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John 4:27 - 4:42



Gospel of John - Steve Gregg

In John 4:27-42, Steve Gregg discusses Jesus' encounter with a Samaritan woman and emphasizes the significance of her recognition of Jesus as a prophet and potentially the Messiah. The conversation also highlights the difference in beliefs between Jews and Samaritans regarding worship location, but Jesus emphasizes the importance of worshiping with sincerity and truth. Overall, the text suggests that Jesus' mission was not driven by a desire for recognition as the Messiah, but rather to offer spiritual guidance to those in need.

Transcript

Well, we're going to pick up where we left off in John chapter 4 last time when Jesus had this conversation with this Samaritan woman that he met by the side of a well near the city of Sychar in Samaria, a place that Jews usually would not go. Jesus and His disciples, all Jews, were passing through. His disciples had gone into town to get provisions.

They'd been traveling from Judea en route to Galilee. Upon arriving in Galilee, Jesus would begin what we usually call His great Galilean ministry, which is the focus of attention in the other Gospels. Almost all the miracles and almost all the preaching and parables and so forth that we have in the other Gospels took place during His Galilean ministry.

Up to this point, John has not even gotten us that far into the life of Christ. John alone supplies this earlier material of things Jesus did before the Galilean ministry. But He's on His way there, and before the end of this chapter, He actually does a miracle in Galilee and thus launches that season that will be the focus of the other Gospels, but not so much of this one.

In talking to this woman who came to draw water, He had begun by asking her to give Him water, and she was surprised to hear such a request since he was a Jew and she was a Samaritan. And there was no love between the Jews and the Samaritans. They usually despised each other.

Also, it was uncommon for a man to speak to a woman in public in that culture. Women

would stay at home most of the time, and when they had to go out, they'd ignore the men and go back home. The rabbis thought it was not safe for a man to talk to a woman.

In fact, the rabbis had a saying, do not speak long with a woman, even your own wife, and especially not another man's wife. That was a rabbinic saying of the time. So, Jesus kind of broke custom in two ways, in speaking to a woman and in speaking to a Samaritan.

It was the latter that surprised her most. She said, why are you asking me for water when you're a Jew and I'm a Samaritan and Jews don't have anything to do, they have no dealings with Samaritans. They don't share anything in common.

They don't share water vessels, certainly, to drink from. And Jesus ignored her question, more or less, and said, if you had known the gift of God and who it was who asked you for a drink of water, you would have really been the one who'd asked me. And I would have given you living water.

And she said, well, I don't see how you get any water. You don't have a bucket or a rope, and this is a deep well. She thought, when he said living water, he was referring to the running water at the bottom of that artesian well, which is known to be such because it's still there today, and it does have a spring at its bottom.

So, there is what they would have called in those days living water at the bottom. It was fresh, flowing water. And she thought he was offering to get her water from the bottom of the well, and he had nothing to draw with.

She said, you don't have anything to draw with. The well's deep. How are you going to get me this living water? And then he changed up the conversation a little bit to make it clear that he was talking about something other than the water in that well.

She asked him at the end of her first response, are you greater than Jacob, our father who gave us this well? And he said, anyone who drinks this water will thirst again, but he that drinks the water that I will give him will never thirst, but that water that I shall give shall spring up within him as a fountain of living water. So, in other words, natural water is something that you have to repeatedly use to quench your thirst, because thirst is a recurring phenomenon, and therefore drinking water must be a recurring phenomenon. But he's talking about something that will be a constant supply, a fountain springing up continuously within, satisfying permanently a thirst that will never have to be intermittent.

It will not be recurring, this thirst. It'll be over. As long as you have this fountain springing up within you, your thirst will be satisfied perpetually.

And she still, maybe with a little less certainty, thought that he was talking about normal water. And she said, well, sir, give me this water so that I won't ever have to come out

here and draw water again. There's a possibility that there was a note of irony in her statement, skepticism really.

I mean, who wouldn't be skeptical if she thought he was talking about natural thirst and water, and that he had some kind of magic water that once you drink it, you never have to drink anymore. She would be naturally skeptical, unless she wasn't, unless she was just gullible. Some people were.

I mean, not everyone was educated or sophisticated, and there were all kinds of magicians around, especially in Samaria. Philip ran into a very important magician in that very region later on in Acts chapter 8. But maybe she thought he was a magic man. He claimed to have some magic water.

She wasn't sure, but she said, listen, whatever you talk about, that sounds good to me. That would serve me well to have water that prevents or precludes my having to come back here all the time. Now, whether she had skepticism that he could really deliver, but she was just humoring him, or whether she was really interested but didn't understand him, it's very hard to read her at times.

But he just said, go get your husband. Now, she had been playing along with this whole water analogy all this time, and he was ready to change it up again and stop talking about water and get down to the matters of the kind of thirst his water would quench, which was, of course, that thirst within every person to be connected with their creator. And that thirst exists most acutely in those who feel the alienation the most.

All people who don't have Christ are alienated from God, and yet human beings are not made to be alienated from God. It's like being a machine that's made to run on a certain fuel, but the fuel's not there. There's something very significant missing, and that is felt by more sensitive people at their more sensitive moments.

Not all of them know that it's God that they're lacking, but they know they're lacking something. And many people are on a continual quest to fill that thirst with something. Solomon, in the Book of Ecclesiastes, enumerated many things that he had tried to, although he didn't use the word quench the thirst, certainly that's what he was talking about.

