

Quenching a Thirsty Soul

John 4:1-26

Each one of us has a hunger and thirst for meaning, significance, and relationships. In his encounter with the woman of Samaria, Jesus explains that *the gospel brings good news for thirsty people*.

Jesus leaves Judea because the Jews were becoming increasingly aware of his growing influence (1-3).

The most direct route traveled north through Samaria (4). Typically, the Jews crossed over the Jordan River and traveled through Perea to avoid going through Samaria.

After the Assyrians captured Israel in 722 B.C., they deported much of the population and imported foreigners who intermarried with the remaining Israelites. The foreigners continued to worship pagan gods. After the Babylonian Exile, the Jews regarded the residents of Samaria as racial half-breeds and religious compromisers. The Samaritans offered to help rebuild the temple under Zerubbabel but their offer was refused. The Samaritans then built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim which they dedicated to Zeus Xenios. They resisted Nehemiah's attempts to get them to help rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. By Jesus' day, there was smoldering tension between the Jews and Samaritans.

A half mile south of the town of Sychar (5) was Jacob's Well (6). Jesus stops there at about noon.

Jesus takes the initiative to speak to a woman who comes to get water (7). Normally, women would travel together in the cooler part of the day to get water from the well. Because of the woman's morality, she was coming alone in the hottest part of the day.

Jesus' disciples were absent because they had gone into the city to buy food (8).

The woman was shocked at Jesus' request for a drink (9). Normally, men did not talk to women and Jews did not talk to Samaritans. The woman was curious about Jesus' request and identity.

Jesus ignores the woman's implied insult (10). He picks up on both subjects the woman was curious about. Jesus started where the woman was and captured her curiosity by implying he could give her something more valuable.

The woman was curious about the gift and Jesus' identity (11-12). Her question expected a negative answer.

Jesus was not talking about literal water but rather about a spiritual source of refreshment and fulfillment that satisfied completely (13-14).

The woman did not understand because she was still focused on her physical need (15).

Since Jesus was going to give her something valuable, he suggested her husband should be present (16).

Since the woman wanted Jesus' gift, she admitted she had no husband (17-18). After so many tries, she had apparently given up on marriage. Instead of giving her the gift, Jesus gave her a shocking revelation.

The woman tried to change the subject to religion and politics (19-20). She acknowledged Jesus must be a prophet. She wanted to know where the proper place was to worship. Mount Gerizim was where Abraham was reputed to have offered Isaac on the altar.

Jesus avoided the distraction (21) and focused on the real issue that things were about to change.

The Samaritans worshipped a God they didn't really know (22) because they only accepted a portion of the Old Testament, namely just the Pentateuch.

When Jesus died (23-24), the old way of worship would end. Rather than follow rules and rituals, true worshippers are those who worship God in spirit and in truth.

While the woman did not understand everything Jesus was saying, she did believe that Messiah was coming (25) and would reveal divine mysteries.

Since the woman was prepared to welcome the Messiah, Jesus revealed himself to her (26).

The Tale of Two Seekers

Seeker	Nicodemus the Pharisee	The woman at the well
Scripture	John 3	John 4
Gender	Male	Female
Ethnicity	Jew	Samaritan
Reputation	Impeccable	Immoral
Offer of Salvation	Second Birth	Living Water
Barrier to Salvation	Pride	Past
Lesson for Us	We can never be spiritual enough to erase our need for Him	We can never be sinful enough to erase His love for us

Walk Thru the Bible Ministries, NTLive

Principles of Evangelism

When sharing the gospel ...

Be willing to cross barriers of geography, culture, and language (1-5, 9)

Pay attention to divine appointments (4)

Don't let weariness get in the way (6)

Move from felt needs to real needs (7-26)

Stimulate the person's curiosity and interest (7, 10, 13)

Don't be put off by or pass judgment on sin (16-18)

Don't be distracted by arguments or peripheral issues; don't try to answer every question (19-20)

Point people to Jesus (21-26)

Show how the person's needs are met in Christ (22-26)