

Centralia First Baptist – Guest Preacher

“Living Water” – John 4:1-42

John DeLuca – 5/7/23

Good morning brothers and sisters. As was said, my name is John DeLuca, and it is a privilege to be with you this morning. I just spent the last couple days at your Men’s Fall retreat, which was a great time together. So, some of the men know a bit more about me here, but for the rest of you let me share just a little about myself. I am married, my wife’s name is Ashley, and we have 7 kids... there they are (family slide). As you might imagine, they keep us a bit busy... For the last 6 years, I have served as a Pastor at Harmony Bible Church up in Southeast Iowa, where I got to serve briefly with your pastor, Chris Baker, before the Lord called him here. However, in just three short weeks my family and I are moving to St. Louis to church plant. Where we will build relationships, share the gospel, and Lord-willing make disciples of Jesus Christ who will begin to gather and become a local church. So, as I begin this morning, please know that my family and I would love your prayers. And if you would like to know more about our upcoming church planting journey (or maybe some stories about your pastor), feel free to talk to me after the service.

With that, let’s get into God’s Word. For our passage today, we’re going to look at John chapter 4, a well-known passage, and one of my favorites, “the woman at the well” where Jesus has an amazing conversation with a Samaritan woman. Go ahead and open your Bibles to John 4:1-42. We’ll go through our passage in two sections today. Follow along with me for the first part **John 4:1-29.**

I love this passage! Jesus’ patient dialogue and gracious probing to get to the heart of this Samaritan woman, leading her to think about the promised Messiah, as she says, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ) ...” and then Jesus has a mic drop moment... “I who speak to you am he.” Jesus declares, “**I AM** the Messiah, the Christ, the promised one you’ve been waiting for.”

Before we get to our key points, I want to touch on the significance of this conversation. The significance that this conversation is even happening. You see, Jesus is crossing a chasm when it comes to cultural and religious lines. Jews and Samaritans did not get along. Samaritans had Jewish roots, but they had intermarried with foreigners when the Assyrians captured Samaria. Thus, Jews generally viewed Samaritans as racial half-breeds whose religion was tainted by unacceptable influence from other cultures.<sup>1</sup> In addition, it would have been scandalous back then for Jesus, a man, to be having a one-on-one conversation alone with a woman, especially this woman who had a shady past when it came to men. Yet, this is exactly what Jesus does... He breaks down boundaries, He steps over chasms to bring the Good News. John, in his Gospel wants us to see the significance of what Jesus does here, the culture-breaking steps He is willing to take to bring hope and truth to the world, to the outcasts and the unnamed, the poor in spirit, the down and outs, the persecuted. To people like us.

Now, there is a ton of meat in our passage that we could chew on, but today, I want to zoom in on our personal relationships with Jesus. Our relationship with the Savior of the world, who when we are looking for hope in the world, when we are struggling, when we know we are sinners in desperate need of a Savior, He is the only one who can say... “I who speak to you am He.” We are going to consider three key points this morning, two from the first section of our passage that I just read and then one from the remainder of our text. So, key point #1:

### 1. No one knows you better than Jesus.

Every time I read this passage, I am struck that Jesus knows this woman through and through. He isn't surprised by anything she says, and He moves right toward her heart, toward her struggles and misplaced searching for satisfaction. He meets her right where she is and shares the good news with her in a way that she hears it.

Put yourself in her shoes. She goes to fetch water in the heat of the day, not the normal time to gather water, but she has had a rough go in life, she's made mistakes and likely wasn't welcome to go to the well with the other

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<sup>1</sup> D. A. Carson, [\*The Gospel according to John\*](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 216.

women from Sychar. Then, she arrives, and a stranger is sitting there, and no less a Jew who she would have expected to shun her or worse, but instead He catches her off guard and asks for a drink, then this amazing conversation ensues. And this stranger, Jesus, doesn't just know a little about her, but He knows everything about her... as she tells people, "Come see a man who told me all that I ever did."

