

An Appointment at Sychar
John 4:1- 26
Reading: Psalm 24

Bethany Baptist Church
April 26, 2020

...pray...

In **722 BC** the Assyrian king **Shalmanezzer V** began to *wind-up* a two decade campaign against the *Northern Kingdom* of **OT** Israel.

Shalmanezzer captured Israel's capital city of *Samaria*.

Many, *though not all*, of Israel's citizens were *deported* to Assyria.

The Assyrians then "*imported*" various peoples into Israel to *repopulate* the region.

Over time, **two** things happened:

The newcomers *intermarried* with the remaining Israelites. → "*Samaritans*"

The resulting *mixed populace* adopted, but *modified*, the worship of YHWH.

When **Ezra & Nehemiah** led *exiled Jews* back to *Jerusalem* to rebuild the *city* and the *temple*, the Samaritans met them with persistent offers of help.

But their *motives* were politically self-*servicing* and *deceptive*.

Nehemiah sent them *packing*.

Centuries of *hostility* between the Jews & Samaritans resulted.

In **400 BC** the Samaritans *built their own temple* on Mt. Gerezim.

In **128 BC** the Jews *tore it down* – Jerusalem was the *only place* to worship!

Tensions between the neighboring groups persisted right up to the *days of Jesus*.

The Jews *despised* the Samaritans, and the Samaritans *despised them right back!*

One Jewish teacher called the Samaritans *those stupid people from Shechem!*

Kind of like saying, *they don't know "come here" from "sic 'em"!*

So...how would you expect a *Jewish rabbi* to treat a *Samaritan adulterous?*

Let's return to the Gospel of John, and begin reading in chapter four (1-3).

We learned in chapter 3 that **Jesus**/disciples and **John the Baptist**/disciples were *preaching/baptizing* in the Judean countryside and Samaria. Not too far apart.

Jesus was rapidly gaining in *popularity*, and so **two groups** felt threatened:

The *Jewish leadership*, centered in the ruling council (Sanhedrin).

But also, the *disciples* of John the Baptist!!!

After all, *John* had treated Jesus w/ *such respect!*

How could this Galilean *turn around* and *out-baptize* their boss!

The Lord wanted to *extinguish* the hot *jealousy* of John's followers...

And He needed to *delay* open confrontation with the *Sanhedrin*.

So (3), "*He left Judea and went away again into Galilee.*"

Let's pick up the account again in vv.4-14 (the story continues thru v.45; we'll examine vv.1-26 today, and vv.27-45 next Lord's Day.)

Jesus confronts a *shocked* and *sinful* Samaritan woman and speaks to her of *salvation, repentance, and worship.*

Today, we'll *listen in* as...

Jesus breaks *multiple cultural barriers* to save a *single sinner.*

- 1. An ordained *encounter* (4-14).**
- 2. A cutting *command* (15-18).**
- 3. An awakened *conscience* (19-24).**
- 4. A divine *declaration* (25-26).**

This high-noon conversation was no coincidence!

1. **V.4** - *He must...* My NASB reads “*He had to pass thru Samaria,*” but the KJV reads, “*He must needs go thru Samaria.*”
 - a. That might sound *awkward*, but it emphasizes a *critical theological truth* that sets the stage for this powerful conversation.
 - b. “*He must needs*” translates the small but mighty Gr. command $\delta\epsilon\iota$ – “*must,*” which often appears in your **NT** to indicate a *theological imperative*, a *holy necessity*, a *divine decree*.
 - c. Jews **didn’t** like traveling thru Samaria and often *bypassed* the region.
 - d. But Jesus *saw past* those scruples, yet more importantly, our Lord was on a *God-ordained*, soul-saving *mission* – *He must needs go thru Samaria.*

2. At *noon* of the **second** *day of travel* from Judea, Jesus/disciples stopped to *rest* and *eat* outside of the Samaritan village of *Sychar*, at the Jacob’s well.
 - a. The God-Man was *weary*! The *Doctrine of the Incarnation* not only means Jesus is God, it also teaches us that Jesus is completely (perfectly) *human*. And the Man Jesus was *tired*.
 - b. He *sat* by the well while all His friends *hustled* into the Samaritan village to find food.
 - i. That means (8) that Jesus is *completely alone* at the well.
 - ii. He was *alone*, but He *knew* He **wouldn’t** be alone for long...

