



## Unit .21

### Session .04

# Jesus Teaches About Living Water

### Scripture



## John 4:7-14,19-26, 28-29, 39

**7** A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” **8** (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) **9** The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) **10** Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” **11** The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? **12** Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.” **13** Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, **14** but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” ... **19** The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.

**20** Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” **21** Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. **22** You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. **23** But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. **24** God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” **25** The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” **26** Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.” ... **28** So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, **29** “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” ... **39** Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.”

## Intro Options



**Main Point:**  
**God's people worship  
in Spirit and in truth.**

### Option 1

In J. R. R. Tolkien's famous series *The Lord of the Rings*, a creature called Gollum becomes consumed by an obsession with the One Ring. Gollum was originally a hobbit-like creature known as Smeagol, who murdered his friend to take possession of the ring shortly after he discovered it. Smeagol's family later shunned and exiled him because of his deceitful and disruptive ways when using the ring, which made him invisible. Gollum had an insatiable hunger for the ring and its power. He centered his entire life around protecting it and recovering it after he lost it, and it cost him everything.

- **What are some results you have witnessed from people fixated on their desires?**

Though our cravings may not be as extreme as Gollum's addiction, we all have things we desire in life. Children chase after an extra cookie or longer time at recess. Teenagers desire certain relationships or the praise of people at school. We all tend to place a higher priority on pursuing those things that we believe will satisfy a longing in our heart. We were created to hunger and strive with the hope of satisfaction; the question is "What do you think will satisfy?"

In this session, we will examine Jesus' teaching on living water and find that He Himself is living water. He is fully and eternally satisfying for the believer, and He enables us to worship truly.

### Option 2

Some people really get into celebrating certain holidays. They place elaborate decorations throughout their houses, they have seasonal music playing throughout their home, and sometimes they even place those large, inflatable holiday icons on their lawns. The point is: When their favorite holiday comes around, these people will no doubt let you know what time of the year it is. They are all in and their "holiday spirit" is often infectious to those nearby.

- **Who do you know who enjoys "going all out" to celebrate a specific holiday? What are some of the ways they decorate and celebrate?**

Maybe you're constantly in the "holiday spirit" once that season rolls around. More important than being in the spirit of the holidays is the realization that Christians are filled with God's Holy Spirit and He calls us to worship Him in Spirit and truth. He offers us life and living water that can be found nowhere else. And just like the woman at the well, our spirit should be infectious. We should be "all in" when it comes to celebrating what Jesus has done for us. Those who are "all in" will go "all out" to tell others the good news of Jesus, just like the woman at the well.

## TEACHING PLAN


**Read John 4:7-14.**



Jesus knew the Samaritan woman was in a state of separation from God because of her sin. Though she may not have realized it yet, she was needy for a solution, just as all people are today. Jesus highlighted her need, telling her that if she knew what water He was able to offer, she would beg Him for a drink.

All of us are thirsty, longing for something that will satisfy us completely. We often try to satisfy that thirst with sin, either with things that are inherently sinful or with things that become sinful when we put them in the place of God in our lives. How we each try to satisfy our thirst looks different from person to person. But the need is the same in every circumstance; we are in need of Jesus and connection with Him to fulfill our deepest longings.

### ▪ **What are some of the ways we are tempted to fill the longing in our hearts with things other than God?**

Loving your enemies certainly doesn't come naturally or easily. Fortunately for us, God loves His enemies. Though we have made ourselves His enemies through sin, He chooses to love us anyways and works toward our reconciliation, the restoration of our relationship with Him. While we turned our back toward God, He remained facing us, pursuing us, and reaching out to us. He loves us so much that He made a way for us to receive the living water we so desperately need. 

What exactly is that living water? The gift of the Holy Spirit, who grants eternal life to those in whom He dwells. Jesus made this gift possible for us, His enemies, by His death on the cross in our place. Jesus paves the way for abundant life in the Spirit for all those who recognize their need for His salvation and draw near to Him in faith.

### ▪ **How should receiving the gift of living water from Jesus change one's life?**

**Read John 4:19-24.**



Debates about the “proper” way to worship are familiar to most of us. People have opinions about what time church services should start, how long they should be, what ministries should be available, which Bible translation churches should use, what styles of music are appropriate, what types of dress are acceptable, whether there should be chairs or pews, even what color the carpet should be. Opinions are fine to have, but if we are not careful, our personal preferences about the physical spaces in which we worship can override our understanding of biblical worship.

The Bible makes it clear that our physical spaces of worship are not in need of perfection, nor are they even essential. Jesus pointed out to the Samaritan woman that the time had come when the physical space she worshiped in would not matter. In her case, the debate was whether God should be worshiped on Mount Gerizim, as the Samaritans believed, or on Mount Moriah, as the Jews believed. Jesus issued the surprising statement that worship no longer needed to be defined by geographical boundaries.

