

WE ARE (LIKE THE SAMARITAN WOMAN) [WE ARE Series]
“WE ARE SEEKERS”

I. CONTEXT

A. ONE OF TWO GREAT EVANGELISTIC TEXTS

1. John 3—Evangelization of Jews
 - a. This was to be expected—He came first to the Jews
 - b. He had prohibited further evangelization
 1. Had sent disciples only to the Jews—Mt 10:5-6
 2. His words to the Syrophoenecian woman
 - He was sent (for the moment) only to Israel—Mt 15:24
2. John 4—Evangelization of non-Jews
 - a. Nevertheless, he healed the Syrophoenecian woman
 - Commended her great faith—Mt 15:28
 - b. And He had also healed the centurion’s servant
 - Commended his great faith—Mt 8:10
 - Contrasted to disciples little faith in the storm—Mt 8:26
 - c. And He had also exorcised the Gadarene demoniac—Mt 8:28-34
3. Positioning of John 3 and 4 together
 - a. Highlights universality of the gospel
 - b. Illustrates claims made in the Prologue
 1. Purpose of John’s testimony about Christ
 - 1:7—*so that **all** might be believe through Him*
 2. The gospel is for everyone: anyone can be saved
 - 1:12-3—*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*

B. JESUS’ SELF-REVELATION

1. Jesus had already *hinted* at His divine nature—in John 2
 - a. Showed his ability to perform miracles—at Cana
 - b. *Suggested* His power to resurrect—to rebuild ‘this temple’

2. Jesus had already *implied* His mission as the Son of Man—John 3

a. To Nicodemus—a Pharisee—and *ruler* of the Jews 3:1

b. Message to Nicodemus—He was the Son of Man

1. Historical significance for Nicodemus

- **Dan 7:13-14**—*I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a **Son of Man** was coming. And He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.*

2. Importance of this identity

- Jesus used it 90 times in the Gospels to describe Himself

3. *Implied* message to Nicodemus

a. His divine nature

- Implied in His heavenly origin—3:13
- Connected with being the Son of God—3:16-17

b. His role as Savior

- Implied His crucifixion—being ‘lifted up’—3:14
- Whoever believes in Him will be saved—3:15-15

3. Importance of Chapter 4 in John’s Gospel

a. So far, Jesus had made only *indirect* claims about Himself

b. He had not *clearly* and *directly* explained who he was

- Not to his disciples (Peter, Andrew, Philip, Nathaniel)
- Not to His friends (at the wedding in Cana)
- Not to the Jews celebrating Passover at the Temple
- Not to a ruler of the Jews

c. Only John the Baptist had *begun* to understand

1. By direct revelation *from heaven*—not from Jesus

- John recognized Jesus as the ‘Son of God’—Jn 1:34

2. But John did not fully know what this meant

- Sent followers to ask “Are you the Expected One”—Mt 11

d. Chapter 4—unlikely situation for first *explicit, clear* self-revelation

- To a woman—not a man

- To a stranger He had never met—not a friend or relative
- To a hostile foreigner—not a friendly Jew
- To a closed-minded person with ‘attitude’—not a seeker
- To the last person in the village (morally) we would expect
- In an informal non-religious setting
 - Not at a planned feast—but in a casual meeting
 - Not in ‘church’ (temple)—but everyday life (well)
 - Not on ‘Sunday’ (Sabbath)—but a weekday/workday

II. THE FLOW OF THE CONVERSATION

A. READ THE TEXT—Jn 4:1-30

B. KEY TEXTS—for understanding the conversation—a Samaritan and a woman

Jn 4:9—*Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.*

Jn 4:27—*At this point His disciples came, and they were amazed that he had been speaking with a woman*

C. FIVE SHIFTS IN THEIR CONVERSATION

1. Social/racial level—Who can give a drink? (vv7-10)

- She: I can’t give you a drink
 - The gulf between us is too wide
- He: So what? Big deal!
 - God is bigger than any gulf
 - If you knew what’s best for you—you would as *me*
 - I can give you something far better—*Living Water*

2. Cultural/historical level—How can you draw water? (vv11-14)

- She: you can’t do that!
 - It’s impossible—you can’t even *reach* the water
 - It’s unacceptable—you don’t belong around here
 - It’s presumptuous—even Jacob couldn’t do this!
- He: never mind this water—or those problems!
 - I can overcome physical, cultural, historical problems
 - I can do even better than this
 - I can give you water that lasts *forever*

3. Domestic level—provide for my family (vv15-19)

- She: give me this *daily* water for my family
- He: this is not the real issue here
 - Your need is more critical than daily domestic provisions
 - You have more important (moral) issues to deal with
- She: wow—you must be a prophet!