3. A **Samaritan** *woman* arrives by herself at Jacob’s well to *draw water*. Now there are just the **two** of them – *awkward*!
 - a. Then the Jewish rabbi does something even *more awkward* – actually *shocking*.
 - b. He *speaks* to her, and asks for a *drink* from her water pot!

- c. Jesus has *just opened* up a **1st** century *cultural can of worms*!
 - i. Jewish men **don't** *speak* to women in public (even husbands to wives).
 - ii. A *rabbi* certainly wouldn't speak to unknown woman.
 - iii. And *Jews* **don't** speak to Samaritans!
 - d. To add *fuel* to the *fire*, something *unusual* is going on...
 - i. *Village women* went to their wells in groups, for *protection* and to *visit*.
 - ii. And they went *early* and *late*, to beat the Palestinian heat.
 - iii. But *this* woman is *alone*. And *noon sun* is hot. Because *this* woman is an *outcast*. And she is *ashamed*...
4. Yet Jesus *strikes up* an extended conversation. In **vv.7-26** there are 7 *verbal exchanges* between the **two** strangers. Jesus guides the conversation from *social shock* to *spiritual needs*.
- a. **V. 7** (Jesus) – “*Give Me a drink.*” He’s *thirsty*, and this is a *well* (but He has **no bucket**)!
 - i. But He’s *Jew* and she’s a *Samaritan woman*.
 - ii. Drinking from her *water pot* would make this Rabbi “*unclean*”!
 - b. **V.10** (Jesus) – “*If you knew the gift of God...if you understood who I am...you would be the one doing the asking...I would give you living water*”
 - i. *That* confused her! Jacob’s well is *deep* (**100’**) and clearly He has *no bucket*! (*That’s* what seemed to *start* everything!)
 - ii. Her *tradition* taught that the **great patriarch Jacob** used the well, but she *doubted* this stranger was *greater* than Jacob...!
 - iii. How will He get that water...?

- c. **V.13** (Jesus) – “*Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.*”
 - i. That *sounds good*...but the woman is still *confused*!
 - ii. She **hasn't** *kept up* w/ the transition from *physical* to *spiritual*.
 - iii. And she is *wrong*: Jesus is *infinitely greater* than father **Jacob**!
5. But what did Jesus mean by *living water*....
- a. It's a pretty common *spiritual picture* in your **OT**!
 - b. E.g. **Isa 12**, God promises His people, “*You will joyously draw water from the springs of salvation.*”
 - c. Jesus says that *living water*: **i.)** *the gift of God*; **ii.)** *granted by Christ*; **iii.)** *completely & permanently quenches your deepest thirsts*; **iv.)** *living water gives eternal life*!
 - d. The *living water* that Jesus draws (14) is *salvation - eternal life*!

God had ordained this mid-day encounter to lead this woman to the well of life! But she still doesn't get it...

And so Christ speaks a cutting command (read vv.15-18).

1. The **NT** *Letter to the Hebrews* teaches that the **Word of God** is *living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him w/ whom we have to do!*
 - a. And at the beginning of the *Gospel of John* (1), Jesus is identified as the *Eternal Word who has become flesh*. Jesus is the *Word*.
 - b. And **now** the *living Word of God* **lays bare** the sin and shame of this confused, immoral woman w/ one *cutting-edge command*...

