



No.24 The Samaritan Woman – saved her town!

John 4:1-30; John 4:39-42

Jesus knows just where to find you!

This is one of the most exciting passages of the Bible, for all **real women**, as it shows us how Jesus went out of His way to meet the enormous need of **one** individual woman who was certainly not accepted by the crowd. Just one encounter with the Living God completely changed how she saw herself; her men; the town; her enemies; her sin; and her future. If we take this wonderful example of God's personal encounter with one woman we can see how He will go to any lengths to meet with us and change our disasters into His victories.

Jesus had no difficulty making the decision to go through the country of Samaria, as He had the love of His Father for all people and didn't feel any cultural restrictions. The quickest way from Judea to Galilee was through this country whose people were **real enemies of the Jews**. After the Northern Kingdom, with its capital at Samaria, fell to the Assyrians, many Jews were deported to Assyria, and foreigners were brought in to settle the land and to help keep the peace, **2 Kings 17:24**. The intermarriage between those foreigners and the remaining Jews resulted in a mixed race, impure in the opinion of Jews who lived in the Southern Kingdom. These Samaritans had set up an alternative centre for worship on Mount Gerizim to parallel the Temple at Jerusalem but it had been destroyed 150 years earlier. **The Jews did everything they could to avoid travelling through Samaria**. The route Jesus took past Jacob's Well was a much-used watering spot, attracting women and their servants twice a day, morning and evening.

This Samaritan woman came at midday, probably to avoid meeting the people who knew her reputation. Jesus' timing was always right. We see several situations through this Gospel when Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit to move on to where the Father wanted Him, at just the right time. This woman's opinion of herself was so bad that she would never have expected the Living Saviour would want to make contact with her.

Jesus had no such prejudice, bigotry, and hatred

He knew all about this woman and knew it was an appointment made in the heart of His Father. He did not look on her with condemnation or with religion, either of which would have prevented Him from talking to her. The facts that she was a woman, a Samaritan, and an adulteress made conversation forbidden. No respectable Jew would talk to a woman under such circumstances, and certainly not use her water container - that made a Jew ceremonially unclean, but Jesus knew that the Gospel is for all people, no matter what the circumstances, the social position, race or past sins.

What about you? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal unknown areas of prejudice or racism, resentment or insensitivity to others. Are there ministry opportunities or relationships that you are holding back on because of these feelings? These are not appropriate for the children of the King and we are all joint-heirs with Jesus, He has no favourites, so deal with it today.

"Will you give Me a drink?"

Jesus took her everyday job of collecting water, to show her desperate need for a life-changing experience, and to point her to her Saviour who was talking to her. Jesus knew there was no point in ramming down her throat what a dreadful sinner she was. He knew He had to show her how to get her deep needs met and so bring about a miraculous change in her outlook. Jesus talked to her about 'living water' which interested her in purely a material sense as it would stop her having to do this heavy, tedious job every day. She didn't realise that all the water in the world would not satisfy her thirst. Her material problem was not her real need, her desperate need was in her spirit. That was exactly what Jesus was interested in, getting her to see her desperate need and to acknowledge it. She was so taken up with her everyday living she had not considered anything about her spirit or her eternal future.

"Go call your husband..."

Jesus then asked her about her husband in order to get her to face up to the truth of her situation before God. He wanted to bring her to that place of repentance and change through conviction of sin and **not** condemnation. She knew her life was like an open book to Him; she could not lie to this Man, and yet He neither despised nor blamed her. He showed her that He could not give her the 'living water' without first dealing with the sin.

"Sir...I can see that you are a prophet..."

When feeling very uncomfortable because of conviction of sin, she immediately became religious instead of dealing with her feelings. She tried to divert Jesus away from the subject of her lifestyle onto the safe subject of worship, which she could discuss for hours and not have to face her true feelings or position in God.

"Worship the Father in Spirit and in truth..."

Jesus did not ignore her question but pointed out that the place was not as important as the spirit attitude, as God can be worshipped anywhere at any time. We have the Holy Spirit's help, He prays for us (**Romans 8:26**), teaches us the words of Christ (**Romans 14:26**) and tells us we are loved, **Romans 5:5**. Jesus took this opportunity to teach this precious lady about true worship. He knew He had come to this place especially for her.

After He would leave Samaria He knew that the most vital part of her life would be her time of intimate love with her heavenly Father during worship. So what seemed like a side-track was a very valuable teaching time. Nothing is wasted in God's economy, even what seems to us to not be a priority can be God's priority. Jesus knew her heart was filled with a deep longing to see the Messiah and He was looking for people who would seek Him with their whole hearts and who wanted to follow Him totally, **Matthew 6:33; Romans 6:11-14**. Jesus knew that anyone could come to the Father through Jesus on two conditions.

First we have to acknowledge our sin and wholeheartedly repent. This is very clearly described in **Isaiah 1:16-20** "Wash and make yourselves clean, take your evil deeds out of my sight, stop doing wrong." That is speaking of the aspect of repentance where we recognize that what we're doing is wrong and it's got to stop. For this Samaritan woman, it wasn't just a matter of bringing the sacrifices at the right time, attending the festivals at the right time, saying the right kind of prayers, but Jesus is looking at her heart just like He looks at our hearts.