4. Religious level (vv20-24)

- She: [back off fellow!]
 - We do things differently around here
 - And we've always done it that way!
 - Who are you to tell us how to worship, anyway?
- He: [but don't you see]
 - It's not the place that matters
 - It's not the form or style that counts
 - God doesn't want cultic human traditions
 - God wants true, spiritual worship

5. Theological level (25-26)

- She: [well—what do you know anyway?]
 - The Messiah will bring us the truth someday
 - [[He will be like our prophet Moses]]
 - [[And who knows when that will happen?]]
- He: I AM He!
 - The future is here—it **is** happening—I **AM** means NOW
 - **I AM** *more* than a prophet—greater than Moses
 - **I AM** *the* Christ

IV. BARRIERS TO THE GOSPEL

A. EACH OF US IS LIKE THE SAMARITAN WOMAN—(RELUCTANT?) SEEKERS

1. We all feel inferior at times—maybe much of the time!
2. We all have skeletons in our closet!
3. We all have similar fears
 - a. Fear of not measuring up—not being perfect
 - In a perfectionist and glamorous society
 - b. Fear of rejection and criticism
 - c. Fear of being exposed or embarrassed
4. We all build defensive mechanisms to keep people at a distance
5. We all have unmet expectations and broken dreams

B. THREE BARRIERS FOR THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

1. **Her Identity** (actually—her *image*)
 - a. A Samaritan—v9—social or racial rejection
 1. Historical basis of conflict
 - a. Jewish view—II Kings 17 and Ezra 4

- Israel (north) were idolatrous before Assyrian invasion
- Afterward, some Jews intermarried with pagan mates
- Result: Samaritans mixed idolatry and true worship
- So, the Jews rejected their offer to help rebuild temple

b. Samaritan view

- Accepted only Torah—rejected Prophets and Writings
- Rejected Jewish accounts in Historical Books
- Claimed descent from Jacob via Ephraim and Manasseh
- Said true worship could be only on Mt. Gerizim
- They claimed Mt. Gerizim was where:
 - Abel presented his offering
 - Noah sacrificed after the flood
 - Abraham paid tribute to Melchizedek
 - Abraham was to offer Isaac
 - Site/symbol of God's blessing after the Exodus
- They rejected the Jerusalem temple as false
- They built their own Temple about 200 BC
- Expected return of a prophet like Moses—Dt 18:15-18

c. Hellenization and Maccabees

- Samaritans allowed Hellenistic paganization of temple
- John Hyrcanus defeated them, destroyed temple 128 BC
- Samaritans desecrated Jer. w/ human bones—6 AD

2. Jewish view of Samaritan inferiority

- Excluded from inner courts in Temple
- Offerings were accepted only as those of Gentiles
- Inferior to Edomites and Philistines—Ecclesiasticus 220 BC
- Pharisees considered Samaritans—and their utensils—unclean

b. A woman—v27—gender/class distinction

1. Were second-class citizens
 - a. Considered like chattel—property of male head of household
 - b. Easily disposed of—by bill of divorcement from husband
 - c. Could inherit property only if there were no male heirs
 - d. Confined to Court of Women in Temple
 - e. Not among ten (male) persons counted to form a synagogue
2. Were unclean during their menstrual cycles
3. Could not give legal testimony—according to Josephus
4. Men did not talk with women (even their wives) on the street
5. Pharisees did not allow them to be taught the law
6. Rabbis were not to discuss theology with them

2. **Her worries**

a. Everyday provision—not eternal things—v15

- Drudgery—repetitious filling of water pot
- Distance to well—probably about ½ mile

b. About moral issues and family skeletons—vv 16-18

1. Five previous husbands—and now ‘shacking up’
2. A ‘loose’ woman—possible even a prostitute
3. Outcast in own community
 - Came to the well alone
 - In the heat of the day—at noon

c. General tone of despondency—unmet expectations—broken dreams

3. Her Defensive Objections

- a. Cultural objection—descended from Jacob—v12
- b. Religious objection—place of worship—v20
- c. Theological objection—a Messiah like Moses—v25

C. JESUS’ SOLUTIONS TO HER PROBLEMS

1. Identity

- a. Her identity was not primarily as a woman or a Samaritan
- b. His care transformed her identity

1. She became a **believer** in Christ

a. What *we* know this meant

1. She became a child of God

- Not according to human lineage—Jn 1:12
- But by faith in Jesus Christ—Gal 3:26

2. She became one with the Son and the Father—Jn 17:20-23

3. She became a new creature in Christ—II Cor 5:17

2. What this meant to her

- She did not understand all the implications yet
- But when she knew *His* identity—*hers* became clear
- Her identity as a believer = a **follower** of Jesus Christ

