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 Title: Why I need a Savior – The Woman at the Well- “Sir, Give Me This Water”
 Text: John 4:7-26 (v. 15)
 Theme: The Messiah has come and He seeks to save those who are lost.

BIG PICTURE:

“Why I Need a Savior”

- John the Baptist – John 1 - “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”
- Nicodemus – John 3 - “You must be born again”
- **The Woman at the Well – John 4 - “Sir, give me this water”**

The Eternal View:

To those who are dehydrated nothing quenches thirst like simple water. There is much on the market that seeks to replace water, but nothing is as good as simple water.

The Present Danger:

All of us love water. In time, however, we replace the desire for simple water with other things. Soda, coffee, tea, sports drinks all lure us away from the simple power of water.

Although the need is universal, the Psalmist reflects the experience of many when he wrote, “As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?” (Psalm 42:1, 2).

In the days of Jeremiah the prophet he charges the nation with the following crime:

⁹ “‘Therefore I will yet contend with you,’ declares the LORD, ‘And with your sons’ sons I will contend.¹¹ Has a nation changed gods when they were not gods? But My people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. ¹² Be appalled, O heavens, at this, and shudder, be very desolate,’ declares the LORD. ¹³ ‘For My people have committed two evils: [1] They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, [2] to hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns That can hold no water’” (Jer. 2:9, 11-13).

Notice the graphic language used throughout the narrative. This same language will be picked up by John’s narrative as he records the dialogue between our Lord and a woman of Samaria. John’s usage of the living water metaphor dominates the New Testament landscape.

Questions:

1. Who needs to drink?
2. How do you drink?
3. Have you drunk from the eternal fountain of God?
4. Is Jesus enough?
5. What does His presence look like on a daily basis in the midst of the “grind”?
6. Is the water available to all who ask?

To Know: The Holy Spirit desires for us to know Jesus as the living water.

To Choose: The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose Him above all else.

To Feel: The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the cool thirst-quenching joy of resting in Jesus Christ for the salvation of our immortal soul.

How will they best hear?

Salvation is like drinking a cup of cool water. It quenches the eternal thirst of souls. It is different than anything else out there and it quenches thirst like nothing else. It is simple as well; you simply must drink.

“Christ, leaving the proud Pharisees, communicates the treasures of everlasting life with a poor sinful woman and stranger, refuting the gross errors of the Samaritans, and defending the true service of God, which was delivered to the Jews, but yet in such a way that he here calls both Samaritans and Jews back to himself.”

<http://www.ccel.org/g/geneva/notes/John/4.html>

There was initial controversy with the Religious Leaders that motivated Christ to leave where He was and journey to where He desired to be. This course of action led Him through Samaria and thus provided Him a time to teach His disciples on the breaking down of barriers.

The setting for the story – Jacob’s well in the city of Samaria (vv. 1-6)

First, the city of Sychar (vv. 4, 5).

The Samaritans were considered half-breeds by the Jews. They were a consequence of the Jew mingling with the Assyrians during the Assyrian captivity of 722BC. They were considered *mongrel Jews, half-breeds*. To be called a Samaritan was a term of derision.

“The Jewish Rabbis said: ‘Let no man eat of the bread of the [Samaritan], for he who eats their bread is as he who eats swine’s flesh.’” (William Barclay, John, 1:150).

The feelings of the Samaritan toward the Jews were equally strong, “And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he were going to Jerusalem” (Luke 9:53).

Matthew 10:5 speaks of our Lord’s admonition to His disciples not to go into the city of the Samaritans, “These twelve Jesus sent forth, and charged them, saying, Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans.”

The fact that the disciples were willing to go into a city of Samaria to buy provision is a statement that cultural taboos were already beginning to fall.

Second, Jacob's well (v. 6).

Jesus began in Judea, left Judea for Galilee, and while on route passed through Samaria. While passing through Samaria "they came to the town of Sychar. Just short of Sychar, the road to Samaria forks. The one branch goes north-east to Scythopolis; the other goes west to Nablus and then north to Engannim. At the fork of the road there stands to this day the well known as Jacob's well. The well itself was more than 100 feet deep." (William Barclay, John, 1:147).

Third, the woman at the well (v. 7).

"The strict Rabbis forbade a Rabbi to greet a woman in public. A Rabbi might not even speak to his own wife or daughter or sister in public. For a Rabbi to be seen speaking to a woman in public was the end of his reputation - and yet Jesus spoke to this woman. Not only was she a woman; she was also a woman of notorious character." (William Barclay, John, 1:151).

To a Jew this was an amazing story. The events of John 3 must be contrasted with that of John 4. In John 3 we have the leading Rabbi Nicodemus needing to be born again, and here in John 4 we have an immoral woman needing to be born again. What John states in 3:16, he visualizes in John 4. There are five roadblocks to belief noted in our passage that I would like us to consider. I am working from the idea found in Mark 1:2, 3 concerning John's ministry of preparation.

I. "Making His path straight" (Mark 1:2, 3)

A. The issue transcends cultural taboos (vv. 7, 9, 27).

The issue is not whether I am a Jew, or a Catholic, or a Muslim, or a Protestant. It does not matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, male or female, bond or free, the Messiah transcends cultural taboos.

B. The issue transcends individual ability (vv. 11, 12).

I am not asking you if you are able, but are you willing?

C. The issue transcends personal convenience (v. 15).

You do not come to the Messiah to make your life better or more respectable. You come to be healed because you are sick, you come to be made whole because you are broken, and you come to be brought back to life because you are dead.

