



The Woman & The Well

A Study in Worship in Spirit & Truth

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"Explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words."

1 Corinthians 2:13

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The Woman & The Well

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Preface

In this message, we will be reading through the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well, as it is recorded in the 4th chapter of John's gospel. Our goal is to learn more about being true worshipers – those who worship in spirit and truth – because Jesus said: “The Father is looking for people like that to worship Him. God is a spirit. Those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:23-24)

Before proceeding, we need to clarify something so that there are no misunderstandings, and so the essential points of this message are not missed. And that has to do with the definition of “worship”. “Worship” can take place in the singing of “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” (Colossians 3:16), but worship cannot be reduced to singing. Worship is nothing short of a lifestyle. The biblical concept of New Covenant worship is comprised of two facets:

- 1) **Surrender:** Greek – *proskuneo*¹, “to bow down before”, and *paristano*², “to yield”. Worship is a presenting and surrendering of spirit, soul (will, mind, emotions), and body – indeed the whole of one's life to God.

¹ Strong's # G4352

² Strong's # G3936

2) **Service:** Greek – *latreia*,³ “service”. Worship is ministry unto the Lord as a lifestyle employing any and all of God’s good gifts.

I believe the following verses encapsulate a New Covenant concept of “worship in spirit and truth”:

“¹Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to **present** (*surrender*) **your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice**, acceptable to God, which is your **spiritual service of worship**. (service) ²And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” Romans 12:1-2

So, as we come across the word “worship” in this message, please think: *A lifestyle of surrender and service.*

³ Strong’s # G2999

“Jesus Had to Go Through Samaria”

Let’s begin in John chapter 4, verses 3 & 4:

“³ So He left the Judean countryside and went back to Galilee.
⁴ Jesus had to go through Samaria.”

Jesus was traveling from the region of Judea back to the region of Galilee, and “had to go through Samaria.” Samaria is in route between Judea and Galilee, but the fact is, for reasons we’ll discuss in a moment, many or most Jews would have avoided Samaria, by crossing over the Jordan River and traveling on its east side. Jesus “had to” go through Samaria, not because of the geography, but because of the ministry. But first, let’s establish the rest of the setting of this story:

Verses 5-6:

“⁵ He arrived in a city in Samaria called Sychar. Sychar was near the piece of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob’s Well was there. Jesus sat down by the well because He was tired from traveling. It was about the sixth hour.”

Most commentators set the time at mid-day, that is, approximately six hours after sunrise.

A Picture of the Church

The story continues – Verses 7-8:

“⁷ A Samaritan woman went to get some water. Jesus said to her, “Give Me a drink of water.” ⁸ (His disciples had gone into the city to buy some food.)”

What is so significant about an individual Samaritan woman, for this story to occupy the fourth chapter of John’s gospel? In John chapter 3, Jesus is speaking with another individual – Nicodemus - but he was “a teacher of Israel”. What is so significant about Jesus’ meeting with this Samaritan woman? I see two significant aspects: Firstly, she was a woman; and secondly, she was a Samaritan.

The person at the well was a **woman**. In Ephesians 5, after speaking about the relationship of the man and the woman, Paul writes in verse 32: “The marriage relationship is a great mystery, but I see it as a symbol of the marriage of Christ and His Church.”⁴

Throughout both the Old Testament and New Testament scriptures, we see that, in biblical typology - that is, the interpretation of symbols in the Bible - women are types or

⁴ *New Testament in Modern English*, J.B. Phillips

symbols or **pictures of the Church**, which is referred to as “the Bride of Christ”. Some women portray good examples – some not so good examples. So, this woman at the well represents us, the Church.

The woman at the well was a **Samaritan**. The Samaritans were a mixed-blood race. When the Jews were exiled to Babylon after the destruction of Jerusalem, those Jews of the lower classes were left behind. These Jews intermarried with Gentiles brought into the land by the Assyrians.⁵ When the Jews later returned from exile to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, the Samaritans tried to discourage and stop the Jews from rebuilding; and Nehemiah declared to them: “You have no property or claim or historic right in Jerusalem.”⁶ And up to the time of Jesus, there was open hostility between Jews and Samaritans.