He tried various things, education and philosophy and horticulture and music and women and money, and tried everything that the world promises to bring some kind of satisfaction, but he found it to be unsatisfactory. He found it to be frustrating, like striving after the wind. It was emptiness, he said.

And so, in Solomon's case, we have a very good example of the desperation of a person who feels that hunger but does not know where to go to satisfy that thirst. This woman had apparently been seeking to satisfy that thirst in relationships with men. She had had

at least six significant relationships, five of which were actual marriages, and the last of which she was actually living with a man.

One might argue that it's not hard to find out what her self-medication of choice was, and yet she was no different than almost anyone else. The way in which people who don't know Christ differ from one another is not in that some are good and some are bad, or that some are satisfied and others are not, but simply in their choice of self-medication, self-treatment of that thirst, seeking to quench it. And Jesus knew that for her to understand what the living water was, she had to become aware of what the thirst was that he was talking about.

And so he said, go get your husband. He knew she had no husband. The question was calculated to get her to mention the fact that she had no husband, and for him to be able to bring up this matter, which would focus like a laser beam on her spiritual hunger and thirst.

And I believe that she did have spiritual thirst. I don't believe she was merely cynical, skeptical, and sarcastic with Jesus. I think she really, because of Jesus' openness with her and how much he told her, Jesus didn't waste his words on people who were not receptive.

I think he found in her a person who really had the preparation of heart to be interested in what he was saying, and who had that thirst. If Jesus had not seen in her a thirst, he would have used probably some other analogy, some other approach to evangelism. He was addressing that which he saw in her, and that was something she was trying to satisfy, something she was trying to quench, and she had been trying to quench it apparently for many, many years with several marriages, and even after she was done with marriage, with a relationship nonetheless.

And so when he said, go get your husband, she simply said, I have no husband. She volunteered no other information. Perhaps the other information was something she wouldn't speak to strangers about, and may have had some embarrassment about.

Especially if, as I believe, she was feeling convicted and desiring to reconnect with God. That's the thirst that she had, a thirst for God that she didn't know how to find him. And she said, I have no husband.

She said, that's right, you did say that correctly, you don't have a husband. You've had five husbands, and you have a man now, but he's not your husband. And in speaking that way to her, she instantly recognized he was not an ordinary man.

She said, sir, I perceive you're a prophet. It's a little bit like when he said to Nathaniel, I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you. And Nathaniel said, you are the son of God.

I mean, Jesus was blowing people's minds continually with revealing things that they didn't expect him to know. This, by the way, phenomenon of being able to know things about people that you have no natural access to in terms of the information. Usually, this is a gift of the Spirit that I know Pentecostals and Charismatics identify this as the gift of word of knowledge.

And they may be right, because there is such a gift named in the Bible in 1 Corinthians 12, when Paul begins to list the gifts of the Spirit, of which nine are listed in that chapter. He mentions first the word of wisdom, then the word of knowledge, and then some others. Also prophecies in the list, and others.

And Paul never explains what he means by either word of wisdom or word of knowledge. The expressions are only found in that one passage in a list. So they're not self-explanatory.

So what does he mean by word of wisdom, word of knowledge? Modern Pentecostal and Charismatic people think they know, and maybe they do. But they believe that the word of knowledge is this phenomenon that Jesus exhibited, that when God reveals to somebody facts about somebody else, which are not available for that person to know naturally, when they have a supernatural insight into facts about people like Nathaniel under the fig tree or the woman's marital history. However, I don't know if that's the gift of word of knowledge.

If it isn't, I'm not sure what Paul meant when he said the word of knowledge, but he didn't tell us what he meant, and therefore we can't be sure that this particular phenomenon is what he was referring to. Because this particular phenomenon was already known in Israel, in the Old Testament, and this woman knew the name. You're a prophet.

The ability to tell people things about themselves that were unlearned by the one revealing it was generally part of the gift of prophecy. Elisha had known that his servant Gehazi had gone and secretly made a deal to take money from Naaman the Syrian, and he revealed that he knew it. That was because Elisha was a prophet.

And it seems like knowing such things are a function of the gift of prophecy, which is a separate gift than word of knowledge in Paul's list. So I don't know if this is the word of knowledge or if this is just the function of prophecy. She saw it as a prophecy.

She said, sir, I see you're a prophet. And of course she was right, but not quite right. He was the prophet in Deuteronomy.

Now the Samaritan people only accepted the Torah, the first five books of our Old Testament. They didn't accept the other portions of the Old Testament that the Jews accepted. And so they didn't accept the prophetic books or even the historical books as

scripture.

They accepted only Moses' writings as scripture. Now because of that, the Samaritan religion did not anticipate any prophets except the Messiah to come. Because Moses had said in Deuteronomy 18, the Lord your God will raise up another prophet like myself.

To him you shall heed, and he that does not listen to that prophet will be cut off from his people. And so there was this, not just a prophet, but the prophet, par excellence, the ultimate prophet that Moses had predicted. We know from New Testament writings later on from the book of Acts, Peter's sermon in Acts 3 and Stephen's sermon in Acts 7, both sermons refer to this prediction of Moses, that there would be another prophet like Moses.

