

John 4:1-26
“The road less traveled”

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I. Intro.

It is interesting to realize that Jesus departure from Jerusalem through Judea into Samaria and finally to Galilee (the end of the earth) is the same route that Jesus will exhort his disciples to travel after receiving the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:8. But I think that the importance is not geographically important as it is relationally important and that is what will examine this morning.

II. Vs. 1-6 The need to go

Vs. 1-6 The first six verses serve as a background to the story as John reveals three reasons for Jesus departure of Judea.

a. “*When the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John*”: Notice the words, “*When the Lord knew...He left...but needed to go through Samaria*” The word “*left*” in verse 3 sheds light on one of the reasons Jesus left as it means an “*intentional break or departure*” a “*send away or to dismiss*”. Elsewhere in Greek the word is rendered “*abandoned*”. Jesus abandoned Judea as the Pharisees were making His popularity an issue. One of the most remarkable things about Jesus has to do with **His priorities**. This story happens early on in His earthly ministry as Jesus was on the verge of national popularity which had reached the Pharisees; yet Jesus takes leave of them and heads back home to Galilee. **Jesus was never concerned with popularity, His only concern is for people and it was this that directed His route in life!**

b. “*He needed to go through Samaria*”: Jesus could have taken one of three routes: Along the coast, Across the Jordan and then up through Perea, or straight through Samaria. Jews would never go through Samaria as they had a great racial hatred of the Samaritans. The Samaritans grew out of the Assyrian Captivity of the 10 northern tribes that were rejected by the Jews because they could no longer trace their ancestral heritage. When the Babylonians conquered the nation they took only the best people leaving the lower class people who inter mixed with the people brought there originally by the Assyrians. Because of this the Jews rejected them and wouldn’t allow them to worship in Jerusalem. This caused them to establish their own form of worship and they built their own temple on Mount Gerizim still based on the first five books of Moses but changing the stories making them happen on Mount Gerizim. The name “Samaritan” is what they will call Jesus in John chapter 8:48 and became a swear word. Jesus going through Samaria is more than a route taken it is a statement from Jesus against racial and religious prejudice. Jesus traveling this direction was setting a clear sign that HE came to bring people together not tear them apart.

C. “Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well”: Finally John takes us to the location to reveal that Jesus didn't “need” to go through Samaria **geographically** nor **politically**. He needed to do so **relationally**. “He needed to go through Samaria”. Geographically it was the quickest way but not the normal way Jews would go to Galilee. The reason for Jesus NEED was because there was a woman in NEED! His need was brought about by another's NEED.

III. Vs. 7-15 Better water

Vs. 7 Typically young women would travel together, in the morning to get water for the day and there would have been a well close to them in Sychar but we see this woman having to come alone outside of the city in a time of day when no other person would be gathering water and she had done so for some time. We note that she is woman, not a young girl any longer but a mature woman. Her youthful foolish decisions have caught up to her, she has lived a lifestyle that now causes her to carry the burdens of her choices everyday. This suggests that this woman was an outcast among a people of outcasts; she has been shunned by people who had been shunned. It would take her an hour or more to walk alone along that dusty dirty with nothing but her thoughts. Oh how heavy those foot steps must have been. She had been through five husbands and now she is with a man not her husband. This tells us is that she has not learned from those foolish choices instead she is left carrying those choices.

As she came to this well because of her own foolish choices but this time there was someone sitting by the well of those choices, Jesus. Oh do not pass by the reality of this my friend, maybe you have come today to the well of your foolish choices that you haven't learned from and now you aren't young any more. Your impetuous dreams of being someone famous and important may have long ago been swallowed up by the choices you have made. Don't get me wrong I'm not here saying that you made the choices because you just wanted to screw up your life. You didn't sit down one day and say I think I'll mess up my life, I think I'll do drugs become an addict, have children outside of marriage, go to jail, but that is where you are now an outcast living outside of outcasts coming each day to the same pit to get a little something to quench the heartache. But this day Jesus is sitting at the well and He is waiting for you and what you haven't seen is that He has been at the well everyday of your life, but this day you have seen Him.

