

Why did Jesus leave Judea?

- His popularity was soaring but it was untimely popularity. The Pharisees were taking special notice of Him. It was not yet time for our Lord to confront the Pharisees. He was working on God's schedule, not man's.
- John's disciples were jealous of Him, so Jesus could possibly be leaving to short circuit the potential for conflict.

As Jesus made His way from Judea to Galilee, He "had to" go through Samaria. Why was this?

- It was the shortest, most direct route between the area of the lower Jordan and Galilee.
- God wanted to save the Samaritans from their sins. They would not come to Jesus, so He went to them.

Application: This is always the way it is in the spiritual realm. Jesus comes to us first. If left to ourselves, we would leave Jesus sitting on the edge of the well forever. But He comes to us and initiates the conversation. He breaks through to our hearts. He draws us. You may think you were looking for God, but in reality it was He who chased you down. What is your experience with Jesus?

Verse 6 What human attributes of Jesus are seen here? Jesus was tired. It was about noon, so His fatigue may have been partly related to hunger and the heat of the day.

How does Jesus, a Jew, feel about the Samaritan woman? What was His attitude toward her? He saw her the same as anyone else—a sinner in need of a Savior. She was not a worse sinner because she was a woman, a Samaritan, or sexually immoral.

Note: The racial and cultural (not to mention theological) barriers present at this encounter were significant. By tradition, a rabbi would not speak with a woman in public—even his own wife. It was also *very* unusual for a Jewish person of that time to ask a favor of a Samaritan. Hardly any Jew would have accepted a drink from a Samaritan's cup. Jesus' request genuinely surprised the woman.

Application: Who are the Samaritans in your world? Who are the people that Christians don't seem to want to have anything to do with? Our Lord's willingness to cast aside racial, gender, cultural, and theological barriers serves as a model for us.

In verses 10-15 What did Jesus mean by living water? It was not a literal drink, but the life-giving presence of the Holy Spirit, who produces a continual refreshing and sustaining source of strength and blessing. See John 7:38.

Up through verse 15, how would you characterize the conversation between Jesus and the woman? It was an amusing game, this verbal back-and-forth with the interesting Jew, but it was not serious.

How does the conversation change in verse 16? It becomes personal. Suddenly Jesus jolted her by calling attention to her failed life.

Application: Jesus knew everything there was to know about this Samaritan woman. He saw into her heart. Do you realize that He also sees into your heart? He knows all that you have done. He sees your every thought...and He still loves you! Incomprehensible!!

How/why does the conversation change in verse 19? The woman changed the subject away from her own immorality. She wanted to end that line of discussion as soon as possible.

Verses 21-24 How did Jesus respond to the woman's change in conversation?

- Her statement about where to worship was irrelevant. With the coming of the Messiah, no longer did man need to seek God's presence in a certain, designated place. God is not to be worshipped in a place, but in a person, Jesus Christ.
- The Samaritans worshipped in ignorance. They worshipped "what you do not know." The fact was that salvation was to come from the Jews. The Messiah was to be a Jew, not a Samaritan. The Samaritan religion of that day was a mix of paganism and biblical faith. To worship a god who does not conform to the truths of Scripture is to practice idolatry.
- True worship is a matter of the spirit, prompted and produced by the Holy Spirit. It is never enough to be sincere; one must be in accord with truth to be a real worshipper of God.

Note: The woman thought she was okay with God because she was doing the right things. She was following the religious traditions of the Samaritans—and she was deceived. Jesus opened her eyes to the Truth.

Verses 25 & 26 It is interesting that the first time Jesus identifies himself as the Messiah, He does so to a Samaritan woman!

Application: Based on Jesus' model, how should we approach our "Samaritans"? When the opportunity arises, in an engaging manner, based on truth, educate them, gently confront, etc.

Verses 31-32 When the surprised disciples returned and urged Jesus to eat something, how did He respond? Jesus talks of spiritual food being more satisfying to Him than physical food. Doing the will of God sustains us—even when we are exhausted.

What does Jesus mean in v. 35? The time is now. There is a great opportunity staring us in the face. There is work to be done at this very moment—the people of the city are almost here! He conveyed a sense of urgency.

Application: The Samaritan woman sowed and Jesus reaped the harvest. Teamwork is the nature of evangelism. Most often when people come to the Savior it involves the combined efforts of several people. Who did the sowing and reaping in your life?

What observations can you make about the faith of the Samaritans? At first they took the word of the Samaritan woman, but having heard Jesus for themselves, they no longer relied on her testimony, but on what they heard Jesus say. These Samaritans have a faith that is not based on miracles and signs. Their faith is in Jesus Christ, based upon His words.

What lessons in evangelism can we learn from this passage?

- Our Lord witnessed in the midst of His normal activities. Two guidelines for when to witness emerge from this text: (a) When you have the opportunity. (b) When you have a listening ear.
- There is no one “canned” approach to evangelism that our Lord forced indiscriminately upon everyone He encountered; rather the gospel is presented individually. Jesus approached Nicodemus very differently than He did this woman.
- Don’t water down the Word of God to make it less offensive.
- All evangelism has to be preceded by the work of the Holy Spirit. John 6:44, 65.
- Our testimony is a valuable witnessing tool—just like the Samaritan woman’s testimony impacted a village. Do you have your testimony ready to share? Consider preparing several versions of different lengths to fit different situations.

Application: Make a top-ten list of people you know who need Jesus. Pray that their hearts would be open to the Lord. Pray that God would give you the opportunity to interact with them and share your testimony.

Verses 43-54: Jesus Heals

Why did the Galileans welcome Jesus? The Galileans welcomed Him because they had seen all the things He had done in Jerusalem at the feast (for they themselves had gone to the feast John 2:23). Expectations for miracles are running high.

A royal official, a Gentile living in Capernaum, hears that Jesus is at Cana. His son is at the point of death. How would you describe this man’s attitude? This father is desperate! When he finds Jesus, he pleads with Him to return immediately with him to Capernaum and to heal his son, who is about to die.

Verse 48 The Lord’s response to the royal official is puzzling—almost disturbing—but the word translated “you” is plural, not singular. Jesus was speaking to the Galileans—not just the royal official.

What sets the official apart from the Galileans who also are also looking for a miracle? His heart and his response. He knew little about Jesus but had great faith. As he testified of this miracle, everyone in his household believed in Jesus.

How did God use adversity in the life of the official? It made him desperate. He realized that he was helpless without Jesus.

Application: God often uses adversity so that we must come to Him as our only hope. That’s exactly where God wants us—at the feet of Jesus acknowledging our total dependence on Him. What has caused you to become desperate for Jesus in your life?

What other lessons can we learn from this royal official?

- He was wrong in (initially) supposing that God could only accomplish what he asked for by doing it the way he prescribed. The royal official thought Jesus could save his son *only if He came to Capernaum and personally attended to him*. He was wrong. Our Lord did intend to heal this man’s son, but in His way. He does not need to be at the bedside. He could heal him from a distance.
- Let us not lose hope when God refuses to “jump through our hoops” and doesn’t answer our prayers the way we expect.
- God delights in answering our prayers in ways that highlight His power, grace, glory, and sovereignty. We would do better to trust Him to answer our prayers His way rather than demand or beg for the answer we desire/expect.

MEMORIZE: John 4:35

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