

Subject: *Jesus Friend of Sinners*

Scripture: *John 4:1-26*

This is a beautiful story of how Jesus went out of His way to talk to a woman and change her life forever. John 4 reinforces the main theme of John's Gospel that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and all who believe in Him receive everlasting life. The focus is not on the Samaritan woman, but on Jesus and His love and compassion for people, no matter who they are, where they live, or what they have done.

The conversation between Jesus and this woman is a great contrast to the story in John 3 about Jesus talking with Nicodemus.

Nicodemus found Jesus and came to him.

Jesus found this woman and came to her.

Nicodemus was a highly respected religious leader.

She was an immoral woman and a social outcast.

Nicodemus was a serious and dignified Bible scholar.

She was a casual, ordinary person.

Nicodemus was up and out.

She was down and out.

Nicodemus exchanged his religion for the new birth.

She exchanged her empty water pot for a well of living water.

JESUS WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO FIND HER (vs. 1-4)

This was a divine appointment (vs. 4). *Luke 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.* Jesus is the seeking Savior.

JESUS CROSSED MANY BARRIERS TO HELP HER (vs. 5-9)

- He crossed the barrier between God and man

Verse 6 tells us that He was weary from his journey. Verse 7 tells us He was thirsty.

Hebrews 4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. He is the sympathizing Savior.

- He crossed the barrier between Jews and Samaritans

Jesus could have traveled a different way from Judea to Galilee. The Jews despised the Samaritans and looked upon them as half-breeds because they had intermarried with Gentiles. They avoided dealings with the Samaritans.

- He crossed the barrier between men and women

It was against the custom of that time for a man to speak to another woman in public. A man would not even speak to his own wife in public.

- He crossed the barrier between holy God and sinners

This woman came to the well at 12:00 noon. Women usually drew water early in the morning or late in the evening, but she came to avoid the other women. She was a social outcast because of her past and her present lifestyle. Verses 17-18 tell us that she had been married five times and was now living with a man who was not her husband. Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan. This is the story of the Bad Samaritan.

Jesus is a friend of sinners because He crossed the same barriers to help us. *Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*

JESUS OFFERED HER THE GREATEST BLESSING (vs. 10-14)

She came to draw water out of the well, but Jesus talked to her about living water that would satisfy her thirsty soul. She was only interested in physical water to drink, but Jesus used that as a point of conversation to tell her about something much better.

JESUS EXPOSED HER BIGGEST PROBLEM (vs. 15-19)

Jesus said something that exposed her sinful lifestyle and caused her to confess the truth. She was living with a man who was not her husband. Jesus reminded her that she had five other husbands. Now she realized that He knew all about her life. She thought He was a prophet because He had such insight and was so plain spoken. Why did Jesus do this? He exposed her false hopes. She had obviously thought that relationships with men would fill her empty soul.

Jesus always shoots straight with us. He doesn't sugar coat the truth. He tells it like it is. And that's exactly what we must do. The Spirit uses the truth to show us our sins, and that leads us to repent and confess. *Proverbs 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

JESUS REVEALED HIMSELF TO HER (vs. 20-26)

She turned to the subject of worship. Maybe she thought, "I will clean up my life and get serious about God, so I'll talk to him about worship. But Jesus wouldn't let her dodge the main issue. Samaritans worshiped in Mt. Gerizim, but Jews worshiped in Jerusalem. Jesus tells us that the place of worship doesn't matter for two reasons. First, His death would satisfy God once for all and the Old Testament sacrificial system would be abolished. Second, the temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed in 70 A.D., and so worship there would come to an end. Worship is not about a certain place. Worship must be about the right Person and the right method. The right Person is the one true God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The right method is to worship in spirit and truth. We must have our heart in it and we must worship in line with the Word of God.

This woman said, "When Christ comes, He will tell us everything we need to know." And then Jesus says: "I that speak unto thee am he." This is the first time that Jesus revealed Himself as the Christ, the Son of God and Savior of the world. Can you imagine how she must have felt? How can it be that the Christ would come and talk to me?

Jesus is not looking for perfect people, for there are none. He is not looking for impressive, people who have it all together. He is looking for needy and sinful people who need forgiveness, for empty and thirsty people who need the satisfying water of everlasting life.