

Simply Jesus

The Life and Ministry of God's Son

Inductive: Lesson 3

Introduction

It has been pointed out that at the foot of the Cross, men and women are considered equal. There is no such thing as rich or poor, good or bad; all have sinned and fallen short of God's standard and are in need of a Savior. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). We see this point beautifully illustrated through the Lord's encounters with two very different individuals: Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman at the well.

During the first year of Jesus' ministry, so many people became interested in His teachings that the religious leaders in Jerusalem were beginning to talk about how to turn people away from Him. Sensing the growing opposition, Jesus turned His attention to the north toward the region of Galilee, but to get there He would stop and rest in Samaria (the area we know today as the West Bank).

The Jewish view of Samaritans meant that they were regarded as half-breeds, consequently the Jews refused to have anything to do with them. Actually, the Jews and the Samaritans despised each other for racial and religious reasons going back hundreds of years. So great was the animosity between them that Jews traveling northward between Jerusalem and Galilee would avoid taking the shorter more direct route through Samaria, choosing instead to add miles and days to their travel agenda by going the long way around. The Samaritans in turn would often retaliate by closing the road through town that led in either direction. So here was Jesus, departing Jerusalem to go to Galilee, and the Scripture says, *He needed to go through Samaria* (John 4:4).

Did You Know

Jesus did not allow Himself to be governed by the common ethnic prejudices or cultural traditions of the day. He deliberately headed toward "hostile territory" immune to the social political biases of His day because His concern was for the souls of people. Nicodemus was as moral and religious a man as they come. He was wealthy, an educated scholar, and a ruler among the Jews. He allowed his life choices to be defined and governed by God's laws. Yet his conversation with Jesus led to the revelation that Nicodemus would never be righteous enough; he too must *be born again*.

Contrast this with the next encounter Jesus was about to have with a woman whose reputation was anything but stellar. Yet in spite of her sinful lifestyle, she too was clinging to her religion with a thread of hope that it would help her find God. She would receive the very same counsel that Jesus gave to Nicodemus—that both were in need of a Savior.

Open your Bible and lesson each day by beginning with a word of prayer.

Read Matthew 4:18–25, 8:14–17; Mark 1:29–39; Luke 4:14–44; John 4:1–54.

First Impressions: Group Discussion

Reflect for a moment on the passages you have just read.

Respond by recording your first impressions from your initial reading of the text. Be prepared to share one of your impressions with your discussion group.

Heartbeat: John 4:10 (Memory verse)

(Write out the verse in the spaces below. Practice it each time you open your lesson.)

Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

John 4:1-42 NKJV

Living Water

1 Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John 2 (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples),

3 He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. 4 But He needed to go through Samaria.

5 So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well.

It was about the sixth hour. 7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her,

"Give Me a drink." 8 For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

9 Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

11 The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep.

Where then do you get that living water? 12 Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"

13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again,

14 but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst.

But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing

up into everlasting life." 15 The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water,

that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

True Worship of the Messiah

16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."

17 The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her,

"You have well said, 'I have no husband,' 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

19 The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know, we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. 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.

24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him much worship in spirit and truth.” 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.”

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

The Whitenened Harvest

27 And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, “What do You seek?” or, “Why are You talking with her?”

28 The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men,

29 “Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?”

30 Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

31 In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.”

32 But He said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.”

33 Therefore the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?”

34 Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.

35 Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! 36 And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

37 For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’

38 I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.”

The Savior of the World

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all that I ever did.” 40 So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days.

41 And many more believed because of His own word. 42 Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

(Scripture from the New King James Bible, © 1980 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission.)

INTERPRETATION: What Does It Mean?

Pray. The more time you take to observe the passage, the more you will have a basis for understanding what God's Word means. Interpretation **always** seeks to answer the questions, "What was God saying to the original audience?" and then, "How does that same truth relate to life today?" Asking yourself questions will help you see the spiritual lesson in the text: What does this teach me is true about God? What does it teach me is true about mankind? Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a condition to the promise? Is there an example I should follow or avoid? A spiritual lesson is a timeless truth that points to God and speaks to the heart of man. **Stating the lesson in a sentence of 10 words or less will help you keep it simple and memorable.**

APPLICATION: How Does it Apply to Me?

