

A Divine Appointment
John 4:1-18
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INTRODUCTION

1. We are continuing our study of John's Gospel as we begin this morning our look at chapter 4.
2. I would like to invite you to take God's Word and turn to John chapter 4.
3. This section of Jesus and the Samaritan woman begins in verse 1 and runs through verse 42.
4. Read John 4:1-42.
5. We now come to a very familiar story in the gospel of John—the woman at the well.
6. This story is marked with many contrasts with that of Nicodemus in chapter 3.
7. “He was a devoutly religious Jew; she was an immoral Samaritan. He was a learned theologian; she was an uneducated peasant woman. He recognized Jesus as a teacher sent by God; she had no clue who He was. He was wealthy; she was poor. He was a member of the social elite of Israel; she was the dregs of Samaritan society— an outcast among outcasts, since the Jews regarded all Samaritans as unclean pariahs (an outcast or castaway)” (John MacArthur, John 1-11, 140).
8. But that didn't stop Jesus—for He had *a divine appointment*.

9. When you study what the Bible teaches about salvation, one might quickly conclude that it is sovereign.
10. It comes from a sovereign God to a dead sinner.
11. Man is impotent when it comes to salvation.
12. According to Ephesians 2:1, he is “dead in trespasses and sins.”
13. Unless God intervenes then no one would be saved. And that’s what He does in the heart of those whom He has chosen.
14. In John chapter 4, we hear of Jesus’ dialogue with a Samaritan woman that gets to the point of her real needs.
15. Today preachers are talking about preaching to felt needs—that’s was foreign to Jesus.
16. He wasn’t interested in how you “felt” but how you “thought.”
17. He was interested in you conforming to what God said in His Word.
18. Over and over we hear Him say, “Has God not said” or “It is written.”
19. The woman at the well is no different. Once He cuts through her physical needs He addresses her real need.
20. To do that He confronts the heart.
21. John begins this account of Jesus with the Samaritan woman by mentioning His departure from Judea.
22. In verses 1-6, *Jesus leaves Judea for Galilee.*

I. Jesus Leaves Judea for Galilee (vv.1-6)

In verses 22-36 of chapter 3, Jesus is in the rural area of Judea preaching the gospel while His disciples are baptizing.

John now tells us in the first six verses of chapter 4 why He decides to leave for Galilee.

A. The Reason (vv.1-3)

He says, “Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John 2 (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), 3 He left Judea and went away again into Galilee.”

1. To avoid a premature confrontation with the Pharisees (v.1)

He knew that the Pharisees “were ill-disposed towards Him” [and] He did not wish to expose Himself to their anger before the proper time” (John Calvin, Calvin’s Commentaries: John).

William MacDonald says, “By leaving Judea and journeying to Galilee, Jesus would prevent the Pharisees from being successful in their efforts to cause divisions” (Believer’s Bible Commentary).

2. To have a divine encounter with a woman of Samaria

We will say more about this in a moment, but let’s suffice it to say that Jesus’ going into Samaria was not just for conveyance but was “in reality keeping a divine appointment that He Himself had made

before the foundation of the world” (John MacArthur, John 1-11, 142).

He didn’t happen there by chance. This was a divine appointment.

B. The Route (v.4)

Verse 4 says, “And He had to pass through Samaria.”

“Samaria was on the direct route from Judea to Galilee. But few Jews ever took this direct route. The region of Samaria was so despised by the Jewish people that they often took a very roundabout route through Perea to get north into Galilee” (MacDonald).

John MacArthur says “so great was [the Jews] disdain for the Samaritans that the stricter Jews avoided traveling through Samaria altogether” but the shorter route “many Jews traveled on it, especially at the time of the major religious festivals” (141).

C. The Region (vv.5-6a)

Verses 5-6 tell us that “He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; 6 and Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.”

When Jesus came into Samaria, He came to a small village called Sychar (Suchar) which probably identifies “with the modern village of ‘Askar, on the shoulder of Mount Ebal, opposite Mount Gerizim” (D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 216). John says this is near “the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son

Joseph.” According to Genesis 48:22, while Jacob was on his deathbed he tells Joseph, “I give you one portion [Or ridge; lit shoulder; Heb Shechem] more than your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow.”

