

## Quarter Four: Themes in the Gospel of John

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### Lesson 5—The Testimony of the Samaritans

Monday: The Woman at the Well

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- **Last Week:** “Witnesses of Christ as the Messiah”
  - John 1 & 3 – individuals who testified as to Christ, the Messiah
  
- **This Week:** “The Testimony of the Samaritans”
  - John 4 – the Samaritans were captives from other nations, brought in to populate the northern kingdom, after they were dispersed in 722 BC
    - The Samaritans practiced their own form of Judaism
      - Largely built upon the corrupted Judaism of the Northern Kingdom
      - Built their own temple on Mt Gerizim – destroyed in 128 BC
      - + were monotheists & accepted the Pentateuch (1<sup>st</sup> 5 books of the OT) with the expectation of the coming Messiah
    - Great animosity between 2 people groups
      - Jews could not borrow from Samaritans or even receive a favor from them
  - This week: woman at the well & her encounter with Jesus

**Memory Text:** “Then they said to the woman, ‘Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.’” (John 4:42, NKJV)

The week in brief:

- 1. **Sunday:** The Setting of the Encounter (Ryan)
  - John 4:1 – 9 – Pharisees made issue of Jesus’ disciples baptizing more disciples than John the Baptists; Jesus left Judea to go to Galilee; Jesus encounters the woman at the well
- 2. **Monday:** The Woman at the Well (Jill)
  - John 4:7 – 15 – Jesus’ discussion with the woman; seeking to get to the heart of the matter: she needed a conversion experience
- 3. **Tuesday:** ‘Sir, Give Me this Water’ (SQ)
  - John 4:15, 16; Eze 36 – about Christ & the living water & awakening a recognition of her sin & need of a Savior
- 4. **Wednesday:** The Revelation of Jesus (James)
  - John 4:16 – 24 – Jesus revealed her secrets & revealed who He was who could heal her
- 5. **Thursday:** The Testimony of the Samaritans (John D)
  - John 4:27 – 32 – the woman’s witness to others

# Monday: The Woman at the Well

John 4:7 – 15

## 5 Keys to witnessing

- **1. Know how to break down barriers**

- She wouldn't talk to Him
  - 2 barriers: ethnic / religious & gender
    - He was a Jew; she, a Samaritan
      - Jews & Samaritans were bitter enemies
      - All social intercourse was condemned by the Rabbis
      - A Jew would not borrow from a Samaritan, nor receive a kindness
    - He was a man; she, a woman
- Women of the OT (Hebrew Scriptures) were given status & privilege
  - Miriam led the women in worship
  - Deborah served as judge, & was also a mother & wife
  - Huldah was a prophetess that the king consulted
  - In Gen 21, God told Abraham to listen to his wife Sarah
  - Abigail was recognized for her ability to navigate political & familial tension
  - Wise woman of Tekoa was sent to convince David to accept his son, Absalom
- Status of women evolved or changed
  - Greek (Hellenistic influence) into the Jewish way of thought
    - Little difference between the Talmudic & Hellenistic view of thought, in regards to women
- By the time of Jesus, religious leaders would cross the street to avoid contact with a woman
  - Devout men routinely prayed & thanked God that they had not been born a woman
  - Mere contact with a woman could render a man ceremonially unclean
  - Sages warned, "Do not speak excessively with woman, for all women's conversations are lewdness."
  - A man's life was operated within the public sphere, while a woman's life was almost entirely private
  - Women were not allowed to testify in court, which relegated them to the category with Gentiles, minors, deaf-mutes, & undesirables (gamblers, insane, etc)
  - Women were illiterate – Talmud said, "It is foolishness to teach the Torah to your daughter."
- Disciples astounded that Jesus was talking with a woman
  - John 4:27 – "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?'"

- **1. Know how to break down barriers**
  - John 4:7 – “A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give Me a drink.’”
    - He asked a favor from her
    - DA, p. 184, “The hatred between Jews & Samaritans prevented the woman from offering a kindness to Jesus; but the Saviour was seeking to find the key to this heart, and with the tact born of divine love, He asked, not offered, a favor. The offer of a kindness might have been rejected; but trust awakens trust.”
  - Understand differences, prior to witnessing
    - Cultural differences
    - Ethnic differences
    - Religious differences
    - \*Bruchko – Bruce Olson’s story of taking the gospel to a South American Indian tribe
      - The Motilone Tribe
      - Eventually, when he shared the gospel, he told the story of the incarnation with one of their own fables: that of a man becoming an ant
        - Tribal leader was converted – and he sang the gospel story as a chant, thus influencing others in the tribe
  - Philosophical questions:
    - How does one communicate the gospel in a different culture?
    - How much do missionaries need to be immersed in that culture before preaching the gospel?
    - What traditions & customs can a culture preserve, while maintaining a Christian identity?
- **2. Push beyond the earthly perspective**
  - John 4:9 – “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 the Samaritans.”
    - Just like Nicodemus
      - Both lacked spiritual understanding
      - Looked at things from an earthly perspective
    - Nicodemus – how can I be born again? (I don’t need conversion)
    - Samaritan woman – why are you talking with me?
      - Later, give me physical water (I don’t need conversion)
  - John 4:10 – “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.”
    - Push beyond the earthly perspective
- **3. Don’t engage in controversy**
  - John 4:11 – “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?’
    - Earthly perspective again – Jesus will push past the earthly perspective
      - First, she seeks to engage Him in controversy

- John 4:12 – “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?”
  - Do you know who you’re dealing with?
  - We are children of Jacob – we’re not outcasts or castaways
  - Jesus ignores the controversy & pushes to the heart of the matter – past the earthly perspective
- **4. Offer something better**
  - John 4:13, 14 – “Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, (14) 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.’”
    - Think outside the earthly perspective – regular water that we drink
    - Push to the spiritual perspective – spiritual water that quenches the thirst & gives eternal life
    - Jesus is offering eternal life – salvation through faith in Him
  - Living water
    - Jer 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.”
      - We turn to things other than Jesus
        - \*Hold onto idols, thinking desperately they will help us
      - We turn to people – instead of Jesus
        - Books & philosophies – instead of the Word
        - Works instead of grace
        - Fear instead of faith
        - Tradition & human reasoning instead of the Bible
    - Isa 12:3 – “Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.”
      - This was a fountain of water, ‘springing up into everlasting life’
      - Water = salvation
    - Isa 55:1 – “Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, Come, buy and eat.”
      - Everyone is freely invited
    - Isa 44:3 – “For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, and My blessings on your offspring.”
      - Water = the Holy Spirit
    - John 7:37 - 39 – “...Jesus stood & cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. (38) He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ (39) 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.”
      - Water = the Holy Spirit, given after the Cross in special measure
      - Woman still doesn’t understand – like Nicodemus

- **5. Reach the heart**
  - Woman still doesn't understand
  - John 4:16 – “Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come here.’”
    - Jesus reaches the heart, finds her point of pain

### **5 Keys to Witnessing**

- 1. Know how to break down barriers
- 2. Push beyond the earthly perspective
- 3. Don't engage in controversy
- 4. Offer something better
- 5. Reach the heart