

John 4:1-42

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Preacher: S Jaj

[0 : 00] Good morning, Church. My name is Sonny Judge. I'm one of the ministers in New Life, Masigar, which is just a mile away. We meet every evening and we reach out to a predominantly South Asian crowd, but you're always welcome to come over there.

And usually not at this moment because of COVID, we have a curry after church. So if you fancy, I will let you know. You're always welcome. That is going to God's word.

So the story is told of an Indian Punjabi farmer who visited his friend in America. The American friend was supposedly a Texan. And Texans, as we know them, are known to think big.

So the Texan asked the Punjabi farmer, tell me, Mr. Singh, how big is your farm in the Punjab? So looking 50 yards ahead, he says, you see that signboard? My farm is that long and about that wide. Do you know how big my ranch is here? The Texan asked. Tell me, the Punjabi farmer replied. Well, the Texan boasted, if you got into my car at sunrise every day and kept driving and driving and driving and driving, somewhere around mid-morning or about midday, only then you will reach the end of my property line.

[1 : 26] At that point, the Indian Punjabi farmer smiled and said, my friend, I understand exactly what you mean. I used to have a car just like that.

So reading the Gospels, especially the Gospel of John, you see many misunderstandings like this, you know, between Jesus, what Jesus said and what the others heard.

And it happened with everyone. The disciples, they kept misunderstanding him. The religious leaders, even the people that came to him for help, Pontus Pilate, the political leaders, normal people, everybody seems to misunderstand Jesus.

It's as if they were speaking two different things, you know, they were always speaking over each other. So Jesus is revealing spiritual truths and pointing it to them using the physical world as a departure point.

And his hearers are just listening to him at a literal and natural level. Now, D.A. Carson, a respected Reformed biblical scholar, suggests that there are about 30 misunderstandings within the Gospel of John itself.

[2 : 36] Now, that's a lot of misunderstandings in a book that has 21 short chapters. And if you look at our passage today, we have two misunderstandings, but I want to concentrate on one. And the vast majority of the misunderstandings that people had about Jesus centered on his claims about himself.

Who you really think he is, his identity. You know, that seemed to be the most important misunderstanding in the Gospel. Who do people say I am?

So this morning, my sermon could be outlined within these three points. Firstly, misunderstanding what Jesus offers. Secondly, understanding who Jesus is.

And thirdly, I will respond to Jesus. So firstly, misunderstanding what Jesus offers. So in our text this morning, Jesus is in a Samaritan town called Sychar.

It's in Samaria. And Sychar probably was famous because of Jacob's well that was there. And Jesus, being tired, was sitting near the well.

[3 : 43] It was noontime, the hottest time of the day. And a Samaritan woman comes out to draw water from the well. Now, this was unusual. Women drew water either early in the morning or late in the evening.

Now, it's as if this person was trying to avoid contact with everybody else. Now, what is remarkable, very remarkable in this passage, right at the beginning, is we see the humanity of Jesus.

He was tired and he was thirsty. And he was willing to ask for water. Now, John portrays a Jesus that is all too human and open about his vulnerabilities and his needs.

Now, the book of Hebrews tells us that Jesus shared in our humanity. He was all flesh and blood. Because it says he had to be made like his brothers in every respect so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God.

To make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. Jesus, in his humanity, is reaching out to bless another human being.

[5 : 01] So, the Samaritan woman was surprised when Jesus addressed her. How is it that you, a Jew, ask me for a drink, a Samaritan? A woman from Samaria.

Now, John tells us in the passage that Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. Culturally, they could have not been so different. Jesus is a male, he's a rabbi, and he's Jewish.

She's a woman. A Samaritan woman. You know, the Jews had no dealings with them because of theological reasons. And she has probably questionable character.

Any self-respecting Jew would have walked away at a presence at the well. In fact, he would have tried to ignore that town.

Jesus, on the other hand, engages her in a conversation. He requested water from her. Now, overlooking her question, Jesus answers her. He says, if you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, give me this drink, you would have asked him, and he had given you the living water.

[6 : 09] Now, this is the second surprise for the woman for the day. So, she says to him, sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?

Now, this began their conversation. Their whole conversation is built on this misunderstanding. And it has to do with the offer of living water. Now, living water signifies running or flowing water, fresh spring water, from a well that is bubbling up.

So, indicating that its source is from an underground river or spring. At least, that's the picture that the Samaritan woman had in her mind. The well is deep. How is this water going to be bubbling up? In a pre-technological world, how is Jesus going to draw up the water? Since he has no other gadgets. And moreover, he's the one dependent on her for a drink.

