

## **John on Jesus - Jesus and the Samaritan Woman - Pt. 1**

**Sign Title: Jesus and the Samaritan Woman - Pt. 1**

**July 22, 2012**

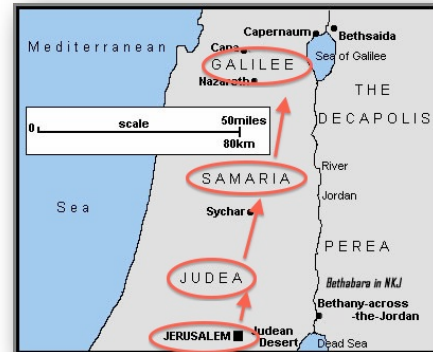
Good morning Faith family. My name is Kurt. I am one of the pastors. I want to say a special "Hello" to those connecting through the Internet. I discovered we were having some problems streaming to the Internet. Some of you were only receiving audio. We did a little repair this week so everyone should receive audio and video again. I think we solved the problem. Let us know if you have trouble.

This summer, we are studying the Gospel of John. For the next two weeks we are taking a break from the series. I will be out of town next week performing a wedding. In my place, we have a special singing group next week, The Bontragger Family Singers. They are a family with 10 kids. All the kids sing and play an instrument. They love Jesus. Next week is a relaxed fun-filled Sunday with the Bontraggers. The following week pastor Greg Jorgensen will preach. I will be on vacation visiting my parents in Philadelphia. The week after that we are back in the Gospel of John and we will finish the story we begin today.

One of the things I love about the Gospel of John is we see Jesus up close and personal with real people. This morning, in John 4, we see Jesus up close and personal with a Samaritan woman.

## What is the geographical and historical background?

For John 4 to make any sense, we need to begin with a little geography and history. Last week, we learned Jesus was working his way north. He left Jerusalem after the Passover. His public ministry took off at that Passover. He cleansed the temple, which put him on the front page of every newspaper. He performed miracles, which everyone took note of. Then people started following him and his disciples were baptizing in the Judean countryside. He was on his way home to Galilee, but he needed to pass through Samaria.



In that day, and in many ways today, Samaria is a very different culture than Galilee and Judea. Galilee to the north and Judea to the south were populated by Jews. Samaria, which is what we call the West Bank, was populated by Samaritans. Samaritans were a bizarre motley blend of culture, religion and worship. They were racial and religious mongrels. They were despised by the Jews because of their blended background.

Let me explain how that happened. Samaria has a great deal of history to it. Joseph's bones are buried there. Portions of the book of Genesis transpired there. Everything was fine until 722 B.C. when the Assyrians invaded. They hated the Jews. They didn't just want their land. They wanted to destroy their culture. They took the best people of that region and deported them. They left the poorest in the land. They took other nations they conquered nations and

moved them into the region. They were trying to get the cultures to mix and ultimately destroy their individual identities, histories, religions. The reason they did this was if you left a conquered culture intact, they tended to have lots of babies that grew up to hate you, then they tried to conquer you.

So the deported people, and those who remained in the land, had a crucial decision to make. Would they remain faithful to God or would they blend with the other cultures around them? Would they let their kids marry people who don't worship the true God? Would they go through the hard work of staying faithful to God?

The Jewish people who stayed in this region quickly blended with the new cultures brought into their land. They adopted their false gods. They adopted their false worship. They even adopted the hideous practice of child sacrifice. You can imagine how flaming mad those who were deported became about this. This was totally ruining their old neighborhood. We are talking deep animosity.

When they blended with these new nations, they didn't completely abandon their Jewish culture. They abandoned all the Old Testament books except the first five. The Samaritans claimed they still worshipped the true God but they simply worshipped in a different way.

Eventually the deported Jews returned and rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem. The Samaritans offered to help but the returning Jews wanted nothing to do with them. They considered them heretics, nut-jobs, freaks, traitors and animals. As you can see, the hostility ran deep. You can read about that in Ezra and Nehemiah.

The Samaritans didn't like experiencing rejection for the temple reconstruction project so they build their own temple on Mt. Gerazim to suit their own religious and motley cultic practices.

This competing temple of weird worship continued for 300 years until the Jews, under a guy named John Hyrcanus, were sick of it. They marched to Mt. Gerazim and destroyed the temple. That didn't win friends and influence people in Samaria. It created more deep hatred. Twenty years before Jesus' ministry, the Samaritans struck back by scattering human bones in the temple courtyard during Passover to defile it. That really freaked the Jews out when Samaritans emptied body bags of bones in the temple.

