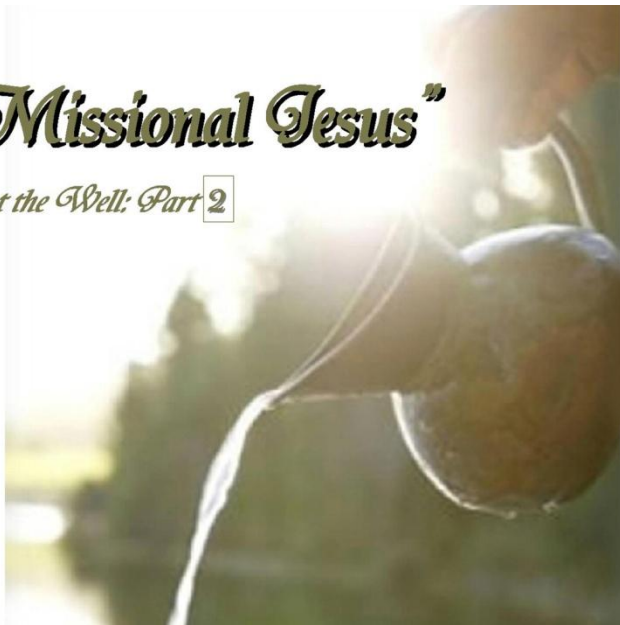


"The Missional Jesus"

The Woman at the Well: Part 2

John 4:1-42



"THE MISSIONAL JESUS"

The Woman at the Well: Part 2

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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." **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 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 tell us all things." **26** Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He." **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." **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."

The woman on this divine appointment travels now on a journey that would transform her through the renewing of her heart and her mind. (Romans 12:2) One that would process Jesus for her from a mere Jew in verse 9, to "sir" in verse 11, to a "prophet" in verse 19, to *worshipping Him* in the end as the Christ for whom she awaited. She did not come looking for God, she just wanted water. She was thirsty. She perhaps didn't grasp just how thirsty she was. She did not come looking for God but God on this day came looking for her.

She began by being rational and a realist. Her private life and her language gives us a view of the woman: *earthly, sensual, practical, individualistic, and yet still seeking*. Despite it all, she still ultimately gives away this glimpse of her heart, as needy and wanting and as lacking as anyone else: woman who had shed the constraints of moralism and dogma for the perceived freedom of individualism and a world pursuit of fulfillment. She was in so many ways the same person that we all run into everyday in our own world. That person that we have categorized as locked in and entrenched. There is “no way” *that* person is coming out of there!

But our perceptions of this woman would have been wrong. As wrong as our perceptions often are concerning those we run into daily. It is because we fail to take into account a couple of things: One, that there is an inescapable and insatiable God sized hole inside of every one of us, and that despite an often lifetime of effort, we can never successfully fill that hole with anything else. It is so critical that we never forget that truth! People can cover it up, play it down, say it is inconsequential, or even deny its existence all together. But we know better, so we can go in there with the confidence that indeed some people *seek* redemption, but everyone *wants* redemption. The world is obsessed with that quest! It is what drives the marketplace and fuels the indulgences of the flesh.

And the second thing we can never forget is the sovereignty of God: His management of all things. He is the master of “divine appointments,” the author and instigator of the “butterfly affect.” Nothing is mere chance, and there is no such thing as luck. All the searching...all the experimenting...all the “trial and error” ultimately has now led her to this appointment. An appointment made in the heavens before she was even born. An appointment perhaps caused by spilling the bucket of water early this morning at her place, or accidentally over-sleeping, or inexplicably hitting all the traffic lights coming out of town that day! The omniscient, omni-present (all knowing, everywhere at once) God that makes personal meeting appointments for us if we seek to have them, and sometimes even when we don’t.

For Jesus often did not wait for such folks to find Him. He went to them. Beside that Samaritan well is only one of the unlikely places we find Jesus in the gospel accounts. At the wedding feast making wine, in the dark of night with incognito religious leaders, walking on the water during a storm and climbing into a boat, the list goes on. We must stop looking for the lost to come sit in the pews on Sunday mornings and instead take Jesus out to them. The lost are here amongst us indeed today, but they will be the hardest to convince of their lost state. For ‘in religion’ is the best place to hide from Jesus.