“When the Israelites conquered and settled Canaan, they brought with them out of Egypt the bones of their ancestor Joseph, and buried them ‘at Shechem in the tract of land that Jacob bought for a hundred pieces of silver from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. This became the inheritance of Joseph’s descendants’ (Carson, 217).

John continues by stating in verse 6 that “Jacobs well was there.”

D.A. Carson says, “The site of Jacob’s well is as certain as such things can be. At various periods churches were built there, but they were destroyed by the Muslims. Today the well lies in the shadow of the crypt of an unfinished Orthodox church” (217).

“According to well-attested ancient tradition, Jacob’s well was about half a mile south of Sychar” and “was a deep well (approx. 100 feet), fed by a running spring” (MacArthur, 142).

D. The Rest (v.6b)

John continues in verse 6 to tell us He “being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.”

John now tells us about *the rest* He desired as He sat “by the well.”

He was “wearied” (kopiao) or “tired” (GING). This word refers to growing weary “from work” (Rienecker). It is translated “worked” (Lk.5:5), “toil” (Lk.12:27), and “labored” (Jn.4:38).

“Jesus was without sin (8:46; 2 Cor.5:21; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5). But He was still subject to the physical limitations of His full humanity” (MacArthur, 142).

John says that “it was about the sixth hour” when Jesus arrived at the well.

“If John used the Jewish reckoning of time, calculated from sunrise at about 6:00 a.m., the time was about noon. If John used Roman time, which started reckoning from 12:00 p.m., the time would be about 6:00 p.m.” (John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, John 4:6).

II. Jesus Encounters a Samaritan Woman (vv.7-26)

A. She Came to Jacob’s Well to Draw Water (v.7a)

“Women generally came in groups to collect water, either earlier or later in the day to avoid the sun's heat. If the Samaritan woman alone came at 12:00 p.m., this may indicate that her public shame (vv. 16-19) caused her to be isolated from other women” (MacDonald).

B. Jesus Begins His Dialogue with Her (vv.7b-26)

1. He asked her for a drink of water (vv.7-8)

“Jesus said to her, ‘Give Me a drink.’ For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food” (vv.7-8).

This was a remarkable scene because the Lord's request "was in that culture a shocking breach of social custom. Men did not speak with women in public—not even their wives. Nor did rabbis associate with immoral women (cf. Luke 7:39). Most significant of all in this situation, Jews customarily wanted nothing to do with Samaritans" (MacArthur, 143).

But Jesus was impartial to all people. The last part of verse 8 also indicates that Jesus and His disciples did not pay attention "to the taboos of the strict Jews, who would not eat food handled by Samaritans" (MacArthur). "For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food" (v.8).

2. The woman responds to Jesus with astonishment (v.9)

She said, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan women?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)"

"No dealings" referred the vessels the Samaritans used. The NIV has a footnote on this verse which translates this accurately. It says, "For Jews do not use dishes Samaritans have used."

"Jews do not use vessels with the Samaritans for fear of becoming unclean" (Fritz Rienecker, *The Linguistic Key to the Green NT*, 226). "But Jesus was the infinitely holy God in human flesh. He could not be defiled by a Samaritan water pot. Whatever He touched—even corpses (Luke 7:12-15) or lepers (Mat.8:2-3)—did not taint Him, but instead became clean" (MacArthur, 144).

The woman was amazed that Jesus spoke to her because she recognized Him to be a Jew—Jews had considered Samaritans “half-breeds” (MacDonald) because of their intermarriage with foreign non-Jews.

John MacArthur writes in his commentary on John’s Gospel: “The bitter rivalry between the Jews and the Samaritans had been going on for centuries. After the fall of the northern kingdom to the Assyrians, the ten tribes of Israel [were] carried away into exile from their own land to Assyria ... [and] the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon and from Cuthah and from Avva and from Hamath and Sephar-vaim, and settled them in the cities of Samaria in place of the sons of Israel. So they possessed Samaria and lived in its cities. (2 Kings 17:23-24).

The foreign non-Jews intermarried with the population of Jews who had not been deported, forming a mixed race known as the Samaritans (the name derives from the region and capital city, both called Samaria). The new settlers brought their idolatrous religion with them (2 Kings 17:29-31), which became intermingled with the worship of Yahweh (vv. 25-28, 32-33, 41). In time, however, the Samaritans abandoned their idols and worshiped Yahweh alone, after their own fashion (for example, they accepted only the Pentateuch as canonical Scripture, and worshiped God on Mount Gerizim, not at Jerusalem).

