

John #6

John 4: The Woman and the Clueless Disciples

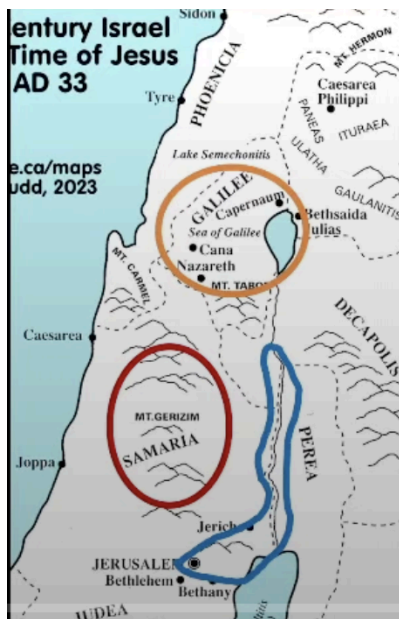
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There are five mini stories in John 4: I label them as

1. Water
2. Water & Living Water
3. Food & Mission
4. Harvest
5. Healing

Here is a map to geographically arrange these stories:



We start in the blue circle, somewhere along the Jordan River near Jerusalem.

Then we move to the Samaritan in the red circle and end up in the orange circle of Galilee (towns of Cana and Caperhnaum).

Story 1: Water

4 Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John— **2** although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. **3** So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

John was dunking people in water for a spiritual/religious purpose. Jesus's disciples were also doing this and John wants to make it clear that Jesus's disciples, not Jesus, was doing this.

Jesus was really popular and has to leave because things were going so well...so many people were leaving John and following Jesus. The religious authorities are out to get Jesus and Jesus said it wasn't his time so he leaves.

They have to travel in the red section (Samaria) to get to the yellow circle area (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 noon.

There is a lot of back story about Jacob in Gen 29-33: much was going on in this back story that Jesus wants to bring out. Jesus was tired; this was a trip you could make in one day but it would be long and exhausting. The story picks up in the middle of their journey (about noon) when he sits down to rest. The importance of the time of day may or may not be important.

Story #2: Water & Living Water

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.)

They are alone; in this culture there were sharp divisions between men and women, it was not common to meet together: there was a social taboo in Jesus meeting with this women. Moreover, Jewish people did not get along with Samaritan people: they disagree very strongly with each other

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.^[a])

Some versions may have a footnote here: I think its important because it says Jews don;t use dishes that Samaritans used. Jews believed this was unclean and would make you unable to participate in Jewish rituals. If Jesus touches the vase or cup that the women gives him, he would become unclean. This is kind of like Jim Crow South in the

U.S. There is racial hatred between the Samaritans and Jews. The woman is astonished that he would ask her for a drink.

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."

Let's go back to a question from a couple of weeks ago: w/hat do you want from Jesus? Consider what it is like to not have indoor plumbing: whenever you needed water, kyou have have to make a trip to the well, whether you need it for laundry, washing, or drinking, cooking. Every time you need water, you have to make a trip! You need water for everything, back then and now. You can go without food but you can't go long without water. Jesus invites her to ask for not only water but living water.!

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 livestock?"

This is kind of sarcastic! I'm not sure how honest this woman is...or is she sarcastic? Jesus could have said, "Yes, I am greater." Sometimes he does answer "Yes" to these kinds of questions but not here.

13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, **14** but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

The kind of water he is referring to is spiritual water. This is the kind of water you dont" have to come back again for the next day!

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."

Jesus throws her a curve ball: He has something important to share with her and needs the presence of her husband. He also alludes to the cultural, social awkwardness of a man and woman being alone. He knows what he is doing.

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."

This cuts to the core and becomes a very important motivation when she tells other about Jesus. But let's also consider how a woman would end up having five husbands. Maybe she was unlucky and had many husband die. But I don't think this is the reason. Maybe she was not appreciated by the husbands she had. There was an ongoing conversation in this culture about the possible reasons for divorce. If she burns the toast, did that qualify? Another reason could be that she was adulterous and promiscuous. I think you might assume this from the fact that the last man she is with is not her husband. Ultimately, it's probably a combination of the 2nd and 3rd reasons.

The woman gets uncomfortable and changes the subject. This happens in conversation all the time! My speculation is that this is what is going on here. Nevertheless, the Samaritans did have many different beliefs from the Jews.

19 "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. **20** Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

They probably could have seen the mountain from where they were.

21 "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, 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. **23** Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. **24** God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

Jesus answers that the Jews are more correct but that it really doesn't matter. The location of worship will not matter.

25 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, the one speaking to you—I am he."

This is an intimate moment between two people who probably shouldn't be talking. And then Jesus discloses something he hasn't told many people before. It's really amazing what he is doing yet His disciples find this very weird.

27 Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

28 Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people,

29 "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?"

Story #3 Food & Mission

30 They came out of the town and made their way toward him. 31 Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something."

"I love the way that Jesus use the water topic as a stringboard for their conversation and uses it to talk about living water. And now he does the same thing with the topic of food and says he has food to eat that they don't know about.

32 But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about."

33 Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?"

Did the woman give him food? The disciples were confused; this is actually kind of funny! There are many comical moments in John if you are paying attention!

Story #4 Harvest

34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."

35 Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. 36 Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. 37 Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. 38 I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor."

This is about to happen **right now** in the story! The woman has gone to get other Samaritans and the field is ready for reaping. I love the way, Jesus uses water and food to show the work of the kingdom.

39 Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days.

The one-day trip turned in a longer trip. This was a big deal for this group of Jews becoming unclean by staying with these Samaritans.

41 And because of his words many more became believers.

42 They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”

You have seen in this story that the woman becomes a spring of living water. You have seen Jesus being nourished by doing the work of God without eating physical food.

Next, they leave for Galilee:

43 After the two days he left for Galilee. **44** (Now Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his own country.)

People have difficult receiving truths from someone they knew

45 When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, for they also had been there.

It was customary at Passover to come to Jerusalem. We will see this again and again in this John. If you have lived then, you would have wanted to do this: it was like going to the super bowl. In fact, this time, they had seen Jesus do some very dramatic things like clear the temple and make some bold statements about his authority. .

Story #5: Healing

46 Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. (a near-by town on the coast of Galilee) **47** When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death.

48 “Unless you people see signs and wonders,” Jesus told him, “you will never believe.”

I sense a tone of disappointment in Jesus’s voice here.

49 The royal official said, “Sir, come down before my child dies.”

50 “Go,” Jesus replied, “your son will live.”

Jesus doesn’t do what the man asks him. Nevertheless his sons lives.

The man took Jesus at his word and departed. **51** While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. **52** When he inquired as to the

time when his son got better, they said to him, "Yesterday, at one in the afternoon, the fever left him."

53 Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." So he and his whole household believed.

There are seven miraculous signs in the book of John that Jesus uses to prove his deity, that he is who he claims to be: this is the second one.

54 This was the second sign Jesus performed after coming from Judea to Galilee.

See if you can collect all seven signs!

This will eventually get more and more hostile. You have a miraculous healing here: a Messiah brings healing, whose food is the mission of God, who offers living water that brings people into springs of living water. He also washes for purification: this is who Jesus still is today. You know what the the resurrection is the final miracle: He is risen and his Spirit is with us now. What did he say to you this morning? Who do you imagine yourself as in these stories?