For us to come before Him with acts of worship and yet unclean lives is to bring before Him what He rejects. 'We have to purpose to live in holiness.' **Isaiah 1:17** then, 'Learn to do right.' It's not just a matter of stopping, but we stop doing what is wrong; we start doing what is right. Paul would describe it as "Put off the stealing and start working. Put off poor communication and start telling the truth." God says in Isaiah, 'Come now, let us reason together,' says the Lord. 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool.' God holds the door open for us and we can receive from Him forgiveness. God is a forgiving God. This Samaritan woman found this in Jesus Himself. What He doesn't want is just a worship that's on the outside. He wants a worship that comes from her heart.

Second we must trust in, cling to and rely on Jesus Christ and pour out our hearts in worship to Him alone. Worship is an action word and a matter of the heart. We have to ask the question, who is the performer? Our typical mindset thinks that the person on the platform is the performer; while the people in the pews are the audience. What should be clear is that the people on the platform, the minister, the choir, the other leaders, are merely the prompters to worship. The real worshiper is the person in the seat. God is the audience. The question we should be asking ourselves on the way home on Sunday morning is not "What did I get out of it?" But rather, "How did I do?" For when all the sermons that have been preached, all the songs sung, all the worship renewal workshops conducted, and all our innovations come and gone, worship is all that will have mattered: That we said with our whole being, "Worthy is the Lamb". The Samaritan woman was a worshiper but she did not worship the one true God. We are created to worship; we need to check out our hearts to be pure in this area. Easy check, do we choose to put anything before God in the forefront of our thoughts?

"I who speak to you am He."

In a split second she saw it all very clearly. She was sinful, horrible, and contemptible. He was **full of love, understanding and forgiving**. She understood that this was the reason He sought her out. She received Him into her heart. She said 'yes', to Jesus Christ. She was now free of all condemnation from both herself and others. She was free from the past, **a new creation with a new sense of direction and purpose**, thus the reason she went immediately to tell all her neighbours, forgetting her water pitcher (representing her past), and openly testifying to everything He had told her about her past without shame.

She was so changed that they all wanted to see this amazing man. At first they believed because of her testimony but when they met Him for themselves they believed because of His words, **John 4:41**. This

woman of the world who had no hope of any change in her life, who certainly had no security and no future was completely changed in **one** day by **one** conversation with the **One** true Living God. She was used by Him to reach her whole town, so the most '**value-less**' member of that society became the most **valuable** as she showed them the way of Eternal Life. **How do you judge your value?**

No.24 The Samaritan Woman - saved her town! Challenges Questions

Read all the notes about the Samaritan woman

1. Do you think our society is more or less prejudiced today than it used to be 30 years ago? Give reasons for your answers.
2. If a woman joins your Church and is living with a male partner how would you encourage her in her walk with God? Would you invite them to your house as a couple?
3. How do you enjoy worship in your Church? In private? Do you think there is any difference between 'praise' and 'worship'? Where are they similar? What encourages you to worship and what puts you off?
4. The disciples were told to go to Jerusalem; Judea; Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth, (**Acts1:8**) but did not go because they chose to be comfortable in their home situation so God allowed persecution! Are you a daily witness to all who you speak to, that Jesus has changed your life? Can you learn anything from the Samaritan woman?
5. How do **you think** her attitude changed to herself; men and neighbours after she met Jesus? Give your reasons.

Read Mark 12:38-44 and Luke 21:1-4

6. Where is Jesus at this time? Is it a public or private place?
7. How did Jesus describe the religious leaders of His day? What will be their reward?
8. Why do you think Jesus would sit down right opposite the place where the offerings were put? What do you think that would tell Him about the individuals?
9. What did the widow do? How much was it worth to her?
10. How did Jesus describe her gift? Who did He tell?

11. How do you think the disciples felt? How do you feel when wealthy people give a lot of money to a request in Church? How do you feel if they do NOT give anything? How do you feel when an elderly widow is very generous?

12. If Jesus was sitting in your Church by you when you put your money in the collection would you increase what you give? Why?

13. What do you find the hardest part of dealing with money?

14. Do you give your tenth and feel that is more than enough? What do you feel about God having all your finance?

15. Look at the following verses and pray about what they are saying to you. Make a comment below each one?
Matthew 6:20-21 Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

Proverbs 3:9 Honour the LORD with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce.

1 Chronicles 29:14 AMP For all things come from You, and out of Your own [hand] we have given You.

1 Timothy 6:17 KJV Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy;

2 Corinthians 8:3 NLT For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will.

2 Corinthians 9:6 NIV Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously

Read Philippians 4:10-20

16. This passage points out that the people with the least are often the most generous. Have you experienced this?

17. Paul said he had learnt to be content in both lack and plenty, **Philippians 4:11**. Could this be your testimony?

18. Do you have any advice to anyone going through lack at this time? How can they get out of this situation?

19. Sum up in one short sentence what has challenged you in this study.