Don't miss the ALL. Jesus knows her. Not just a bit of her history, He knows everything! The good, the bad, the ugly, the really ugly, the things in her heart and mind that she doesn't want anyone to know. And yet knowing everything about this woman, He doesn't shun her, He doesn't pronounce her unclean, He doesn't avoid talking to her, but instead He asks her for a drink and starts a conversation (He opens the door to begin a relationship with her) ... And in that conversation, He reveals that He knows her... We also can't miss that He doesn't skirt around her mess, He doesn't avoid her sin as to not offend her, but instead He goes right at it... Right after He shares about the living water, she asks for it, and His response is, "Go, call your husband, and come here." Now, I don't know about you, but I feel like if I tried something like that the conversation would end abruptly...

But Jesus knows her, He knows her heart, her past, He knows how she was likely trying to find satisfaction, her identity or perhaps just safety, security, and survival in a harsh world through her multiple marriages and relationships. Jesus does not ignore her sins or struggles or thirst for satisfaction, but instead He goes right after them seeking to bring healing, eternal satisfaction for her soul, to quench her thirst forever. Jesus knows her better than anyone. He knows what she needs most...

And here's where you come in. **Jesus knows you, too!** He knows you better than anyone: better than your spouse, better than your best friend, even better than you know yourself. As David wrote in Psalm 139:1-4, "O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether."

Here's the truth, it doesn't matter if you follow Jesus or not... **No one knows you better than Jesus.** And this is so important because we were made to be known. We were made for relationships. God made us to be in relationship with each other, and most important in relationship with Him, with Jesus.

I found this interesting, if you do any type of research on basic human needs, even from a secular perspective, relationship, or belonging, or connection, or love are always there. Of course, there's food, water, shelter, and sleep, but almost always on those same lists is being known, being in relationship with others. We weren't made to be alone... We were made for relationship. We need people who know, love, and care about us. And no one knows you, loves you, or cares about you more than Jesus.

All our relationships with each other will let us down in some way (we're sinners and our sin often makes a mess of our relationships), but Jesus, never lets us down. He already knows all our junk, our mess, and yet. He meets us where we are just like the woman at the well. He stepped down from heaven, lived the perfect life, and died for us. He took the penalty of our sins (he took our mess, our ugly), so that we might be reconciled to God, so that we might have a restored relationship with Him. "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16, right? John 3 right before our passage, where Jesus' next major encounter is with this Samaritan woman, a woman of the world that God so loved, and Jesus, knowing everything about her, doesn't shun her or push her away, but pursues a relationship with her... but Jesus pursuing a relationship with her, or with us, isn't where we stop, the next step is critical.

It's true that one of our greatest needs is to be known. And no one knows you better than Jesus, but the next part is critical. He knows us, every one of us, but our biggest need, is to come to know Him. Be in a relationship with Him. In our passage, Jesus doesn't just cross this cultural divide to let the Samaritan woman know that He knows her, but He lets her know who He is... the Messiah, the Christ, the Savior of the world. So, key point #2:

2. You need to know Jesus.

Here's the key question... He knows you, but do you know Him? We need to know Jesus because knowing Jesus changes everything. Only Jesus can fully satisfy our greatest need and desires. Only Jesus offers living water that becomes in us a spring welling up to eternal life. When we truly know Jesus, not just intellectually, but in our hearts, when we have a relationship with Him, through faith, we get eternal life.

Knowing Jesus changes everything. You see for me before I knew Jesus... I was living for myself, seeking what I wanted. Seeking first the kingdom of John (which by the way would be a great name for a porta-potty company and would be all my kingdom is worth). And just to be clear I was raised in a Christian home, I knew all about Jesus, but I didn't know Him, I didn't have a relationship with Him. **Until GOD** met me where I was, with all my junk, all my ugly, He cut to my heart, just like He did for the woman at the well... He opened my eyes to who He was, and it changed everything in my life. It put me on a whole new trajectory, where now I seek to live for Him, seeking His kingdom to make Him known... and do I do that perfectly? NO! But praise God for His grace because the requirement is NOT how well I do or what I do for Him, but that I know Him, and He knows me.

