

## EXPOSITION OF JOHN

### Message #19

### John 4:1-10

As we read and study this Gospel of John we clearly see that Jesus Christ continually demonstrates that He is God - the second member of the Trinity. If one is honest with the words that are systematically written, one will admit this is precisely what this book does teach.

**Carefully notice verse 1 in which John gives Jesus the title of “Lord.”** Jesus Christ is Lord in the religious world; He is Lord in the heathen world; He is Lord in all the world. What we also see as we go through this book is that He clashed with the religious world, time and time again. This religious world not only rejected Jesus Christ, they will eventually kill Jesus Christ. If ever you want to see a text that shows how against the grain Jesus Christ was, it is this passage right here. There is a point that surfaces in these opening verses of chapter four and it is this:

**JESUS CHRIST WAS GOD AND HIS MINISTRY ON EARTH DID NOT FIT THE STATUS QUO OF THE RELIGIOUS WORLD OF HIS DAY WHEN HE OFFERED GRACE SALVATION TO ALL TYPES OF SINNERS, EVEN SAMARITANS.**

There will be times, if one is truly right with God, when he will clash with almost all religious people. Fact is, as we shall see next week, there will be times when one really right with God will clash with people who are close to him. Jesus demonstrated that on His first public ministry trip to the temple. He started slamming over tables and chased leaders right out of the temple. His way was not the norm. He didn't just fit in, He set a new standard and then asked everyone to respond to Him. Never is that more evident than in this passage.

I want us to take time to understand this as best as we can. In the opening of this chapter there are three main ministry actions of Jesus Christ:

**MINISTRY ACTION #1** – Jesus Christ leaves Judea. 4:1-3

The Lord “knew” what the Pharisees thought; He knows what all people think (John 2:24-25). In the Greek text, John 4:1-3 is one long sentence. The Pharisees were watching Jesus Christ closely. They learned through their network of spies that Jesus was making more disciples and baptizing more people than the prophet John. Christ decided to get out of Judea and head back north to Galilee. **The Pharisees were, and still are, the real hostile enemies of Jesus Christ and the Grace of God.**

Jesus did not baptize anyone. We can imagine the undo importance if He had. Some would say we were baptized by Jesus so yours doesn't count. Today some say they were baptized in this church or in this temple so yours doesn't count. Here is no hint that any Samaritans were baptized. Christ did not come to baptize in water, but with the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ did not come to conduct a bunch of water baptisms. I've been in some churches where you would think this is the big goal, the only goal.

Sometimes the best thing to do is to leave when there is controversy. Christ could have stayed and fought, but He took His ministry elsewhere and they were the losers, not Jesus Christ.

There would have been a couple of reasons why Christ did this:

**(Reason #1)** - Jesus wished to avoid an appearance of rivalry between Himself and John.

Both of these two were of God. One was a prophet who was doing the will of God and the other was God who was always doing the will of God. John was still preaching his repentance message and trying to prepare the nation to meet Jesus Christ. Since Christ did not want to give the appearance of rivalry between the two, He moved north to Galilee. There was no real competition between these two ministers.

Notice carefully what Christ did - He did not join up with John, He stuck to His own agenda, but He departed from John and let him have his ministry. So many confused people today think it is wrong to have your own ministry, your own church. The mindset is, we must all hook up together to show unity. Jesus did not do that with John, he got out of the way.

**(Reason #2)** - Jesus did want to avoid premature hatred and hostility.

Although smashing things in the temple had not won Him a major popularity contest, His time had not yet come to be taken to the cross and these Pharisees hated Christ enough to kill Him. So He just took His ministry north. Jesus Christ was on a heavenly time clock and they would not change it. It is also possible that He wanted to get around honest Galileans rather than the religious, lying frauds of Judea. The Jews lived a lie, but the Galileans lived in truth.

Here is a true Christlike principle - if people can do your ministry harm and prevent you from accomplishing the will of God, get away from those people. That is what Jesus did. Christlikeness loves to be around straight-shooting, truthful people, not lying frauds who twist reality.

**MINISTRY ACTION #2** – Jesus enters Samaria. 4:4-6

According to Matthew 10:5, Jesus had no intention of going into this area for ministry purposes. He was going to the lost sheep of Israel and prior to His resurrection, He had, as Calvin said, no intention of staying in Samaria (*John*, Vol. 17, p. 143). In fact, this city came to Him (John 4:28-30, 39-41). If you come to Christ you will have eternal life. Even a Jew, whose house is left desolate, may have eternal life, if he comes to Christ.

Now the most direct route from Judea to Galilee was straight up through Samaria. However, the Samaritans were so hated by the Jews that most of the religious Jews refused to even travel through this country. Most would actually cross the Jordan River into Perea and then swing north and cut back across the river at the south end of the Sea of Galilee. **No orthodox Jew would step one foot in Samaria.**

Notice that verse 4 says Jesus “had” to pass through Samaria. Why? To reach a sinful woman who in turn would reach others. He went to Samaria to offer eternal life to a wretch of a woman, whom He had chosen before the foundation of the world. Jesus was following a divine map to specific individuals and one of them was this woman. Every move He made

fulfilled the sovereign will of God. **You will never appreciate your salvation at the ultimate level until you realize that Jesus Christ tracked you down as part of God's sovereign election before the foundation of the world.** This is a precious reality and it is a humbling truth. Jesus Christ tracked you down in all of your sin and filth.