And Peter and Stephen both identified this prophet with Jesus. So that because of them, we know that the prophet that Moses spoke of is also the same person that's the Messiah, because we know Jesus to be the Messiah as well. The Samaritans felt that too.

They felt like that prophet would be the Messiah. The Jews didn't quite have that certainty. Because when they came to John the Baptist, they said, are you the Messiah? He said, no.

They said, are you Elijah? He said, no. They said, are you the prophet? Meaning that prophet Moses spoke of. Now he'd already said he wasn't the Messiah, so clearly the Jews weren't sure that that prophet was to be identified with the Messiah.

But in the Samaritan religion it was. And they didn't really expect any prophets until the Messiah would come, the excellent prophet that Moses had spoken of. So when she said, sir, I perceive you're a prophet, as a product of Samaritan belief systems, it was to her, it would be consistent with her thinking that if he really was a prophet, he's probably the Messiah.

In fact, later on when she says, well, I know when Messiah comes, he'll explain all this stuff, she may have been prying to see if he would say, well, that's me. And sure enough, he did. She may have meant the statement as sort of an invitation for him to reveal himself as the Messiah.

But we're not there yet. Her first comment was, sir, I see you're a prophet. And then she begins to talk about religion.

And that's really pretty much the subject Jesus wanted to get onto, because that's where her hunger was. Religion is the means by which people try to connect with God, try to reconnect with God, we might say, because people feel like this connection with God is somehow primordial and original in our state, but we've just lost it. We're not normal without it.

It's something that we've somehow, it slipped through our fingers, and we're now alienated from somebody that we need to be reconciled with. But how do we get there from here? That's what religion is for. Go to the temple, offer a sacrifice, atone for your sins, get right with God.

That's what religion is. But the Samaritans and the Jews had different religions and different temples in different locations. The Jews in Jerusalem had the temple that Solomon, well, not that temple, Solomon's temple had been destroyed, but it had been rebuilt on the same spot.

Zerubbabel's and Herod's temple was there. That's where the Jews offered their sacrifices. The Samaritans had a different religion in a different location.

Mount Gerizim, right there, that well is in the shadow of Mount Gerizim, within view of it. And they had their temple there. And so she says, Sir, I see your prophet.

Let me see if you can settle a dispute for me. Our people say that we should worship God, read, offer sacrifices. That's what worship means to the Jewish mind, to the ancient mind.

Worship means offer sacrifices. To us, worship means sing, pray, in some traditions, genuflect, whatever, you know, just these ritual things that we do. There's no blood offered because we don't have blood sacrifices anymore.

But in all ancient religions, including Judaism, worship meant specifically to offer sacrifices on an altar to God. And she said, our people say that we should worship, that is, offer our sacrifices here on Mount Gerizim. You Jews say otherwise.

You say that Jerusalem's the place that men ought to worship. And so she's asking him for a decision about this. Now, as I said when we were talking about this previously, some people, as they're talking about this chapter, have the impression that the woman, upon Jesus mentioning her five previous marriages and her present situation, that she suddenly felt convicted and wanted to turn the light of his gaze off of her guilt and just almost desperately grasped at almost any subject she could to change the subject.

And what better than to focus on the religious controversy between their two people, between their two nations. And so that this was a diversion she was throwing up. Well, let's see, never mind my husband business, but where is the right place for us to worship? And some people treat this as if it was just a shallow and sudden and almost arbitrary change of subject.

But I don't think so. I think she was very much aware that she had become disconnected from God and her lifestyle was what had disconnected her. I believe she was aware.

They had the Pentateuch. She knew she had sinned. She knew she had fallen short.

She knew that she wasn't living the way God would have her live and therefore God would not be pleased with her. But she didn't know where to go to reconnect. And that was her thirst.

That was her thirst that needed to be quenched that Jesus had come to speak to her about. She's thirsting for God, but she doesn't know where to go to find him. And there's no sense going to the wrong place because it was very much the opinion of the Jews that if you don't offer at Jerusalem, you might as well not offer at all.

Jerusalem is the only place where God will meet with you. And the Samaritans had a similar idea about Mount Gerizim. So she knew there was controversy, but she didn't know who was right.

She, on one hand, no doubt wanted to be loyal to her native religion as the Samaritans, but she apparently suspected the Jews might be right, but she's not sure. So she's got a prophet, an inspired man now, available to answer this long-standing conundrum. And she says, which is the right place to worship? She doesn't say it, but that's what she implies.

She implies, what is the right place to worship? My people say here, your people say there. And what she's saying is, if I were to want to offer a sacrifice and atone for the life I've been living, which, by the way, I've been wanting to do, I've just been paralyzed by uncertainty about where the place is that God would accept it, which is the right place? I don't think there's anything arbitrary about the subject she raised. I think it was right at the heart of her concerns.

She had a felt need to atone for her sin and to get right with God. So she needed to know, and now for the first time in her life, there was someone who she felt confident could tell her, where does God want us to worship? Here's a prophet for the first time. I'm the first person to run into a prophet in my lifetime, and here he is right here at this well.

So could you settle this for me? And Jesus did. He said, woman, it doesn't matter who's right and wrong about that because it's all going to change real soon. The hour is coming when no one's going to worship in Jerusalem or in Mount Gerizim.

