



River Church Men's Bible Study Guide

[Pursuing Outcasts – Hope for the Thirsty Soul](#)

[John 4:1-26](#)

One Couldn't Help But Ask...

1. In verse 4 it says, “And he had to pass through Samaria.” According to Josephus, there was an alternate route that could be taken but some Jews went through Samaria anyway. Why do you think Jesus “needed” or “had” to go through Samaria? In other words, if the need wasn't because of travel arrangements or practical necessities, then why did He have to go this way?
2. In verse 15 it says, “The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.’” What do you think the woman's inner motive was with a response like this?
3. What did Jesus mean by “living water”? Do you think the Samaritan woman understood the meaning?
4. The woman is convinced Jesus is a prophet (she says so) and the conversation changes. The woman asks about worshiping on Mount Gerizim the mountain near the well of Jacob as Samaritan religion requires vs. the Jews saying people must worship at the temple in Jerusalem. Jesus tells her that soon all who would worship God must worship in spirit and truth. Gerizim & Jerusalem are locations. What is the alternative Jesus is talking about?
5. Do Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman share a common need or desire, i.e., a common reason for needing Jesus? How does the outcome of their meeting with him differ?
6. Which of these two has experienced and passed on the greater impact of meeting Jesus and share your reasoning?

Takeaways

- Jesus demonstrates that all of mankind have sinned and long for relief from the burden of it. Neither worldly acclaim nor self-indulgence in sin will satisfy the longing that only Jesus' grace & love can provide.
- Someone might object: “I drank of what Jesus offers, and I feel thirsty and empty again.” The answer is simple: drink again! It isn't a one-time sip of Jesus that satisfies forever, but continual connection with Him.
- Jesus has presented two messages in the stories of Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman
 - He warns the religious leaders that they can sometimes get carried away with their self-importance and may even jeopardize their opportunity to see the kingdom of God because their self-acclaimed righteousness is outside their faith & trust in Jesus.

- He encourages the lost & broken to trust in Him, who knows everything about you, to give them what they need, the thirst quenching “living water” of salvation and the promise of an everlasting life of joy in the kingdom of heaven.

Notes

- Jesus had an appointment to keep with the woman at the well, He was not forcing her to come to him but rather, he would go to her in a place the Pharisees would not go. This is the same commitment he has to each of us; to pursue us all of our days offering the gift of living water, salvation.
- “He felt that his miraculous power was to be used for others, and in his great work; but as for himself, his humanity must bear its own infirmity, it must support its own trials: so he keeps his hand back from relieving his own necessities.” (Spurgeon)
- In the interview with Nicodemus John showed us, Jesus has something to say to the religious establishment. In the meeting with the Samaritan woman at the well John showed us, Jesus has something to say to those despised by the religious establishment.
- It’s common for people to try and satisfy their God-created inner thirst through many things, or through anything except for what Jesus gives. People are thirsty – they want, they long, they search, they reach; but only what Jesus gives satisfies to the deepest levels of man’s soul and spirit.
- “What does a thirsty man do to get rid of his thirst? He drinks. Perhaps there is no better representation of faith in all the Word of God than that. To drink is to receive-to take in the refreshing draught-and that is all. A man’s face may be unwashed, but yet he can drink; he may be a very unworthy character, but yet a draught of water will remove his thirst. Drinking is such a remarkably easy thing, it is even more simple than eating.” (Spurgeon, *Good News for Thirsty Souls*)
- Jesus takes the woman at the well through several steps in their conversation
 - He gets her attention by asking for a drink (4:7-9)
 - He whets her appetite for his better “living water” (4:10-14)
 - He secures her desire for his water; she asks for it (4:15-18)
 - He provides a spiritual solution for sin; salvation from the Jews (4:19-24)
 - Trusting Christ as the Answer, worship in spirit and truth (4:25-26)
- Robert Definbaugh who writes for Bible.org provided a study guide that one of the authors used as a reference. To demonstrate how important leaders can sometimes forget that they are not necessarily the peak of every pinnacle offered this confrontation.
 - *“This is the transcript of an ACTUAL radio conversation of a US naval ship with Canadian authorities off the coast of Newfoundland in October, 1995. Radio conversation released by the Chief of Naval Operations 10-10-95. (This is an apocryphal story, but still useful for illustration.)*
 - *Americans: Please divert your course 15 degrees to the North to avoid a collision.*
 - *Canadians: Recommend you divert YOUR course 15 degrees to the South to avoid a collision.*
 - *Americans: This is the Captain of a US Navy ship. I say again, divert YOUR course.*
 - *Canadians: No. I say again, you divert YOUR course.*
 - *Americans: This is the aircraft carrier USS Lincoln, the second largest ship in the United States’ Atlantic fleet. We are accompanied by three destroyers, three cruisers and numerous support vessels. I demand that you change your course 15*

degrees north, that's one five degrees north, or counter-measures will be undertaken to ensure the safety of this ship.

- *Canadians: This is a lighthouse. Your call."*

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This study guide is provided in the hope that others will be moved to consider the sermon, let their mind wander to questions it might raise and thoughts they wish to remember and apply to their personal life. If anyone reading the guide cares to ask a question or share their thoughts regarding the subject, please e-mail the authors at mensbreakfast@therivercolorado.org . If you would like to participate in the building of the study guide, please let us know and we'll try to make provisions to have you join us via phone and/or Zoom.