We will see through this woman at the well, that the Samaritans, though they were very proud of their religious traditions, in fact, **did not know how to worship God, because they had no knowledge of God**. There is a very interesting passage of scripture concerning this in 2 Kings 17:24-41. The passage tells about how people from Babylon settled in and mixed with the Jews in Samaria; and how those Jews ignored the Lord’s

⁵ II Kings 17:24

⁶ Nehemiah 2:20

commandments against the worship of idols and mixed their Jewish religion with Babylonian and Assyrian idolatries. The passage ends by saying: “So while these nations feared the LORD, they also served their idols; their children likewise and their grandchildren, as their fathers did....”

Verse 6 of John 4 told us that “It was about the sixth hour” -that is, about 12:00 Noon. Why would this woman be coming to the well to draw water alone so late in the day? Earlier that morning, probably at the break of day, large groups of women from the city of Sychar, would have come out to the well in masse, during the cool of the day – having a time of fellowship together, as they performed their daily duties. So, why would this woman be coming to the well to draw water alone so late in the day? As we shall see shortly, she was a woman of bad reputation and was most likely ostracized from the rest of the women. She was a sinner. Again, this is representative of the Church. Also, in verse 6 we have the word “well”. It is significant to note that every time the woman refers to it, the Greek word *phrear* is used, meaning a **pit** – most likely filled with stagnant water. Every time Jesus refers to the well, the Greek word *pege* is used, meaning **a fountain** – springing up with “living water”. This reflects the difference of perspective we sometimes see between Christ’s point of view and the point of view of the people in His Church.

The Response of Worship

An Internal Spring of Living Water

By asking for a drink of water, **Jesus initiated** the encounter with the Samaritan woman. **Worship**, an encounter with God, is **our response** to the redemptive acts of God initiated through Jesus Christ. Again, picking up the story line – Verse 9:

“⁹ The Samaritan woman asked Him, “How can a Jewish man like You ask a Samaritan woman like me for a drink of water?” (Jews, of course, don’t associate with Samaritans.)”

We have the explanation of why the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. But this was not the case with Jesus. He purposely made Himself available to this Samaritan, just as He so often purposely befriended sinners.

Verse 10:

“¹⁰ Jesus replied to her, “If you only knew what God’s gift is and Who is asking you for a drink, you would have asked Him for a drink. He would have given you living water.”

There are two key phrases in this verse: “God’s Gift” and “Living Water”. “God’s Gift” is the gift of His work of salvation through Jesus Christ. In Romans 5:15-18, the apostle Paul explains some things about “God’s Gift”. He wrote:

“God’s gift... God’s kindness and the gift given through the kindness of one person, Jesus Christ.... The gift brought God’s approval.... Those who receive God’s overflowing kindness and the gift of His approval will rule in life because of one person, Jesus Christ.”

Again, the “Living Water” is God’s work of salvation through Jesus Christ. The prophet Isaiah said in chapter 12, verse 3: “With joy you will draw water from the springs of salvation.”

John 4, Verse 11:

“¹¹ The woman said to Him, “Sir, You don’t have anything to use to get water, and the well is deep. So where are You going to get this living water?”

Who is really needing the water here? First, Jesus asked the woman for a drink of water, but that was only to initiate the encounter. Now, the woman seems to be becoming interested in this “Living Water”, and in a moment, will be saying, “Sir, give me this water!”

Rebirth & Relationship

She continues in Verse 12:

“¹² You’re not more important than our ancestor Jacob, are You? He gave us this well. He and his sons and his animals drank

water from it.” Now here we see some of the religious tradition of which the Samaritan woman was so proud.

But, in Verses 13-14

“¹³ Jesus answered her, ‘Everyone who drinks this water will become thirsty again. ¹⁴ But those who drink the water that I will give them will never become thirsty again. In fact, the water that I will give them will become in them a spring that gushes up to eternal life.’”

There are two key phrases in this verse. The first key phrase is this: “Those who drink the water that **I will give them ...**” We can get this “Living Water” only from Jesus – nothing and no one else can give it to us. To get this “Living Water” requires that we have a vital, life-giving relationship with Jesus Christ.