Jesus was continually in his ministry making predictions about the end of the Jewish system, and the Samaritan system ended at the same time, within 40 years of this, when the Romans destroyed both the temple in Jerusalem and the temple at Mount Gerizim, and neither has been built since. So no one worships at Jerusalem or at Mount Gerizim in the prescribed way anymore. Now you might say, but if you go to Israel today, don't the Jews worship in Jerusalem? Not in any way that the Bible prescribes.

They don't have a temple. The only prescribed worship in the Old Testament is to offer

animal sacrifices at the hands of a Levitical priest in a temple or tabernacle. They have neither.

You go to Jerusalem now, there's no temple there. There has not been a temple there for almost 2,000 years. That system is gone.

The fact that the Jewish people generally do not accept Jesus as the ultimate atoning sacrifice means that they are left without any atoning sacrifice. They don't have the animal sacrifices anymore either, and can't, because there's no temple. So Jesus was right.

People are never going to worship in Jerusalem or in Samaria again in these locations. But he says it doesn't matter, because God's not looking for people who go to the right spot. He's looking for people whose hearts are right.

God is seeking such as know how to worship him in spirit and in truth. He's not an ordinary God like the pagan gods, who just is delighted with animal sacrifices and ritual. He's delighted because he's spirit, Jesus says.

He's delighted in spiritual things. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. They must, in other words, be inward in their worship, in their spirit, not just in external behavior, not just external ritual.

And they must worship in truth, which means in genuineness, in honesty, in integrity, unlike the hypocrites who put it all on the show that Jesus often referred to. So he tells her it's not going to be any longer a matter of where you worship. It's just how you worship.

Is your worship internal or merely external? In other words, is it of the heart and of the spirit, or is it just outward show? Is it genuine or is it play acting, like the Pharisees? He also said to her, you Samaritans don't know what you worship, but we Jews know what we worship, because salvation is of the Jews. So he did say, regardless where the right place to worship is, the Jews at least know who they're supposed to worship. Again, the Samaritan problem was not so much that they worshiped in the wrong place, but they didn't worship anyone that they knew.

They didn't know who God was. The Jews had it over the Samaritans in that respect, but the Jews and Samaritans were both equally susceptible to the wrong kind of worship, ritualistic and hypocritical worship, as opposed to worship in spirit and in truth. And so when he said these things to her, he was telling her that you can connect with God spiritually without having to worry where an animal sacrifice has to go, because God is where you are.

Wherever your spirit is, you can worship. Wherever you're honest and truthful, you can worship, because God is there too. He's not confined to these locations, and it's a good

thing too, because these locations are soon to be devastated and destroyed.

So it's never really been about location. It might have seemed like it in the Old Testament, because the rituals and so forth were pretty important as a lesson, sort of object lessons about Christ. But God has met with people wherever they were humble, wherever they were honest, wherever they were submissive to him, wherever they loved him.

That's where he has always been, and he's accepted that kind of worship all forever. Joseph was a slave in Egypt, and God was there. Joseph wasn't in Jerusalem.

Abraham was in Babylon when God met with him. Moses never did go to Jerusalem, but God was with him in the wilderness and everywhere he went. So God is wherever people are whose hearts are directed toward him.

And so Jesus is saying, I'm glad I was able to disabuse you of this, because you've been disconnected from God, and leaving this matter of your sin unresolved, because you've been paralyzed by indecision about which way to go. Don't worry about either place, just get your heart right. Just come to God genuinely and honestly with your whole heart.

And the woman said to him, I know the Messiah is coming, who is called the Christ. When he comes, he will tell us all things. Of course, like I said, she might have been kind of baiting him to see if he was going to say he was the Messiah.

If she was, well, he didn't disappoint her. Jesus said to her, I who speak to you am he. And as I said last time, she's the only person on record to whom Jesus made that statement clearly.

Many people don't realize that Jesus never went around publicly declaring he was the Messiah. Sometimes when you try to point out to people that Jesus is the Messiah because he fulfilled so many prophecies about the Messiah that were uttered in the Old Testament, sometimes a skeptic will say, well, you know, he just wanted people to think he was the Messiah. He knew what the prophets said about the Messiah, so he kind of engineered things so that he did things the way that they expected the Messiah to be, and therefore he convinced people he was the Messiah.

By artificially fulfilling these prophecies. The only problem with that is it presupposes that Jesus somehow wanted to convince people he was the Messiah. I mean, that's the only way that particular explanation would hold any water.

If Jesus was somebody, even if he wasn't the Messiah, but somebody who wanted people to think he was, then he might do that thing. Except he probably wouldn't, because the things Jesus did were not the things people thought the Messiah would do. If he was an imposter, trying to convince people he was the Messiah, he probably would have done a lot of different kinds of things.

Like the things they thought the Messiah would do, instead of the things they didn't think he was going to do. He probably would have been like all the other false messiahs that came and went, who all did the same thing. Namely, tried to rally the people of Israel to throw out the Romans.

That's what the Messiah was expected to do, and Jesus made no motion in that direction. And in John 6, verse 15, when Jesus saw that the crowds he had fed were about ready to forcibly take him and make him king, he sent them away and hid, because that wasn't what he was about. That was what they thought the Messiah was supposed to be about, it was not what he was about.

Jesus didn't act very much like a man would act if he was an imposter trying to convince people he was the Messiah. There were lots of those, and none of them acted the way he did. They all did what the people thought the Messiah should be.

