

EXPOSITION OF JOHN

Message #20

John 4:11-26

No matter what your race, social position, religious orientation or past sin, God's Gospel is for you. All people need Jesus Christ in their lives and if they will invite Him into their lives, they will be saved.

J. Vernon McGee said when this story concerning the Samaritan woman begins, she is a rude, immoral, godless broad who is hard-hearted and loudmouthed. By the time the story ends, she has been so transformed that she becomes a top-notch woman of God and witness for Jesus Christ.

There is an important lesson to be seen from this text:

JESUS CHRIST IS GOD AND HE OFFERS SALVATION TO ANY PERSON WHO WILL BELIEVE ON HIM AND INVITE HIM INTO HIS OR HER LIFE, AND THOSE WHO DO WILL BECOME A NEW PERSON AND A GREAT WITNESS.

John 4 is a chapter that deals with a godless Samaritan woman who eventually becomes a godly woman totally committed to Jesus Christ. This discussion that Jesus has with this Samaritan woman not only establishes that He is God, but that He is the only means of salvation.

Now in verse 10 Jesus created an interest in this woman by implying that if you knew who you were talking to, you would be asking me for living water. The "living water" metaphor refers to believing on Jesus Christ and receiving the Spirit of God (John 7:37-39). In order for one to be saved, one must have the Holy Spirit in one's life and in order for that to happen one must receive Jesus Christ and believe on Him as Personal Savior (John 1:12).

Now in this section there are ten responses that take place in this unique dialogue:

RESPONSE #1 – The Samaritan woman responds to Jesus Christ. 4:11-12

The Samaritan woman did not think in spiritual thirst terms when she first encountered Jesus Christ. The only thirst she thought of was physical thirst. Now Jacob's well has been identified by archeologists as one of the deepest wells in all of the Promised Land, nearly 100 feet deep. When Christ spoke of giving this woman living water - she responded in somewhat of a flippant manner by saying how are you going to get this water when you don't even have anything to even draw it. Literally - where are you going to get this life water? You aren't greater than Jacob are you and can actually bring up water from a deeper level than this well? The Greek text is written in such a way that she expects a "no" answer.

Jacob's descendants mingled with the Assyrians which produced the Samaritans. At this point this woman is somewhat mocking Jesus Christ. People who are in need of salvation often do two things: 1) Focus their lives on the physical; 2) Mock the true spiritual. That is what this woman was doing.

RESPONSE #2 – Jesus responds to the Samaritan woman. 4:13-14

Christ could have said - “greater than Jacob, I am the God who made Jacob. I am the God who wrestled with Jacob and I am the God who watched him dig this well.” But instead of answering this woman this way, He very subtly says, “I can produce water that will cause one to never thirst again.” There was absolutely no way that Jacob could do that.

Jesus responds by saying, I am not talking about the water in this well. Anybody who drinks this water will thirst again, but the one who drinks the water I can give will never spiritually thirst again because that water will spring up to eternal life. **Jesus is contrasting a man made well with a God-given eternal spring.**

If you are involved in works religion, you will always thirst and look for fulfillment. Something will be lacking. It will leave you dry. But if you will invite Jesus Christ into your life, He will satisfy your soul.

Many people are going to the watering holes of the world looking for satisfaction. Most people continually look for something physical to satisfy them, but it isn't happening. Until Jesus Christ has first place in your life, you will not really be satisfied within your soul. Anything you do will only bring temporary satisfaction - love, food, drink, sex, education, money, fame. None of these things will bring lasting satisfaction.

There are various fountains in life from which people drink: There is the fountain of gold that millions go after; there is the fountain of self-glory which many crave; there is the fountain of pleasure in which many plunge, but those fountains never satisfy. Many people have everything their heart could want, and they are weary of life. Without Jesus Christ “you can't get no satisfaction” no matter how hard you try. This woman had tried it all and seen it all, but she knew there was a big void in her life.

