

Seeing a Bride, Part 2; From Outcast to Disciple Maker (John 4:1–30)

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (6/27/2021)

Introduction

1. The woman Jesus was seeking in Sychar of Samaria represents the church. Jesus was seeking a bride, not in the literal sense, but in the spiritual sense of Hosea 2:19, 20. This text was in Paul's mind when he wrote the Corinthian church: *"For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ"* (2 Cor. 11:2). Again, Paul wrote to the Ephesian church, illustrating the duties of husbands and wives by relating the relationship of Christ and His church (Eph. 5:22–33). He ended the discussion with, *"This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church"* (Eph. 5:32).

The glorious victories of the Revelation are brought to conclusion by announcing the marriage supper of the Lamb: *"Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"* (Rev. 19:7, 8). Jesus came to bring in the glorious kingdom of God, and the gospel age is the time He is seeking the bride.

I. A Divine Appointment

1. A stop on the journey to save a sinful woman

The need brought Him to Jacob's well near Sychar in Samaria at noon to wait for a Samaritan woman. She was coming to the well for water, not Jesus.

2. The Savior engaged the sinful woman on three levels:

- a. The *social* level— *"Give me a drink."*

Her reaction was surprise and contempt. Jesus responded by informing her that He had water that would truly satisfy, and she should ask for it. When the woman heard this, she asked for that water, and Jesus took the conversation to the next level.

- b. The *moral* level— *"Go call your husband."*

She sensed something in Him that made her honest but cautious: "I have no husband." Jesus encouraged her, *"You are right in saying 'I have no husband.'"* She had had five husbands, and the man she had now was not a husband. Hearing this, she concluded, *"You are a prophet."*

- c. The *spiritual* level— *"The Father is seeking such."*

Jesus, in His infinite wisdom, used this change of topic to take her even deeper. She would escape His invasion by arguing that their religious aims, though similar, were incompatible. The light broke into her heart: *"I know that Messiah is coming, and He will tell us all things."* Did He not just tell her *all things*? Yes, Jesus said, *"I who speak to you am He."*

3. From religious sinner to disciple maker

As His disciples returned from the city with lunch, the woman, newly converted, sped away to the town, eager to share the news: *"Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?"* (v. 29).

II. A Divine Mission

1. The aim of John's Gospel

- a. Jesus must increase. John the Baptist testified that Jesus, who came from above, was above *all*. The first six chapters of John focus on the Savior's work of calling and enabling His followers.
- b. A hard truth, false disciples cannot tolerate the truth. They were offended by truth's demands (6:61–65). Those offended turned away to walk with Him no more. Turning to the twelve, He asked whether they too would go away. They demonstrated true spiritual life by their response: "*Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life*" (6:68, 69).

2. Word-enabled trust

This truth reflects two themes that run parallel through these chapters: (1) *the sovereignty of God in salvation*, and (2) *the power of the Word of God*—how saving work is accomplished.

- a. *Seeking* Jesus in order to follow Him.
- b. Entering His labors (v. 38).

Conclusion

1. An irresistible inward compulsion

Few can testify with David, "*My soul clings to you [because] your right hand upholds me*" (Psalm 63:8).

2. Occupying oneself with God

David wrote Psalm 63 in the hardships of the wilderness, fleeing King Saul. Separated from the tabernacle and its worship, David understood that it is not the place of worship, but the Person worshiped: "*O God, you are my God*" (v. 1).

Many seek God as a *means* rather than the *end*. For self-satisfied people, there is no inward compulsion to know God. Churches are forced to pursue programs, entertainment, and other gimmicks rather than Biblical order and mandate. This produces unbiblical and sterile ministries devoid of divine power and blessing.

"The doctrine of justification by faith—a biblical truth, and a blessed relief from sterile legalism and unavailing self-effort—has in our time fallen into evil company and been interpreted by many in such a manner as actually to bar men from the knowledge of God. The whole transaction of religious conversion has been made mechanical and spiritless. Faith may now be exercised without a jar to the moral life and without embarrassment to the Adamic ego. Christ may now be 'received' without creating any special love for Him in the soul of the receiver. The man is 'saved,' but he is not hungry nor thirsty after God. In fact, he is specifically taught to be satisfied and encouraged to be content with little."

—A. W. Tozer