This woman liked the idea of never having to go get water again...especially in the high heat of the day. She said “*oh yes sir! I would love to have some of that water, and then I would never have to come back out here and tote this water back home again!*” But her eyes were just beginning to be opened and she still did not understand all-together. Not having to come back to the well would have had the secondary benefit of not having to dodge the other women and the whispers and the “shunning.” She would not have to be reminded what the exercise of her “freedoms” had cost her.

Jesus would now gently “out” her but He did so only to open **her** eyes, no one else’s. She was currently living with a man...*not her first*, and Jesus put her in a situation in which she effectively confessed to such without provocation. This was not a wicked woman, but rather merely a worldly one. We build walls between “us” and “them” when we think in such terms. *They* are **wicked** so I must shun their presence or some of their wickedness might get on us! We tend to paint such scenes with broad strokes...attributing their behavior to a conscious awareness of sin and evil, and purposely choosing such over goodness out of some sort of twisted spite.

But the reality is they are just being *unredeemed*! They are being normal for their world! This was just a woman who was lost on the road of life while still looking for it. It was for *these* Jesus came! Not for the fine and proper pew warming Sunday “moral man.” He would later say in Luke 5:31 that “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick,” and thus he had not come “...to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

“Give me a drink.” It was a simple and humble “ice-breaker” for where Jesus wanted to go with this woman and would indeed eventually go. With such he was able to bridge a communication between Himself and this woman. He did not begin with condemnation. He did not even begin with a conversation on faith, or need, or sin. He first broke down the walls that separated them, and then He had a clear path to her heart. May we take note of the lesson here that He gave us in methodology.

Jesus engaged people where they were. Throughout His ministry the application of common things characterized His teaching ministry. Here before us, He uses the concept of thirst to teach how mankind is thirsty spiritually. Elsewhere He used the wind to teach about the Holy Spirit. He used the sower and the seed to teach evangelism. He identified with the fisherman and said, "I will make you fishers of men." He performed a miracle involving bread to show that He was the "Bread of Life." With this woman He began with *conversation*, not a "chick tract."

THE JESUS WAY: Introducing a Person to Jesus

- (1) Go to where the non-Christians are found ([Jn 4:4](#))
- (2) Speak to them with respect and not with a sense of superiority or in a patronizing way ([Jn 4:7](#))
- (3) Meet them where they are, focusing especially on any need you can discern in them ([Jn 4:10](#))
- (4) Speak about God's great gift (not necessarily quoting verses but just telling them that God has a free gift) ([Jn 4:10](#))
- (5) Try to use illustrations or pictures from daily life ([Jn 4:10-12](#))
- (6) Tell them of the real satisfaction available to meet one's needs ([Jn 4:14](#))
- (7) Give them an opening to be honest about their sin (which speaks of their greatest need) ([Jn 4:16](#))
- (8) Don't be sidetracked ([Jn 4:11-12, 19-21](#))
- (9) Try to differentiate genuine concerns or questions from those that are not ([Jn 4:25](#))
- (10) Answer questions with the truth about Jesus ([Jn 4:26](#))
- (11) Don't fear potential results ([Jn 4:29-30](#))
- (12) Encourage them to share with others what you have shared with them ([Jn 4:39](#))
- (13) Most importantly, imitate the Jesus Way but making people and their need for salvation your highest priority (I have found when I pray for people to be saved, I often get opportunities to share Jesus with them). ([Jn 4:34-35](#)).

The water in which Jesus spoke of here, was not merely the H₂O kind but rather the kind that so deeply satisfies that nothings else would ever compare. *"Everyone who drinks of this water in the well before us will of course sooner or later still thirst."* No one would know that better than her. For 6 men later she was still without personal fulfillment. She still wasn't *whole*. She was still *thirsty*! Such is a defining characteristic expressing where we stand. The world is insatiably thirsty...always seeking, always pursuing the peace and satisfaction that only Christ can bring. They buy, seek experience, and "feel" their way through life...trying at all cost to find some meaning. And for those who find Him? There is **rest**: the rest that the author of Hebrews speaks of.

This woman however is like most men and women we meet in life, in that she's almost exclusively concerned with the provision of what will satisfy her immediate and physical wants, not spiritual needs. The reality of life on this planet is that most people are in reality just more concerned for the welfare of the body more than the welfare of the soul.

"Give me a drink."

"How is it that you... ask of me?" ([John 4:9](#)). The woman has awakened. As soon as she comes into His presence her curiosity is aroused. Whoever comes into the presence of Christ cannot help but be moved in one way or another. If we ourselves are in "tune" with the Spirit of God, we often cause similar curiosity and even thirst, and need not prod in order to illicit conversation.