We need to know Jesus, because only He can transform our hearts... from hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. As it says in **Ezekiel 11:19-20, "And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God."** God transforms us from the inside out. When we know Jesus, trust in Him, our sins are forgiven, we receive His spirit, we're adopted into His family, and God begins to transform us to be more and more like Christ.

Here's a key to the Christian life. Becoming more like Jesus doesn't happen because we try harder or do more, but because of our relationship with Him. So, if you're out there thinking, "I have been working so hard to make myself more like Jesus, trying to fight my sin as hard as I can, white knuckling it..." please hear me, all your working, your doing, must be secondary to your being, being with Jesus, in relationship with Him. If you want to be more like Christ, it's all about your relationship with Him. Pursuing and investing in your relationship with Him. Let me say that again... The Christian life is about being, not doing. Being in Christ, not doing for Christ.

Think about any important relationship in your life. If you want to strengthen that relationship, what do you do? You invest in it: spend time with that person, get to know them more, right? Let me give a personal example. Let's talk about my relationship with my wife... I have been married for almost 14 years now. And almost daily, I think, "how could I be a better husband?" (Probably because I mess up a lot). But do you know what my go to next thought is? "Maybe I should read another book, another article, listen to another podcast, see what insights I might find that will be transformative to our relationship, so I can do better."

Now, that's not a bad thing, but if I'm honest, I've learned and know and read way more about being a good husband, then I actually am a good husband. And what I'm finally beginning to realize, is that Instead of learning more about how to do this marriage relationship, I need to spend more time in the relationship, in simply being present with my wife, asking her questions so that I know her better. Instead of learning to be a better husband generally, I need to dive into knowing my wife, more specifically. Instead of trying to come up with 100 date options, just take my wife on a date. Maybe that's being a bit too transparent, but here's the point...

Often this is how we approach our relationship with Jesus, a lot of thinking and studying, or planning what we're going to think about and study, instead of just spending time with Jesus, fixing our eyes on Him, investing in our relationship with Him. **We need to know Jesus because knowing Jesus changes everything...** it transforms us.

I love the glimpse of this in our passage. We don't get all the details but think about it. This Samaritan woman who is likely avoided and shunned, meets Jesus, finds out who He is, and leaving her water jar behind, goes back to the town, and begins to tell everyone to come meet this man, who knows everything about her... can this be the Christ? Now, at first that might not seem like a huge change, but she went to the well alone for a reason... I imagine she generally avoided people, not wanting to be talked about or judged, probably always keeping her head down, but then after meeting Jesus, she returns to town seemingly making a scene to anyone who would listen to her... to come meet this man... a man that offers living water, eternal life. Knowing Jesus changed everything for her, has knowing Jesus changed everything for you? This is the most important question in your

life, do you know Jesus? And if you do know Him, are you seeking to know Him more? No one knows you better than Jesus and there's no one you need to know more than Him!

Alright, let's continue with the second part of our passage. We'll start back in verse 27 again. **John 4:27-42.**

So, this amazing conversation happens, then Jesus' disciples come back to a confusing scene (Jesus speaking alone with a Samaritan women), and they don't have a clue. And then Jesus shares something seemingly disconnected from what has been going on. He talks about reaping and sowing... reaping and sowing, which seems like it doesn't fit, but it completely does. Because we learn that the Samaritan woman had been reaping a harvest... Many believed and came to know as our text says, that Jesus, "is indeed the Savior of the world."