The other key phrase is this: “The water that I will give them will become in them a **spring that gushes up to eternal life.**” This is the same thing which Jesus told Nicodemus in verses 4 and 7 of John chapter 3: “No one can enter the kingdom of God without being **born of water and the Spirit.... You must be born again.**”

“The water that I will give them will become **in them...**” This is a key to worship in spirit and truth: True worship is something that is **in us** which we bring to gatherings. We do not come to

gatherings in order to receive it. It is something **in us** which we bring to gatherings.

And so, in Verse 15:

“¹⁵The woman told Jesus, “Sir, give me this water! Then I won’t get thirsty or have to come here to get water.”

When we drink from the well of salvation, true worship is **in us**.

As I said: We do not come to gatherings in order to receive it. It is something **in us** which we bring to gatherings.

Acknowledgement of Sin

Then, in Verses 16-19:

“¹⁶ Jesus told her, ‘Go to your husband and bring him here.’

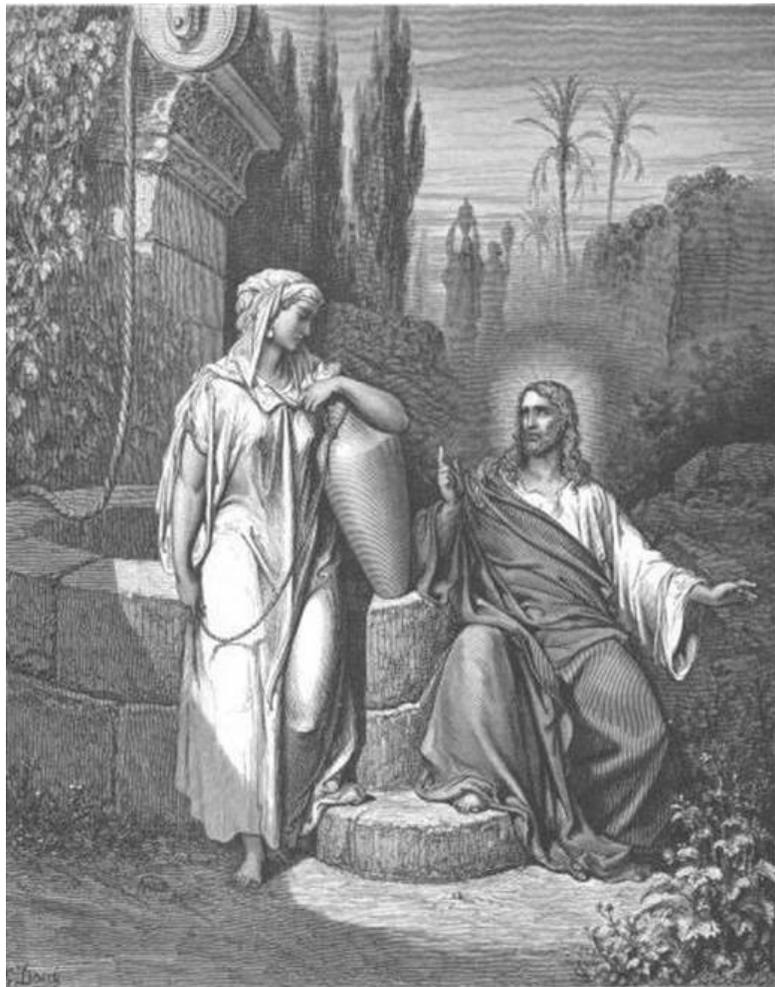
¹⁷ The woman replied, ‘I don’t have a husband.’ Jesus told her, ‘You’re right when you say you don’t have a husband. ¹⁸ You’ve had five husbands, and the man you have now isn’t your husband. You’ve told the truth.’ ¹⁹ The woman said to Jesus, ‘I see that You’re a prophet.’”

Jesus had exposed her sin. **Worship in spirit and truth always addresses the issue of sin.** True worshippers always acknowledge their sin.