Jesus did what the scripture said the Messiah would do. But what's more, there's no evidence anywhere in the Bible that Jesus ever tried to convince anybody that he was the Messiah. He didn't even tell his disciples.

He asked them, who do you say I am? And when one of them said, you're the Messiah, he said, I'm glad you got that right. I wasn't so sure you knew. He confirmed it.

But he never publicly declared, I'm the Messiah, follow me. He did say, I'm the good shepherd of the sheep and some things like that, which people could connect with the idea of the Messiah. But we don't have any record of Jesus announcing his Messiahship publicly.

He did confirm it, as I said, with Caesarea Philpi when Peter said, you're the Messiah, and he also confirmed it under oath on trial before Caiaphas. Caiaphas said, are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed? And he adjured him in the name of God because Jesus had been refusing to answer up to that point. And since in order to honor the name of God, in whose name he was put under oath, he said, I am.

Yeah, that's me. So as far as we know, three times Jesus confessed to being the Messiah. Twice when someone else said it, he confirmed it.

This is the only time that he actually came out and said it to her, I'm the Messiah. So it certainly makes me think this woman was not just some kind of a garden variety, sinful, cynical, half-interested kind of individual. Jesus revealed himself to her in ways he didn't even reveal himself to his apostles.

And he does not cast his pearls before swine, so he must not have judged her to be such. He must have seen that she was a person with genuine thirst, with genuine integrity, with a genuine desire. And if the only reason that commentators and preachers have made her out to be something other than a genuine and honest person is because of her

marriage history, that's not really very fair.

That opinion of her, that assessment of her on that basis, which I think Christians often make, is so typical of religious people. They think that the most dishonest people are the people who have scandalous sin in their lives. And no doubt they think that the really honest people are the ones in church.

That's not what I've necessarily found to be true, and I don't think that's what Jesus found to be true. He found the biggest hypocrites were in the church, the Pharisees. The people who were honest about who they were were the tax collectors and the prostitutes and the sinful women and the people who were outcasts of society.

It would appear to me that our religious conditioning tends to make us think that we religious people, we are the better people because we don't do the scandalous things. But in fact, the New Testament makes it seem like those of us who don't do scandalous things aren't always any better than the ones who are. And in some respects, we may be dishonest, we may be putting on a show more, we may be more proud of ourselves than these people are.

These people are often broken people, not always. I mean, they can be proud too, but there's no reason to believe this woman was anything other than an honest soul hungry for God. A fallen woman, a woman with a tragic past, we don't know how much of it was her fault.

Five marriages ended, but we don't read that it was her fault. We sometimes think, oh, divorcee, very bad. Well, divorce is very bad, but not every divorcee is very bad.

We forget that divorce is a crime, and like most crimes, has a victim and a perpetrator. It is a crime, it's perjury. If you perjured yourself in other circumstances, you could be prosecuted in court for it.

The only crime that the courts don't care about is the crime against marriage. They don't mind if you break your oath there. They don't mind if you destroy lives in that situation.

You destroy lives in any other situation, they'll prosecute you. You destroy your spouse's life, your children's life, your relatives' lives. Courts couldn't care less, they'll help you.

They'll smooth the skids for you all the way through. They won't even let the spouse who objects slow the process down. And it is criminal.

Divorce is criminal. But, like most criminal things, crimes are not usually... Two parties in a criminal situation, one is usually the victim, and the other is the perpetrator. That is almost always true in marriage, the breakup.

Sometimes people say, well, in a divorce there's no innocent party. Nonsense. The

divorce between God and Israel, was he not an innocent party? Hosea and Gomer, was Homer not an innocent party? The troubles Christ has with his bride, is he not an innocent party? Where in the Bible does it say there's no innocent parties? What I read is that the person who divorces his wife without grounds is the guilty party.

He's committed a crime against her. And this woman was divorced, but we don't know that she was the criminal. She might have been the victim.

She might have been blameless until the sixth relationship, when she decided marriage really wasn't working out for her. And as I said last time, I might have given up on marriage sooner. Maybe after four marriages, you know.

She went into the fifth one, still. She was a hard one to get to give up on marriage. She was apparently an eternal optimist, but not quite eternal.

Just long-standing. So here's the woman that Jesus evangelized, and her response to him was not simply receptive, but exuberant. And here's where we come to the new material in verse 27.

That was just the review. We've got ten minutes for the new material, that's right. It's fairly typical of me.

That's right, but I wouldn't even repeat it all if I didn't have new points I wanted to make that hadn't been made last time. And there's always more. I could come back to it tomorrow and bring up some more points.

I'd have to repeat some of them, though. I'd have to repeat some of them to tie it together. So the new material begins at verse 27.

At this point, his disciples came, and they marveled that he talked with a woman. That was not customary, especially for a rabbi. Not only was it, generally speaking, questionable for any man to speak publicly with a woman, even his wife, but rabbis in particular had a conviction that teaching women was useless.

Not immoral, just a waste of time. Women weren't smart enough to learn. That was how the rabbis felt.

In fact, they actually said, Women just don't have the mental capacity to understand the law. So rabbis would only teach men. Obviously, they hadn't experimented to find out how much women could learn, because it seems like in modern times we've seen that women can get PhDs in theology and any other subject they want to.