The Samaritans were a mixed race of people who were part Jew and part Assyrian. When the Assyrians captured Israel, there was much interaction between the Jews and the pagan people. Pagan religion and pagan relationships were introduced to people of Israel and as a result a group of people was formed called Samaritans. They had their own religion, their own worship, their own temple and even their own religious books. The pure Jews hated these people and would not even step foot in Samaria. As H. A. Ironside said a "stern legalist" would not go through Samaria.

Jesus was God's provision for all people - heathen idol worshipping sinners to hard core stoic religious Pharisees. He had no problem taking His message everywhere; He had no problem whatsoever passing through Samaria because all people needed to believe on Him for salvation. No matter who you are, or what your background, you need Jesus Christ in your life. You may be a godless sinner or a stoic religious, self-righteous person, but you still need Jesus Christ.

Now in verses 5-6 there are certain facts brought out to us about this story:

**(Fact #1)** - Jesus came to a city called Sychar (pronounced "Sue-car"). 4:5a

This is the only place in the N.T. where this city is mentioned. Today it is modern day Askar. Christ has stopped in a real Samaritan city. This city is located about 34 miles north of Jerusalem.

**(Fact #2)** - Jesus was near the place that Jacob gave to Joseph. 4:5b

This was a very important place. This was the place that Jacob purchased and gave to Joseph. In fact, Jacob was buried here (Genesis 33:18-19; 48:22; Joshua 24:32). This is land that Israel has a legal right to, yet it is land of the Samaritans. Had the Jews responded to Jesus Christ, this land would have been Jewish land, not Samaritan land. When we do not obey God, we miss God's blessings and shortchange ourselves.

There will come a day when Jesus Christ will give this very land to Israel. Yet that was not the goal of His first coming.

**(Fact #3)** - Jesus was specifically sitting by Jacob's well. 4:6a

A well was a land title. Water is always crucial to land. There is something stirring about Jesus visiting this historical spot. Jesus is physically fatigued at Jacob's well. The walk from Judea to Sychar probably took two days, about a 34 mile hike. He was tired, but that does not prevent a need for him to minister. One cannot help but wonder whether Jesus thought of how fatigued Jacob was the night He wrestled with Him (Genesis 32).

We cannot help but see, in this very text, the Deity of Christ and the Humanity of Christ. **The first part of John zeroes in on Christ's Deity, but when you see Him weary and thirsty, you cannot help but see His real humanity**. He is the God/man. On the one hand, He is sitting by a well totally fatigued and on the other hand He will tell this woman things only God can know. Jesus Christ can fully identify with human hurt, thirst, hunger and pain because He Personally experienced it, Himself. Jesus traveled from Judea which is hill country into Samaria which is hill country. It is dusty and hot and it is no wonder he wanted to sit down. By the way, the shaft to Jacob's well is still there to this day and water still flows from this well.

We are never called to slow down and take it easy. We are called to press on, fight a good fight, run a good race. Real Christlike ministry keeps at it when it is tired. When you find yourself tired and fatigued, just remember, Jesus Christ understands it.

**(Fact #4)** - Jesus was there about the sixth hour of the day. 4:6b

Jewish time is different than Roman time and for the most part John goes by Roman time. Jewish time starts at 6 a.m. Roman time was like our time - it starts the a.m. at twelve midnight and starts the p.m. at twelve noon. More than likely, this was the sixth of the p.m. part of the day, which means it is about 6 p.m., which was the normal time women went to get water. If it were Jewish time, it would be about 12 p.m.

Jesus has had a long day of travel. It is hot and He is tired. Dr. Ironside said he, his wife and daughter actually sat at this well and he could visualize this very scene (*John*, p. 139). He is in Samaria. He will still minister. Had Christ used His weariness as a crutch, the entire city would have been lost. If you are tired, keep at it. Look for opportunities when you are fatigued.

**MINISTRY ACTION #3** – Jesus meets a Samaritan woman. 4:7-10

We want to introduce this to you today and next week, Lord willing, we want to carefully study what takes place here. There are four facts:

**(Fact #1)** - A Samaritan woman came to draw water. 4:7a

There is a big difference between Nicodemus and this Samaritan woman. They were socially and religiously miles apart, yet they both had the same need - the need to believe in Jesus Christ in order to be saved from sin.

This woman has no idea who she is about to meet. She is simply doing what most women did at this time of day, go to Jacob's well to get some water. She had probably done this hundreds of times. But this one day would change her life forever. Christ does not minister to proud Pharisees, but He does minister to a lowly, outcast woman. Don't you get sick of talking to proud, arrogant, religious people? It is so refreshing to talk to sinners.

