

John 4:1 – 29

...³ Jesus left Judea and started back to Galilee. ⁴ But he had to go through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well¹ was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. ⁷ A Samaritan woman came to draw water², and Jesus said to her³, 'Give me a drink.' ⁸ (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans⁴.) ¹⁰ 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.' ¹¹ The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? ¹² Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' ¹³ Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' ¹⁵ The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.' ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come back.' ¹⁷ The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; ¹⁸ for you have had five husbands,⁵ and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!' ¹⁹ The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.' ²¹ Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. ²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must 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 proclaim all things to us.' ²⁶ Jesus said to her, 'I am he, the one who is speaking to you.' ²⁷ Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you want?' or, 'Why are you speaking with her?' ²⁸ Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, ²⁹ 'Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?'

Cultural Background Notes

¹ *Two wells:* There were two wells this woman could have gone to. One well was in Sychar itself, and was closer. The village women would have gone to this well in the morning when it was cool. The other well was Jacob's well, outside the town, near a caravan route, which is the one this woman goes to.

² *Wells have romantic connotations.* In the Old Testament, romantic encounters happened near wells: Adam and Eve, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel, Moses and Zipporah.

³ *Men & Women:* Normally, an upright man would not talk to an unknown woman.

⁴ *Jews & Samaritans:* Samaritans were descended from Assyrians intermarrying with Jews during the Assyrian captivity in 721 B.C. They did not believe in any biblical book after Deuteronomy and worshiped on Mount Gerizim, not on Jerusalem.

⁵ *Multiple marriages:* Under Greek cultural influence, men had the power of divorce

Questions

1. Take a few minutes to read the passage on your own for a few minutes. Circle words or interactions that you don't understand. Try to get into how the woman perceives Jesus at different points. What keeps her in the conversation?
 - a. So what might this woman think about the fact that this Jewish man was striking up a conversation with her?
 - b. Do you think there is language that serves as 'double entendre' here?
 - c. When Jesus talks about living water, what might the woman think about?
 - d. Notice the progression of titles with which the woman speaks to Jesus. What does that indicate?
 - e. Why does she ask Jesus if he is greater than 'our father Jacob' in v.12? Why make reference to 'his sons and his cattle'?
2. Jesus deepens the conversation:
 - a. Jesus says in v.16, 'Go call your husband and come back.' Why does he do this?
 - b. How do you think she hears that question? What does her answer suggest?
 - c. Why do you think Jesus brings this up?
 - d. What kinds of cycles do you find yourself in?
 - e. How might Jesus be relevant to your cycles of thirst?
3. Looking towards Jesus for resolution
 - a. What do you think is going on in v.19? What's with this Gerizim or Jerusalem thing?
 - i. If she needs to go to Gerizim to find God, then everyone there will...
 - ii. If she needs to go to Jerusalem to find God, then everyone there will...
 - b. How is Jesus' answer sensitive to her question?
4. What is attractive and challenging to you about Jesus in this interaction?