2. Worries and Objections

- a. Jesus cared about these—but they were not primary
- b. He focused on her real **identity** and her **eternal need**
- c. When she understood this—two things happened
 1. All other concerns dissipated

- She left behind her worries and objections
- She left her water pot at the well—v28

2. She was driven to share the good news with others

V. HOW JESUS TREATED HER

A. HE UNDERSTOOD HER

1. He saw through all her excuses
 - He knew these were defense mechanisms
2. He identified her real needs beneath the surface
3. He saw what she really had to offer
 - He recognized her unrealized potential
 - He enabled her to make a real difference

B. HE LOVED AND CARED FOR HER—UNCONDITIONALLY

1. No matter **who** she seemed to be
 - a. She *did* have a disreputable image—as a Samaritan
 - b. Jewish perspective—she was not one of God’s ‘chosen’ people
2. No matter **what** she had done
 - a. She *had* behaved in a disreputable manner—an immoral woman
 - b. Jewish perspective—she was not ‘righteous’
 - Unlike the scribes, Pharisees, and other rabbis

C. HE WAS PATIENT WITH HER

1. Not argumentative—His purpose was not to *win* the debate
2. Not arrogant—just because He knew the truth
3. But He was persistent—He did not give up—because He cared

D. HE KNEW WHAT WAS BEST FOR HER

1. Even better than she knew for herself
2. He had created her—and knew how she was wired
3. He knew how she would be most fulfilled as a person

E. HE MORE THAN OVERCAME HER PROBLEMS

1. He removed all the barriers—one by one—gently

2. Then He provided enduring solutions
 - a. Not just physical water—v10
 - But water that brings *real* life—Living Water
 - b. Not just temporary water—v14
 - But *everlasting* water—Eternal life
3. This addressed a past problem
 - a. Identified by Jeremiah (2:13) almost 600 years earlier
 - b. Two sins committed by Israel
 - They had forsaken God—the *fountain of living waters*
 - They had dug their own cisterns
 - Broken cisterns
 - That could hold no water
 - c. Summary:
 - They had depended on other nations for their strength
 - They had followed the gods of other peoples

4. This provided a new promise

a. Of **living water**

Jn 7:37-8—*Now on the last day, the great day of the feast [of Booths], Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From the innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’”*

1. Fulfilling the prophecies of Is 44:3 and 55:1
2. Pointed to later pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon believers

b. Of **eternal** water

1. Given by the Alpha and the Omega—without cost—**Rev 21:6**
2. Flowing from the throne of God—**Rev 22:1**
3. Offered to *anyone* who is thirsty

Rev 22:17—*The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.*

VI. APPLICATION

A. THE SAMARITAN WOMAN'S LIFE HAD VALUE AND PURPOSE

1. Value

- a. To be saved—and to be made one with the Father
- b. Enough value for Jesus to give His life for her

2. Purpose

- a. To follow and honor Christ
- b. To glorify the Father
- c. To do these two things by serving others
 - She had a special purpose and mission
 - She was the only one who could reach her village

B. WE ARE LIKE THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

1. We have the same identity crises, worries, and objections

2. Jesus relates to us the same way

- He understands us—better than we understand ourselves
- He loves and cares for us—no matter what—unconditionally
- He is patient with us—time and time again
- He knows what is best for us—how we are wired
- He can more than overcome all our worries and objections

C. OUR LIVES HAVE VALUE AND PURPOSE

1. Value

- a. God love *each* of us with—unconditionally
- b. Jesus died to give *each* of us eternal life

2. Purpose

- a. To honor and follow Christ
- b. To glorify the Father
- c. God has special plans that only *you* can accomplish

D. WE SHOULD TREAT OTHERS AS JESUS DID

1. Esteem their value

- a. *Tell* them that God loves and values them
- b. *Show* them that *we* value them

c. Don't underestimate what God can do with people

1. Don't judge a book by its cover
2. Sometimes God uses the most unlikely people

EX: Susan Boyles and Paul Potts

2. Help them discover their purpose

a. Teach them by word and example

1. How to honor and follow Christ
2. How to glorify the Father

b. Help them discover their special kingdom purpose

1. Focused on their divine calling—vocation
2. Based on their spiritual gifts

E. DO THIS LIKE JESUS DID IT

- To all-comers—genders, ages, race, cultural background
- To strangers—not just friends and relatives
- To those not necessarily friendly
- To those who seem close-minded
- To the last person we might expect
- Not just in a religious setting
 - Not only at church—but in the workplace
 - Not just on Sunday—but during the week

Remember: Life's most important moments are unplanned!
God's appointments don't always follow our schedules!