

Jesus the Messiah

At the end of our last study, we read that Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again," and she responded, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water." (John 4:14,15). Obviously, she didn't understand what He was saying to her spiritually about "living water." Many today also are confused about how to receive and enjoy the life offered to us in the gospel of Christ. In His continuing dialogue with the woman in our text today, Jesus explains what we need to know and believe in order to enjoy living water.

I. We must understand and embrace our profound need as sinners (16-19).

16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." **17** The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; **18** for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." **19** The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.

Initially, it may look like Jesus, in verse 16, is changing the topic on this woman, but not really. He is going to help her receive His "living water" by showing her why she needs it. He immediately asks her a question about her sex life! Why does He broach such a sensitive, personal area? He does this so that she might grasp why she needs what He offers. We see that she deftly tries to deflect His question, but Jesus gently presses forward with her, and she must confess that He is at least a prophet. In Paul's extensive explanation of the gospel in his letter to the Romans, he does a similar thing. He begins by describing in detail why every human being is guilty before God and in need of divine redemption (see 1:18-3:20). Look also at the Westminster Shorter Catechism, Questions 18 and 19 regarding human sin:

Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?

The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?

All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.

We desperately need this "living water!"

II. We must understand and embrace the uniqueness of the Christian faith (20-24).

20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." **21** Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. **22** You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. **23** But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. **24** God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

The woman raises a legitimate religious question, but one that also has the apparent intent of deflecting Jesus' piercing examination of her personal life. In verse 20 she points out that their religious commitments and assumptions are quite different, suggesting, perhaps, that His religious teachings might not be relevant to her. Jesus says in verse 22 that the Jews were

-
4. What are the religious or traditional barriers today that keep people from listening carefully to the gospel of Christ? What can we learn from verses 20-24 about dealing with this reality?

 5. Why must a person sincerely believe in the deity of Jesus Christ in order to have eternal life?

Going Deeper

1. Do you have times when your own soul is parched and thirsty? What, from this text, can you apply to your life, that you may enjoy the "living water" Jesus offers?

2. From observing Jesus in this text, what have you learned about how you need to strengthen your own knowledge or practice of evangelism?