

# GOSPEL OF JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

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## *“Come to the Well” (Part 2)*

John 4:15–26

Open your Bibles to John Chapter 4. We are going to be looking at verses 15–26 at this time. This will be our second of three studies involving Jesus’ encounter with the woman at the well. Let’s read our text and then we’ll take a look at it verse by verse. Beginning in verse 15 John writes:

<sup>15</sup>The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.”

<sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, **“Go, call your husband, and come here.”**

<sup>17</sup>The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.”

Jesus said to her, **“You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ <sup>18</sup>for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.”**

<sup>19</sup>The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.

<sup>20</sup>Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.”

<sup>21</sup>Jesus said to her, **“Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.**

**<sup>2</sup>You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. <sup>23</sup>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. <sup>24</sup>God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”**

<sup>25</sup>The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.”

<sup>26</sup>Jesus said to her, **“I who speak to you am *He*.”**

At the end of chapter 3, Jesus and His disciples were baptizing people in Judea, and many were coming. So many that the disciples of John the Baptist got a little envious.

Not John. He knew that he was sent to be a voice crying out in the wilderness about the coming of Messiah. He must decrease, and Jesus must increase.

That is exactly what was happening there in Judea.

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But for a variety of reasons, Jesus closes up shop; and He and His disciples head to Galilee where most of their ministry work was done. Rather than heading to the coast and going north, they went straight through Samaria. This was not something a good Jew would do.

The Samaritans were only half-Jewish so, although they were not complete heathen like the Gentiles, the Jews had little to do with them.

But as the KJV says, Jesus “**must needs**” go through Samaria on the way. He had a divine appointment with a Samaritan woman at Jacob’s Well.

Being weary from the climb, Jesus sat down at the well, while His disciples went to town to get some food. While He was sitting there, this woman comes up the hill in the heat of the day for what we called a *God-incidence*. Rather than come up to the well in the cool of the morning, like the other women in town, she came alone. We will see why in a moment.

As she gets ready to draw some water, Jesus said to her, “**give me a drink.**” This startled her for a couple of reasons. First, He was a Jewish rabbi who would not have a conversation with a woman in public. Second, she was a Samaritan, and no Jew would drink from her cup because of that.

So I’m sure she had mixed emotions about the motives of this man. And, as we shall see, her history with men was not good to say the least. Rather than simply complying, she engages with Jesus in a debate. She asks Him why a Jew would ask for a drink from her. I’m sure she expected any answer rather than the one the Lord gave her.

Instead of giving her some lame excuse, He offers her a drink of what He called “**Living Water.**” And Jesus equates this water with the “**gift of God,**” which we know is salvation found only in Him (Romans 6).

The woman, however, was still thinking in the natural rather than the spiritual. So she fires back at Jesus about how deep the well is and the fact that He doesn’t even have something to draw the water with. But Jesus does not engage her in debate.

Instead, He points out that the water she was going to draw would not quench her thirst. It could only do so temporarily. What He had to offer her would not only quench her thirst forever, it would become a fountain of living water springing up from her life.

And that ended the debate.

Who could refuse this kind of water?

So we begin in verse 15 with this needful woman saying this:

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**The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.”**

I think at this point the woman at the well is about halfway to where she needs to be. She wants what Jesus has to offer her, but she is still thinking in the natural. What Jesus desires to give her is salvation. But in order for that to happen, she must first see her need for a Savior. You see, there is no true conversion without conviction. So once again, Jesus shocks her with His response. Look at verse 16:

**Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.”**

Ouch! I bet this touched a nerve.

I remember when I first came to an understanding of just how wretched a sinner I am — especially in respect to who God is. It was not pretty.

In fact, we all have something known as “**besetting sins**” in our lives. In other words, we all have a well that we draw from that never quenches our thirst. Listen to how *Got Questions* defines besetting sin:

*Everyone has besetting sins they constantly struggle with, whether it is gossiping, lying, losing one’s temper, or lust. Christians do not automatically become perfect and sinless when we are saved ([1 John 1:8](#)); rather, we will continue to struggle against sin for the rest of our lives. We are constantly fighting against our sinful nature, as what the flesh wants conflicts with what the Spirit wants ([Galatians 5:17](#)).*

Before we come to know Jesus, the enemy uses these sins to blind us so that we cannot understand the Gospel (2 Corinthians 4:4).

The woman at the well had the besetting sin of trusting in men to comfort her. Look at verses 17-18:

**<sup>17</sup>The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.”**

**Jesus said to her, “You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ <sup>18</sup>for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.”**

When the woman said that she had no husband, was she speaking truthfully or trying to hide something?

What she said was technically true. However, she is not just dealing with a man here. She is dealing with the God/Man Jesus Christ. And He knows everything about her.