Rather, what is important about worship is that it is done in Spirit and truth. Because God is spirit, a nonmaterial, divine being, so must our worship be in spirit, specifically in the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of truth (John 15:26).

# COMMENTARY

**Main Point:**  
God's people worship  
in Spirit and in truth.

## John 4

**1-6.** The story of Jesus' interaction with the woman at the well began with a couple of geographical details. These details are essential to understanding the dynamics of the conversation about to take place.

The route Jesus selected to travel from Judea to Galilee was quick, but not common. It took Him through Samaria, an area that most Jews would avoid. The Samaritans were considered "half-breeds" whose forefathers were Jewish but had intermarried with Assyrians. A result of their history, they were despised by many Jews.

Jesus rejected the culturally acceptable route that went around the Samaritans. Instead, He took the direct route, and this decision placed Him at Jacob's well around noontime, when the social outcasts came to draw water.

**7-14.** This dialogue occurred between Jesus and a woman who was likely considered a social outcast. Jesus initiated the conversation when He asked for a drink of water. In Jesus' day, this conversation was taboo. A teacher of the law or a Rabbi would avoid talking to a woman, especially one from this ethnic background and with this social history.

The woman's response included an element of surprise. Don't you realize I'm a Samaritan? She saw herself as "out-of-bounds" and "cast out" by the Jews, and perhaps devalued because of her ethnicity.

But Jesus advanced the conversation in a way that implied this conversation was God's gift to her. He steered their discussion about water to the need for living water only God can offer—the gift of salvation, the gift of God Himself through the work of Jesus the Son and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. To a woman whose soul longed for satisfaction, Jesus spoke of living water that would quench spiritual thirst.

## 99 Essential Doctrines (p. 112, DDG)

### Christ as Reconciliation

Ever since the fall of the first man and woman in the garden of Eden, God and human beings have been estranged. Sin resulted not only in an estranged relationship with God but also in enmity between God and humanity. Sin is an infinite offense against an infinite God. Thankfully, God loves His enemies and has sent Christ to be the reconciler between us and God. Through Christ's death, God provides the means whereby that broken relationship is restored and renewed (Rom. 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:18-19).



## TEACHING PLAN

- **What should our churches look like if we are worshiping in Spirit and truth?**
- **Jesus taught that worship isn't tied to a place, but is something first and foremost of the heart. Why is this important in our daily lives? How can we apply this when attending church?**

**Read John 4:25-26,28-29,39.**




Throughout the Gospels, Jesus was hesitant to proclaim His identity outright when traveling and teaching amongst the Jews. He likely wanted to avoid the political and military baggage many Jews had attached to their expectation for the Messiah. With the Samaritan woman, however, Jesus came right out and said it. He could not have been any clearer—Jesus is the long-anticipated Messiah, the promised One come to save His people.

As the Messiah, Jesus accomplished the work of reconciling us to God. He is the sacrificial Lamb who takes away the sin of the world, the means by which our broken relationship with God is restored and renewed (John 1:29). It is His perfect righteousness that is presented to the Father on our behalf for our justification. He is the triumphant King who delivers His people and restores all of creation. If we trust that Jesus is who He says He is, then He is our salvation.

When the Samaritan woman learned of Jesus' identity as the Messiah, she went back to her town and shared with her people. Since the woman came to the well in the heat of the day (John 4:6-7), when other women were unlikely to be there, it is probable that she was some kind of a social outcast, perhaps because of her history with men (John 4:16-18). But she did not let that stop her from being an evangelist. Such was her excitement that she told everyone about Jesus, wondering "Could this be the Messiah?" Through sharing the testimony of her encounter with Jesus, many of the Samaritans believed in Him (John 4:39-42). Her story drew others to His side.

Today, our testimonies can work in the same way. Sharing with our neighbors about the ways Christ has worked in our lives and spreading the news that He is the Messiah invites people to come to Him themselves. Encountering Jesus as the Messiah ought to inspire us to tell others about Him. We shouldn't be able to resist telling our neighbors about Him anymore than we can resist sharing when we've just aced a final exam or when we've won a free car or when a loved one is finally cancer-free. And we shouldn't want to resist telling people. Jesus is the Messiah—this is amazing news!

Often, instead of yielding to the Holy Spirit as He leads our hearts to share Jesus with others, we enter into a battle with Him over control in our lives, over our social standing, reputation, status, and dignity. The good news is Jesus still wants to meet us there in His loving-kindness that leads us to repentance so our lives can echo again His glory to those around us. 

