

11. Jesus Introduced Himself as the Christ

In our last topic, we saw that Jesus talked with a Samaritan woman that came to get water at the well near the city of Sychar. We also saw that Jesus provided an example of the way to make contacts and build relationships with those who are of a different culture and religion. We want to show our physical and spiritual children what we have learned from this passage by our example. In this topic, we are going to see how Jesus introduced Himself to the woman as the Christ.

The woman had become very interested as Jesus talked to her about living water, even though she did not exactly understand what was meant by living water. John 4:15-18 says, “The woman said to Him ‘Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come here.’ The woman answered and said, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You have well said, “I have no husband,” for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.’” Here, we see that the woman asked Jesus for this living water. We see that the woman thought that living water would eliminate the work of going to the well, drawing water and carrying the water back to her home. She did not realize that Jesus was talking about her spiritual life.

Jesus just told the woman, “Go call your husband and come here.” Suddenly, the woman became very uncomfortable. Jesus had just hit some very painful wounds from her past. Proverbs 15:13 says, “A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.” This woman had probably experienced a lot of sorrow of the heart. In many cultures of that day, only the man was allowed to get a divorce so this woman may have experienced much rejection or may have had one or more husbands who died. As a result, the woman just answered, “I have no husband.” Jesus complimented the woman for telling the truth about having no husband. He then said that she had been married to five different men but that the man that she was now living with was not her husband. Then, Jesus complimented her again for telling the truth. The fact that Jesus complimented her twice for telling the truth means that Jesus chose to show great grace to a hurting woman.

Even if the woman had a very sinful past, Jesus had still spoken the truth in love. Jesus did the same thing with the woman caught in adultery in John 8. In that case, when the men kept pressuring him, John 8:7 says, “So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, ‘He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.’” Jesus also chose to show great grace to this woman. The final result in that conversation is seen in John 8:10-11, where we read, “When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, ‘Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?’ She said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said to her, ‘Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.’” In both cases, these women were drawn to Jesus and placed their trust in Him because He chose to speak the truth in love.

This Samaritan woman immediately tried to cover her pain from her past by changing the subject. John 4:19-26 says, “The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to

worship.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.’ The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When He comes, He will tell us all things.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am *He*.’” This woman recognized that Jesus must be from God because He knew all about her past.

The Samaritans had built a temple on the nearby mountain where they worshiped. In contrast, the Jews said that people should worship God at the temple in Jerusalem. This woman chose to change the subject by asking which place was the right place to worship God. Christ quickly made it clear by His answer that it is not where a person worships but who a person worships. The Jews knew more about salvation because they regularly read the Old Testament in their synagogues every Sabbath. However, that did not mean that all of the Jews worshiped God. Jesus explained this to the Jews by quoting from Isaiah 29:13 in Mark 7:6-8 which says, “He answered and said to them, ‘Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: “This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.’”

However, Jesus chose to explain to this Samaritan woman the meaning of true worship. Jesus said that the hour had arrived when true worshipers must worship God in spirit and in truth. This is talking about our human spirit. False worship tries to worship God by following rules set by a particular religion. First, true worship with our spirit must come from the heart because such worship talks about the attitudes in our hearts. 1 Samuel 16:7 says, “But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For *the LORD does not see* as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.’” Many people depend on religious actions but God is looking for proper heart attitudes.

Second, true worship must be according to truth. That is the truth which is revealed to us in the Word of God. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” The Father is seeking people who will worship Him with true heart attitudes and according to the Word of God.

The woman was growing in her understanding of who Jesus was as she talked with Him. As a result, she said, “I know that Messiah is coming (who is called Christ). When He comes, He will tell us all things.” The fact that Jesus knew all about her past and chose to speak to her with grace caused this woman to think about the things that she had been taught about the Messiah. She knew that the Messiah would be called the Christ and would come from God. She realized that the Messiah would know all things just as Jesus had shown the woman that He knew all about her past and still had a great love for her. Then, Jesus told the woman that He is the Messiah.

Meanwhile, the disciples had arrived back from their trip into the town to get food. John 4:27-30 says, “And at this *point* His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, ‘What do You seek?’ or, ‘Why are You talking with her?’ The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, ‘Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?’ Then they went out of the city and came to Him.” The disciples were very surprised to see that Jesus was talking with this woman from Samaria. We see that the disciples said nothing but just watched and listened as Jesus spoke to the woman.

The woman had learned through talking with Jesus that He was the Messiah. As a result, she immediately changed her purpose. She had come to the well to get water. However, we see that she now left her waterpot and went into the city to tell others about Jesus. There were many things that she did not yet know about Jesus. However, she did know that Jesus knew about her past. She also knew that He accepted her in spite of her past and in spite of the fact that she was a Samaritan. As a result, she wanted to tell others in the city about Jesus. One of the things that we have seen in the book of John is that the first thing that several people did after they met Jesus was go and tell others about Him.

The woman had one message to share with each of the men that she met. John 4:29 says, “Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” In her words, we see that the woman gave a very interesting statement of her conversation with Jesus. Jesus had said to the woman, “You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.” Here, we see that the woman felt that Jesus had summarized her entire life by just that one statement. She knew that her life had been a life of failures. At the same time, Jesus complimented her twice for telling the truth in His statement so the woman knew that she was accepted by Jesus. By that statement, Jesus had given this woman hope for the future.

The woman was convinced that Jesus was the Christ because He knew all about her past life and He still accepted her. He had also told her that He was the Christ. At the same time, she asked the men whether this could be the Christ because she wanted them to meet Jesus and decide for themselves if this was the Christ. We see that excitement in the voice of the woman caused the men to go out of the city to meet Jesus. Here, we see an example of the powerful impact that Jesus has on the lives of those who feel that their lives have been a series of failures. We want to help our physical and spiritual children realize that they can also give hope to those who feel that they have made such a mess of their lives that no one will accept them. Jesus said in Luke 19:10, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Jesus offers hope to every person who feels that he or she is so sinful that Jesus would never forgive them. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn how to share this message of hope.