But the rabbis had this basic prejudice, and Jesus was a rabbi, and the disciples were surprised to see him teaching or talking to a woman. That just generally wasn't done by rabbis or most men. Yet no one said, that is, none of the disciples said, What do you

seek? That is to her.

Or, Why are you talking with her? To him. Now the New King James says, What do you seek? They've capitalized the U. There is no capitalization in the Greek, and it's obvious that the New King James is suggesting that both questions were addressed, or would have been addressed if spoken to Jesus. But it's not so.

No one said to the woman, What do you want? Or to Jesus, Why are you talking to her? They were curious about what was going on, and they could have asked those questions, except they were a little bit intimidated. They didn't think they should really challenge Jesus, or a woman that Jesus was seemingly not himself challenging, so they just let it drop. The woman then left her water pot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, Come see a man who told me all things that ever I did.

Could this be the Christ? Last night somebody asked why she spoke to the men, and maybe not to the women. Some of the translations change men to people, recognizing that men is often simply a generic term for people, and it's not necessarily specifying that she restricted her comments to males. Though it is very possible that at most times of the day, she would find only males out and about.

Women would be in their homes doing their chores and so forth, so if she's out in the streets, the men would be the main people she'd run into, maybe the only people in certain times of the day. So it may have only been men, but I think she basically talked to anyone she could find. It may have been men and women, it's not important really.

If the men would come to Jesus, the women would follow. The whole family would learn of him. So, it says, she said to them, come see a man who told me all things I ever did, could this be the Christ? A bit of a hyperbole, no doubt.

We don't think he told her everything she did, but she was enthusiastic. And when she said, could this be the Christ, that means the Messiah, it says, then they went out of the city and came to him. So they actually took her seriously.

This also seems to militate against the idea that she's some kind of a social outcast, an untouchable in that society, that avoided social interaction or whatever. These people didn't seem to have any qualms about her testimony or her assessment of Jesus being possibly the Messiah. Apparently they thought, well, maybe he is, let's go see.

In the meantime, his disciples urged him, saying, Rabbi, eat. But he said to them, I have food to eat, which you do not know. Therefore, his disciples said to one another, has anyone brought him food to eat, anything to eat? You know, the irony here is, they're making the same mistake the woman made.

He was talking about water and thirst, and she said, oh, you mean real water. You know, he said, I have food to eat. They thought he meant real food.

One of the themes woven through the Gospel of John, it seems to me, is that Jesus often was misunderstood by people who took him overly literally. He said, destroy this temple, in three days I'll raise it up, in John chapter 2. And they thought he meant the real temple. He said, it's been taken 42 years to build this temple, how are you going to raise it up in three days? But he meant something else.

He said, I can give you, he said to Nicodemus, you must be born again. He said, oh, you mean you have to go back in a womb and be born again? Took him literally. He says, no, I'm talking about being born of the Spirit.

He says to the woman, I can give you water that you'll never thirst again. She says, oh, you don't have a bucket. And he says to the disciples, I have food to eat you don't know about.

And they said, oh, well, who brought you food? We were out getting you food. We didn't know there was food more readily at hand. People were continually, even his disciples, taking him more literally than he intended to be.

And that's an important thing to note when you come to something like John chapter 6. He says, whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life. Because about 50% of the people on the planet who call themselves Christian believe he was talking literally about eating literally his flesh and drinking his literal blood. And they make the very same mistake that everybody seems to be making about Jesus' words in the Gospel of John.

He says something that is not literal and they take him literally. And so here even the disciples, he talks about thirst to the woman she thinks physical thirst. He talks about hunger or food or satisfying a hunger to the disciples.

They think he's talking about literal food. So just like he had to explain to her, he has to explain to them what he meant. Verse 34, Jesus said to them, my food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

That's what turns me on. That's what charges me up. That's what gets me invigorated.

Not regular food, but knowing I'm doing the will of God. Just being onto the will of God like a blood hound on the trail. Saying I can sense my father's got something for me to do here.

I'm on it. I'm on it. And I'm suddenly my heart's beating faster.

I'm more excited. I'm energized. I was kind of getting bored before.

He sat down because he was weary by the well after his long travels. Suddenly he's ready to go. Because something has energized him.

Something has replaced for that moment the need to eat food. There's an adrenaline thing happening here. And anyone who has the pleasure of being in the ministry, that is if it's the ministry that God has given them and they end up doing what seems to be truly the will of God, knows how that is.

You almost don't want to stop to eat. Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Once you eat that bread, you feel you don't want to take time out to eat other kinds of bread.

Now, there are down times in the ministry, and that's times when you do eat. But Jesus was in the midst of something here. Here's a woman he's witness to.

She's going to get the crowd. He sees that he's going to have some teaching to do. Some evangelizing to do.

And he doesn't want to stop and eat a taco. He wants to just put that aside for later because he's feeling all he needs in knowing that he's doing the will of his Father. His food is to do the will of him who sent him and to finish his work.

He says, Do you not say, verse 35, there are still four months and then comes the harvest. Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest. And he who reaps receive wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

For in this the saying is true, one sows and another reaps. I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.

Now in this passage Jesus seems to allude to two proverbial sayings that must have been already familiar. He makes it very clear in verse 37 that he is quoting some kind of a saying that was known to him. You know that saying, one sows and another reaps, well that's true in this case, he says.