All of this is to say there is deep racial, cultural and religious hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans. Many of the Jews traveling to and from Jerusalem from Galilee would turn a two day journey into a five or six day journey by intentionally walking around Samaria. Think of this like extreme racial prejudice. You have the Klan in the north and the Klan in the south and the blacks in the middle. Walking in the wrong neighborhood may cost your life. Drinking from the wrong water fountain could start a riot. If we are to understand John 4, we need that historical backdrop.

### **Why did Jesus go through the bad part of town?**

Let's pick up our story in John 4.

**Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. And he had to pass through Samaria. John 4:1–4 (ESV)**

Do you remember the Pharisees? These were the most devoted religious people of the day. They were such hard-core religious folks that there were never more than 6,000 of them alive at one time in history because it was such an elite club. They heard Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John. This is what we talked about last week where John the Baptist was losing market share to Jesus. Rather than get into an encounter with the Pharisees, Jesus left the Judean countryside and headed north through Samaria to Galilee.

So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. John 4:5–6 (ESV)

Jesus was on his way through Samaria. He and his disciples came to the town called Sychar. This town was a fork in the road in the middle of Samaria. Jesus was tired. Remember that Jesus is fully God but he is also fully man. He became tired. He was exhausted. He needed to sit down. He needed a cold drink of water on a blistering hot day. It was about the sixth hour. That means it was high noon. The well was a hundred feet deep so unless you brought a bucket, you weren't getting any water.

### **Who was this woman?**

A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) John 4:7–9 (ESV)

It is interesting this woman came at noon. In the Middle East, nobody wants to be outside at noon because it is so hot. The well was about a mile outside of the city. Most women came to the well first thing in the morning to get

their water for the day before it was hot. The well was also the social gathering spot for ladies. It is where the ladies talked while they were filling their buckets before they walked back to town.

Why did this woman come by herself at noon? She had no friends and no life. The Samaritans were rejected by the Jews because of their weird religion and history. If the Samaritans rejected you, then you were at the bottom of the social food chain. That was this woman. She was a social outcast. A reject. She had a pathetic, lonely life.

Here is something funny. How many disciples does it take to make a sandwich? Apparently it takes 12 because all of them go to town to find the Jimmy John's leaving Jesus to fend for himself at the well. Maybe they were afraid to go into a Samaritan town. Maybe they thought they would be mugged. I don't know. It is funny when it takes 12 guys to make 13 sandwiches.

Jesus was hanging by himself on the side of the well baking in the noon sun like a French fry in an oven when this lady walked up with her empty water jar. Jesus asked her for a drink. That doesn't sound like much but in that culture, a man wasn't allowed to speak to a woman. A woman was regarded as sub-human. Some men were complete freaks about the possibility of lusting after a woman. That is why women were made to wear veils and drapery clothing. That is why women walked around looking like they had a bed sheet over their heads and were a ghost at a halloween party. There was to be nothing to attractive about them.

There was even a breed of Pharisees that were so extreme about this they were known as the bleeding Pharisees. Every time they saw a woman, they put their heads down but kept on walking. They kept running into things. They would run into animals, houses, and walls. Their heads were always bleeding from bumping into things. Thankfully none of them drove a car because it would have been a real mess if they saw a woman in traffic. Some Pharisees were so prudish in this area they wouldn't talk to any women in public, including their wives, mothers or daughters for fear that someone would think they were lusting.

So Jesus talked with a woman, which freaked everybody out. Not only that, she was a Samaritan woman. As we will see in a moment, she was not just any Samaritan woman, but she was a sexually-loose and spiritually-confused Samaritan woman.

When Jesus asked her for a drink, you need to know a little more cultural background. Jews hated Samaritans so much that when they traveled through Samaria, they would pack their own cups and silverware because they didn't want to be contaminated by eating from something a Samaritan touched. Here was Jesus asking if he could have a swig from her drinking bucket. That was unheard of!

What I like about Jesus is he didn't care about his reputation. He didn't care what people thought of him. He cared about this woman more than what other people thought of him talking to this woman. Here was a single guy talking with a despised rejected woman in public at the town well because he loved her. God loves the person nobody else loves. I love that part.

## Why am I still thirsty?

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.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?” John 4:10–11 (ESV)

What Jesus was doing here is the same thing he did with Nicodemus. He was taking an earthly need and connecting it to a deeper spiritual need. The last time this woman had a glass of cold refreshing water was at least 24 hours before. It was 110-120 degrees in the sun. Was she thirsty? She was parched. She was dreaming of cool water from the well. Jesus said to her, “You know what you are really thirsty for? It isn’t cold water. It is living water. I can give it to you.”

