

The Gospel of John

Believe and Live!

Lesson 5

John 4:1–54

Living Water

Following the events of the Passover celebration in Jerusalem and the extended time preaching and baptizing in Judea, Jesus attracted crowds and followers in ever increasing numbers, much more than those of John the Baptist. The religious leaders came out as well but they were not seeking the truth, rather their desire was to arouse jealousy between John's followers. John's response was loyalty to the one he recognized as the Messiah: *"He must increase, but I must decrease."*

Feeling the increasing pressure from the Jewish leaders, Jesus chose to change the location of His ministry operation by traveling north to Galilee. The route He would take would transform an entire village by revealing to them He was indeed the Savior of the world!

At a glance ~ **Read John 4:1–54.**

God created man with a void that only He is meant to fill. When your thirst for Him beckons you to come, He meets you at the well of His Word. In your initial reading of John 4, what impression draws you to come and drink today?

There were several routes Jesus could take but the most direct route led through Samaria, a place Orthodox Jews avoided because of a deep-seated hatred for the Samaritan people. (They were a mixed race of Jews and Gentiles dating back to the Assyrian exile of the northern tribes in 727 B.C.) Considered interracial and impure, they were rejected by the Jews which in turn resulted in bitter hostility between them. The Samaritans in turn established their own Temple to worship on Mt. Gerizim.

1. Why did Jesus decide to go through Samaria? vv. 4–6
 - a. Where did this route take Him?
 - b. What did He do when He arrived?

The fact that Jesus “needed to” or “had to” go the way He did implies it was out of necessity or compulsion. In fact, He was led by the Holy Spirit for the purpose we will see in this chapter. If Jesus and His disciples began their journey at daybreak, they would have been traveling for six hours when He arrived and sat down by the well around noon. We see His humanity in the fact that He *was wearied from His journey*.

A conversation ensues that will forever change the lives of those who hear it. Remember that this is a private conversation between two individuals. We can assume that due to the depth of its detail, Jesus must have repeated it to the disciple John who later recalled it when writing his gospel account.

2. Where were Jesus’ disciples? vv. 7–9

a. With whom did He initiate a conversation and what does He ask of her?

We don’t know her by name but by reputation—she was a social outcast who came to the well at the hottest time of the day when no one else would be there to fetch water. His request of her breaks through the cultural and social boundaries of the day.

b. What point does she make that Jesus completely ignores?

This woman had never experienced a conversation like this one! It was unheard of for a Jewish man to speak to a Samaritan woman. She was shunned by the Jews because of her Samaritan heritage and by people in general due to her reputation. But when Jesus looked into her, He saw who and what she would become.

Picture it ~

This Samaritan woman and Jesus both have something in common: she is interested in obtaining water—He in supplying it. She comes carrying a water jar on her head and the water Jesus gives fills up her heart to overflowing!

a. What critical points does Jesus pose to her? v. 10

b. Thinking that Jesus is referring to well water, what does she reply? vv. 11–12

c. What does Jesus say about the kind of water she is seeking? What truth does He reveal about the water of satisfaction He offers? vv. 13–14

d. How does she receive this *living water*? v. 15

Selah ~

Jesus addressed three aspects in His conversation with the Samaritan woman that are critically important for anyone who is spiritually empty and needing to be filled. Take a moment to reflect on each one from a personal perspective and record your thoughts . . .

Jesus Christ is saying to *you* today: “If you only knew . . .” (v. 10)

- *The gift God has for you* _____
- *Who is speaking to you* _____
- *How you can receive it* _____

Do you know about the gift God has for *you*? Do you realize He is the one speaking to your heart? All you have to do is ask to receive His *Living Water*!

In focus ~ (Key words) **Worship**

Worship means much more than praising God with your lips, it includes glorifying God with your life. Look up the word using the resources you have on hand (Bible translations, dictionary, concordance). Write a definition, reflecting on Romans 12:1–2.

Worship: (4:24) _____

Take a closer look ~ **John 4:24**

(Memorize and meditate on the memory verse each time you open your lesson.)

“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

In your own words, explain how Jesus Christ enables you to worship God in spirit and truth.

True Worship

Outlook ~ Read John 4:16–42.

The Samaritan woman's response in our text: "*Give me this water*" (v.15) is the overture to the experience of true worship. With these simple words Jesus brought her to express her spiritual need, but she did not yet fully know the depth of that need and so He probes further.

1. What does Jesus ask her to do and what is her response? vv.16–19

a. As Jesus exposes her true condition, what does she perceive about Him?