Pray. Practicing Biblical truth day-to-day is the only way to grow in Christ and reflect the glory of God. To apply the spiritual lesson you have learned from the text, you have to take deliberate action. Take the time to examine yourself, and ask: Does this spiritual lesson point out error in my thoughts about God? Does it point to error in my attitude or actions? How does this lesson relate to my home life, my work, my relationships, how I spend my time, etc? What change is required? What practical steps will I take to make that change? Write your application in the form of a question to help make it personal.

John 4:1–15

Lesson: _____

Application: _____

John 4:16–26

Lesson: _____

Application: _____

John 4:27–38

Lesson: _____

Application: _____

John 4:39–42

Lesson: _____

Application: _____

Take a Closer Look: A Samaritan Woman Meets Her Messiah

Review John 4:1–42

The fact that Jesus “needed to” or “had to” get to Galilee by way of Samaria implies it was out of necessity or compulsion. In fact, He was led by the Holy Spirit for the particular purpose disclosed in this chapter. If Jesus and His disciples began their journey at daybreak, they would have traveled about six hours before arriving at Jacob’s well. The reader is given a glimpse of His humanity in that Jesus too experienced weariness and thirst. He sat down by the well and a conversation ensued that would have lasting impact on all those who hear it.

1. Where were the disciples at this time? v. 8

2. What request did Jesus make to the woman who came to the well? v. 7

We aren’t given her name, but the fact that she came to the well at the hottest time of the day indicates she was avoiding the other women who came daily to draw water. Jesus’ request shatters the cultural and social boundaries of the day.

- a. What does the woman point out that Jesus seems indifferent to? v. 9

This woman had never engaged in a conversation like this one with a Jew. It was unheard of for a Jewish man to speak to a Samaritan woman. She was shunned by the Jews because of her heritage and by the local townspeople because of her reputation. When Jesus looked at her, He saw neither; He looked at her from the standpoint of who and what she would become.

3. What does Jesus point out about Himself? v. 10

4. Thinking that Jesus is referring to well water, what does she reply? vv. 11–12

5. What does Jesus reveal about the water of satisfaction He offers? vv. 13–14

The woman’s response is, “Give me this water” (v. 15), which is the overture to the experience of true worship. With these simple words she was brought to express her spiritual need; but she did not yet fully know the depth of that need, so He probes further. The questions He asks her awakens her conscience and reveals her sin, leading to her repentance.

6. What does Jesus ask her to do next? What is her response? vv. 16–19

- a. As she exposes her true condition, what does she perceive about Him?

In attempt to avoid being exposed, the woman tries to avert the issue to the mountain where the Samaritans worship—Mt. Gerizim. The Samaritans would turn their faces toward this mountain as they worshiped, believing that the Messiah would one day appear there. Jesus points her not to a mountain but to Himself as the center of worship.

- b. What is the essence of His message? vv. 21–24

The Samaritan woman and Jesus both have something in common: she is interested in obtaining water; He in supplying it. She came carrying a jar of water on her head, but Jesus ended up filling her heart with overflowing satisfaction!

True worship is not a matter of tradition and ritual as the Samaritans believed when they faced the mountain, rather it is a personal relationship with the living God. Jesus taught Nicodemus that this relationship begins when one is born again inwardly by the Holy Spirit. Here He teaches the Samaritan woman that true worship is the outward expression of this relationship with God.

The disciples marveled when they returned to find Jesus talking with the woman but none of them asked Him the reason for it. And she was so impacted by her encounter with Jesus that she left her waterpot behind and returned home to share this “good news.”

7. What news did she share with her fellow townspeople that made her the first female evangelist? vv. 28–30, 39

8. There was a great harvest in Samaria resulting from this event. Jesus used it to teach a lesson to the disciples—what was it? vv. 31–38

Many Samaritans believed as the result of this woman’s testimony; and many more believed because of His own word (vv. 39–42): “Now we believe . . . for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

True worship means much more than praising God with your lips, it means glorifying God with your life. Do *you* know about the gift that God has for you? Do you realize He is the One speaking to your heart right now? All you have to do is ask to receive His *Living Water*!

Behold & Be Transformed

What did you **see** as you beheld God's Son?

How does beholding (looking upon) Him, motivate you to change your thoughts, habit, attitude, speech or actions?

Pause . . . What is the most significant lesson you have learned this week?

Ponder . . . How will you put it into practice?

Pray . . . Write out your prayer and be specific.

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