- **How does the Samaritan woman's response challenge us when it comes to pointing others to Jesus?**

# COMMENTARY

**Main Point:**  
God's people worship  
in Spirit and in truth.

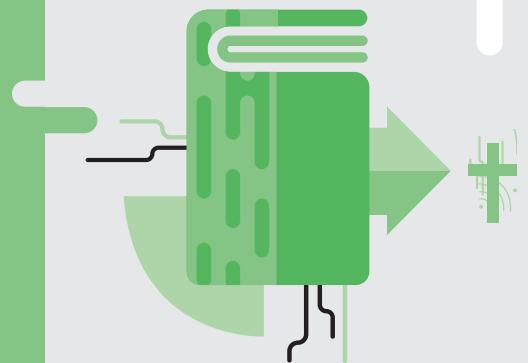
## John 4

**19-24.** We are only able to worship because of Jesus and what He accomplished on the cross. Though the Samaritan woman did not yet recognize it, Jesus wasn't just a prophet—Jesus is the Prophet. The Jews and Samaritans were expecting the arrival of a prophet who would be like Moses and who would answer all their questions. But Jesus exceeded these expectations. As God's Son, He possesses the knowledge, wisdom, and authority of God to respond to every situation and longing of the human heart. He also was able to make atonement for people's sin once and for all, thereby forging the path for them to enter into true worship of an everlasting communion with the one true God.

Apart from the revealed knowledge of God, it is impossible for us to worship Him, and God has chosen to reveal Himself—His character and nature—to the world most fully through Christ, the Word made flesh (John 1:1,14; Heb. 1:1-3). Through the Spirit-inspired Scriptures we have the person of Jesus revealed to us, and through the Spirit we are able to have personal understanding of the person of Jesus. When a person is filled with the Holy Spirit by faith in Jesus Christ, he or she is then capable of seeing the kingdom of God and knowing God in truth. It is only through new birth in the Spirit that we are taken from our broken state in sin and made new, able to see and know God through revelation given by His Spirit. Thus, it is only through Jesus that we are enabled to truly worship because we cannot worship what we don't know.

## (p. 113, DDG) Christ Connection

Jesus told the Samaritan woman that a day was coming when worshipers would not focus on the physical location of their worship but would worship God in Spirit and truth. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, our worship is no longer confined by geography. We worship Jesus as the Savior of the whole world wherever we are.



# Our Mission

God's Story has always been designed to connect with our story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own. Suggested answers to these questions can be found on the right-hand side of the page for leaders.

## Head



**Why does God emphasize the importance of worshiping in both Spirit and truth?**

**What happens when only one of these is present?**

## Heart



**What does it mean that the water Jesus provides has the ability to satisfy us completely?**

**What are some areas of life where we have sought satisfaction in other things more than in God Himself?**

## Hands



**What can we learn about the disciples' response versus the Samaritan woman's response after discovering who Jesus is?**

**When was the last time you broke "social protocol" to minister to someone? Why is it important that Christians be seen as breaking cultural barriers instead of creating them?**

## Main Point: God's people worship in Spirit and in truth.



### Head

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We see in this account that God desires people to worship Him rightly, and to worship Him rightly means to worship Him in Spirit and in truth. To worship in Spirit and truth means we must be born again—of the Spirit—and be satisfied with all God is in the person of His Son, Jesus. Our worship must be saturated in the Scriptures and must focus our attention on Jesus—God in flesh. Worship involves both components. Genuine worship of God requires an accurate understanding of who God is and what He has done for us, which is why truth is essential. Likewise, knowing the truth of God without being born again wouldn't amount to genuine worship, which is why both components are essential.



### Heart

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The living water—the Spirit—that Jesus taught the Samaritan woman about satisfies completely. The Holy Spirit fills us with eternal life and helps us to worship our Maker as we ought—in Spirit and truth. When we encounter Jesus as the Messiah and believe in Him, we may receive and drink the living water only He can provide. And only through Jesus can we worship in Spirit and truth because He is the revelation of God. Because of the gift of God of the Son and the Spirit, we are motivated to share the good news of Jesus with others so they can believe and join in the worship He provides.



### Hands

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The disciples arrived at the pivotal moment of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman, after having ventured into town to find food. They wondered about His motives for breaking cultural protocol, for ignoring ethical and cultural barriers. While they were questioning in their hearts what Jesus was doing, the Samaritan woman left her water jar and ran back into town. As soon as she understood that Jesus was the Messiah, she dropped everything and told others about Him.

We can learn from, and probably identify with, both of these reactions. Christians, among all people, should be least concerned about maintaining cultural and social expectations if it means getting the gospel to those who have not heard. Our reaction should be like that of the Samaritan woman, who responded to Jesus by telling others about Him.



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