**(Fact #2)** - Jesus asks the Samaritan woman for a drink of water. 4:7b-8

I don't know if you have ever been real thirsty, but when you are, typically you are focused on one objective - get a drink. This is a real thirst need. From Jesus' perspective, His thirst is physical, from the woman's perspective, her thirst is both physical and spiritual.

Now the reason why Christ asks this woman for water is stated in verse 8 - His disciples were not there with Him. They had gone away into the city to buy some food. This shows us that Christ had rejected the Jewish dietary codes which had been invented by religious men. He would permit His own disciples to eat Samaritan food. The well was a good place to eat, because you could eat your food and have something to drink. Jesus waited at the well. There is nothing wrong for a minister to allow others to do things they can do - go get food. A minister does not need to do all of the chores. There are others who can do physical things.

Some will never know how fatiguing and draining ministry is. There is a spiritual warfare in the unseen world that is very real and it does take its toll. When Jesus was resting and asks for a drink - some probably would have said - get it yourself. What's wrong with you - you have two legs and two hands. Some probably would have thought, who do you think you are? Who He is God and it is a privilege to do anything for God, even get someone a drink of water. Do you realize that when you do something for a servant of God, like even getting him a drink of water, it has great eternal value? Matthew 10:42 says this very thing.

Now notice it is Christ who starts this conversation with this Samaritan. He initiates the conversation that will eventually lead to her salvation. There are ten major differences between what happened with Nicodemus and what happened with this woman:

- 1) Nicodemus was seeking to talk with Jesus; the woman was not seeking Jesus but some water.
- 2) Nicodemus was a respected religious leader; the woman was an immoral, social outcast.
- 3) Nicodemus was an esteemed Jew; the woman was a despised Samaritan.
- 4) Nicodemus had an esteemed name; the woman doesn't even have a revealed name.
- 5) Nicodemus was a male; the woman was a female.
- 6) Nicodemus had an esteemed job - great teacher; the woman had a menial job - get water.
- 7) Nicodemus was very respectful of Christ; the woman was somewhat flippant with Christ.
- 8) Nicodemus was a very learned scholar; the woman was very ignorant.
- 9) Nicodemus was a man of the cloth; the woman was a woman of the world.
- 10) Nicodemus starts the conversation with Christ; Christ starts the conversation with this woman.

As you will see, in spite of these major differences, they both had the same need - **they both needed to be born again**. That is every person's need, from the real religious to the real deprived.

Jesus asked this woman for a drink of water.

**(Fact #3)** - The Samaritan woman wonders why a Jew would ask a Samaritan for anything. 4:9

The Samaritans were known to be the "scum of people gathered from among foreigners" (Calvin, p. 146).

This request both surprised this woman and piqued her curiosity. She found it hard to believe that a Jew would ask a Samaritan for anything. It was not normal for a Rabbi to speak to a strange woman, especially a Samaritan woman. Their prejudice and hatred ran deep.

The Jews had “no dealings” with the Samaritans, which means they would not talk to them and they certainly would not use the same dishes. This was a shocking request. It is so tragic when the supposed people of God have a “heartless indifference” to their neighbors.

**(Fact #4)** - Jesus uses His physical request to address her spiritual need. 4:10

The truth is, this woman did not deserve or merit Jesus Christ saying anything to her. This is pure grace. Jesus’ witnessing tactics are important. He does not use a memorized formula for evangelism. He addresses each person individually and strategically depending on their need and background. He witnesses according to the person and does not use the same approach on everyone.

Jesus basically responds by saying this - If you only knew about who I am and who is talking to you, you would be asking me to give you eternal life. Now how could this woman possibly have known who He was? It is predicted in Psalm 69:21 that One would come who would ultimately say “I am thirsty” (John 19:28). That One would say this while hanging on the cross for the sins of humanity. Had this woman known the Scriptures, she would have known that there would come another moment in time when this prediction would pinpoint specifically who the Savior is. Christ’s response would generate three thoughts in this woman’s mind: 1) Who is this Person; 2) What is the Gift of God; 3) What is living water?

Friend, God is not a businessman looking to make some bargain with you concerning your salvation - He wants to give you a "gift," a gift of life. A gift is not something you earn or work for - that is a paycheck. A gift is something you are given and all you do is receive it. That is what God wants to give you - a gift - Jesus Christ. The question is will you receive Him. Will you ask God to give you this gift? Will you tell God you will receive His Son as your Savior?

I know this goes against the grain of the teachings of most formal religions and education. But that is what Christ’s whole ministry did. It marched right into Samaria and offered salvation to any who would believe. Will you believe?

Four Key Points of Salvation:

- 1) You need to know that only Jesus Christ can give salvation - “If you knew.”
- 2) Biblical salvation is a gift of God not earned by works - “gift.”
- 3) You must ask Jesus Christ to save you. You must personally “ask.”
- 4) If you ask, you will be given eternal life.