So, then comes her next question. Now, perhaps just to tease him. Could he be greater than Jacob, who gave his sons and the Samaritans the well, and everyone drank from the well since then, including Jacob?

[7 : 20] Jacob was dependent on that well. And Jesus' reply, at this point, probably must make her think that probably Jesus is out of his mind. You know, for him even to be in that town.

Jesus says, everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty. Okay.

The water that I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. Where Jesus meant spiritual satisfaction, the woman understood it literally.

So, she says, sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and keep coming to draw water. At this point, the table's turned.

The woman is now making a request. Jesus tells her, go bring your husband over. And so, she replies. She says, I have no husband. And Jesus says, you are right in saying I have no husband.

[8 : 23] For you have had five husbands. And the one you have now is not your husband. So, Jesus basically prophesies her life before her eyes. Now, I sometimes wonder what is the connection between the offer of the living water and the woman's marital life.

Now, perhaps, you know, the book of Proverbs might give us a clue, you know. Proverbs 3 calls for sexual purity within the bounds of marriage. It says, drink water from your own cistern.

Flowing water from your own well. Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be for yourself alone and not for strangers with you.

Let your fountain be blessed and rejoice in the wife of your youth. The breakdown in her marital life, moving from one husband to another, being exploited, now living with a man who is not her husband, points to a deeper thirst for relationship and intimacy.

Now, the Samaritan woman is no different than any one of us. We will look to almost anything and everything to satisfy a deeper hunger, a deeper thirst within ourselves.

[9 : 40] God spoke about our problem through the prophet Jeremiah thousands of years ago. Jeremiah chapter 2, God says this, Has a nation changed its gods, even though there are no gods?

But my people have changed their glory for which does not profit. Be appalled, O heavens! At this, be shocked!

Be utterly desolate, declares the Lord, for my people have committed two evils. They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

The sin, beneath the sin, that the Samaritan woman had actually committed is this. It's the twin evil of forsaking God, the fountain of living waters, and hewing a cistern for ourselves, a broken cistern that could hold no water.

And we are no different. You know, as a famous hymn says about our sinful hearts, prone to wonder, Lord, I feel it, prone to live the God I love.

[10:50] We forsake God, the fountain of living waters, and we hew out broken cisterns for ourselves. Now, outwardly, we might appear respectable and holy, however you define or interpret the word.

We might appear successful. We might give the impression that we have it all together. But we have forsaken the fountain of living waters. Now, the Samaritan woman, we are told about her broken cistern.

She got into numerous relationships. Our broken cistern might take a different form. Our broken cistern is where we go to find life, where we derive our identity, our comfort, our security.

The thing that we hold on to, that we clutch to, that we refuse to give up, it's a thing that we try to quench our thirst with. It could be money, it could be a relationship, it could be our career, our family, our inheritance.

It could be the thing that we depend completely to get through this life. Our education, our good looks, our strength, whatever. All these things that we have, they are good in itself.

[12:13] It becomes an idol when we depend on it for spiritual satisfaction. After all, most evil is perverted good. The very thing that God has blessed us, we turn into an idol.

We focus on it, and we forget the source. The gift, the gift becomes the be, and then no. We forsake the giver. And like the Samaritan woman, we go through life the same way.

We are like the thirsty men, drifting about in an ocean, and instead of depending on fresh rain, he tries to quench his thirst with salty water.

And that just makes him more and more thirsty, and he never reaches fulfillment, or ever be satisfied. Instead, he will destroy us. On that hot day, Jesus finds that woman.

And Grace meets her, where she was. Jesus interrupts her life, and he invites her to something higher, something deeper, something truly fulfilling.

[13:21] And that's something only Jesus can offer. Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him, will never be thirsty again.

The water that I will give him, in him, a spring of water, welling up to eternal life. Only Jesus can make such an offer to us.

Thousands of years ago, the God of the Bible spoke through the prophet Isaiah, come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, and he who has no money, come buy and eat, come buy wine and milk, without money, without price.

Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor, for which that does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in rich food.

Do we truly understand, what our deepest needs are? We probably know what our wants are, and we assume that if we could satisfy our wants, we will be truly happy.

[14:37] But it's a rollercoaster ride. Only Jesus is able to offer us the living water, that could satisfy our deepest hunger and thirst.

And only Jesus can make such a claim, because of who he is. Now throughout this chapter, there are a number of verses, in 40, 42 verses, as we read, the identity of Jesus, gets clearer.

