
John 4:5-26. Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. ⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" ⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." ¹¹ "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can 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 also his sons and his flocks and herds?" ¹³ Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." ¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." ¹⁶ He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." ¹⁷ "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." ¹⁹ "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." ²¹ Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time 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, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." ²⁵ The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." ²⁶ Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."

Believe! God's Grace is Boundless

- 1. Jesus comes with grace for all.**
- 2. Jesus gives grace that provides everlasting refreshment.**

Her sin was well known, both by Jesus and by those in her community, and yet Jesus came to her. She was a woman who lived in a place where many of Jesus' ethnicity avoided and yet Jesus was compelled to go to that region, that place, to that person. So gracious and so rich in mercy is our Lord.

Just before our reading for today, there is a wonderful little verse that should not be overlooked. John 4:4 reads: **Now he had to go through Samaria.** Technically speaking, Jesus didn't have to go to Samaria. Historically speaking, there was a common custom that he could have followed as many of his fellow Jews just went around Samaria. But Jesus was interested in following that custom. As we will find out, this passage speaks more about Jesus' mission and his heart for souls than mere geography or travel plans. John 4:4, and then the rest of this lesson, demonstrates something wonderful about Jesus. His **grace is boundless. Jesus comes with grace for all.** And as Jesus offers and describes the living water to the Samaritan woman at the well, we also learn that **Jesus gives grace that gives endless and everlasting refreshment for our souls.**

God's grace is boundless, and so we see Jesus defy the conventional thinking of the day to demonstrate his remarkable and delightfully unconventional grace. The Jews and Samaritans of Jesus' day did not get along. It was so bad that there was this common understanding among the people that the most Jews would avoid the whole region of Samaria altogether by crossing the Jordan and traveling on the east side of the river to get to areas that were north of Samaria. Well, Jesus was not like most Jews, of course he was not like most people. And so he had in mind that this time he was going through Samaria, he just had to go there. And upon coming to a town in Samaria called Sychar, Jesus arrived at a well that was there. Tired as he was from his journey he sat down at the well. It was about the sixth hour.

This was not customarily the time when people came to get water from the well. Rather, this would be a time when this woman usually could expect to be alone and go unnoticed. But on this occasion, she is noticed by Jesus as he is waiting for her at the well. Again, Jesus would defy popular and conventional wisdom, as a Jewish man would certainly not normally talk to a woman, especially not a Samaritan woman, and certainly not one with her kind of reputation – this all would be seen as quite unconventional even quite scandalous. But Jesus had come to this place, for this reason, to share the message of sin and grace, to share the message that this woman needed to hear. His grace defies conventional thinking, as his grace is boundless.

There are times that we are quick to draw more defined boundaries around God's grace according to more conventional thinking, or what seems right to a collective understanding. Perhaps because of traditions we have grown up with we might have a certain group or type of person in mind who kind of fits our understanding of who is included, and who is also therefore excluded. In our sinfulness, we can be quick to judge, slow to forgive, steeped in sinful misunderstandings, and we limit God's grace. But here Jesus expands our understanding, opens our eyes and our minds to see how gracious and merciful our God is. This is a woman is from a different culture, who is living an immoral lifestyle, and who has been excluded from her own society, and Jesus *includes her* in his mission to save. He had to go to Samaria. He had to stop at that well. He had to talk to that woman, so rich is his grace, so abundant is his mercy. Believe! Trust in Jesus, in his amazing grace, and share this message of grace that is for you and for all people.

His grace is boundless. God is so full of love for sinners that he chooses for himself a people that he would protect and preserve so that a Savior, a Messiah, would come to be the Savior of all the nations. He would give this promise to Abraham and say to him that he would be the father of many nations and through him and the child promised to him all nations would be blessed. Through the prophet Isaiah (as well as other places of Scripture) the Lord would make it clear that this Savior's grace would cross over the borders of Israel and burst forth like a mighty flood and flow out to the ends of the earth. ***"It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."*** That very Lord of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is by the gift of faith our God too and he is described in this way, ***the Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.*** The holy God sent his Son even for sinners like us. Our Lord is ***compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.*** His grace abounds!