Another gospel story in Luke 7:36-47 which is about another woman who is another picture of the Church, illustrates this quite clearly:

“One of the Pharisees invited Jesus to eat with him. Jesus went to the Pharisee’s house and was eating at the table. A woman who lived a sinful life in that city found out that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house. So, she took a bottle of perfume and knelt at His feet. She was crying and washed His feet with her tears. Then she dried His feet with her hair, kissed them over and over again, and poured the perfume on them. The Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw this and thought, ‘If this Man really were a prophet, He would know what sort of woman is touching Him. She’s a sinner.’ Jesus spoke up, ‘Simon, I have something to say to you.’ Simon replied, ‘Teacher, You’re free to speak.’ So, Jesus said, ‘Two men owed a moneylender some money. One owed him five hundred silver coins and the other owed him fifty. When they couldn’t pay it back, he was kind enough to cancel their debts. Now, who do you think will love him the most?’ Simon answered, ‘I suppose the one who had the largest debt canceled.’ Jesus said to him, ‘You’re right!’ Then turning to the woman, He said to Simon, ‘You see this woman, don’t you? I came into your house. You didn’t wash My feet. But she has washed My feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You didn’t give Me a kiss. But ever since I came in, she has not stopped kissing My feet. You didn’t put olive oil on My head. But she has poured perfume on My feet. That’s why I’m telling you that her many sins have been forgiven. Her great love proves that. But whoever receives little forgiveness loves very little.’”

Jesus told the Pharisee that he was not a true worshipper because he did not acknowledge his sin. He also said that those who are aware of their sinfulness and God's graciousness become great worshippers – the kind that the Father is looking for – those who can worship in spirit and truth.



The Woman & The Well

Worship in Spirit & Truth

The Present, Not the Past

Now back to our story of the Samaritan woman at the well - in John 4, Verse 20, the woman said to Jesus:

“²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews say that people must worship in Jerusalem.”

“This mountain” she referred to was Mt. Gerizim. On this mountain God had appeared to Abraham and made a covenant with him. Abraham built an altar there – a place of worship. Jacob also bought land, pitched a tent, and built an altar there. God told Moses to bless this particular mountain because it was in the Promised Land. This mountain represents a rich religious tradition. The Church’s historic traditions are a wonderful thing. But for the Samaritan woman all the meaning of this place was locked up in the past. It had no vitality in the present because she and her people **did not know God nor how to worship God**. The name “Gerizim” actually means *“a desert place”*.

True worship – worship in spirit and truth, while it may be rooted in and draw from historic tradition, is something which can happen only in the present.

In Isaiah 43:18-21 the Lord says:

“Forget what happened in the past, and do not dwell on events from long ago. I am going to do something new. It is already happening. Don’t you recognize it? I will provide water in the desert. I will make rivers on the dry land for My chosen people to drink. I have formed these people for Myself. They will praise Me.”

This passage is meant to encourage the Church.

A Person, Not a Place

In response to the Samaritan woman, in John 4, Verse 21:

“²¹Jesus told her, ‘Believe Me. A time is coming when you Samaritans won’t be worshiping the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem.’”

The Lord God spoke through the prophet Amos in chapter 6, verse 1 that His people should not look for security in the mountain of Samaria, which was between the cities of Bethel and Gilgal. He said in chapter 5, verse 5 that they should not seek Bethel and Gilgal. And in chapter 5, verse 4 He said that His people should **seek Him. True worship – worship in spirit and truth – is not about a place – it is about a Person.**

KNOWING GOD

Jesus continues in John 4, Verses 22-24 by saying to the woman:

“²² You don’t know what you’re worshipping. We Jews know what we’re worshipping, because salvation comes from the Jews.

²³Indeed the time is coming, and it is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. The Father is looking for people like that to worship Him.

²⁴ God is a spirit. Those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

True worship – worship in spirit and truth – is, as Jesus said, knowing the God you are worshipping. The Samaritan woman is a picture of those who go through the motions of worship, but, in fact, **do not actually know the God they are worshipping.** The story of the origins of the Samaritan people in 2 Kings 17:24-41 effectively illustrates that **we really cannot worship a God we do not know.** The Lord spoke through the prophet Hosea in chapter 4, verse 1:

“There is no knowledge of God in the land.”

In chapter 6, verse 6 He said:

“I want you to know Me, more than I want your sacrifices and offerings.”