Jesus seeks out folks just like this woman who because of their own failings, society has deemed unworthy of attention and love. He finds them alone in life, having adapted a lifestyle around their sinful choices. Notice that Jesus gave this woman by the well the opportunity to turn Him down, He gave her that choice! It wasn't Him that didn't want her, it would be her choice not to want Him. Right this moment Jesus is sitting on the well of our choices giving us the opportunity to stop coming to that well that doesn't satisfy, but it will be our choice.

One of the fascinating things in this passage of scripture is this women's growing understanding of who Jesus is. In verse 9 she calls Him a “**Jew**”, then in verses 11 she is more respectful calling Him “**Sir**”. Next in verse 12 she asks if He is greater than the patriarch “**Jacob**”, in verse 19 she calls Him a “**prophet**” and finally in verse 25 she alludes to the fact that He is the “**Messiah**”.

This progression all took place in a matter of minutes as she saw His heart towards her. I wonder if she ever gave Him that drink (*verse 28 says that she left her water pot but it never says that she filled it*) but there is an indication that she received His “living water”.

Vs. 8-10 The fact that the disciples were in town buying supplies from Samaritans shows that the Jews did have some dealings with Samaritans. His words shocked the woman as she said, “*How is it that you, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?*” She had two strikes against her, one she was a woman and no respectable Rabbi would speak to a woman in public not even their own wife and she was a Samaritan and no Jew would ever drink from a cup of a Samaritan. In Matt. 8:13 Jesus said, “*I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance*”, so like this women by the well we all qualify. Jesus told her that she was ignorant of **three things**:

1. **Who He is** Jesus said, “*If you knew the Gift of God, and who it is who says to you, Give me a drink*”: She had questioned how it was that He being a Jew would ask a favor from a Samaritan woman and Jesus says, “*You don’t know who I am, that is why you question Me.*” This woman had been around men, she knew men, she knew what they wanted and here she has come to a well and yet another man asks for something. He had asked her for some of the water that she had to drink, but she didn’t realize that He wanted her to give to Him all that she had been drinking from the world year after year. Her response is, “*What are you saying, you want to drink from my cup an outcast of outcasts?*” Then Jesus said if you knew the “*gift of God and who it is that says to you*”. She had probably knew many men (at least six of them) that had thought they were the “*gift of God*”. Maybe she thought, “*Oh I’ve heard that line before!*”

2. **What He offered** “*He would have given you living water*”: He had asked for water from her and what He wanted was to give her that which would satisfy the longing of her heart. She had religion but she didn’t realize what He was offering as she was ignorant of both the gift and the giver. If you combine two phrases in this story in verse 7 “*Give me a drink*” and verse 16 “*go call your husband*” then I will give you living water; you realize what Jesus is trying to get this woman to do. As we give to Jesus that which can not satisfy, give to Him our sin, our substitute for Him and in so doing He will replace it with Himself.

3. **How to receive it** “*Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep*”. Here before her was the living God offering her an exchange of her daily trip to that which never satisfied for that which if she would receive it would forever satisfy. Yet she seems to be more concerned with “*where...do you get that living water*” (verse 11) instead of simply asking for a drink of it.

Vs. 11-15 Jacob’s well today is around 150 feet deep; in most every other case it is Jesus who is the one giving and serving, but here in this story he invites the Samaritan woman to get Him a drink. What this demonstrated to her was that He was not against her, that He saw her as valuable. Jesus always reached people where they were at; to an aging Nicodemus He spoke of being born again, to fishermen He spoke of making them fishers of men and to this woman by a well He spoke of her about living water. She can’t seem to move beyond the physical even though she has been drinking from the physical world to satisfy what only the spiritual “*Living Water*” can satisfy. **How many of us have lowered down our rope day after day into that pit only to find it dry?** She asks, “*Are you greater than our Father Jacob*” and Jesus could have

answered, “Let me think, I know I’m a better wrestler than Jacob, I know that Jacob liked to sleep at the bottom of my latter. Yeh, I’m greater than Jacob, you may know **Jacob’s well** but I know **Jacob well!**”

But that is not how Jesus answered instead He went right back to her need as he said, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again”. He tells her that His living water is superior in **three ways** to what the world has been giving her:

A. Content “Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst.” Living water is superior in that it quenches what the world can not satisfy.