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By the power of the Holy Spirit (a word of knowledge), He points out the truth about her life. She not only has been married five times before, but she is now living with a man in sin.

What Jesus is doing here is not cruel and unusual. In fact, He is doing the most loving thing He can do. He is helping her understand that she, like all of humanity, has a sin problem that needs to be addressed. We all fall short.

So many think that you don't need to go here for a person to come to know Jesus. They think you can just point out to them the wonderful gifts that God has for them, and they will come to Him.

But the truth is, if that is how you evangelize, everyone comes. Everyone signs up. That was the failure of the "*Seeker Sensitive*" movement in the church. They never pointed out the sin problem people had (they called it "missing the mark"), so many never saw a need for a Savior. Thus, many people had a faith that had no roots, and they soon fell away.

This woman did not need another man. She needed to realize where her sin was taking her and turn from it.

What would we call her sin?

Adultery.

According to the Old Testament, what was the penalty for that sin?

Death by stoning.

But worse than that, her sin was keeping her from knowing God.

Like all sinners, she was spiritually dead. If something is not done about her condition, she will suffer eternal separation from a holy God who cannot look upon sin. But notice something else that Jesus points out here.

He separates her marriages from the fact that she is now living in sin, and that is NOT the same thing. One man and one woman become one flesh and build one family in a relationship not only together but serving one God. That is how the Lord has chosen to build His kingdom. Anything outside of that is unacceptable to Him.

Have you ever heard someone say that the marriage contract is "*just a piece of paper?*"

No, it is not.

It is a divine institution that comes from God. So if you think it is just a piece of paper, that is all it will ever be.

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Why does the enemy of our souls fight so hard against the family?

The first command given to man was, “**Go forth and multiply.**” Satan believes he can stop God’s plan by perverting the things He has instituted. So he goes after the family, government and the church with unrivaled zealously.

Thus, we have relationships outside of marriage, homosexuality, and the trans- movement that we are seeing in our world today. [*Mention Gary Hamrick and his teaching on “The Transing of America.”*] We are producing fewer children; and even when we do get married, half end in divorce. This is true even in the professing church.

So what the woman at the well was doing was an affront to God’s plan. That makes this a mega shift in the conversation she is having with Jesus. There is no more talk of blessings, no more talk of mercy. She is now confronted with her sinful state, and she has a choice to make.

Will she choose to draw from the well that Jesus offers her?

Or, will she just head back to town and come tomorrow to drink from the same well she has been drinking from her whole life?

Look at verse 19:

**The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.**

The word “**perceive**” here means to “*come to a knowledge of.*” In John 6:40 this same word is used of beholding Jesus in a knowing way. Listen to what the Lord says:

**And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees (perceives) the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”**

The woman is not there yet, but she is getting closer. She is at a point where many know Jesus — as a prophet or great teacher. Most likely she is just trying to deflect the conversation from her sin. She is willing to believe that there is something special about Jesus, much like Nicodemus did. But she isn’t ready to believe He can save her. Thus, in verses 19-20 she changes the subject.

This is what we often do when we are feeling conviction. We try anything we can to get the focus off of us and onto something else. Listen to what the woman at the well says next (verse 20):

**Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.**

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Unfortunately, for many when they are confronted with their sin, their first thought is religion. They say, “Yeah you’re right, I need to go back to church.” They turn their minds away from their sin and start thinking about how they can do better.

Well, guess what?

You can’t do better. That is why these kinds of sin are called **“besetting.”** If you try to overcome the sin in your life on your own, you will go back to it, just as Jesus said. You will go back to the well instead of getting well.

It is not enough to go to church.

It doesn’t help if you once got baptized.

It doesn’t even help if you went up at an altar call.

You need to be born from above, as Jesus told Nicodemus. You need to partake of **“Living Water,”** as He told the woman earlier. There is no other way. Your dead spirit needs to be renewed. And the only way that happens is by trusting Jesus. There is no other path that leads to the fountain of life other than through Him. And that is where He is going to lead this woman. Look at verses 21-22:

**<sup>21</sup>Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.**

**<sup>22</sup>You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.**

**“Woman, believe Me,”** Jesus says.

Only He knows the way to the Father.

Only He has the words of life.

And He was bringing a new way to worship.

Up until now the woman at the well was trusting in a series of fallen men. She now needs to trust in the God/Man. And He says that it is not about the place where we worship. It is about the Person we worship.

The Jews were closer than the Samaritans to understanding this. The Samaritans were kind of like the Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons. They thought of themselves as a sect of Judaism, but the changes they made were wrong. So they were worshipping what they did not know.