In Hosea chapter 4, verse 6 He said:

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”

And in Hosea chapter 6, verse 3 the prophet said:

“Let’s learn about the Lord. Let’s get to know the Lord.”

Through another prophet – Jeremiah – in chapter 31, verses 33 and 34 the Lord specifies both the promise and the responsibility of the New Covenant. He says:

“I will put My teachings inside them, and I will write those teachings on their hearts....(and) All of them from the least important to the most important, will know Me declares the Lord.”

And in John 17:3 Jesus prayed:

“This is eternal life: to know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom You sent.”

Worship & Witness

This story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well has a happy ending:

²⁵The woman said to him, “I know that the Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will tell us everything.” (Messiah is the one called Christ.) ²⁶Jesus told her, “I am he, and I am speaking to you now.” ²⁷At that time his disciples returned. They were surprised that he was talking to a woman. But none of them asked him, “What do you want from her?” or “Why are you talking to her?” ²⁸Then the woman left her water jar and went back into the city. She told the people, ²⁹“Come with me, and meet a man who told me everything I’ve ever done. Could he be the Messiah?” ³⁰The people left the city and went to meet Jesus. ³¹Meanwhile, the disciples were urging him, “Rabbi, have something to eat.” ³²Jesus told them, “I have food to eat that you don’t know about.” ³³The disciples asked each other, “Did someone bring him something to eat?” ³⁴Jesus told them, “My food is to do what the one who sent me wants me to do and to finish the work he has given me. ³⁵“Don’t you say, ‘In four more months the harvest will be here’? I’m telling you to look and see that the fields are ready to be harvested. ³⁶The person who harvests the crop is already getting paid. He is gathering grain for eternal life. So, the person who plants the grain and the person who harvests it are happy together. ³⁷In this respect the saying is true: ‘One person plants, and another person harvests.’ ³⁸I have sent you to harvest a crop you have not worked for. Other people have done the hard work, and you have followed them in their work.” ³⁹Many Samaritans in that city believed in Jesus because of the woman who said, “He told me everything I’ve ever done.”

⁴⁰So when the Samaritans went to Jesus, they asked him to stay with them. He stayed in Samaria for two days. ⁴¹Many more Samaritans believed because of what Jesus said. ⁴²They told the woman, “Our faith is no longer based on what you’ve said. We have heard him ourselves, and we know that he really is the savior of the world.”

- In verses 25 and 26 the woman realizes that she has had an encounter with the Messiah.
- In verses 28 and 29 it says that the woman is so excited that she leaves her water jar at the well, and runs back to the city to tell the people of her community that she has met the Messiah.
- Verse 30 says: “The people left the city and went to meet Jesus.” Remember, these are all Samaritan people – people who did not know the living God.
- Verses 39 through 42 tell us that Jesus stayed with these Samaritan people for two days, and many believed in Jesus, firstly because of the woman’s testimony, and then because of their own personal encounter with Jesus.

This demonstrates a marvelous connection between **our true worship of God** and **our personal witness to Jesus Christ**: Both are a result of **knowing the Lord in spirit and truth**. Listen to the power in the words of John in the first three verses of his first epistle; and let us make these words the desire of our hearts and our heart-felt prayer:

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us— that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

1 John 1:1-3 *New King James Version*

Bill & Frances Furioso
~ At Christ's Table ~



Bill Furioso and his wife, Frances, have been married for more than 40 years, and have two children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Bill and Frances served as missionaries in South Africa for thirteen years making disciples, establishing churches, and training church leaders. Over a span of 40 years, they also traveled extensively in an itinerant Bible teaching ministry which took them to hundreds of gatherings on four continents ministering in churches, conferences, spiritual formation seminars, and home gatherings. They have shepherded several churches, discipled many to Christ, and mentored church leaders in the USA and abroad.

Being an avid student by nature, Bill has done both formal and informal study in various fields including Education, Music, Philosophy and Theology. As a writer, he has authored many publications which are distributed worldwide. Because of Bill's disabilities resulting from a spinal cord injury, he can no longer travel, so their ministries of writing, recording, distributing, mentoring, and correspondence are now shared primarily via the Internet... www.AtChristsTable.org

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