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."

"...if you knew the gift of God." Sadly, most people just don't! Our job as ambassadors is not to save people. We cannot do that, and it is an exercise in futility and heartbreak to try. Our job is to express in our living and our words the "gift of God." The gospel good news of redemption and wholeness that is available to everyone.

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?" Again we see the woman was still operating in the physical realm, in the immediate needs and wants of the body. The woman stood that day on the brink of the greatest possibilities, but was utterly unconscious of them. Jesus was offering her "living water." The 'water' of a living God...not a mere dead historical figure, one which brings *living* into our lives! But her question was legit and is the question the world is asking: *"where do you get this living water?"* It is a gift that cannot be earned no matter what we do. It is a *gift*: always and forever a free gift.

A Jew familiar with the OT Scriptures would have likely understood that the Messiah was the spiritual fountain or source for the "good stuff." In Jeremiah, God lamented the poor "water" choices of His people declaring *"My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, **the fountain** (same word for "fountain" Jesus used in verse 14) of **living waters**, to hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns That can hold no water."* (Jer 2:13) His is a water endowed with life itself. A water that gives us life. A water that quenches the insatiable thirst that ravages our world.

The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

I am struck by the insistent line that is blindly repeated by the multitude of naysayers today, that "Jesus never said He was God...never said He was the Messiah." And yet here we read this in utter clarity: **"I am He..."** She knew that "He" was out there someplace. She, like the untold millions that have followed since have sought for the answer. Even in the blindness of the unredeemed life, they all know "He" is out there.

The gift...the "water" that Jesus spoke of was more than truth, more than purpose, and more than eternal life. All of those things exist in this "gift," but the water Jesus spoke of was literally Himself. It is the possession of deity within us...the missing piece of who we are. That which has been missing from our lives since that first sin in the garden of Creation.

Augustine said that *"water issuing from a spring is what is commonly called living water. Water collected from rain in pools and cisterns is not called living water. It may have originally flowed from a spring; yet if it collects in some place and is left to stand without any connection to its source, separated, as it were, from the channel of the spring. It is not called "living water." Water is designated as "living" when it is taken as it flows. This is the kind of water that was in that fountain."*

Many of those who claim the mantle of Christianity today still fail to grasp the depth and truth of this presentation. So many still see faith as something you buy into, instead of someone you participate in and with. The idea of that unity, that participation with, so often still escapes us. And often it literally offends us! When Jesus spoke of the need to "eat His flesh and drink His blood" many of His followers turned back and followed Him no more. Why? Because man wants a credo to follow, rules and regulations to adhere to in order to establish our standing. Something we can measure. Something to give validation to our perceived sacrifices and religious personal efforts. What Jesus was telling this woman was that **He** was the answer and her unity with Him gave her life and life eternal, not religious laws and regulations. And how do you measure that? How do you measure something that doesn't stop flowing?

In the Old Testament Moses struck the rock twice and he struck it out of anger, and God was not pleased with His behavior. Yet many of us are attempting to evangelize with that same heart today. The world and its ways are frustrating and frankly often deeply disturbing to us that stand with God. And yet Jesus was herein not angry or condemning or in any way avoiding this woman. He was gentle, patient, and purposeful. For this was a woman who was blind. How could she then be expected to make sense of the world around her in a spiritual manner? It was Jesus that could open her eyes. And it is still Jesus that opens the eyes of the blind, gives direction to the lost, and gives water to the thirsty...all of which was and is HIM.

How then, in light of this great truth, will we ever know where we stand? What will affirm our rebirth and our standing? *"Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."* **John 7:38**. You see, this water is again, **"living water."** And living water **moves**. In Isaiah we read the promise to the chosen people *"Therefore you will joyously draw water ...from the springs of salvation."* (**Isa 12:3**).

To "drink" in this passage is not a "once thing" or a "past thing" for any of us. Jesus paints the picture of a singular life changing act as well as a continuous lifestyle. Meaning we are to "drink and keep drinking." We are to drink of Him...drink of that water as a 'practice of life.'

How long has it been since you really drank of that water? Are you thirsty today? Maybe you have never drank from this water, and know nothing of such life. Maybe you remember that first drink but have never been back to that well for more. Either way you find yourself thirsty this morning. You have been looking for so long, while the well of life is before you today...