The questions Jesus asked her awakened her conscience and the guilt of her sin, which would ultimately lead to her repentance.

2. How does she try to avoid the true issue? v. 20

The mountain referred to in verse 20 is Mt. Gerizim, considered by the Samaritan people as the most sacred place on earth. When Samaritans prayed they turned their face toward this mountain, believing the Messiah would one day appear there.

3. Jesus points her not to a mountain but to Himself as the center of worship. What is the essence of His message? vv. 21–24

True worship is not a matter of tradition and ritual as the Samaritans believed when they faced their holy mountain, rather it is a personal relationship with the living God. Jesus taught Nicodemus that this relationship begins when one is born again. Here He teaches the Samaritan woman that true worship is the expression of this relationship with God.

4. How does Jesus later expand on this truth in John 14:6?

This Samaritan woman was ignorant of the truth, but she did know one thing: the Messiah was coming, who will tell of all things!

5. That hour she spoke about had arrived. How did Jesus reveal it to her? v. 26

Look closer ~

There are seven occasions in John's Gospel where Jesus makes the statement: "I AM." When He does He makes a claim to deity that would have startled the Jewish people. It is the direct connection of God's revelation of Himself to Moses in Exodus 3:14, where He states, "I AM WHO I AM." He is relating that He is defined by nothing apart from or outside of Himself. Look up the references to these statements below and note what Jesus reveals about Himself.

- a. John 6:35

- b. John 8:12; 9:5

- c. John 10:7,9

- d. John 10:11,14

- e. John 11:25

- f. John 14:6

- g. John 15:1,5

The disciples marveled when they return to find Jesus talking with a woman, but none of them asked Him the reason for it. She was so impacted by her encounter with the Messiah that she left her waterpot and returned home to share the "good news."

6. With what words did she witness to the men of her city? vv. 28–30
 - a. What was the response to her testimony?

 - b. The belief of the townspeople was not only the result of this woman's testimony; what else caused them to believe? What did they too declare? vv. 39–42

7. There was a great harvest in Samaria resulting from this event! Jesus used it to teach a lesson to His disciples—what was it? vv. 31–38

The Miracle in Galilee—The Second Sign

Outlook ~ Read John 4:43–54.

After two days of ministry with the Samaritan people, Jesus turned northward toward Galilee. On His way, He passed the towns of Nazareth and Cana, prompting Him to testify that a prophet has no honor in his own country. He returned to Galilee with a reputation and a warm welcome for all the things He did in Jerusalem. It is in Cana that He once again resumes His mission of ministry to the Jews.

Among those who come out to welcome Him is a distraught parent who had heard of His return and rushed to Him with an urgent request.

1. What was this father's anguished plea? v. 47
 - a. What was Jesus' first reply to this man's request? v. 48

The words in verse 48 at first seem a bit harsh coming from Jesus, but they are a reference to the privileged ruling class of people who, for the most part, were cynical and often in opposition to Jesus' work. The nobleman belonged to this ruling class and yet he came seeking Jesus on behalf of his son. Jesus spoke these words to pierce the heart of a father in order to bring him to saving faith.

- b. What was this father's response to Jesus' words? This time how does Jesus answer him? vv. 49–50

It was a twenty mile return trip home on horseback before the father could expect word about his son. What must he have thought as he pondered the words of Jesus? On the way he received the news he was waiting for.

2. Who rushed out to meet him and what did they say? vv. 51–53
 - a. What question was he eager to have answered? Why?
 - b. What was the result for him personally?

c. What other fruit came about from his belief in Jesus?

d. Personal: Has God brought fruit from *your* personal testimony that has impacted the lives of others? Share an example.

This father came to Jesus asking for a healing for his son and received one for himself that impacted his entire household! Jesus had drawn him on to a deeper faith that brought salvation to others.

John tells us at the close of this chapter that the healing of the nobleman's son was more than a miracle—it was a sign—one that revealed something important about Jesus. The first sign—changing water into wine—revealed Jesus as the God with authority over nature. This second sign reveals that He is the Great Physician with authority over all illness. He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we could ask or think, according to His power which works mightily in us!

More like Jesus ~

Are *you* becoming more like Jesus? Absolutely! Every time you open the Word and spend time getting to know Him more intimately, you partake in the life-long process of drawing near—going deeper—bearing fruit—becoming more like Him. As you close your lesson today, determine to put into practice what you've learned by noting it below.

- Recite your memory verse _____

- Reflect on a lesson you received _____

- Respond with prayer and praise to God _____

Notes