When the Jewish exiles returned to Jerusalem under Ezra and Nehemiah, their first priority was to rebuild the temple. Professing loyalty to Israel's

God, the Samaritans offered their assistance (Ezra 4:1-2). The Jews' blunt refusal (Ezra 4:3) enraged the Samaritans, who then became their bitter enemies (Ezra 4:4ff.; Neh. 4:1-3, 7ff.). Rebuffed in their attempt to worship at Jerusalem, the Samaritans built their own temple on Mount Gerizim (c. 400 B.C.). The Jews later destroyed that temple during the intertestamental period, further worsening relations between the two groups.

After centuries of mistrust, there was a deep animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans” (MacArthur, 144).

By the way, the name “Samaritan” comes from the name of the region and capital, both which are called Samaria.

Before we move on it is important to note that *Jesus shows no partiality*.

Even when one of Pharisee’s disciples was sent to trap Jesus in His words, he admitted that Jesus was “not partial to any” (Mat.22:16).

The reason is because He is God and God is not partial.

God is absolutely impartial in His dealings with people.

We are not naturally inclined to be impartial.

We deal with people on the basis of how they look, how they dress, their social status, their personality, their intelligence, their wealth, their power, by what

kind of car they drive, and by the type of house and neighborhood they live in.

But all those things are nonissues with God. They have no significance or meaning to Him whatsoever.

Moses said in Deuteronomy 10:17 - “For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.” (NKJV)

King Jehoshaphat of Judah told the judges he had just appointed: “Now therefore, let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take care and do it, for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes” (2 Chron. 19:7) (NKJV).

This truth is repeated in the New Testament where Paul declares in Romans 2:11: “There is no partiality with God” (NKJV).

Peter learned this in Acts 10:34 with an object lesson in impartiality and said, “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality” (NKJV).

God is impartial in regard to social status, occupation, in the helping of others, in judgment, as well as in all things. He is perfectly impartial! And so we must be.

In Ephesians 6:5-9 Paul said to servants and masters: “ Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; 6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as

bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. 9 And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him” (NKJV).

In the parallel passage that’s found in Colossians 3:22-4:1, Paul says, “Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. 23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality. 1 Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven” (NKJV).

To Timothy, Paul said, “Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. 20 Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear. 21 I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality” (1 Tim.5:19-21) (NKJV).

Church leaders and members alike are therefore to be disciplined according to Jesus’ instruction here and in Matthew 18. If a believer is warned privately by one person, and then by two or more but refuses

to repent, “tell it to the church,” He commands; and “if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector” (Mat.18:15-17).

So just as God is impartial so we are to be in how we treat people.

James says “if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors” (Jas.2:9) (NKJV).

In Luke 10:25-37, when Jesus was asked by a lawyer who tested Him, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (v.25), Jesus responded by quoting Deuteronomy 6:5. When the man asked “Who is my neighbor?” in verse 29, Jesus responds with a story about a Samaritan who helped a man who had been robbed and left for dead (read vv.30-37).*

3. Jesus responds to the woman with the offer of living water

Verse 10 points out that “she didn’t know who Jesus was; she didn’t know what Jesus had to offer her; and she didn’t know how to get it” (John Barnett, Sermon: The Bad Samaritan and Jesus).

So as you examine verses 10-15 she continues in her ignorance of these things until verse 16 when Jesus addresses her sin.

It is clear from verse 10 that Jesus sparked her interests regarding “living water.”

The terms “living water” was a phrase used in the

Old Testament referring to God. Jeremiah 2:13 says, “For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of *living waters*, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.”

D.A. Carson says “They have rejected the fresh, ‘running’ supply of God and His faithful goodness, choosing instead the stagnant waters of cisterns they themselves prepared, discovering even then that their cisterns were cracked, and leaving them with nothing to sustain life and blessing” (219).

“The Old Testament uses the metaphor of living water to describe the spiritual cleansing and new life that comes at salvation through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit...John applies these themes to Jesus as the living water, which symbolizes eternal life” (MacArthur, 145).

