

**The Gospel of John**  
**Week Five**  
**John 3:31-4:26**

**Day One**

31 "The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. 32 He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. 33 The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. 34 For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. 35 The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. 36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

v. 31 – John was proclaiming that Jesus was supreme to everything in the Bible or among those servants who were or are carrying out God’s will. Someone gave me a summary of theology yesterday and it is simple and profound: Jesus Christ is the all-sufficient Savior. I like that statement. There is nothing on earth that can assist, complement or take the place of what Jesus did and who He was and is.

vs. 32&33 – John gave a summary of how few in Israel had responded to Jesus’ message. Obviously, some had responded to Jesus’ message, for He had disciples at that point in time. Yet even those disciples would ultimately question Jesus’ message and mission. John was straightforward when he said that anyone who did not receive Jesus declared that God is untruthful! It is a serious sin to accuse God of being a liar, but that is just what anyone does who denies that God sent Jesus.

v. 34 – Keep in mind that Jesus identified John as the greatest of the Old Testament prophets. So here is the greatest OT prophet declaring that Jesus has come from God and speaks the words of God. Therefore, Jesus is greater than the entire OT sacrificial and worship system as represented in and through John. Yet the Jews would oppose Jesus as a fraud. When they did, they were resisting the very God whom they said they served.

v. 35 – John had tremendous insight and revelation into the heavenly Jesus and His earthly role. He saw that there was no limitation to the power that emanates from relationship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Son has all authority and an unfettered relationship with the Spirit. So therefore Jesus has and is everything that anyone needs as they serve and follow the Lord. This seriously damages the case of those who say there are many ways to God. No other way can offer what Jesus has to offer, because anyone who says there is another way to God is a false prophet. It’s just that simple.

v. 36 – Notice that John said that the wrath of God already rests on the person who does not believe in Jesus! That destroys the thought that God is everyone’s friend and Father. Without Jesus, the wrath of God rests on anyone, no matter how nice of a person they are.

That offends many people who think that this concept makes God out to be an ogre. Yet God does not have to give any sinner a second chance – sin is that heinous to God. Dealing with sin requires radical eradication or else it remains a barrier between man and God. That is why Jesus came to give His life. Those who accept Him have open access to and reconciliation with God. Those who do not are subject to His wrath.

## Day Two

1 The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John, 2 although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. 3 When the Lord learned of this, he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. 4 Now he had to go through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

vs. 1-3 – When Jesus learned that the Pharisees had gotten wind of Jesus' baptismal activity, He broke off His work and returned to Galilee. **Why did Jesus do this?** He never seemed concerned with what people thought of His work, but here it seems that He did not want to appear to be in competition with John's baptismal ministry. John the author made it clear that it wasn't Jesus who was baptizing (which only adds to the kind of detail that could be known only by someone who was with Jesus).

Judea was not a friendly place for Jesus because of the Pharisees and the religious traditions entrenched in that area. He returned "home" where His most significant teaching and miracles took place. **Where do you function best? Where does the Lord empower you to do your best work?** One of my areas certainly is English-speaking Africa.

Jesus was a hero in Galilee, they considered Him one of their own. He was an outsider in Jerusalem and spent little time in that dangerous place. I have always advocated that you go where you are celebrated and not where you are tolerated. **Where are you celebrated? How can you spend more time there?**

v. 4 – Jesus didn't have to go through Samaria; He could have taken a long detour around it through Gentile country. Yet He chose to go through it because it was the most direct way home. What's more, He had business there with a woman whose encounter with Jesus would impact the church then and now. Jews were prejudiced where Samaritans were concerned, and vice versa, but Jesus pressed on to Samaria.

v. 5—Jesus chose this place for this encounter perhaps because it symbolized the common heritage that Jews and Samaritans could claim. Here we see again that Jesus focused on water, just as He did at the marriage feast at Cana. He once again indicated that the old water of the past was about to give way to the new wine of the future, which was the new covenant that He had come to establish in His own blood. This new covenant was not just for ethnic Jews, but for any and all who called on the name of the Lord.

v. 6 – Jesus was fully God and fully man. He came to Samaria by way of His humanity, but He was about to minister in His divinity. He came as a Jewish man, but He was about to minister as the Creator God who held no bias or prejudice against any people, gender or sinner. Jesus was tired and thirsty and the disciples had gone into the local town to purchase some food. Jesus was about to change the world through this simple encounter with one woman and the lessons we can learn from such an encounter are many.