2. “**Go, call your husband and come here...**” Jesus’ order introduces the next **two exchanges** in His conversation w/ the woman.
- a. The woman replies (17): “**I have no husband.**” I doubt she has yet *looked* Jesus in the eyes, but **now** her *entire frame* must *sag w/ shame*. **She probably felt like jumping down that well!**
 - i. Her answer may be a little *deceptive*; the **Gr.** term for *husband* can more simply translated “*man.*” She **doesn’t** have a *husband*, but she **is** living w/ a *man*. But Jesus sees right through her *word play*...
 - b. **V.17** (Jesus) – “*You have correctly said, ‘I have no husband’; for you have had **five** husbands, and the one whom you **now** have is **not** your husband; this you have said truly.*”
 - i. Can you *imagine* her life...? How *sad* and *messy* it is?
 - ii. Serial *immoral* relationships.
 - iii. Repeated *broken* relationships.
 - iv. Permanently *broken* heart.
 - v. Constant *public* shame – she **can’t** even walk to the well w/ the women of her village...
 - vi. **Do you know any one like this...?**
3. But like a *painful* but *necessary surgery*, Jesus’ *penetrating command* offers this shamed Samaritan her only hope for a *new life!*
- a. And she finally begins to *catch on*... **V.19** – “*Sir, I perceive that You are a **prophet.***” Their conversation is about to take a *turn* to the *spiritual*.

4. But how did He *know*? In fact, how did Jesus **know** *all* these things?
 - a. How did He *know* she'd been *married* **five** times?
 - b. How did He *know* she was now *living* w/ man she **wasn't** *married* to?
 - c. And how did He *know* she'd be *coming to Jacob's well*...?
 - d. But God knows *everything*! And as the **Bible** teaches *repeatedly*, **Jesus was God** – *truly* God and *truly* Man.

Which is why the *most embarrassing question* this poor woman has ever confronted has *just dropped her bucket into the well of life!*

The Samaritan's conscience has been awakened, but she still has a ways to go.
(Read 19-24)

1. The *woman* is beginning to feel *conviction* of her sins.
 - a. The *man* before her is **no ordinary Jew**. He *claims* (14) to offer ***eternal life!*** “*Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst again; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.*”
 - b. He also said this *living water* is God's *gift!*
 - c. If there was ever a *time* to think about *God* and how to know *Him*, **now** is the *time!* “***Sir, I perceive You are a prophet.***”
2. The woman begins to connect the dots: *repentance* of her sins against God, and *eternal life* from God, and a *life of worship* before God.

3. One Bible teacher points out that Jesus and the woman can see *Mt. Gerazim*, and perhaps even the **400** year old ruins of the *Samaritan temple*, from they stand.
 - a. And in the shadow of that mountain, she asks: “**Where** should we worship?” *Mt. Gerazim* or *Jerusalem*? **Who** is right, **we Samaritans** or **you Jews**?
 - b. Jesus’ answer surely *stunned* her! “*Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.*”
 - c. **Neither** place is the *right* place!
4. Then Jesus *drills down* on the fundamental nature of *true worship*.
 - a. *First* He points out that *Samaritan worship* has always been *wrong*!
 - i. Their problem is *ignorance*.
 - ii. They *limited their understanding* to the first **five** books of the **Bible** (***Pentateuch***), so there was *so much that they missed*!
 - b. *Then* Jesus makes the *shocking* declaration that *Jewish worship* is about to become *obsolete worship*. **V.23** – “*But an hour is coming...*”
 - i. Jewish worship had been *correct*, up to that point, because God had entrusted the Jews with *salvation* by means of:
 1. Complete *revelation* in the **OT**.
 2. God’s promise to *bless the nations* thru **Abraham’s** line.
 3. God’s promise of a *Messiah* thru **David’s** line.
 4. Which added up to *salvation from the Jews*, for every *tribe and tongue and people and nation* (and that incl. the *Samaritans*!).
 - ii. Yet that was *all* about to become *obsolete*, because Jesus was about to *reveal* Himself as the **Jewish Messiah**, and usher *in* the **New Covenant**. That would be a *worship game changer*!

c. Which brings us to Christ's *definition of true worship* (**five** truths).

i. Jesus said, "*An hour is coming, and now is....*" True worship is *now* possible because Jesus has ushered in the *New Covenant* by His *blood* poured out on the cross.

1. His *blood* pays for sins, which allows *sinners* to forgiven.

2. And to receive God's gift of *eternal life*.

3. You can't *worship* God if you aren't *reconciled* to Him.

ii. So the question is **not** *place*. God is **not** so interested in *brick* and *mortar*, or *geography*.