D. The issue transcends moral superiority (vv. 16-18).

Jesus is not waiting for you to clean up your life or to turn over a new leaf. If you are not sick, you will not seek a physician. If you are not ignorant, you will not seek a teacher. And if you are not blind, you will not seek an optometrist.

E. The issue transcends religious bigotry (vv. 19, 20).

The issue is not accepting or rejecting the various viewpoints of multiple people groups. What road blocks to belief do you need to overcome? This is the simple story of our Lord's dialogue with a woman at a well. There is a story behind the story that I believe we need to consider. There is a rich theology to be exposed in this dialogue that would be unfortunate to overlook. There are nine theological snapshots we should develop.

There is a large embrace to the mercy of God in the redemption of mankind. We would be amiss if we failed to see God's love for the lost.

II. The theology behind the story

A. It shows us the reality of His humanity (v. 6).

"It is very significant that John who stresses the sheer deity of Jesus Christ more than any other of the gospel writers also stresses his humanity to the full." (William Barclay, John, 1:148).

Our Lord's weariness at the well communicates at least two ideas.

1. He was a true man and subject to the common infirmities of the human nature.
2. He was a common man else he might have traveled on horseback or in a chariot.

B. It shows us the warmth of His sympathy.

Somehow this woman who was accustomed to social scorn sensed in Jesus warmth that engulfed her and disarmed her. It is with patience Jesus addresses the misunderstandings of His audience. We see this in John 3 with Nicodemus and now in John 4 with the Samaritan woman. When living Christ before others, we cannot afford to be short and ill-tempered. The Spirit of Christ is compassionate and long-suffering toward the unbelieving.

C. It shows us the breaking down of religious racism and spiritual bigotry (v. 4).

Ethnic and gender barriers were being smashed.

"John often uses the word 'must' of this mission (3:14; 9:4; 10:16; 12:34; 20:9; 3:7). The expression points to a compelling divine necessity. Jesus had come as 'the light of the world' (9:5). It was imperative that this light shine to others than Jews." (Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John, Revised, NICNT, 226).

The need is pressing (v. 35). Away with our excuses and let us enter the fields that are ripe for harvest.

D. It shows us there are no accidents, only assignments (vv. 6, 7)

“How the divine Providence brings about glorious purposes by events which seem to us fortuitous and accidental. How the preventing grace of God sometimes brings people unexpectedly under the means of conversion and salvation. He is found of them that sought him not.” <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/henry/mhc5.John.v.html>

E. It shows us salvation is a gift received by faith, not a reward earned by works (v. 10)

“If you knew . . . you would have asked Him.” All Jesus required of her was for her to ask of Him this water.

F. It shows us the temporal can never satisfy the eternal (v. 13)

In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord spoke of a thirst that can only be quenched in God (Matt. 5:6). This soul satisfying water eliminates the need to seek other cisterns (John 4:13, 14; 6:35; Rev. 7:16). This soul satisfying water can be found only in Jesus Christ (John 7:37). Because it is distributed by grace and not works, it is freely given to all who ask (Rev. 21:6). And the invitation to drink is broadcasted to all who have ears to hear (Rev. 22:17). It is a stunning commentary that John’s usage of the metaphor of Jesus being the Living Water would cry out at His crucifixion, “I thirst” (John 19:28).

G. It shows us the provision always exceeds the need (v. 14)

The word used by John to describe the impact of the water on the recipient is the same word used in Acts for those who are healed of lameness and “leaping” for joy at the outcome (Acts 3:8; 14:10). The infinite resides in the finite. The overflowing filling of God exceeds the capacity of the vessel to contain it.

“The living water that Jesus gives is such that those who receive it are permanently satisfied (cf. Matt. 5:6). The living water becomes in them a vigorous stream issuing forth in eternal life. The movement of a fountain is brought out in the vigorous ‘springing up.’ The life that Jesus gives is no tame and stagnant thing. It is much more than merely the entrance into a new state, that of being saved instead of lost. It is the abundant life (10:10), and the living Spirit within people is evidence of this.” (Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John, Revised, NICNT, 232, 33).

H. It shows us that we must always come as we are; hopeless and helpless (vv. 16-18).

Jesus does not care what you’ve done or where you are at. Jesus only asks that you come.

“I think that the Samaritan woman must have unburdened her soul to this stranger. For one of the very few times in her life she had found one with kindness in his eyes instead of critical superiority; and she opened her heart.” (William Barclay, John, 1:148).

“There are two revelations in Christianity: the revelation of God and the revelation of ourselves. No man ever really sees himself until he sees himself in the present of Christ; and then he is appalled at the sight. There is another way of putting it - Christianity [always] begins with a sense of sin.” (William Barclay, John, 1:156).

- I. It shows us there is only one way to come to God, through Jesus Christ (vv. 20-26)

APPLICATION: (What’s the NEXT STEP?)

There are no acceptable excuses for not embracing the person and work of Jesus Christ today. “We are never safe from the longing for eternity which God has put in man’s soul. There is a thirst which only Jesus Christ can satisfy.” (William Barclay, John, 1:156).

1. The issue is what do you think of Jesus the Christ (vv. 21-28, 42)?

“Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee, O Lord.” Augustine opens his Confessions with one of the best-known passages in all of Christian literature -- his observations about man's restless search for God.

2. The issue is do you believe (vv. 39-42)?

“The heart of all this there is the fundamental truth that in the human heart there is a thirst for something that only Jesus Christ can satisfy.” (William Barclay, John, 1:155).