B. Location And it “will become in him a fountain of water”: The source of refreshment is from the **inside** so that a person will never have to seek refreshment from the outside.

C. Duration “springing up into everlasting life”: Thirdly, Jesus says that it is superior as it will never end, she will be fulfilled forever.

Jesus has brought her to her need that the water of this world has not satisfied her and she wanted to know more. In verse 10 Jesus said it was by way of the “*Gift of God*”. The word “Drinks” in verse 13 in the Greek is a continual action where as Jesus says, in verse 14 speaking of the water they He shall give the word for “**Drink**” is a completed action a one time sip. Jesus superiority is upon what He offered when compared to what she had continually been drinking. Her twofold response is honest as she tells Jesus why she wants His water:

a. “*That I may not thirst*”: She is tired of living in serial relationships that never satisfy.

b. “*Nor come to draw*”: She tired have the outcome of her behavior as it has keep her from true companionship.

IV. Vs. 16-26 Woman believe Me

Vs. 16-17a The only way to prepare this woman’s heart for the “Living Water” that He was offering to speak to her about her sins so she would confess her failure and this was her shortest reply in the entire conversation, “I have no husband”. Jesus asked for her husband because there is no conversion without conviction and confession.

Jesus mentions the truth about her five husbands but doesn’t go into the sorted details; Jesus is into the gospel not into gossip! You cannot have living water unless you stop traveling to the water of this world. She came back with one of those statements we do when convicted, “None of your business”. But Jesus loved her and made her His business not to ridicule her but to rid her of that which never satisfied.

Vs. 17b-22 Jesus now needs her to move her to conviction so He brings her to her personal sin. “*Your right*”, Jesus tells her. “*You don’t currently have a husband but you’ve had five and the one you’re with now you can’t bring yourself to trust in another person so you’re just playing house without commitment.*” She tried to change the subject into theological to misdirect her need, but Jesus simply responded that worship is in the location of the heart not on the location of the body. How simple a life can be changed from emptiness if only people would trust in Jesus to satisfy the longing of the heart instead of the world.

Vs. 23-26 Then Jesus makes it personal as He says, “*the hour is coming when YOU...the hour is coming and NOW is*”. “*The time is now and you are the person that I’ve come for*”, Jesus tells her, “*I’ve come to make you a true worshipper.*” The well of the world was dug along ago and

people have been coming to its water for far too long, why not now hear these words of Jesus to you, *“I who speak to you am He”*.

Jesus says to her that, those true worshippers are those who worship in Spirit and in truth? Don't just push it off as words spoken to an immoral woman, Jesus is still seeking out people to worship the same. Jesus spoke of *“true worshippers”* being balanced between the *“Spirit of God and the Word of God”*. It is a wonderful thing to realize that the Father is seeking those to worship Him. Perhaps you gone through a time where you feel distant from God, a time when you've walked away from His love for you and you don't know how to get back, well He is seeking those that will worship so why not just start thanking Him and praising Him?

This is the first of Jesus' I am statements and this one deals directly with Him being the Messiah. You can meet Him anywhere and everywhere if only you bring to Him that which you have been trying to medicate your life with so that He can replace it with that which heals. What did she do when Jesus said, *“I who speak to you am He”*? Well verse 28 says that she *“left her water pot”*; she left the well and the water pot for the living water. It is time for us to leave our water pots of the world and return to worshipping Jesus!