Lesson 5 [Chapter 4] "The Samaritan woman"

Remember:

Last lesson, we talked about Nicodemus who met Jesus at night, and Jesus explained to him the spiritual birth. Also, the famous declaration that God sent His Son out of love for the world, so believers wouldn't perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

Lesson Goal:

Jesus is the only one who can satisfy our thirst, transform our lives and give us a new purpose.

Lesson opener: 'The untouchables"

From Judea to galilee, there were three routes to travel (1) Along the coast, (2) along the Jordan valley, or (3) along the central road through the mountains. The central mountain road was the fastest and most direct, but it travelled through Samaria. The strictest Jews avoided the route not to encounter a Samaritan. In our Bible reading, it says Jesus "had to" take this route because He had a divine appointment with a woman at Jacob's well.

We know that women in Jesus' day typically drew water in groups in the morning (it was a social occasion and a daily task). Being alone at midday suggests she was a social outcast. She represents the lowest of the low. A female in a society where women were overlooked. She is of a race hated by its neighbors and living in shame as a social outcast. Yet, Jesus goes out of His way to meet her and change her life forever. This conversation is also the longest recorded between Jesus and any other individual in the Gospel of John.

No matter our social status, Jesus is there for us. He loves us and wants to bring us peace and eternal life. He does not care what sins we have committed. He has already paid the price for all the sins we've ever made and will ever make. Jesus wants to bring us His forgiveness and peace. Even when the world turns its backs on us, Jesus calls us to Himself. In today's lesson we will look out how Jesus dealt with one of the "untouchables" of His day and so better learn how to reach all kinds of people with the gospel, including those who are outcasts.



Lesson Body:

A Samaritan Woman Meets Her Messiah 4:1-26

Jesus realized that the Pharisees were aware of His increasing popularity, He was in fact making more disciples than John. So, He left Judea, where the events in the last part of chapter 3 had occurred and went back to Galilee, passing by Samaria.

The baptism done by the disciples was for the repentance, similar to the baptism offered by John the Baptist since the Christian baptism cannot be offered until death, resurrection and ascension of Christ.

Why do the Jews hate the Samaritans?

- The history of conflict goes back to the 10th century BC when 10 tribes of Israel broke away from David's descendant, King Rehoboam and formed the Northern kingdom.
- To prevent the influence of the Southern Kingdom of Judah on his people, Jeroboam, king of Israel, established a new system of worship by setting up golden calves at Bethel and Dan, in violation of God's covenant.
- Later in the 8th century BC, God brought judgment and the Assyrians exiled the 10 tribes. When Assyria captured Israel, the poor were left in the land of Samaria, so those of Jewish origin intermixed with other nationalities, and especially with those of Assyrian origin.
- The Samaritans only read the Five Books by Moses, and they considered Shechem and not Zion to be the house of God. They built Mt Gerizim to use instead of the temple.
- As for the Jews, they despised the Samaritans as much as they despised the rest of the Gentiles.
- The Lord Jesus came to plant the seed of living faith in the earth of Samaria. Its people accepted the Word because of their faith and not because they had seen miracles.

Jesus was fully divine and fully human. Like us, He suffered from hunger and thirst and felt tired but did not waste the opportunity to reach out to the lost sheep.

The woman came at noon when it was so hot probably to avoid meeting other people.

Although his woman was considered an untouchable, Jesus had to find a way to start up a conversation to win her to repentance. He asks humbly for a glass of water not out of His personal need but to reveal her own need for Him. He left the crowds and was concerned by one person.

Why was she surprised at His request?

It was not an option in the Jewish customs for a man to converse with women in public who are not part of their immediate family, John 4:27, much less a woman who is a recognized as an outcast, John 4:18. Also Samaritans hate the Jews, and they usually do not talk to them.

How did her faith grow?

