

10. Jesus Talked to the Woman at the Well

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain what Jesus taught about the fact that every person must choose to either accept or reject the everlasting life that Jesus made available by His death and resurrection. Those who reject are making the choice to receive the wrath of God against sin while those who accept and receive Jesus also receive everlasting life. In this topic, and the next two topics, we will see that Jesus shared this same message with some Samaritans.

We saw that people were being baptized that came to Jesus in our last topic. Here, we see that Jesus was not the one who was doing the baptizing. John 4:1-4 says, “Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. But He needed to go through Samaria.” John had said that Jesus must increase but He must decrease. That is exactly what was happening. These verses tell us that more people were being baptized in the name of Jesus than were being baptized by John.

We saw, in John 1:19-20, that the Jews had sent Levites from Jerusalem to question John why he was baptizing. That verse says, “Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, ‘I am not the Christ.’” Once the Pharisees knew that the disciples of Jesus were baptizing more disciples than John, Jesus knew that they would send people to question Him also. However, Jesus was going to reveal to the Jews that He is the Christ according to His time plan and not according to the time plan of the Pharisees. Here, we see that it was actually the disciples of Jesus that were baptizing.

As a result of the fact that Jesus knew that the Jews would soon question whether He was the Christ and it was not His time to reveal that to them yet, Jesus then left Judea and went to Galilee. However, we see that He needed to go through Samaria. Usually, the Jews would cross the Jordan River in order to avoid going through Samaria because the Jews did not get along with the Samaritans. In contrast, we see that Jesus said that it was necessary for Him to go through Samaria. The word translated “needed” means *it is necessary*, and so we see that Jesus was carrying out the will of the Father by going through Samaria. Jesus said in John 4:34, while they were in Samaria, “Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.’” In this verse, we see that Jesus was very conscious of doing the will of His Father at all times.

We will see that the will of the Father was to save many Samaritans. John 4:5-10 says, “So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from *His* journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give Me a drink.’ For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, ‘How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?’ For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered and said to her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked

Him, and He would have given you living water.” Here, we see how Jesus got acquainted.

Jesus and the disciples had been very busy, so when they arrived at Sychar, Jesus was tired. He chose to sit down by the well that provided water for the city while His disciples went into the city to get food. We see that it was about the sixth hour. Matthew, Mark and Luke use Jewish time, which divides the time from the morning until the evening from the first hour to the twelfth hour. In contrast, Roman time began with midnight. John 4:52 says, “Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, ‘Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.’” This was either at 1 p.m. or 7 p.m., depending on whether it is Jewish or Roman time. John 19:14 says, “Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, ‘Behold your King!’” Here, we see that the sixth hour was early in the morning, which would be Roman time. As a result, we are not sure what time John used.

Soon after Jesus sat down by the well, a woman of Samaria came to get water. The disciples had gone into the city to buy food. Jesus said to the woman, “Give Me a drink.” The Jews and the Samaritans had a mutual dislike for one another so the woman was very surprised by the request of Jesus. She replied, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman? For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.” A Jewish man normally did not speak to any woman in public, but especially not to a Samaritan woman. As a result, we see that this woman showed her surprise and probable rejection by the answer that she gave Jesus.

Instead of reacting to her statement, Jesus showed His concern for the woman by responding with love. Jesus said, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.” Here, we see an important lesson that we want to show our children by our actions. We want to learn to respond with love to others rather than react with anger. That way, others can see the love of Christ in our lives. We will see that the woman did not fully understand Jesus. However, she did recognize that Jesus was offering her the gift of God. She also recognized that Jesus was offering her living water. She was not sure exactly what Jesus meant but she wanted to know more.

John 4:11-14 says, “The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?’ Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.’” Jesus had treated the woman with respect and so she responded with respect by calling Him, “Sir”.

We see by the statement the woman made that she did not understand what Jesus meant by living water. Her first response was, “Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep.” Although the later conversation will show that the woman was somewhat familiar with the Old Testament, there were probably many parts that she had never heard. Jeremiah had written in Jeremiah 2:13, “‘For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, *and* hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.’”

Jeremiah had pointed out that God is the fountain of living waters. Here, Jesus is offering this Samaritan woman living water. That pointed out the fact that Jesus is God. However, the woman was thinking about the water in the well. As a result, she wanted to know where Jesus would get living water.

She was searching for an answer and asked a second question, “Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?” The kindness and love that Jesus had shown by His attitude toward her caused this woman to think carefully. That was why she asked Jesus if He was greater than their father Jacob. Here, we see an important key to effective witness about Jesus. Any statement about Jesus will have a much greater impact if the statement is spoken with the love and kindness that Jesus showed here.

Instead of answering her question directly, Jesus chose to explain the difference between the water that she was getting and the water that He was now offering to the woman. Jesus said that the water in the well would not last because those who drank that water would soon be thirsty again. In contrast, Jesus said that those who took the water that He offered would never have thirst again. Jesus explained what that water is in John 7:37-39, where we read, “On the last *day*, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” Here, we see that the living water to which Jesus referred is the Holy Spirit that would be given to all who come to God in repentance and place their faith in Christ. The Holy Spirit had not yet been given at that time because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

We see that Jesus explained about the water that He would give but the Samaritan woman could not understand what Jesus meant. Jesus said, “The water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” This is a reminder that those without spiritual life cannot understand spiritual truth without God giving them understanding. Here, we see that Jesus wanted to give that woman the spiritual understanding that she needed to believe and have true faith in Him. Jesus said that the spiritual water that He offered would produce everlasting life.

This is the key thing that each person needs to have the Lord help them understand in order to come to the point of receiving spiritual life. We want to help our physical and spiritual children grow in their understanding so that they can explain to others how to have spiritual life. Then, the Holy Spirit will use their ministry to convict and the Father will use their ministry to draw so that they can come to Jesus who is seeking them because He wants to save those who are lost. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to work with the Trinity in evangelism.