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The Jews had the sacrificial system, and they were custodians of the Word of God. They were following what the Bible said about worship (although they had made it all about ritual). But they too were missing the point.

They weren't saved because they were Jewish. Salvation is "from the Jews" because Jesus is Jewish. He was born of the seed of Abraham. And in just a short time, when He heads to the Cross, the hour would come when worship would be all about Him.

So the woman is now faced with the biggest decision of her life. Her old system of religion is not going to save her. Going back to the well of her relationships with men is not going to satisfy her. She has no place to turn, and that means she is in the best place she can be. She has nowhere else to go but to Jesus. So the Lord leads her there. Look at verse 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.**

The woman had talked about the worship of her fathers. But Jesus directs her to the worship of THE FATHER.

True worship does not demand a place. It is not about a rite or a ritual. It is not about a ceremony of any kind. And, contrary to what many people in the modern church believe, it is not all about music.

True worship is always about loving God, serving God, glorifying God and, yes, obeying God.

You don't have to go to church to worship Him, although you should go to church. You can worship the Lord anywhere, any time. And that is exactly what the Father desires — what He seeks — for us to worship Him.

I believe worship is the key to Christian life. When you feel that God is a million miles away, worship. Acknowledge the greatness and goodness of God. Open yourself up and let Him in. He is not a million miles away. You are.

The truest form of worship is a matter of the heart. And it is manifest in spirit and in truth. Notice it does not say to worship Him in the Spirit, although you can do this. He also doesn't say to just worship in truth. That can lead to dead orthodoxy. You have to worship God in both.

Jesus is telling the woman that she needs a new spirit, one that can communicate with the God of the universe. So in verse 24 He introduces her to Him. Look what Jesus says:



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**God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”**

What does it mean that God is Spirit?

It means that He lacks physical restraints. At times the Bible does attribute physical properties to Him. But these are known as anthropomorphisms. This literary tool is a way of describing God so that we can understand Him. But He does not have a physical body. Listen to how *Got Questions* explains why He cannot have physical restraints:

*Philosophically, God must be a spirit in order to be [infinite](#). Also, if God was limited to a physical body, He could not be [omnipresent](#) (in all places at once). God the Father is not limited to the dimensional restrictions of created things but can exist in all places at one time. God is the uncreated [First Cause](#) that is the power behind all other beings.*

That is why our spirit must be renewed. We cannot communicate with a God who is Spirit when our own spirit is dead. And the best place to get to know Him is in His Word.

Did you know that when you are born again, you now have the **“mind of Christ?”**

That means you can discern and understand spiritual matters. Plus, you now have the advantage of being led and taught by the Holy Spirit.

So what Jesus is telling the Samaritan woman is to stop limiting God to a mountaintop or a temple.

That means we should also not limit Him to a church. He is not found in brick and mortar.

We worship Him in Spirit and truth. The true God is understood Biblically and experienced spiritually. No matter where you are, all you need to connect with God is an open Bible and an open heart. Real worship occurs by the Spirit and through the Word.

So how does this woman respond to what Jesus just told her?

Is she ready to give her life to Jesus?

Not yet. She still has one last gasp argument to make. Look what she says (verse 25):

**The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.”**

The Samaritans expected a coming Messianic leader. But they did not expect him to be an anointed king of the Davidic line. Remember, they rejected all of the Old Testament



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except the first five books of Moses (Pentateuch). Based on Deuteronomy 18, they expected a Moses-like figure who would solve all their problems.

The woman was getting closer to understanding the truth. She was longing for the day when “her messiah” would come and explain everything. Little did she know that a much greater Messiah was standing right next to her. Look at verse 26:

**Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am *He*.”**

In the original, there is no “**He**.” It just reads, “**I who speak to you AM.**”

This is the first of what are known as the seven “**I AM**” statements that Jesus makes in John’s Gospel. And, in this statement, Jesus is unveiled as the “**Christ**.”

This woman is ready, even longing, for the truth; and Jesus gives it to her. He reveals Himself to her, and I believe she comes to Him.

This is how it works with the sinner.

It starts with love and compassion as we share the realities of grace and mercy by explaining what Jesus has done for us. Next, we move to confront the sin in their life. This does not have to be a time of condemnation.

Have you ever heard of Ray Comfort?

I love how he uses the Law to point out the sin in people’s lives. It is actually very easy to prove that we are all sinners. And when we realize exactly how we stack up against a holy God, the rest is simple.

We repent and see our need for the Savior. At that point, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ is disclosed to the sinner.

That is what happened that day at Jacob’s Well.

How do we know?

Next time we will talk about how she goes from being a woman of the world to becoming a powerful witness for Jesus. Read ahead and contrast what she does with what the disciples of Jesus do. It is amazing.

Let’s pray.