1. At the beginning of His conversation, she thought Him to be a Jew who would not deal with Samaritans [9].
2. She called Him 'Sir' [11].
3. She conceived Him to be greater than Jacob, the father of all the tribes [12].
4. She believed that He is the Giver of the living water though she doesn't fully understand its meaning [15].
5. She believed that He is a prophet [19].
6. She expected Him to be the awaited Messiah [25]; therefore, He said to her: "I who speak to you am He" [26]

We notice how Jesus keeps His goal in mind. He doesn't get off on tangents about the current political environment between the Jews and Samaritans.

It seemed to the woman that the Lord's words were illogical because the well is about 35 yards deep. He spoke of spiritual matters, whereas she was thinking in materialistic terms. In spite of that, she felt obliged to respect and honor Him due to the tone of His words. As a result, she started to address him as 'Sir.'

It is the water that never dries out or passes away. It quenches our spiritual thirst forever. Only Jesus can give the real thing!

At the beginning, her question is legitimate, but in verse 12 she starts going down another rabbit trail thinking how great Jacob is and how blessed they were to have the well.

The Samaritans considered themselves to be Jacob's children since they were one of the ten tribes who had been separated in the days of Jeroboam. However, as we know, they carried foreign blood as they mixed with different Gentile nations.

Jesus handles her question masterfully. He refers to the well that she puts her hope in as being inadequate and then immediately gets back to the point that He offers living water. After any water, or any drink, a person naturally thirsts again; but Christ speaks of the spiritual water of grace in this life, and of glory in the next, which will perfectly satisfy the desires of a person's immortal soul forever.

Then she senses that He is the Messiah that generations have been awaiting for and Who would tell them all things. Therefore, she becomes qualified to hear Him revealing it to her.

He proclaims that the Spirit has the power to clean and remove dirt.

Jesus strikes home her need as a sinner (15-19):

This woman is attracted by Jesus' offer and wants what He has to give. Did Jesus say, "ok, you are saved"? No. He could see she wasn't ready yet, she didn't repent.

He wanted to show that she was really a sinner, needing His help, and had to change through repentance. Jesus delves into her marital situation to show her need as a sinner.

At the same time, though He pointed out her sin, He didn't rub it in. He wasn't harsh either.

What a skillful divine healer! He uncovers the infirmity in the woman, and with His divine blade, heals with skill, power and love. This leads her to confess what no other woman would pronounce: 'I have no husband.'

As the Lord reveals Himself gradually to her, the woman discovers that He knows all her hidden secrets. According to her understanding, this means that He is a prophet and so she trusts in His ability to answer truthfully the question that puzzles so many: 'Will true worship take place in Jerusalem as the Jews claim, or will it be on Mount Gerizim according to the Samaritans and which had been blessed?'

Do you note how the woman becomes more insistent in her search for understanding?

If God were flesh, it would be correct to worship Him on a mountain which is a material substance. What should preoccupy believers is not the place but their status as children of the heavenly Father. He does not show preference to any place but focuses on one's intentions.

Where should we worship?

"You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation comes of the Jews…" [22]

By saying: "…what you do not know…" the Lord indicates the Prophetic Books which the Samaritans had rejected. These Books prepare the way of knowledge and establish the person of the redeeming Messiah. The words: "…we worship what we know…" refer to the divine Books as a safe path to true knowledge and worship.

The Messiah was born of the Jews, and they were the ones who began to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles.

In the case of your people- the Samaritans, you have received the teachings about worship from the Jews although you do not fulfill them correctly.

The Lord does not explain to the Samaritan woman why the fathers worshipped on this mountain, or why the Jews worship in Jerusalem. By being silent about this, He dismisses and cancels any further importance to both places.

Instead of being preoccupied with the place of worship, it is essential to be concerned with the condition of inner thought. God the Father seeks those who worship Him with their hearts.

Finally, the conversation turns to the subject of the Messiah. She was just a poor woman who had no prior knowledge of the Holy Books; therefore, the Lord does not discuss what is written in them. He leads her to faith by taking her through the path of the water.