Verse 14 says, “But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him *a well of water springing up to eternal life.*”

John 6:35 says, “Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never *thirst.*”

John 7:37-39 says, “Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone is *thirsty*, let him come to Me and *drink.*’ 38 ‘He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of *living water.*’ ” 39 *But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive;* for the

Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

4. The woman responds to Jesus in vv.12-13 questioning how He could give her “that living water”

“She said to Him, ‘Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water? 12 ‘You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?’”

William MacDonald says, “Her confusion deepened when she thought of the patriarch Jacob, who had given this well. He had used it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock. Now here was a weary traveler, centuries later, who asked for a drink from Jacob's well and yet who claimed to be able to give something better than the water which Jacob had given. If He had something better, why should He ask for water from Jacob's well?”

D.A. Carson says, “If Jesus was offering fresh water without expending the energy to dig or using the means provided, He was greater than Jacob, or a cheap charlatan” (219).

5. Jesus again answers her question with the offer of “living water” (vv.13-14)

He says, “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.”

Again we hear the Old Testament promises of God's salvation which speak of God's people "joyously [drawing] water from *the springs of salvation*" (Isa.12:2).

Isa.49:10 says, "They will not hunger or thirst, nor will the scorching heat or sun strike them down; for He who has compassion on them will lead them and will guide them to *springs of water*."

The pouring out of God's Spirit will be like pouring "water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground" (Isa.44:3).

6. The woman still perceiving only in the physical asks Jesus for that "living water" (v.15).

"The woman said to Him, 'Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw.'"

"The woman, like Nicodemus, continues to think on the purely naturalistic plan, as is made clear by her desire not to keep coming here to draw water" (Carson, 220)

It's clear by this point that the Samaritan woman still did not have a clue to who Jesus is because there was a barrier in the way—her sin.

7. Jesus confronts her sin in verses 16-18

"The change of subject, though abrupt, is not artificial. The Samaritan woman has already failed to grasp who Jesus is, and misconstrued the nature of the living water He was promising. By this turn

in the dialogue, Jesus is indicating that she has also misunderstood the true dimensions of her own need, the real nature of her self-confessed thirst” (Carson, 220).

Jesus said to her in verse 16, “Go, call your husband and come here.”

Warren Wiersbe says, “The only way to prepare the soil of the heart for the seed is to plow it up with conviction. That was why Jesus told her to go get her husband: He forced her to admit her sin. There can be no conversion without conviction. There must first be conviction and repentance, and then there can be saving faith. Jesus had aroused her mind and stirred her emotions, but He also had to touch her conscience, and that meant dealing with her sin.

‘I have no husband’ was the shortest statement she made during the entire conversation! Why? Because now she was under conviction and her ‘mouth was stopped’ (Rom. 3:19). But this was the best thing that could have happened to her!” (The Bible Exposition Commentary: John 4:11).

In order to come to Jesus for that “living water,” you must first understand your real need—forgiveness, cleansing from sin!

Sin, according to 1 John 3:4 is “lawlessness.” It is falling “short of the glory of God” (Rom.3:23). It is “disobedience” (Rom.5:19) that resulted from Adam and Eve’s sin in the Garden of Eden (Gen.3) which made all of us “sinners” (Rom.5:19).

If we are to “take of the water of life without cost” (Rev.22:17), then we must confess and repent of our sin. We must see our sin as God see it.

David said in Ps.51:4-5, “Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge. 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.”

When Isaiah saw a vision of God in Isaiah 6, he saw his sin and said, “Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts” (v.5).

CONCLUSION

1. Have you come to Jesus for that “living water”?
2. Have you come confessing and repenting of your sin?
3. The Samaritan woman responded to Jesus’ confrontation by stating “I have no husband” (v.17). And He said, “You have correctly, said, ‘I have had no husband’; for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly” (v.18).
5. The great puritan Matthew Mead said, “The Word travels with life or death, salvation or damnation, and brings forth one or the other in every soul that hears it” (The Almost Christian Discovered, X).
4. “While commending her for her truthfulness (as far as it

went), Jesus nonetheless unmasked her sin.”

5. It should also be noted that by refusing to call the man she was currently living with her husband, Jesus rejected the notion that merely living together constitutes marriage. The Bible view marriage as a formal, legal, public covenant between a man and a woman (Matt.19:5-6)” (MacArthur, 147).
6. I want to invite you to Jesus, who is “the living water.”
7. Let’s pray.