**When is the last time you reached out to someone with whom you did not regularly mix, with whom you are not entirely comfortable being with?**

### Day Three

7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" 8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) 9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans. 10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

vs. 7&8 – The conversation between Jesus and the woman is a fascinating study. First, Jesus spoke about natural water and then she turned the talk to religion and then He answered about religion but she changed the topic back to natural water and when He responded in kind, she got religious once again! I get the sense that she was trying to keep Jesus off balance and control the conversation for reasons that would eventually emerge.

Jesus was tired and thirsty and the disciples had gone off to fetch lunch. It was time to have a heart-to-heart talk with this woman, Jesus using the opportunity to announce that He had come not just to reach the Jews but the Samaritans as well.

v. 9 – The woman was surprised by Jesus' request. Jewish men did not request things of Samaritans, especially Samaritan women. This woman had come to draw water during the day (an unusual time) and alone (an unusual practice) and now a Jewish man was asking for water. This woman was well acquainted with how Jews treated Samaritans and had expected the same from Jesus. Yet Jesus was no ordinary Jew, as she was about to discover, and He was on a mission from God. **When is the last time you surprised someone with behavior they did not suspect in a good way? When did you last show kindness and compassion to someone whom your culture or society says is not worthy of such treatment?**

v. 10 – Jesus had been indirect with the Jews when it came to stating who He was but with this woman, He was much more straightforward. There was nothing in her behavior or background that would warrant such an open response; this was simply an expression of God's grace to this hapless woman.

Jesus said that He was a gift of God, as was the very conversation they were having. While the focus had been on the well, water and worship, Jesus served notice that He had access to water that was living! That is quite a promise to make. No other spiritual or religious leader could make a commitment like that. Jesus was the Rock that watered the people and flocks in the wilderness and He is now the Rock that waters the thirsty souls of those who put their trust in Him:

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert (1 Corinthians 10:1-5).

The imagery is graphic in the passage above. The greatest lack in the desert is water, and Jesus provided enough water for millions of Jews and their flocks in their wilderness wanderings. The lesson here is that He is the All-Sufficient One who is capable of meeting all our physical and spiritual needs, even for someone like the Samaritan woman with whom He was conversing.

**Do you act like Jesus is the Rock, not just of your salvation, but of your provision?**

#### Day Four

11 "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?" 13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

v. 11 – The woman was surprised that Jesus was offering her water, for He did not seem to be equipped to do so – in the natural. He had no bucket and the well was deep. Like Nicodemus before her, this woman was confused by what Jesus was saying. He was offering spiritual water, but she was hung up on the well and natural water. Yet she was free enough to ask Jesus for clarification.

It seems to me that sometimes God only answers the questions we ask, so if we want better understanding and insight, we need to ask better questions. **How effective are the questions that you are asking God? Are you pleased with the answers? Are you recording the answers in your journal? How can you be equipped with better questions?** I think that is a function of how desperate you are for the water that only Jesus can provide!

v. 12 – The woman was desperately trying to hold on to the initiative in the religious discussion she had started. She asked Jesus if He was greater than Jacob; Jews wanted to

know if He was greater than Moses. The woman felt loyalty to Jacob because he had dug the well from which she was drawing and drinking. Jesus was about to dig His own well from which all people could drink, but the women could not grasp this truth yet.

Religious tradition and thinking can be quite limiting and restrictive. They don't allow you to think outside of the system that has conditioned your brain. The Jews were hung up on Temple and Law; Samaritans on venue and heritage. **What is restricting your thinking where Jesus and God are concerned?**

vs. 13&14 – You must see the connection between the woman's attachment to the past through Jacob and the water He was offering. Anyone who would "drink" from the debate about what mountain was the better mount on which to worship would never be satisfied. There would always someone who would disagree or make a better case for another mountain – the debate would be endless and would satisfy no one's longing for God. Jesus was presenting Himself as a better option than the Law, mountain worship or legalistic debates.