The Whitened Harvest 4:27-38

When the Samaritan woman received the divine truth, she abandoned her waterpot and forgot the reason that had brought her to the well. So, she returned without getting water.

However, she returned to offer the water of truth to the people of the city.

She informed everyone in the streets that she had found the treasure she has been looking for, and that she has found the Source of her inner joy

The Jews believed that one essential characteristic of the Messiah would be, that He should be able to tell the secrets of all hearts.

She did not want to draw them based on her own determination and conviction. Rather, she wanted then to draw their own conclusion after hearing Him.

The Lord Jesus Christ desires the harvest that will not be achieved without serious work with joy and perseverance. Work is definitely necessary and urgent in order that the harvest may be enjoyable. He sees the coming harvest when many Samaritans come to Him through the service of the Samaritan woman.

After the two-day stay in Samaria, He went on to Galilee as planned.

Nobleman's Son Healed 4:46-54

When Jesus went back to Cana, an official came to Him asking Him to heal his sick son.

It is clear he had pretty strong faith in Jesus. He didn't come and ask if Jesus was able to heal His son. He wasn't timid or fearful, but he implored Jesus to go there [about 40 Km

away] and heal his son. But his faith was not enough. He wanted Jesus to physically go there to the boy assuming a miracle cannot be done remotely.

Verse 48: The LORD did not say to him that he had no faith, but that he was weak in his faith. He was unable to believe that the LORD could heal the child without going in person from Cana to Capernaum. This is the weak faith that is built on miracles.

Jesus told him, 'Go your way; your son lives.', He is omnipresent and omniscient. Jesus says this with amazing authority! He doesn't promise to pray or ask the Father and see what He can do.

He healed this boy without ever physically seeing him, diagnosing him, prescribing medicine, or doing surgery. That is divine. No one can do that except God.

Lesson Takeaway:

JESUS ALONE CAN SATISFY (JOHN 4:13-14)

Jesus tells the woman that He will give her Living Water. Not water that will ease physical thirst on long, hot days, but our thirst for something more. We all urge something more than we have here on earth. Something we cannot find on our own. Something Heavenly. Jesus is the only source that can quench that longing, desire, and thirst.

Everyone wants to know what will make them happy. We anxiously seek the person, place, or thing that can satisfy our needs. We think if only we had more money, better looks, fame, or the perfect career, we would be satisfied. The Samaritan woman looked to men to satisfy her longing. But she was more desperate than ever. Always drinking but never satisfied.

If you seek pleasure and satisfaction in anything other than Jesus, turn to Him. Accept His invitation for eternal life. "In His presence, there is fullness of joy; at His right hand are pleasures forevermore." (Psalm 16:11)

TELL OTHERS ABOUT JESUS (JOHN 4:39-42)

The first thing the woman did after speaking to Jesus was to tell the other Samaritans about Jesus. Her words made an impact.

We also have the incredible privilege of sharing the good news of Jesus with others. Sometimes we make evangelism more complicated than it is. The Samaritan woman shared her story. We all have a story (testimony) of how Jesus is involved in our lives.

The Apostle John wrote, "that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed, our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." (1

John 1:2-3). The Apostle Paul, spoke to King Agrippa in Acts 26 about his life before salvation, how he met Christ, and what his life was like now.

You are the only person in the world with your testimony. Be ready to share it with others. God can use it to bring many others to Himself.

Memory Verse: 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

On the day of Pentecost, the Samaritan woman and her five sisters were baptized by the name "Photini" which means the enlightened one. St. Photini became a missionary and was known for her brave Christian teachings. She would give her life and that of her children for the Lord Jesus Christ by refusing to deny the Lord Jesus and His teachings. St. Photini would become forever known as a saint. God blessed St. Photini.

References: Bishop Youssef: https://www.suscopts.org/diocese/bishop/bible-study/new-testament/holy-gospel-according-to-st-john

Fr. Tadros: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1USxNacY0RpvkchQRIe1mq9bQwrhld3cn/view?pli=1