RESPONSE #3 – The Samaritan woman responds to Jesus Christ. 4:15

The woman did not have a clue what Christ was talking about, but she did want what He was talking about. She thought He was talking about some physical water that could give her eternal life and she wanted eternal life. There is no physical water that can give you eternal life. There is no “holy water” that can give you life. There is no water baptism that can give you life. Life comes from Jesus Christ. Notice this woman “asks” Christ to give her living water. She doesn't know theology, or doctrine. She doesn't know how to pray, but she simply asks Christ to give her living water. That is all one must do, ask Him to give you life.

RESPONSE #4 – Jesus responds to the Samaritan woman. 4:16

If this woman is to have eternal life, to get the living water, she needs to come to terms with the true fact that she is a sinner. Her sin secrets must come out of the closet and must be addressed before Christ. Jesus Christ knows everything about every person (John 2:24-25). This ability is only true of God, which again proves Jesus is God.

When Jesus asks her to call her husband, He is doing this so that she will be brought face to face with the reality that she has had a tangled up mess of a life of sin and she needs a Savior . As Dr. Wiersbe said, “There can be no true conversion without real sin conviction” (*Be Alive*, p. 49).

If you are going to be right with God, you will have to stop seeing yourself as a righteous, God-fearing person and see yourself as God sees you as a sinner who has fallen far short of the Glory of God. The first thing the Holy Spirit does when He really saves someone is to bring them under tremendous conviction of their own personal sinfulness. If a person wants to play some pretend game of “righteousness” with God, that one will never be saved.

RESPONSE #5 – The Samaritan woman responds to Jesus. 4:17a

This is very important, the woman responds honestly, truthfully. This is a key to being right with God - total and complete honesty before God.

RESPONSE #6 – Jesus responds to the Samaritan woman. 4:17b-18

Jesus said “you have said well” in that you have told the truth . Most people do not tell the truth about themselves. It is rare to find one who does. It is refreshing. **If you are going to have eternal life, you have to admit the truth about yourself to God, namely - you are a sinner .**

Jesus then zeroes in on her specific sin issue - you do not have a husband right now, in fact you have had five husbands and the man you are with right now you are living with. This woman had been divorced five times. She was the Elizabeth Taylor of her day. She liked men and she had been with many men. But she was about to be delivered from the sin and shame of it all.

Here is top notch witnessing. It confronts the sin issue. J. Vernon McGee said in 1983, “I am convinced that most superficiality in our churches today is there as a cover-up of sin. Unfortunately our churches are honey covered with hypocrisy, a compromise with evil and a refusal to face up to sin.”

You may be listening to this right now and your life has been a tangled mess. You may have had some broken relationship. You may have had more than one divorce. You may be living with a man right now. If you will tell the truth to God that you know you are a sinner and will invite Jesus Christ into your life to be your Savior, you can be set free from your sin just like the Samaritan woman. You can find satisfaction and meaning to life that will never fail you. Jesus Christ came into this world to clean up our sin messes.

RESPONSE #7 – The Samaritan woman responds to Jesus. 4:19-20

This is a most interesting response. Christ is making this thing very personal. She must personally confront her own sin and this woman does what so many people do when you get personal - she tries to divert the point through some religious discussion. She tries to throw this conversation off track. She is personally squirming.

She says to Jesus in a flattering way - I know you are a prophet. I know you are a man of God. Let me ask you a theological question - we Samaritans worship in this mountain - Mt. Gerizim and you Jews claim we need to worship in Jerusalem. What is the deal? Her mind is turned to religion and a place of worship and it turned away from her own sin. The same thing happens often today when you ask someone if they are a Christian or born again and they say, "I go to church" or "I've been baptized."

It is true that the Samaritans worshipped in Mt Gerizim because the Jews would not permit them to worship God in the temple in Jerusalem. Josephus says the Samaritans constructed their own mini-temple which resembled the one in Jerusalem in this mountain. This was a constant point of debate between Jews and Samaritans.

