

WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY

The Glory of Christ as our Only Treasure

INTRODUCTION

Illustration: Bruce Brunelle & Amway ☹️

In the end, I wasn't so much turned off by the product. I was hurt because a friend deceived me. He wasn't honest. He used trickery and deceit to try to win a customer. Of course, this is not unusual in the world of business, but it should be non-existent in Christianity – especially as it relates to the proclamation of the Gospel. Paul wrote about this in 2 Corinthians:

“But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.” (2 Corinthians 4:2, ESV)

Paul was defending himself against accusations of being manipulative – using dishonest tactics. He refused to accept the charge that he was using deception. And he would not agree that he was distorting the Word of God. There are a few ways that we can err in this regard but there is one in particular that we should be aware of: when the gospel we offer people portrays God as a means to our own ends, instead of God being the end.

In other words, we want to avoid treating God as currency to get what we want.

Jesus is going to face that issue, head-on at a well in Samaria.

SCRIPTURE TEXT: (John 4:1-15)

1. THE CULTURAL CONTEXT (John 4:1-6)

“Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. And he had to pass through Samaria. So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.” (John 4:1–6, ESV)

You will recall that Jesus was in Judea and John was baptizing, almost in the lower area of Samaria. When this news went out that Jesus was baptizing more than John, it seems that rather than cause confusion and an unnecessary fuss, Jesus left to go to Galilee. Galilee is north of Samaria. Therefore, we read that “he had to pass through Samaria”.

He came to a place called Sychar that dates to a time, according to Genesis 33:19, when Jacob bought this parcel of ground and later gave it to his son Joseph (Genesis 48:22). Not a lot is known about Jacob's well, but it was probably a dug out well, fed with an underground stream. This same well can be seen today, which is an interesting verification of this account.

John makes two references to the humanity of Jesus. We read that "Jesus learned" that the Pharisees were making something of his popularity; and secondly, we learn that Jesus was "wearied" from his travels, which probably included that reality that he was thirsty. This is an important truth that the first readers would need to know. John has already established the fact that Jesus is God; but Jesus was also fully human. It was necessary that the Messiah be fully human and fully Divine. About the same time as John wrote his second letter, he had around him people who were attacking the Christian truth that Jesus, the Anointed One, the eternal Son of God had taken fully human nature so he could accomplish salvation. He wrote:

"By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already." (1 John 4:2–3, ESV)

To reject this truth is to reject all hope of reconciliation with God, while to receive it is to receive God Himself. So what happened when our Lord stopped in Samaria?

2. THE CULTURAL CONFLICT (John 4:7-9)

"A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) 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.)" (John 4:7–9, ESV)

There was great animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans¹. During the Assyrian captivity, the oppressors made the Jews marry pagan wives. Jews viewed Samaritans as being half-Jews. There was racist enmity between them. The Samaritans withdrew from the worship of God at Jerusalem and established their own worship at Mt. Gerizim in Samaria. Samaritans also only believed the Pentateuch God's Word. So, the Jews treated the Samaritans as heretics.

¹ "From the time of King Ahab's father Omri, Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel (1Ki 16: 24). Scripture says that when Israel was exiled, foreigners settled in the land, mixed with remaining residents, and mixed their foreign gods with the true God of Israel (2Ki 17: 23– 35; cf. Ezr 4: 9– 10). Nehemiah reports Samaritan opposition to his plan to strengthen Jerusalem (Ne 4: 2) . . . Samaritans and Jews were hostile toward each other's holy sites. Jews insisted that Jerusalem was the proper place for the temple; Samaritans insisted that it was Mount Gerizim (Josephus, Antiquities 13.74); the extant form of the Samaritan Pentateuch even includes the demand to worship at Gerizim in the Ten Commandments!" - HarperCollins Christian Publishing. NIV, Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, eBook: Bringing to Life the Ancient World of Scripture (Kindle Locations 239870-239881). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

As Jesus sat and rested at this well a Samaritan woman came for water. “This was unusual for two reasons: first, women generally came in groups rather than singly; and second, they came in the morning rather than the heat of the day. Likely (as we will see) this was because she was considered an immoral woman and so was not welcome in the company of the others. She came when she could be alone.”²

3. THE COMPASSIONATE OFFER (John 4:10-14)

“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.’ 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? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 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.’” (John 4:10–14, ESV)

The woman was taken back by Jesus’ request for a drink. She must have been really put on her heels when he said this: *“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.”*³ Jesus said in so many words, “If you knew who I was and what I truly offer’ you would ask me.”

