

The Woman at the Well – “Living Water for the Thirsty”

John 4:4-42 (CSB)

4 He had to travel through Samaria; 5 so he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar near the property that Jacob had given his son Joseph. 6 Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, worn out from his journey, sat down at the well. It was about noon.

7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water. “Give me a drink,” Jesus said to her, 8 because his disciples had gone into town to buy food. 9 “How is it that you, a Jew, are talking to me, a Samaritan woman?” she asked. For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered, “If you knew the gift of God, and who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would ask him, and he would give you living water.” 11 “Sir,” said the woman, “you don’t even have a bucket, and the well is deep. So where do you get this ‘living water’? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and livestock?”

13 Jesus said, “Everyone who drinks from this water will get thirsty again. 14 But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty again. In fact, the water I will give him will become a well of water springing up in him for eternal life.”

15 “Sir,” the woman said to him, “give me this water so I won’t get thirsty and come here to draw water.” 16 “Go call your husband,” he told her, “and come back here.” 17 “I don’t have a husband,” she answered. “You have correctly said, ‘I don’t have a husband,’” Jesus said. 18 “For you’ve had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.”

19 “Sir,” the woman replied, “I see that you are a prophet. 20 Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem.” 21 Jesus told her, “Believe me, woman, an hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know. We worship what we do know, because salvation is from the Jews. 23 But an hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. Yes, the Father wants such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and in truth.”

25 The woman said to him, “I know that the Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” 26 Jesus told her, “I, the one speaking to you, am he.”

27 Just then his disciples arrived, and they were amazed that he was talking with a woman. Yet no one said, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?” 28 Then the woman left her water jar, went into town, and told the people, 29 “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” 30 They left the town and made their way to him.

31 In the meantime the disciples kept urging him, “Rabbi, eat something.” 32 But he said, “I have food to eat that you don’t know about.” 33 The disciples said to one another, “Could someone have brought him something to eat?” 34 “My food,” Jesus said to them, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. 35 Don’t you say, ‘There are still four months, and then comes the harvest’? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes and see the fields are white for harvest. 36 The reaper is already receiving pay and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together. 37 For in this case the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ 38 I sent you to reap what you didn’t labor for; others have labored, and you have benefited from their labor.”

39 Now many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of what the woman said when she testified, “He told me everything I ever did.” 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they

asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. 41 Many more believed because of what he said. 42 And they told the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said, since we have heard for ourselves and know that this really is the Savior of the world.”

- Key Background:
 - Samaria & Samaritans: Samaria was a region Jews avoided; Samaritans were a mixed-race people—part Israelite, part foreign—despised by Jews for centuries.
 - Jewish Men Talking to Women: In that time, Jewish men rarely spoke to women in public, especially not alone, due to strict social rules.
 - Worship on the High Places: Long ago, King Jeroboam led Israel’s northern tribes to worship on hills, not at Jerusalem’s temple, splitting God’s people.
 - Women Carrying Water: Women fetched water daily, usually at dawn, hauling heavy jars from wells for their families’ needs.
 - Messiah: The Messiah, meaning “Anointed One” or “Christ,” was the promised Savior Jews and Samaritans expected to bring hope and rescue.
- Questions from the Story:
 - Why do you think Jesus sent His disciples away and chose to wait for this woman at the well (v. 8)? What does this tell you about how Jesus values everyone?
 - Why did she come to the well at noon instead of with others in the morning (v. 6)? What might this show about how Jesus reaches out to people despised by others?
 - Why was the woman surprised that Jesus, a Jewish man, spoke to her, a Samaritan (v. 9)? What might this show about how God cares for all kinds of people?
 - She thought Jesus meant well water, but He spoke of “living water” (vv. 10-14). What is this living water, and how does it show Jesus offers eternal life to those who believe in Him?
 - Why did she ask if worship should be on the mountain or in Jerusalem (v. 20)? What might “worship in Spirit and in truth” (v. 23) mean for praising God anywhere?
 - Jesus knew her past—five husbands and more—yet spoke kindly (vv. 16-18). What does this show about God’s love and forgiveness for anyone who turns to Jesus?
 - Why was it a big deal when Jesus said, “I am the Messiah” (v. 26)? What does it mean to trust Jesus as the Savior who died to save us from our sins?
 - She told the town, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did” (v. 29). Why do you think her words got people curious about Jesus?
 - What was this food that Jesus had that the disciples did not know about?
 - This woman was used in a great way by God to bring others to Him (vv. 39-42). What does this say about how God can use us to share the good news of Jesus?