

**“LIFE IN HIS NAME”:**  
THE PURSUIT OF WHOLENESS AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

---

IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH  
(JOHN 4:11-15)

**I. The End of the Quest**

- A. What Jesus has promised in v 13-14 is the end of every major quest the human race has ever embarked upon.
- B. All our great Quests and Pursuits end in Jesus.
- C. If anyone receives the Water that Jesus gives, they will find within themselves the Spring that never runs dry, because that Spring is the Holy Spirit.
- D. When the Holy Spirit makes his home in a human life, the Holy Spirit sustains that life until he or she attains full salvation (which includes physical resurrection).

**II. Not Quite There Yet (Jn 4:15)**

- A. The lady still doesn't quite get it. She says to Jesus, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”
- B. That last sentence shows that she's still not quite there. She's sensing something about Jesus. But her response shows that she is still operating on a purely earthly, material, and pragmatic level.
- C. She wants the Water so that she doesn't have to keep coming back to this well. She doesn't yet understand the *real* purpose of the Water that Jesus wants to give.
- D. Whenever we find ourselves unclear about our actual needs, do not be surprised if the Lord unveils something of the real darkness that is in us so as to spur us to Jesus.

**III. The Big Dark Thing (Jn 4:16-18)**

- A. Jesus says, “Go, call your husband, and come here.”
- B. She says to Jesus, “I have no husband.”
- C. Jesus responds with terrifying insight: “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true” (vv 17, 18).  
—This is the Big Dark Thing she keeps closeted away in her life.
- D. Jesus' approach toward the Samaritan woman shows that he comes for real sinners.
  - 1. He goes to those society has rejected, those who carry the curse of their culture and community.

2. Who would be considered like this woman in our society today? What segments of society are like this woman?

#### **IV. Recognition (Jn 4:19)**

- A. The lady now realizes that she stands on holy ground. Jesus is...
  - the Lion of Judah
  - the Burning Bush
  - the Pillar of Fire
  - Glory in human flesh.
  - Every ounce of divine nature is in this one man.
- B. Jesus can see into the depths of our rebellious hearts.
- C. The woman acknowledges that Jesus is a prophet (v 19).

#### **V. Concerning the Sacred Space (Jn 4:20)**

- A. The woman starts talking about theology, perhaps to evade the issue in her life: “Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.”
  1. The mountain the woman has in mind is Mount Gerizim, the holy mountain of the Samaritan people.
  2. The issue of sacred space divides the Samaritans from the Jews.
  3. Since she recognizes that Jesus is a prophet, she would ask him to give her the answer. Are we Samaritans right? Or are you Jews right?
- B. The woman may be sincerely interested in hearing what Jesus the prophet has to say.
  - Since sacred spaces were where people met with God, she was really asking about where God can be found.
- C. It could be that the woman is evading the sin in her life by talking about an issue in which she has some sincere interest.

#### **VI. The Hour Is Coming (Jn 4:21-24)**

- A. Jesus addresses the woman’s concerns. He doesn’t harp on her Dark Thing. If she wants to discuss the matter of sacred space, he would go along.
- B. When initiating an evangelistic relationship, do not be afraid to talk about what people want to talk about. Do not be afraid to talk about what is on the hearts of people.
  - Remember: All roads will lead back to Jesus.
- C. “Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain [Mt. Gerizim] nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father’” (v 21).

#### **VII. Worshiping the Father in Spirit and Truth (Jn 4:23)**

- A. What does it mean to “worship the Father in spirit and truth”?
- B. First: Jesus says “the hour is coming, and is now here...” (v 23)
  - 1. The worship Jesus has in mind is far greater than what presently exists either in Jerusalem or in Samaria.
  - 2. To “worship the Father in spirit and truth” is a new way of worship that doesn’t yet exist, but has begun to appear.
- C. Second: This worship is directed toward God who is identified as “the Father.”
  - 1. This suggests that there is now a familial relationship between God and the worshiper.
  - 2. The rift between sinner and God has been healed.
- D. Third: This worship is done “in spirit and truth.”
  - 1. The meaning of this becomes clear when we recognize that the point of this present discussion has to do with the correct sacred space, the place where God is to be worshiped.
  - 2. The day is coming when the matter of earthly sacred spaces becomes irrelevant.
  - 3. To worship “in spirit and truth” is the opposite of...
    - a. worship that is tied to one sacred space.
    - b. the false worship the Samaritans have been offering.
  - 4. To worship “in spirit and truth” is to worship by the power of the Holy Spirit, guided by the Truth who is Jesus himself.

### **VIII. God Is Spirit (Jn 4:24)**

- A. Why does God desire such worship? Because “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth” (v 24).
- B. This is the new hour that is dawning. God is going to pour out his Spirit on anyone who believes. *Any place can now become sacred space.* God is making the entire world into a house of prayer (cf. Rev 21:22). And it all hinges on this one man, Jesus.

### **IX. I Am He (Jn 4:25-26)**

- A. Jesus has answered the woman’s question. How does she respond? “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.”
- B. Jesus declares himself: “I who speak to you am he” (v 26).
- C. Jesus is making clear to this woman that she cannot run from him. He is the Final Authority on all things.
- D. The good news is that the Jesus who is Truth—the Jesus who reveals the ugly truth about us and the glorious truth about God—is the same Jesus who offers Living Water to dying sinners.

- E. When Jesus uncovers the ugliness of our sins and shows us God’s frightening perfection, it is for one purpose—so that we might flee to him for salvation.

**How do we get free of our Dark Secrets? It is not by avoiding people, retreating into ourselves, and talking theology. How do we become the worshippers that God will accept? It is not by defending cherished worship practices, or merely arguing about the finer details of what can or cannot be done in a worship service. At the end of the day, the *resolution* to the woman’s sin and the *answer* to the issue of sacred space are one and the same. It is *Jesus*. By giving us the living Water of the Holy Spirit, Jesus washes our sins and idolatries away. By giving us the Holy Spirit of God, Jesus also makes us children of the Father who now worship “in spirit and truth.” Do you see that God is always calling you to Jesus? Do you see that Jesus is “the way, and the truth, and the life” (Jn 14:6)?**

### Questions for Reflection

1. Was there anything in particular about today’s sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
2. Was there anything that you disagree with or found difficult to accept?
3. The woman says, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.” What does this show about the woman’s understanding?
4. Whenever we find ourselves unclear about our actual needs and what Jesus seeks to give us, do *not* be surprised if the Lord unveils something of the real darkness that is in you. Discuss.
5. What is our real need at the end of the day?
6. “Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship” (v 20). Discuss this statement. Why do you think the woman is starting to talk about sacred spaces?
7. What does it mean to “worship the Father in spirit and truth”? How will this new form of worship replace the older forms?
8. How is Jesus “the *resolution* to the woman’s sin and the *answer* to the issue of sacred space”?
9. How does Jesus make you a right worshiper of God?