1. It's **not** *Mt. Gerazim* or *Jerusalem*.

2. It's not *Mecca* or *Rome* or a big-city *MegaChurch*!

iii. The question is **heart** (*spirit* and *truth*). **Let's read v.23 together.**

1. ***Spirit***. Jesus is prescribing the *sincere, God thirsting spirit* (heart) of the worshiper. Think about ideas like *genuine, faithful, sincere, honest, heart-felt*.

2. ***Truth***. In order for your *heart* to be *genuine* it has to be informed by God's *truth*, and it must worship Him according to His *will*.

a. God's *truth* and His *will* are found in His *Word*.

b. **Andreas Kostenberger** - "*No matter how ceremonially elaborate, emotionally rousing, or sermonically eloquent, worship that is not offered from a proper understanding of who God is falls short.*" (156)

- iv. The **God of the Bible** is the *object* and the *definer* of all true worship.
1. Jesus declares in **vv. 21 & 23** that, “*true worshipers will worship the Father.*”
 2. And then clarifies by stating (24): “*God is Spirit, and those who worship Him **must** worship in spirit and truth.*”
 3. “*God is spirit*” is the classic definition of God’s nature, and the point is that He is **not material**, but *spirit*.
 4. And further, God is *true*, and the source of all *truth*.
 5. **So the necessary perquisites for worship are spiritual (not geographical).**
- v. **Finally**, God *invites* you to worship Him! Jesus promises (23), “*for such people God seeks to be His worshipers.*” **(2X) I love that promise!**
1. Do you want to be *reconciled* to God; He **wants** you to be *reconciled*.
 2. Do you want to *drink* the living water, God promises to *slake your thirst*. “*Blessed are those who hunger & thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied!*”
 3. Do you want to *worship* God – *honor* God? **God wants that too!**

The Samaritan woman has an *awakening sense* of her need for *forgiveness and reconciliation* and *worship*. And the *answer* to her need stands *right in front of her!*

Jesus makes a divine declaration that answers all her questions (read vv.25-26).

1. The Bible promises a *Messiah* from the very first chapters of *Genesis*. In fact the **OT** contains almost **300 predictions** of the promised Savior & King.
 - a. Even the *Samaritans* knew enough Bible to know that *Messiah* was coming.
 - b. This woman knew *Messiah* would declare God's *truth* to His people.
 - c. *"I know that **Messiah** is coming – He who is called **Christ**."*

2. Jesus answers her by declaring His *identity*: *"I who speak to you am He."*
 - a. The angels revealed His name as *"Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."*
 - b. The magi sought Him as *"King of the Jews."*
 - c. John the Baptist pointed to Him as *"The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world."* Then named Him *"The Son of God."*
 - d. But **here**, in this *conversation* with this *troubled woman*, our Lord openly identifies Himself as the *Messiah* for the **first** time in the Gospels.
 - e. And for the *last time* until His trial...

3. **Messiah** (Gr. *Christ – anointed one*) declares that Jesus is God's *provision* for His *people*: *redeemer, mediator, intercessor, ruler*.
 - a. And His response hints of His *deity*; His **actual** *answer* was *"I who speak to you **am**..."* Just ... *"**I am**."*
 - b. But *"**I am**"* is God's name. And *"**I am**"* is the *divine name* that Jesus will take upon Himself over **20X** in John's Gospel.

The Samaritan knew she needed Messiah; Jesus declared, "*I Am*"!

What about you? *Do you think you're helpless?*

Spiritually ignorant? ... Sinful? Ashamed?

"I think I need God, but I don't know where to begin!?!"

Jesus offers what you need!

He offers *forgiveness*. But He demands that you *repent* of your sins.

He offers *living water – eternal life*. But He requires that you *trust* in Him...

Trust that His *death on the cross* paid your *debt of sin*.

Believe He was *raised from the grave* to guarantee *eternal life*.

He offers the *truth*. *"I am the way, the truth, and the life, ..."*

He offers to *receive you*. He is ***seeking*** genuine worshipers!

*"Come to Me **all** who are wearied and heavy-laden and you shall find rest for your souls."*

"He who believes in Him will not be disappointed."

Won't you *come* to Jesus?

...pray...

John 14:27 – *"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled nor let it be fearful."*