samaritans told the woman, we believe, not because of what you said, but because now we have heard him ourselves.

We know that this is the Christ, the Savior of the world.



Jesus in the Story



We can look at the story and see how the pattern of the well is presented here in this story.

Someone journeys to a foreign country	-	Jesus traveled to Samaria.
A man and woman meet at a well	-	Jesus met this lady at a well
One of them draw water	-	Jesus asked this lady to give him water
The woman hurries home to tell news of the visitor	-	she ran back to tell the men of the city
The visitor stays (often a meal is mentioned)	-	Jesus stayed for two days
The two parties are joined by marriage	-	Samaritans come into the kingdom as the bride of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 21:2)

Living water is a reminder of the garden of Eden where a tree of life stood, with a river going out of Eden to water the garden.

Jesus is a source of water as the rock in the wilderness, from which the Israelites get water, the source of life.

Jesus also presents a new way of seeing God. The gospel of John is the first place in the Bible that we see God as our Father. Jesus presents God as a Father who is searching for his people. The Father is looking for people who want to worship him in the spirit and in truth. He is presenting God in a different way; he explains that God is a Spirit, and he is looking for people who will relate to him on his level.

To truly worship him, we must meet God where he is in the Spirit, and we can now do that through the righteousness that we have through Christ, and the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.





Lesson Questions & Memory Verses

5. An Evening Visit

1. Who was Nicodemus?
2. What did Jesus say a person has to do to see the kingdom of God?
3. Why did God send his son into the world? (John 3:17)
4. Who are those that are condemned and why? (John 3:18)

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

6. Everything I've Ever Done

1. Why was the lady surprised that Jesus talked to her?
2. What water did Jesus tell the lady he had?
3. Who did the lady go tell about Jesus and what did she say?

John 4:23

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 him. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

7. The Nobleman's Son

Read Hebrews 11:6

1. According to this verse, what do we have to do to please God?
2. What do we have to do to come to God?
3. Who does God reward?

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

8. Waiting for the Water

Read Romans 6

1. We are _____ to sin (v.2)
2. What should we not let rule in our bodies? (v.12)
3. We are not under what? (v.14-15)
4. What are we under instead? (v.14-15)
5. If you obey something, what do you become to the thing you obey? (v.16)

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