Jesus was talking about salvation. He was talking about being born again. He was talking about what it means to move from being apart from God to being in a relationship with him. Jesus was talking with her about what she is really thirsty for. In her heart, she was thirsty to connect with God, find forgiveness and to be loved. She was totally thirsty for God, but she didn’t get it.

The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.” Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.” John 4:11–15 (ESV)

She was interested in water but she didn’t quite get where Jesus was taking this conversation. She asked Jesus how he could give her living water. He didn’t even have a bucket. The well was deep.



She referred back to Jacob in the Old Testament. He dug this well. Every day the people of Sychar were thankful for Jacob because if he hadn't dug this well, they would all be dead. Every day the Samaritans of Sychar went to Jacob's well parched and thirsty. They were thankful he gave them water, because without it, they would die. This lady was thinking that anybody who could give them water in that dry desert region would be greater than Jacob who dug the well that everyone survived on.

Jesus reeled this thirsty woman in deeper. He told her that anybody who drank of the water from Jacob's well would be thirsty again. She understood that. That was why she made a trip every day to the well. She was thirsty again. Anybody who drinks of the water Jesus gives will find it a spring of water. It will continually be available to satisfy their thirst. That was seriously appealing to this woman who walked 1-2 miles a day in the scorching heat by herself carrying water to survive. At this point, she was seriously interested in what Jesus had to offer. She asked Jesus to give her this water so she wouldn't be thirsty and wouldn't have to keep coming back to the well to draw water.

We know Jesus was talking on one level. Jesus was talking about her thirst to be loved by God. He was talking about her thirst meaning and purpose. She thought Jesus was still talking about the thirst in her mouth and was offering to give her indoor plumbing. She seriously thought Jesus was a plumber. That was where she was. Now it gets interesting.

**The opposite sex cannot satisfy the thirst of my heart.**

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I

have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." John 4:16–18 (ESV)

In many ways, these verses seem out of place. Why did he bring this up? This woman was thirsty to be loved. Since she didn't know God loved her, she was trying to satisfy her thirst to be loved through men. This woman's problem was that she was a woman that worshipped men. I know this is a curve ball for many of you but that is what the text says. This woman was thirsty to be loved. Since she didn't know that God loved her, she was hoping that men would love her. She was thirsty for the affection of men just like she was thirsty for a glass of cold water on a sweltering hot day. In fact, she worshipped men.

For some of you, it sounds too strong to say she worshipped men. Think about it. What you dream about is what you worship by giving all your affections to it. What you think about all the time is what you worship. What you must have is what you worship. What is the center of your worship? Some of you worship sex. Others of us worship power. Others of us worship money. Many people worship their kids.

When Jesus went after the issue of men in the Samaritan woman's life, look at how she responds. She claimed she didn't have a husband. I don't know if that was her way of letting Jesus know she was single and available if Jesus was interested. I just don't know. Either way, when Jesus put his finger on the issue of men in her life, she covered it up because it hurt.

Jesus totally called her bluff on this one. She had five husbands and the guy she was living with and sleeping with she was not married to. We don't know what happened to these guys. Maybe they all died. Maybe she was so

desperate for men that she was attracted to losers who married her, had sex with her and dumped her like a used party favor when they were bored.

At this point, she didn't even marry guys, because marriages fall apart. At this point she just slept with a guy. She was doing his laundry. She was carrying his water into the house. She was sweating to bring back water in the middle of the day for a guy who didn't even have the decency to marry her and give her his last name. She put up with all of it because she had to have a man in her life. She worshipped men. She was more thirsty for the affection of men than she was for the water from the well. This was the reason she came to the well at noon. She was too ashamed to be around the other women getting water in the morning.

Can you imagine how sad and dejected this woman was? Can you imagine the pain in her heart knowing that she was a complete relational failure? The only thing a guy wanted her for was sex. Every day at lunch she sweated and strained to carry back water for a guy who didn't love her, but she wouldn't leave him because she was too afraid of being alone.

When Jesus hung on the cross, he took this woman's sins upon himself. He died for her because he loves her. He hung on the cross and took our sins upon him and died for you because he loves you. All of us are thirsty to be loved. Even intimate love from the opposite sex, even marital love is not enough to satisfy. The only thing that can satisfy us is knowing and experiencing what it means to be loved by God.

## **False religions can't satisfy the thirst of my heart.**

The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." John 4:19–20 (ESV)

When she said that she perceived he was a prophet, she admitted Jesus had something freaky going on with God. Either her reputation was so bad that the entire Jewish nation knew about it or Jesus was a prophet who had the ability to look right into the dark secrets of her soul. She was totally caught. She was totally exposed. There were no secrets with Jesus. He just pulled up the big ugly hairball of her history into the open and dealt with it.