Here's our final point. When we come to know Jesus, we must respond like the Samaritan woman. Key point #3:

### **3. Live to make Jesus known.**

Every single person in the world, every single person you know has no greater need than to know Jesus. No one else can offer living water, eternal life. He is the Savior of the world! We must see what Jesus sees when He tells His disciples, "Lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest." Reap and sow, reap and sow. If we know nothing is more important than knowing Jesus, we need to live like it! First, you love God with all our heart, mind, and strength, and then you love others as yourself. And you love others best by telling them about and pointing them to Jesus... introducing them to Jesus; introducing them to the only one who can fully satisfy their greatest need. The only one that offers living water, eternal life. "[He] is the way, and the truth, and the life. No one can go to the Father except through Him" (John 14:6).

Our passage offers a beautiful picture of someone making Jesus known. This no-named Samaritan woman who had 5 husbands and her current man was not her husband, meets Jesus, was so impacted, so changed by a short conversation, that she immediately went to tell others about Him. She immediately went and reaped a harvest in

her town that she had clearly not been sowing seeds in. In fact, her life and reputation had done the opposite. She would have been someone people didn't listen to, didn't give the time of day to, yet she was reaping a harvest. And why was she able to reap a harvest? Was it because of all that she did in her life? NO, her life had done the opposite... It was because the gospel isn't about her. It isn't about us either. **It's about Jesus.** The gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ. It's not about showing people how awesome of a person we are but pointing them to the One who knows everything about them; the good, the bad, the ugly, and yet still loves them. It's about introducing people to the one who can change their eternity. Who can forgive their sins, bring peace, healing, and hope to the hopeless. Who offers eternal thirst-quenching living water!

That is our mission, that is what God calls His people to do – make Jesus known. And as we do, watch Jesus do what only He can do – change and transform lives; turn lost sinners into saved saints – As the hymn says... “I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind but now I see.” Only through Christ are the lost found. Only through Christ can the blind see. So, we must live to make Jesus known. So, our three key points today... 1) No one knows you better than Jesus. 2) You need to know Jesus. And 3) Live to make Jesus known. Let's wrap up with two quick applications that summarize the message and will hopefully spur you on in your walk with the Lord.

### 1) Seek to know Jesus more.

If you take anything away from today, take away the fact that knowing Jesus is what we all need most. Our relationship with Jesus is and must be #1. Your relationship with Him is what changes and transforms you. So, what's one step you can take to grow in your relationship with Jesus? What's one thing you can do to know Jesus more... And let's be careful. By “know Jesus more” I mean invest in your relationship with Jesus. Spend time with Him in prayer, in His Word (not just to study it and gain more head knowledge, but to spend time with Jesus), think about Him throughout your day, acknowledge His presence with you, reflect on what He has done for you, come to worship Him on Sundays with your brothers and sisters. How might the Spirit be leading you to invest in your relationship with Jesus... I promise none of us are going to reach a point in our lives where we think we've spent too much time with Jesus, so let's seek to know Him more and more... and our second application...



## 2) Tell someone about Jesus.

I know this is basically the third key point, but I know we struggle with evangelism. So, let's make this application point simple. A life focused on making Jesus known happens one person at a time. So, who is one person that you can introduce to Jesus? Who is someone in your life right now that doesn't know Jesus? And if you're taking notes, write their name down... or write it down later today. And then, begin to pray for them and make it your aim to introduce them to Jesus. And here's the great thing, all you are called to do is be faithful in sharing the gospel, introducing them to Jesus... He does the rest. Think of our passage, the woman goes and shares her testimony with people in the town, but then they go to meet Jesus... and I love what they say in verse 42... "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world..." No one can get to heaven on someone else's relationship with Jesus. Everyone must know Him personally, but we can help make the introduction!

And if you think you're not qualified... Remember it isn't about who you are or what you do, but about who you know and what He did. No one knows you better than Jesus, we need to know Jesus more and more, and then out of our relationship with Him, let's be like the Samaritan woman and tell everyone to come meet this man who knows everything about me and offers living water. Let's seek to know Him more. Let's live to make Him known.

Please pray with me.