Remember what we saw from 1 Corinthians 10. Jesus was the Rock that followed the Jews in the wilderness. They did not need a well such as the one He was at with the woman to satisfy the people's needs. The Rock followed the people instead of the people coming to a well. Jesus was offering the same "deal," but this time in a spiritual sense. His presence would and will go with His people and satisfy their needs no matter how difficult the circumstances or powerful their enemies.

Jesus was not offering natural water, for the water He promised had the power to bestow eternal life. We know that He Himself was the water, as we will see in a few chapters:

On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him" (John 7:37-38).

**Are you drinking Jesus? Do you have rivers of living water flowing out of you? How do you know if you do? What evidence can you provide that you do?**

### Day Five

15 The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." 16 He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back. 17 "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. 18 The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

v. 15 – The woman still didn't quite understand, for she thought incorrectly that if she got some of Jesus' water, she would not have to come back to that well to draw water any longer. She was still confused, yet Jesus did not abandon the discussion. He had a mission to accomplish with this woman and He remained true to it. The woman thought

she was hearing about a fountain of youth. She had no idea of the free gift of salvation that Jesus was offering.

v. 16 – The conversation then took another surprise path, for Jesus told the woman to go get her husband. **Is this command related to the promise of eternal life water?** Jesus was showing the woman the way to salvation – confession and forgiveness of sins. The woman would do what she could do – confess – and Jesus would do what only He could do – forgive. Many would think that this woman’s situation disqualified her from having an encounter with the Lord. They were and are wrong. Honesty with God is the means to salvation, not a barrier to salvation.

I have heard many people say, “When I get my life together – stop smoking, go to church, pray – then I will come to God.” They have it all wrong. You come to God and then you get your life right. **Are you trapped in that wrong thinking?** I heard someone say that when you sin, it isn’t the time to run from God but to God! I agree and this woman was about to discover that truth as well.

v. 17 – There was no more talk of water, mountains or worship. There was now a discussion about the woman’s sinful lifestyle. She answered honestly but not completely. She had no husband but she did not tell Jesus that she was living with someone. At least she did not lie and try to present her current “boy friend” as her husband. Jesus endorsed that she was telling the truth that she had no husband. Is this what the psalmist wrote about when he said:

Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place (Psalm 51:6).

**Are you truthful with God?** It’s silly not to be, for He knows all things. Yet I encounter people all the time who are afraid to be honest, like as if the admission of what God already knows will “get them into trouble” with God.

v. 18 – Jesus “blew this woman out of the water!” He told her things about her life that only those who were close to her could know. The fact that He did not know her positioned Him as a prophet, which of course was only partially true. He was the Son of God! He knew her “condition” in life and still initiated a conversation with her. If there is any better picture of the grace of God in the Bible, I am not aware of it. Jesus was more comfortable with this woman than any of His peers. **What does this tell you about our God?** It tells me His is gracious and compassionate!

### Day Six

19 "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." 21 Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews.

v. 19 – The woman must have been shocked, but she made a quick recovery. She concluded that Jesus was a prophet because He spoke about her secrets. The woman was still spiritually-minded even though she had been the property of many men. Like her cousins in Israel, she was looking for spiritual truth, but was looking for it in the wrong places. What’s more, she was trapped in her sin and had no hope of escape or freedom until Jesus came along.

v. 20 – The woman quickly shifted the conversation back to a discussion of where the best or correct place to worship was. She took the attention off her sin and placed it back on a theological discussion of worship. I have done the same thing; in a debate, that trick is called a “red herring.” It is introduced to deliberately get someone off track in the debate or discussion (the image being a different scent to throw off a hound dog in pursuit of something or someone).

This woman’s red herring was the debate between Jews and Samaritans over worship issues. The woman was clinging to her religious pride that her way to God was superior to the Jews’ way. Jesus was declaring that both ways were flawed or at best outdated, for Jesus was then and now the way to God.