Notice what this woman is doing - she is diverting the discussion from her sin problem to something religious. I was witnessing to a man one time and pointing out that he was a sinner who needed to trust Jesus Christ as Savior and he said, isn't it something how various religions think differently. I wasn't talking about various religions, I was talking about his sin problem and he was squirming and trying to divert the discussion. When a person diverts their mind away from his own personal sin, he will not be saved or satisfied.

RESPONSE #8 – Jesus responds to the Samaritan woman. 4:21-24

Christ saw right through this and He goes right to the heart of the matter and makes the following points:

(Point #1) - Woman you need to believe in Me. 4:21a

Here is what one must do to be saved - place his or her faith in Jesus Christ.

(Point #2) - An hour will come in which the only way to worship God will be through Me. 4:21b

This would be a devastating blow to Israel who taught you may only worship God in Jerusalem. The hour He is referring to is His crucifixion. You can go to Mt. Gerizim or you can go to Jerusalem or to Salt Lake City, but the hour is here in which the only way to worship God is by faith in the cross work of Jesus Christ. **Jesus is saying the critical issue here is not where you worship but how you worship - you must worship God through Me, Jesus Christ.**

(Point #3) - You don't even know what you are doing in your worship . 4:22a

Most religions fall into this category. They say they worship God and don't know what they are doing. There are religions who say in order to really worship God, you must wear certain clothing, abstain from certain food or drink, give a certain amount of money or be baptized a certain way. These religions don't know what they are doing. They don't have a clue. **It is Jesus Christ who makes one a true worshipper, not religious rituals.**

(Point #4) - We do know how to worship . 4:22b

The “we” refers to the Trinity that devised a program through the Jews that would enable one to worship God. God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit do know what true worship is and it does come out of Israel and, Jesus is saying, I am He who comes from Jewish lineage to make it possible for you to worship God. Jesus is the only way to true worship.

(Point #5) - One who worships God must have God’s Spirit and must be truthful . 4:23-24

Now the Greek text does not say “worship in **the** Spirit.” The emphasis is on worshipping God in the character and quality of a worship that is spiritual and is by the Spirit which is in the context of truth. In fact, Jesus will call the Holy Spirit the “Spirit of Truth” (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13). No one can be right with God or worship God apart from truth.

If you are living a lie about your sin, you cannot worship God no matter how many church services you attend. If you do not have God’s Spirit you cannot worship God. You can talk religion and do religious things, but you cannot worship God. One must come to terms with the fact that Jesus is the only way to worship God and acknowledge the truth that He must be the only way because we are sinful.

God seeks people who will be honest with Him about their sin. You cannot ever have a good, real relationship with God if you are living in some false delusional world about your own sin. If your sin is lying, stealing, immorality, arrogance, jealousy, drunkenness, idolatry or covetousness, you’ll never be right with God, nor worship God until you admit it.

RESPONSE #9 – The Samaritan woman responds to Jesus. 4:25

The woman was beginning to sense something - God would come and when He would come, He would declare all things. This woman knew God would come and would declare everything about everyone. She knew about the pending judgment of God.

RESPONSE #10 – Jesus responds to the Samaritan woman. 4:26

Jesus said, “I am the Messiah.” He flat out says He is the anointed One of God. In Greek, He uses the “I Am” emphatic combination (εγω ειμι) which establishes He is Jehovah/God (Exodus 3:14).

If you want to have a relationship with God, you must come to terms with Jesus Christ. You must be honest about yourself and your sin and you must ask Him to give you life. If you want eternal life and if you want a life of meaning and fulfillment- this is exactly what you must do.

Perhaps your life has been as messed up as this Samaritan woman. Perhaps you are as proper and religiously proud as Nicodemus. Jesus Christ is the only One who can bring you into a acceptable relationship with God. Believe on Him and you will have living water life.