Of course, the woman kept thinking along the lines of human need and physical water. She didn’t seem to understand the importance of what Jesus said. “If you knew who I was and what I offer” you would ask. Jesus explains:

“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.” (John 4:14, ESV)

For those of us who read this account we readily can see that Jesus was drawing from many references in the Old Testament about the promises of living waters (e.g., Zechariah 14:8, Ezekiel 47:9, Jeremiah 2:13, etc. But Jesus is speaking to a Samaritan. She disbelieved all the Old Testament except the first five books. But even in the Pentateuch we read of such a promise. In Numbers 24:5–7 (ESV) we read:

“⁵ How lovely are your tents, O Jacob, your encampments, O Israel! ⁶ Like palm groves that stretch afar, like gardens beside a river, like aloes that the Lord has planted, like cedar trees beside the waters. ⁷ Water shall flow from his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters; his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.”

² Osborne, G. R. (2018). [John: Verse by Verse](#). (J. Reimer, E. Ritzema, D. Thevenaz, & R. Brant, Eds.) (p. 101). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 4:10). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

The late Dr. F.F. Bruce shows that there have been discoveries of Samaritan liturgy quoting this verse in anticipation of the Messiah that would come and reign. Even as a Samaritan, this woman could have known this. So, let's be clear about Jesus' offer to this woman. He was offering her a new authority in her life. Jesus offered her cleansing from sin, new spiritual life and the transforming power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

4. THE COMPLICATED ACCEPTANCE (John 4:15)

"The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.'"
(John 4:15, ESV)

The woman responded to his invitation: "Sir, give me this water." At that point many of us evangelicals would have chalked up a convert. She made a decision! She said "yes" to Jesus. But not quite. She accepts the offer, but John records her motivation: "So that I will not be thirsty or have to come here every day to draw water."⁴ Why does she accept the invitation of Jesus? Answer: So she doesn't have to keep making these trips to Jacob's well.⁵ "She wanted this living water so that she would not have to come all the way out to Jacob's well every day."⁶

Now at this point, she viewed Jesus as a means to an end. She accepted his offer because she thought it would make her life easier. In other words, she was treating Jesus as currency to get what she wanted.

To stop here, enters a subtle, but deceptive distortion of the Gospel. There's a subtle distinction in the Bible. It's a matter of where your emphasis is; where you place the priority. To place your faith in Christ so that your job is easier, your marriage is happier, your health is better, your life is easier is misplaced faith.

Let me illustrate it this way: I love my wife. In marriage I commit myself to her. If I love her so that my meals are prepared for me; so that my socks are washed; so that my needs of companionship are met, you would scold me for misplaced affection. The truth of the matter is that when I love her for who she is, I do receive some of these blessings. The issue is priority. The issue is emphasis.

It is impossible to separate Christ from his blessings. That's how we experience Him. We experience Christ through His forgiveness, His justification, His mercies and His gifts. If we weren't sinners, we would have no trouble loving Jesus and loving His gifts in proper perspective. But we are. Because we are sinners, we are prewired to turn His blessings into alternatives. In my opinion that's why the topic of sin and worship that this woman will engage in, will correct that.

Application

⁴ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 4:15). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁵ Carson, D. A. (1991). [The Gospel according to John](#) (p. 220). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

⁶ Hindson, E. E., & Kroll, W. M. (Eds.). (1994). [KJV Bible Commentary](#) (p. 2084). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Jesus is going to press this matter further in this Gospel. At some point we need to ask the question, "Do we love the bread more than the Bread of Life"? "Do we love the water more than the Fountain?" John Piper has become known for asking the question, "Why do you want to go to Heaven?" He said, if part of the answer to that question is not "God," then you are missing the point of everything.

The good news of salvation is that you get Jesus. The good news of the Gospel is that you get God. If that fails to thrill our souls this morning, we ought to be terrified. Like the woman at the well if "all that thrills our souls" is not Jesus, then we have either a problem of sin; or a problem of worship (what we value); or both.

Inspired writers have carried this same passion. Listen as I read these verses:

- *"And he said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.'" (Matthew 22:37–38, ESV)*
- *"One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple." (Psalm 27:4, ESV)*
- *"The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot." (Psalm 16:5, ESV)*
- *"As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God." (Psalm 42:1, ESV)*
- *"I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better." (Philippians 1:23, ESV)*

What does it look like to love Christ more than His gifts? Here's some examples:

- *"Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.'" (Daniel 3:16–18, ESV)*
- *"Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation." (Habakkuk 3:17–18, ESV)*
- *"Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ" (Philippians 3:8, ESV)*

The writer of *Be Thou My Vision* refers to God by many descriptive titles: Vision, Lord, Best thought, Wisdom, Word, Great Father, High King, Inheritance, Treasure, Sun, Ruler, Heart and others as well.

Coming one upon the other, they overwhelm the reader—and singer! —with the belief that the hymn writer was consumed with one burning conviction: This God alone deserves "first place." Who would

dare to substitute anything or anyone else! Let us sing this in response to God's word to us this morning.