

Living Water

- There are two portions of the lesson today
- First, some words from John the Baptist
- Then, the account of Jesus and His interaction with a woman of Samaria
- We'll be finishing John 3 and working through verse 30 of chapter 4

John 3:22-24

22 After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

23 And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

24 For John was not yet cast into prison.

- "These things" are Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus and His words about salvation
- The next chapter tells us Jesus didn't baptize himself, but rather His disciples
- John continued to baptize as well
- This was before John was cast into prison
- But a question came up
- And John begins to offer explanation

John 3:25

25 Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

- John's disciples and the Jews (or perhaps one particular Jew) were debating over a question
- One commentary says of this question...

"The Jews had so many purifyings, some legal, instituted by God, ordained by Moses as God's minister; some traditional, brought in by the Pharisees, as their washings before meat, [see Matthew 15:1-20 Mark 7:1-23;] that [it seems] a hard thing to determine what the question was between John's disciples and the Jews, [and] about what purifying;"

-Another...

"What the precise subject of this dispute was we do not know. From what follows, it would seem probable that it was about the comparative value and efficacy of the baptism performed by John and by the disciples of Jesus."

- The following verses may help...

John 3:26-28

26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.

27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

- There seems to be some concern that Jesus' following is growing beyond that of John's
- But this was only fitting, for John's mission was to prepare the way for Him
- John was not the Christ
- He uses an illustration to explain...

John 3:29-30

29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

- The church is regarded as Christ's bride
- We see this in a few places in scripture, you may remember Ephesians 5:25-27...

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

- Or in Revelation 19:7-8

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

- We are His, no one else's
- John describes himself as the friend of the bridegroom
- It's fascinating to read what's behind this explanation...

"This is the only instance in this Gospel where the familiar imagery of an Eastern marriage meets us. ...

The 'friend of the bridegroom'—called by the Hebrews "Shōshbēn," and by the Greeks "Paranymphe"—was charged with the preliminaries of the marriage. He arranged the contract, acted for the bridegroom during the betrothal, and arranged for, and presided at, the festivities of the wedding-day itself. It was a position of honour, in proportion to the position of the bridegroom himself, and was given to his chief friend. That friend then joyed in his joy, and there was none brighter on that day than he. This in John's thought is an illustration of his own position. The bridegroom is the Messiah; the bride is the Kingdom of God—the church, consisting of all who with pure hearts are willing to receive Him; the friend who has arranged the betrothal, who has prepared these hearts, is John himself."

- The friend of the bridegroom has a role, no doubt
- God uses him
- Everyone is thankful for his faithfulness and for his service
- But nothing is more delightful to this honored friend than to share in the joy of this union
- John's ministry was for the bridegroom, Jesus
- And when the preparation was completed, the friend's role diminished
- This is why John says "He must increase, but I must decrease."
- He has more to say about this...

John 3:31-35

31 He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

32 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.

33 He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.

34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

- There is none higher than Jesus
- He is above all
- He is come from heaven
- John the Baptist was just like us, earthly
- He could do only what we can do, give testimony of heavenly things
- Point to the truth
- Speak the truth
- Testify of that which is true
- And God can, by His Spirit, take this truth and transform men
- They can know His son
- Be delivered from sin and indwelt by God's Holy Spirit
- Because God loves His son and has given him power over everything

- But John reiterates this common theme...

John 3:36

36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

- So, it's all about Jesus
- And about our belief in Him
- For those who do not believe - only wrath
- But for those who believe - everlasting life
- On to chapter 4...

John 4:1-4

1 When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,
2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)
3 He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.
4 And he must needs go through Samaria.

- Jesus knows what is happening
- And departs into Galilee
- But He needs to go through Samaria
- A commentary makes note of this...

"Samaria was between Judea and Galilee. The direct and usual way was to pass through Samaria. Sometimes, however, the Jews took a circuitous route on the east side of the Jordan."

- To know why, it would help us to learn a little more about the Samaritans...

"The Samaritans were a group of people who lived in Samaria - an area north of Jerusalem. They were half-Jews and half-Gentiles. When Assyria captured the northern kingdom of Israel in 721 B.C. some were taken in captivity while others left behind. The ones left behind intermarried with the Assyrians. Thus these people were neither fully Hebrews nor fully Gentiles. The Samaritans had their own unique copy of the first five books of Scripture as well as their own unique system of worship. At the time of Jesus the Jews and the Samaritans did not deal with one another. Jesus, however, ministered to the people of Samaria preaching the good news to them."

- Far from avoiding this place or its people, Jesus passes through to minister

- One woman there has a divine appointment...

John 4:5-6

5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

- Weary, Jesus finds a seat at Jacob's well
- This is no coincidence...

John 4:7-9

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

- Jesus asked for a drink, which makes sense knowing that he is weary from travel
- But remember the context
- The fact that words were even spoken came as a shock to her, because (as we rehearsed) the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans
- But this was only the beginning of the unusual things this woman would notice about Jesus
- He was far beyond any of the cultural and social hangups of the day...

John 4:10

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

- If she only had a clearer understanding of who she was speaking with, she would have understood
- Her concern would not have been for physical refreshment
- But rather for Spiritual rebirth
- And while she didn't have this knowledge when Jesus arrived
- He was there now
- And His intervention was about to change everything for her

John 4:11-12

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

- This is not that unlike the interaction with Nicodemus in the previous chapter
- At least from the perspective that Jesus speaks of something spiritual, something from above
- And is met with questions about the physical, the earthly
- There is no reflection - or at least not enough reflection - on the meaning of what He is saying
- But He is about to explain...

John 4:13-14

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

- It is a constant struggle for mankind, we so rarely look beyond this earthly life
- We seek to satisfy and refresh the physical body, when that which we need most is spiritual satisfaction and refreshment
- We seem to think that which we see and feel is reality, when the most important reality is beyond
- And Jesus turns her gaze away from Jacob's well to the "well of water springing up into everlasting life"
- The everlasting life we spoke of just a few verses ago in John 3
- This is the well that satisfies and refreshes all those who have been born again - who will never thirst, and will never die

John 4:15-18

15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

- This woman can see
- She has a desire for the kind of water Jesus is speaking of
- But who is this One speaking to her?
- One thing is certain - He knows all about her
- Even her private life

- The part which she might have hoped to keep secret
- And she responds...

John 4:19-24

19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.
 20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.
 21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.
 22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.
 23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.
 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

- Whatever religious understanding she may have had
- Whatever worship she may have conducted or proposed to conduct
- Whether it was in the right place or in the right way or according to the right rules was not at issue
- For God had revealed the truth in His word
- And was even now revealing Himself, by His son, in her very presence
- And she would soon know...

John 4:25-26

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.
 26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

- She knew of the One which would come
- But she, no doubt, hadn't considered that He would meet her at Jacob's well that day
- And tell her all things that she had ever done
- She was concerned with physical reality
- But He caused her to consider Spiritual reality
- And she believed on Him
- We know because of what happened next...

John 4:27-30

27 And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

28 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,
29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?
30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

- This would have been a teachable moment for His disciples
- As a Samaritan woman leaves her water pot behind
- Having met the Savior
- Who stopped at that well out of love and compassion and grace
- To reveal Himself
- Now she began her ministry, giving testimony
- And others responded
- Perhaps some of them also received this living water

Christopher Harper, February 2021