There are times where we might be another way that we quick to draw boundaries around God's grace as the devil tempts us to drift away from God's love into the dangerous and waterless wilderness of despair. When we mess up big, when we sin so often, or we fall into the same temptation over and over again, when we bring private shame or public disgrace upon ourselves, there are these thoughts that push their way into our thinking, ***"How could God forgive me this time? How could God forgive me again?"*** We may even feel as if we have drawn a line in the sand and have placed ourselves outside of God's reach. But dear friends, look upon God's incredible grace as Jesus reaches out to this woman. Our Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness. He does not ignore sin and sins problems, but he addresses them head-on and covers them with his boundless and incredible grace. It is a grace that overflows to the many and washes away that which would divide us from God.

Our Lord is the Lord of all. Our Holy God reaches out to sinners of all shapes and sizes, ages and races. He is the God of the troubled and the blessed, the happy and the depressed. He is the God of the rich and the poor, the successful and the broken. He is the God of those who stand in honor and those who sit in shame. His face shines upon us all as his Word of law and gospel is shared with the world. It is the message of salvation that this world - each and every man, woman, and child so desperately need.

And so it is, that Jesus had to go to Samaria. And once there He speaks to this woman by the well. He gets her talking, and then he carefully steers the discussion toward spiritual things. ***"If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."*** When he speaks of living water, the woman is suddenly locked in and she wants to know more. ***¹³ Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*** ***¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."*** And then this is

where things seem to get even more interesting, ¹⁶ **He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”** ¹⁷ **“I have no husband,” she replied. Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband.** ¹⁸ **The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”**

The woman, at this point, tries to steer the conversation away from herself and deflect from her own record by talking religion, but Jesus is ready for this retort as well. ²³ **Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.** ²⁴ **God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”** ²⁵ **The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”** ²⁶ **Then Jesus declared, “I who speak to you am he.”**

Notice how Jesus doesn't back away from her sin but addresses it directly. And then as she tries to deflect and back away from that powerful message Jesus gently brings her back in. He reassures her of the promise. He calls her to repentance and then reveals that he is her Savior.

Believe! Jesus is *your* Savior from sin. His love for *you* is boundless. He speaks to you as he reaches out to you with his saving Word. Your sin is real, our sins are many, and yet with love that goes against conventional thinking and with mercy that exceeds our expectations he reaches out to us as our Savior, our Messiah. Christ's love covers over the multitude of our sins. He reaches out to us to include even you and me in his wonderful plan of salvation. He saves us from the desolation of sin and the wandering about alone and unsure and unsatisfied, and in his grace, he provides us with living water that satisfies our souls like nothing else can. He calls us to repentance. He calls us to worship and serve our Lord. With hearts refreshed and spirits made new we serve our God surrounded by the boundless love and satisfaction and peace that only Jesus can bring. With hearts made new, we are refreshed to worship our God as we sing his praise and as we live lives of thankful obedience.

There are many pursuits in this life that we might draw from, in some attempt to quench our thirsty souls. In our wanderings, we might reach down to grab hold of bad things: pleasures, greed, lust, passions, and the desires that this life has to offer in abundance. Or we might try to fill up on the good things of this life as we pour ourselves into our relationships, our work, and family, and the like. But such things of life, good, bad, or otherwise, can only leave us craving more. No, nothing in this whole world can heal and satisfy and last like the living waters of the gospel.

Believe and give thanks that Jesus made a point to stop here to reach out to you. Rejoice that in his marvelous grace he has given us the goodness of forgiveness and the peace that satisfies, that refreshes, now and forever. Believe, rejoice, and give thanks for the boundless grace of our God poured out onto you in Jesus Christ and draw from the well that will never run dry. Believe when Jesus says to you. **“Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”** Amen.