Now it gets interesting. She immediately launched into a discussion about what is the right location for worship. Was it Mount Gerazim, where the destroyed temple of the Samaritans was or was it in Jerusalem at the temple of the Jews? I grew up believing the reason she launched into this discussion was because she was trying to change the subject. She didn't like talking about her bad sex life. I am not sure she was changing the subject.

Remember the real issue in this passage is being satisfied by God in worship. Jesus was using the Samaritan's physical thirst to get after the thirst in her heart for God. She was worshipping men to try and satisfy that thirst. She was afraid to be alone so she threw herself into relationships.

I don't think she was trying to change the subject. I think she was finally onto the subject. She wondered what she was supposed to do when it came to worship. Where did she go to deal with her sin? Where should she go to

connect with God? Should she go to Mt. Gerazim or to Jerusalem to find some hope and healing? Jesus came to her rescue.

**Only true worship can satisfy the thirst of my heart.**

Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” John 4:21–24 (ESV)

Jesus said, the time was coming, and is now here, when worship that satisfies our heart’s desire to be loved by God and connect with God would not be about approaching God on Mt. Gerazim or in Jerusalem. This whole way of approaching God in a place, in a temple and with a sacrifice was changing.

John said that the only way to approach God and worship God in a way that is satisfying, the only way you discover how much God loves you is through Jesus. The reason this woman found the Samaritan worship so empty was because it was like drinking salt water. It was empty worship. She didn’t leave church knowing she was loved by God. She didn’t leave church feeling connected to God. She left empty and thirsty. All other religions that approach God outside of Jesus Christ leave people thirsty to be loved by God and to know God.

What does it mean to worship God in spirit? First, it means God is worshipped in your heart and in your life. Worship is not about rituals. It is not about rosary beads. It is not about special sacraments. It is about your heart

toward God. Worship is about the desire of your heart to be satisfied with God through Christ. The worship of God is your pleasure and joy instead of sin.

What does it mean to worship God in truth? It means there are many different ways people approach God, but they are not all the same. There is only one way that is the truth. That is the way God is to be worshipped. That was the problem with the Samaritans. They didn't know God. That is why Jesus said that the Samaritans were worshipping what they did not know. The Jews were worshipping what they did know because salvation was from the Jews. This something the Jews kept getting wrong. They thought salvation was *for the Jews*. They thought they were God's favorite kids and that God just cared about them, and everybody else was kindling for the fires of hell and were to be despised and hated. That isn't what the Bible says. Salvation is *from the Jews*. God's plan was to bless the world from the Jews. Salvation for the world is from the Jews, not just for the Jews.

What is the true way to worship God today? It is only through Jesus Christ. All other worship of God that is not through Jesus is not acceptable nor is it pleasing to God or satisfying.

## **Conclusion**

Is anyone here thirsty this morning? Jesus said we are all thirsty for God. What we are thirsty for is to be loved by God. We are desperate to know God cares about us. We try to satisfy that thirst for God with things like toys, money or sex. The Samaritan woman tried to satisfy her thirst with men, but it never satisfied. Others try to satisfy their thirst for God with false worship. That never

satisfies. It is like drinking salt water. There is only one place to go to be satisfied. There is only one place to go to know you are loved. There is only one place to go to know all your sins are forgiven. There is only one place to go to know you are not alone. That is Jesus. He is the only one that can satisfy that thirst in your soul.



Does anyone want a drink?

Jesus, thank you for loving us. Thank you for dying for us. Thank you for satisfying that deep need inside of us to be loved. The opposite sex will fail us, but you never will. Help us to remember that we are most satisfied when we are satisfied in you. Help us also to remember that all worship is not the same. All worship that is not through Jesus and to Jesus is like drinking salt water. It can never satisfy. Give us opportunities this week to talk to people who are looking to find love, meaning and purpose in sex, money and toys. Give us clear words to tell them the most satisfying thing in this life is knowing we being loved, forgiven and worshipping Jesus. Amen.



Dr. Kurt Trucksess is ordained in the EFCA. He enjoys reading, writing, time with his family and wrestling with his sons. His favorite topics of study are ancient rhetoric and preaching. Feel free to contact him at [ktruck@gmail.com](mailto:ktruck@gmail.com) or visit his web at [www.christ2Rculture.com](http://www.christ2Rculture.com)

© Dr. Kurt Trucksess. You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material in any format provided that: (1) you credit the author, (2) any modifications are clearly marked, (3) you do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction, (4) you include the web site address (<http://www.christ2Rculture.com>) on the copied resource.

