

John 4:4-30

¹⁹ “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet.” ²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

²¹ “Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

²⁵ The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

²⁶ Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”

²⁷ Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

²⁸ Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ²⁹ “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” ³⁰ They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

MONDAY: THE SAMARITAN WOMAN—“EMBRACE OF GRACE”

This is the story of Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman. Or of the Samaritan woman’s encounter with Jesus. Or of the nearby town’s encounter with Jesus. Take some time to read the entire story. What’s it about? Take some notes in your Bible, observing things about the Samaritan woman.

- How does she approach Jesus?
- How does she respond to the things Jesus says?
- What moves her most about Jesus?

TUESDAY: JOHN 4:7-9—BREAKING THROUGH

John explains that Jews do not associate with Samaritans. Samaritans did not worship at Jerusalem, and they used a different version of the Scriptures. About 200 years before Jesus some Samaritans helped Syrians fight against the Jews. Some Jews thought Samaritan women were unclean their entire life.

- It was not the worst thing, but certainly not very good in the eyes of other Jews for a teacher like Jesus to talk privately with a Samaritan woman. Are there such scenarios in need of transforming grace and in need of Jesus breaking through today? How is the good news of Jesus scandalous? Do other stories from the gospels come to mind? Where would you be without the scandal?
- What ‘ice breaker’ does Jesus use? The Samaritan woman either had *one* jar or *one* cup. What are the implications of Jesus’ question, “Give me a drink”? What does this tell us about what Jesus is willing to do? Are there limits to his reach to bring “living water”? Identify limits to your reach. Share how God might be calling you to extend those limits.

WEDNESDAY: JOHN 4:10-14; 31-38—WATER TO DRINK, FOOD TO EAT

Jesus responds to the Samaritan woman. There is a theme of nourishment in this story. The woman seeks nourishment of water. The disciples seek nourishment of food. Jesus uses these quests to point to a greater one.

- What does Jesus say about the kind of water the woman is after?
- How is “living water” a good image for what Jesus offers? What does this water do in a person’s life that still water does not?
- In what way does the woman bring nourishment to Jesus?
- In 4:35 Jesus tells the disciples to “open their eyes.” How were they not open?

THURSDAY: JOHN 4:20-24—TRUE WORSHIP

The woman brings up one of the main differences that caused strife between the Jews and Samaritans. Jesus welcomes the conversation.

- What does Jesus have to say about this cause of division?
- Read 2 Chronicles 6:4-6. King Solomon is speaking after building the temple in Jerusalem. What is significant about Jerusalem?
- Jerusalem is linked with God’s promise to David. Does Jesus’ statement in verse 21 mean this promise is no more? Is there anything from last week’s study of the story in the Old Testament that might help here?

FRIDAY: JOHN 4:20-24—GOD IS SPIRIT AND SALVATION IS FROM THE JEWS

Jesus and the woman engage in what potentially could be a hot debate about belief in God.

- Jews and Samaritans had different conceptions of God. They disagreed about not just how to worship God, but where God dwells. Jesus is clear that the Jews have the correct understanding. But Jesus does not say, “you’re wrong, and you need to worship in Jerusalem.” So, what does he do with the claim that the Jews have the correct understanding? What does this have to do with Jesus himself? (As an interesting side issue: how do you see Jesus’ statement in relation to the modern issue of relativism, that everyone’s conception of God is the right one for them?)
- What does it mean that “God is spirit”?
- “Salvation is from the Jews.” What does this mean to you? Does it change the way you see yourself in God’s grand story of salvation and redemption?

SATURDAY: JOHN 4:28-42—BELIEF

This story has a great ending. Jesus’ encounter with the single woman leads to an encounter with a multitude of people. All through the witness of one!

- Notice that verse 28 says that the woman “left her jar.” Is this suggestive of anything? What could her jar stand for?
- At the end of this story, how have things changed for the Samaritan woman? *What* has changed?
- What does this woman do with her experience with Jesus? Who does she share it with? What does she emphasize about her encounter with Jesus?
- Describe how you think she might have shared Jesus with these people? What insights into evangelism does her story give you? What insights do you have from Jesus, who should not have been speaking to a woman who was also a Samaritan?