In this case that saying is true, that says one sows and another reaps. It was like a proverbial saying. And many scholars feel that also four months and then comes the harvest was also a proverbial saying.

In verse 35 he says, do you not say? In other words, isn't this something that is said by you? Don't people say this a lot? Isn't this like a saying that there's four months and then comes the harvest? These are very typical Jewish proverbial type sayings. Four months and then comes the harvest would be a way of saying Rome wasn't built in a day. In other words you don't sow and have the harvest instantly.

You've got to have patience. Good things come to those who wait. You're not going to just have harvest the next day after you sow it.

You've got to wait. You've got to put in the time. It's four months and then comes the harvest.

In an agrarian society that would be a very well known phenomenon and it would become a paradigm for many other things you could use a proverb about where some things just take time. Some people believe, many scholars believe this was a quotation of a proverb. Others feel like he was saying that it was actually four months at that moment until harvest time.

And therefore this would place this story in something like December or January four months before the harvest season. And so some think that's what he's saying. But in any case he's saying this proverb is not really applicable here.

You may tend to say four months and then comes the harvest but I'm telling you there's a harvest immediately here. You know it's not going to come in four months even if this is January. Or if you're accustomed to saying things don't happen that quick there's four months from seed time to harvest.

Well that's not true in this case. I've just planted the seeds and look here comes the harvest already. Don't think that this isn't urgent.

You know the harvest is already white. The fields are white under harvest. It's even possible that as he spoke that visibly from the town the people were coming with the woman typically wearing their white robes especially the men.

Women would wear more colorful robes but men typically just a plain white robe. And here's this mass of white clad people coming and he says look the fields are white under harvest. And don't think that we can put this off.

I'm not going to stop and have a meal when there's something this immediately pressing as this harvest. And he says I'm sending you to be a reaper too. Now there is a saying that you know that one sows and another reaps and that saying may very well have been a proverb that meant something like you know you can't do it all yourself.

Some of the important things you do have already been started by generations before you and you enter into their labors and continue them. And that proverb would in fact be true. In this case he says because I'm sending you to reap where others have sown.

What others? Well himself for one thing he just planted that seed in that woman and now there's a harvest coming already. John the Baptist had been sowing in this field too. He had been baptizing not too far from here and these people no doubt had heard him preach.

Maybe even the law of Moses and some of the Old Testament witness that the Samaritans would listen to. That was a labor that planted seeds that were watered. In

any case he's saying you're walking right up at harvest time.

Others have planted previous to you but you get to reap. And that of course is true in evangelism now too. Some people are sowers and almost never get to see anyone converted.

They're always planting seeds or handing out tracts all the time. They're witnessing or they're just whatever. Being faithful to try to share the Lord with people and they never really see anyone get converted.

A lot of those people probably get converted later through someone else's efforts. There's people who have the gift of sowing and others who seem to have the gift of harvesting. And let that be an encouragement to you Chunky.

There's a brother who's been out sowing a lot. But you know Jesus is saying you guys didn't sow these seeds but there's already a harvest for you to gather in here. Someone else did that other part of the work but you've got part of the work to do too.

That's how it is in the body of Christ. There's different gifts, different callings, different work to do. The hand doesn't do the same job as the eye or the foot.

And so also in evangelism sometimes the winning of the soul is a long process and lots of people have input into it. It's possible that a person who was raised in a Christian home and then leaves the faith when they come back it's the sowing that their parents did when they were young that really comes back to haunt them when they really need to do business with God at a later age. And other people participate too.

Someone else may harvest them but their parents sowed for years into their life. And that's what Jesus is saying is the case here in Samaria at this point. And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in him because of the word of the woman who testified he told me all that I ever did.

That is their initial faith was based on her testimony but it says when the Samaritans had come to him they urged him to stay with them and he stayed there two days. Now for the Samaritans to invite a Jewish teacher to stay with them and not expect him simply to tell them how wicked they are as Samaritans means he had really won their confidence over. The Samaritans would never invite a Jewish rabbi to come over and teach them because the rabbis were so self-righteous and so above the Samaritans in their own thinking it would come out completely they'd simply harangue and castigate their audience like some preachers do.

That's how a Jewish rabbi would be expected to act towards Samaritans but they apparently didn't think Jesus would do that and apparently he didn't. Some people picture Jesus as that kind of a preacher. I guess preachers who are that kind of preachers do picture Jesus as that kind of preacher because people tend to reshape Jesus in their

own image and especially people who are angry at sinners they always think of Jesus as angry at sinners and they forget that in the Bible he's never seen to be angry.

He's angry at religious people. He's always friendly towards sinners. The religious people wanted to kill him because he was called a friend of sinners.

Not too many preachers are in danger of being called that today evangelical preachers because they preach against sinners more than they preach against the religious hypocrisy in their own midst. In that they're the opposite of Jesus in their ministry. These people apparently did not see in Jesus what they would see in the ordinary rabbi.

A self-righteous, holier than thou critical, judgmental critic of them. But they felt like asking him to stay and talk to them some more. Just like the prostitutes and tax collectors and other sinners did.

They invited him over to eat and to spend time with them. They were hungry. They were sick and needed a physician.

And these people were thirsty and needed living water and they knew it. And Jesus seemed like the guy who could deliver it without the edge on it that many self-righteous preachers would have in dealing with people who were so viewed as so compromised as they were. And many more believed because of his own words.