He's revealing himself, as he's satisfying the needs of the people around him. You know, in verse 9, the Samaritan woman called him a Jew. He was just a Jew.

In verse 12, she asked him, are you greater than Jacob? By verse 19, she recognizes him as a prophet. And by verse 26, Jesus tells her, that he's the promised Messiah.

And the Samaritan woman, runs back to her people, and she says, come see a man, who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ? And by the end of the story, this is what the Samaritans confessed to the woman.

[15 : 49] It is no longer because of what you said, that we believe. For we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this indeed, is the Savior of the world.

This perhaps is the only place, in the gospel, where Jesus is called, Savior of the world. The world might call Jesus, many a names. To them, he might just be a good man, a wise teacher, a failed Messiah, just another guru, or just a prophet.

But John reminds us, early on in his gospel, the true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet, the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people, did not receive him.

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right, to become children of God, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

[17 : 02] So what are we to do, to experience, and enjoy, to drink, this living water, that Jesus offers? Well, God has told us, we have committed, two evils, we have forsaken him, the fountain of living waters, and heaved out cisterns, for ourselves.

Broken cisterns, that can hold no water. We have to give up, our broken cisterns. That's what God, is calling us to do. And that's almost, in every page, of the Bible.

It's an invitation, to come back to God, a call to repentance. You know, that's why the Bible, is very clear, about the sins, of its characters. You know, the Bible is not, a sanitized book.

It's not a sanitized book. It talks about, real people, in real world, calling them back, to God. Now, James tells us, the brother of Jesus, you adulterous people, do you not know, that friendship, with the world, is enmity with God?

Therefore, whoever wishes, to be a friend, of the world, makes himself, an enemy of God. Or do you suppose, it is no purpose, that the scripture says, he yearns jealously, over the spirit, that he has made, to dwell in us.

[18 : 17] But he gives us, more grace. Therefore, it says, God opposes the proud, but gives grace, to the humble. Now, this verse, this few verses, could be a summary, of the way, God works, throughout the Bible.

You know, he puts God's judgment, and God's grace, side by side. As we all have, adulterous hearts, we want to say, that we love God, yet we want to love the world, but God is inviting us back. He's calling, his spouse back. And he's ever willing, to show us, grace after grace. This Samaritan woman, had had five husbands.

Now, the sixth man, that she lives with, is not her husband. She is now, meeting a seventh man, who is telling her, that what he offers, will quench her spiritual thirst.

This seventh man, is Jesus, calling her back to God. despite her sin, and her shame, you know, she's also, of course, a victim of injustice, Jesus has come, to restore, and redeem her.

[19 : 28] And how does she respond? It's in verse 28, we see, she left her, her water jar, and went away, into town, and said to the people, come, see a man, who told me, all that I ever did, can this be the Christ?

She, left, her jar. She, left her broken cistern, at the feet of Jesus. A broken cistern, that could hold, no water.

Jesus, is inviting us, to leave, our broken jars, at his feet. Cisterns, that we have, hewed for ourselves, and come back, to him, who is the source, of living water.

And this Samaritan woman, did just that. And we see, the promise, that Jesus made to her, began to take, fulfillment, at that very moment.

What, did Jesus promise her? Whoever drinks, of the water, that I will give him, or her, will never be thirsty again. The water, that I give him, or her, will become, a spring of water, welling up, to eternal life.

[20 : 43] She, could not, contain the joy, that she, ran to town. She, who was evangelized, by Jesus, became the evangelist, to her own people.

She, pointed them, to Jesus. She, became, the spring, of living water. The Samaritan woman, that went, to Jacob's well, to quench her thirst, met Jesus, and she, became, stream of living water, to her people.

The woman, at the well, now has become, the well. And the well, flowed, into, the Samaritan town. And what was her message? It was very simple.

Come, see a man, who told me, all that I ever did. the Samaritan woman, who had been, avoiding contact, with almost everyone, you know, she goes to draw water, from the well, at midday, is now in the middle, of the town, proclaiming Jesus.

And proclaiming him, through her brokenness. Meeting Jesus, has truly, redeemed her. She, her shame, has been taken away. She's been redeemed, from it.

[21 : 56] And Jesus, is offering us, this life. If we would just, forsake our broken system, and drink from him. And that invitation, is still open to us.

It was, just as it was, over 2000 years ago. If anyone, thirst, let him, come to me, and drink.

Whoever, believes in me, as the scripture, has said, out of his water, out of his heart, will flow, rivers, rivers of living.

May the Lord bless, the preaching of his word. Amen.