We still have these “worship wars” in the modern church, worship in most cases being defined as what we do musically in the public worship service (some expand worship to include the entire service). Jesus was not saying, “Ah, one day, dear lady, you will not worship on a mountain, but in an air-conditioned building with pews.” Worship for Jesus was, well, it was all about Jesus! It should be the same for you. It is not about the technique of worship; it is about the heart of worship, as Jesus was about to explain.

v. 21 – There are some who still want to restore or promote a mountain, a specific place where worship to God is superior because of the venue. I have made ten trips to Israel as of this writing and many who have gone with me have been absolutely enamored with Jerusalem, feeling it is a special place. Yes, Jerusalem is significant for its historical roots, but worshipping Jesus there is no different than doing so in Philadelphia or Johannesburg. It is not where we worship that makes a difference but whom we worship.

Some like stained glass windows, some like to see a simple cross, some like hymns and some like contemporary music. While I have my own personal preferences, they are just that: personal. The important thing in any setting for worship is simple: **Is Jesus exalted?** Not the music itself, the leader, the doctrine, the money. **Is Jesus high and lifted up? Is whatever happens bringing people closer to Him and increasing their awareness of who He is and what He has done to purchase the Church with His own blood?**

v. 22 – Jesus did indicate that the Jews were at least worshipping what they knew, while the Samaritans were not. You don’t sense any condescension when Jesus told her this. He was simply stating the truth (what else could He say?). Yet He indicated that a significant shift in worship theology was about to take place because Jesus had come and

was talking to people like this woman. Jesus wanted to talk to the woman about salvation, not about modes of worship.

### Day Seven

23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." 2 The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." 26 Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."

v. 23 – Jesus indicated that the Father does seek worshipers, not for His sake as if He had any need, but for the sake of the worshiper. Worshipers who were and are rightly related to Jesus are worshipers that please the Father. Jesus said that there were two aspects to worship: the spirit and truth. Those who worship in spirit are not hung up on technique but focus on their corporate relationship with God. Those who worship in truth are worshipping not what they hope or sincerely believe to be true, but what really is truth. **So what is truth?**

It is the fact that Jesus is the One sent from God, the Lamb of God, as John referred to Him, who came to save the world from sin. Only those who accept Jesus' mission and who then focus on giving glory and honor to Him can really worship in truth. Many groups have added a lot of truth to the pile over the centuries, but Jesus was not putting anything on this woman except a need to accept Him for who He was – the Son of God who could forgive her sins.

We have complicated worship to make it what it was never intended to be. Nor was it ever to be confined to a Sunday morning. It is an entire relationship of surrender to and regeneration through a relationship with Jesus. Jesus announced that the time was at hand for this shift in the worship paradigm would take place.

v. 24 – God wants worshipers who come to Him as He is, not as they want Him or misunderstand Him to be. God is not limited to a place of worship, nor is He confined to truth as man can comprehend. God is bigger than a place and bigger than anyone's puny reasoning can make Him out to be. God is spirit and truth and He grants me access to Him on those terms only. I cannot come with an intellectual approach to Him, nor can I come in and of my own strength. I must come in spirit and truth. **Are you approaching God in spirit and truth? How do you know you are? Where are you falling short?**

v. 25 – The woman focused on one thing that united Samaritans and Jews and that was the fact the Messiah was coming. The woman finally stopped focusing on water and mountains and focused on the Promised One of God. When she did, she received a powerful revelation that Jesus was the One that everyone on both sides of the border had been waiting for!

The woman knew that when the Messiah came, He would explain everything to everyone who had a heart to hear and learn. This woman really did have a lot of knowledge and religious heritage. Now Jesus revealed Himself to her so that she would know the truth, and not just doctrine. **Do you know the truth, or just doctrine?**

v. 26 – Jesus was always so indirect and evasive when the Jews asked who He was. With the woman, He was direct and clear, declaring that He was the Messiah that she had mentioned and that her people had been waiting and watching for. Jesus is the One! If Jesus is the One, there can be no number Two. He is the Way, Truth and Life for all who come to Him and put their trust in Him. This woman was highly favored, for she received a visit from God when leaders in Israel were passed over.

This is such an exciting story. Jesus chose this outcast, a woman no less, to reveal His true mission and identity. I trust He has done the same thing for and to you, dear reader. If not, I pray that He will open your eyes and reveal Himself to you as you read these words. He is ready to teach you all things, as the woman mentioned, if you will only acknowledge and receive His Lordship.