So we see in verse 39 a lot of them believed because of the woman's word. And after he'd been there for two days, a lot of people believed because of his words. So that they said to the woman, now we believe not because of what you said.

For we have heard for ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world. So she had said, is this not the Christ? And they thought, well, we'll check it out. And after they'd heard him for two days they said, yep, we know that now for ourselves.

Not because you said so, but because we now have had direct contact. And he's not only the Christ, which would be the Savior of the Samaritans in their religion, or the Savior of the Jews in the Jews' religion, but he's the Savior of the world. This expression is found only one other place in the Bible, the Savior of the world.

It's in 1 John 4.14. And John, of course, the same writer as this, uses that expression as we have known and believed that God sent his Son to be the Savior of the world in 1 John 4.14. But Savior of the world is in contrast to Savior of this race, or this religious group, the Samaritans, or the Jews, or someone like that. No, he's spreading out. He's a Jew himself, but he's here to save us Samaritans too.

He's not provincial, and he's not xenophobic, and he's not racist. He's here for the whole world, including us. Now, their statement in verse 42 is a very profound one, and illustrates something that people with a long-term exposure to religion need to

remember.

And that is, a person can be exposed to Christian truth, even the gospel itself, from childhood, and have it memorized, and yet not ever have had a personal contact with Jesus. They believe at a certain level, because they've heard from people who they find credible, because they may have even heard Christian apologetics presented in a convincing way. They may have concluded that God and Jesus are realities for which there's excellent evidence, but they've never really done business with him, never had direct contact with him, and their faith is an academic thing merely.

Yet, it is so easy for an academic faith to masquerade as the real thing, because when you say, do you believe in Jesus? People who have an academic faith, they always say, of course. And that's kind of the end of inquiries. Of course I believe.

I know all the facts. Jesus is the Son of God, died for my sins, rose from the dead, ascended on high, he's coming back, I believe in the virgin birth, I believe in the blood atonement, I believe all those things. And you can, in fact, believe all those things without ever having the slightest contact with Jesus.

That's just, you can have contact with the information about Jesus, and provide no, put up no resistance to it, and say, okay, I can buy that. But, direct contact with Jesus brings a different degree of conviction, a different degree of certainty, a different depth of faith. And that is something John's Gospel is frequently mentioning.

In chapter two, he mentioned that many believed in Jesus because they saw the miracles, but he wouldn't commit himself to them because, well, he didn't trust them. They believed, but they didn't believe in the way that made him confident about making himself vulnerable to them. Later on in chapter eight, it says, Jesus said to the Jews who believed in him, if you continue my words, then you're my disciples indeed.

And in the conversation that followed, they end up saying, you're a devil, you're a Samaritan and have a demon. And he said, no, you're of your father the devil. Now, these are the people that start out saying they believed him.

This conversation began between Jesus and the Jews who believed him. And they end up, he ends up telling them, they're children of the devil. It's obvious that there's a lot of different grades of belief.

And some of them do not bring you into relationship with God because they're merely academic acquiescence to facts. But trusting in the person of Jesus Christ brings people into a relationship with him. And that's what these people did.

And there's many a person raised in a Christian home or been exposed to Christian truth all their life and they just assume they know Jesus because they don't realize that there's anything more to know than the facts about Jesus. They figure that when they hear other

people testify about knowing Jesus, that they only know what they themselves already know. It's so easy for the mental faith, that's merely mental faith, to masquerade as or to inoculate you from seeking anything more.

Which may be lacking. These people came to know not because they were told but because they had direct exposure. They knew Jesus other than by hearsay.

They knew him by personal acquaintance at this point and they believed at a different level. This is the same thing really with the apostles, at least with Peter, who is probably not much unlike the others. When Jesus at Caesarea Philippi said, who do you say I am? And he said, you're the Messiah, the son of the living God.

Jesus said, blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father in heaven did. But what's interesting is that flesh and blood in fact did reveal it to him. Because we saw in John chapter 1, that when his brother Andrew met Jesus, he ran to get Simon, that's Peter, and said, we have found the one of whom the prophet spoke, Jesus, the Messiah.

The very first thing Peter ever heard about Jesus before he laid eyes on him was that Jesus was the Messiah and he heard it from his own brother. But Jesus here says, when Peter says, you're the Messiah, Jesus says, flesh and blood didn't reveal that to you. You didn't learn that from man.

Now Jesus isn't denying that Peter had heard it from a man. He just didn't learn it from a man. He heard it from people, but he had to come to a point where it wasn't flesh and blood anymore, it was the Father revealing it to him.

He had to have a personal inward revelation of who Jesus was to come to the place that he was at at this point. And so in the Gospel of John and in the Bible in general, it's clear that there's a kind of faith that is mental merely, that it's a kind of knowledge that's by hearsay, and then there's something else, something that's more normative, something that's more what Christianity really is, and that is acquaintance, direct acquaintance with Jesus Christ. And these people illustrate that because they first believed because they were told, as most people would.

That's how most people come to an initial state of belief. They hear something and it's credible to them. But then they discovered that it was true by direct acquaintance with Jesus.

And that's what every person ultimately has to do. And with that, we're going to close because somehow our time got all used up. It always seems to get used up one way or another.

That's how time is. It does get used. But we'll take more time next time and finish up this chapter.