

JOHN

Chapter 4

Jesus Talks With a Samaritan Woman

The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John,² although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples.³ When the Lord learned of this, he left Judea and went back once more to 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 the sixth hour.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.)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.)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."**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 flocks and herds?"¹³ Jesus answered, **"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again,¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."**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."**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."**¹⁹ "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet.²⁰ Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."²¹ Jesus declared, **"Believe me, woman, 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 spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."**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 who speak to you am he."

4:1 Pharisees. The religious leaders took a close interest in John the Baptist (see note on 1:24) and then also in Jesus. (CSB)

The Pharisees were interested in the shifting religious influence, anticipating that this would affect them too. (TLSB)

4:2 The disciples did not baptize without Jesus' approval (3:22). (CSB)

4:3 left Judea. Success (which aroused opposition; see 7:1), not failure, led Jesus to leave Judea. (CSB)

Jesus may have been avoiding premature conflict with the Pharisees, but He was also being led by the Father's direction. (TLSB)

Even at this early day the Pharisees were watching the activities of the Lord with jealous eyes. His growing popularity gave them much uneasiness. And there was a disquieting factor also for Jesus in the situation. The testimony of John and His own teaching had their effect in bringing an ever-increasing multitude to His baptism, which He, however, did not administer in person, but through His disciples. While there was not the slightest intimation of unpleasantness on the part of John the Baptist, there was still the danger of invidious comparisons, and Jesus apparently had no intention of interfering with the ministry of John at this time or ever. But the Pharisees, as Jesus found out, had heard the news that He was making more converts than John. These self-righteous hypocrites were declared opponents of the truth and therefore also of John, the teacher of truth. Should they therefore hear that the baptizing of Jesus was having such extraordinary success, they might be constrained to assume that Jesus was acting in opposition to John. This result Jesus wanted to avoid, and therefore, with a fine tact, which deserves wide imitation, He left Judea and set out for Galilee. (Kretzmann)

4:4 had to go. The necessity lay in Jesus' mission, not in geography. (CSB)

Jesus "had to" (*edei*) go *through* Samaria. According to the Jews, he was "supposed to" go *around* Samaria, but according to his Father's plan, he "had to" go through the region. He had to go through Samaria just as he "had to" "be lifted up" (3:14; 12:34), do his Father's work (9:4), bring other sheep (10:16), and "rise from the dead" (20:9). It was necessary to go, to do, to be lifted up, and to rise for that woman, in whom we see ourselves. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

Jesus took the most direct path between Judea and Galilee. But God's will and plan also required this route for the sake of those in Samaria. (TLSB)

Samaria. Here the whole region, not simply the city. Jews often avoided Samaria by crossing the Jordan and traveling on the east side (see notes on Mt 10:5; Lk 9:52). (CSB)

He was not so sensitive about contamination from contact with Samaritans as many Jews were, who, for that reason, usually took the road on the other side of the Jordan when traveling to Galilee. Jesus took the shortest route, and thus was obliged to travel through Samaria, the country between Judea and Galilee. Samaria took its name from the city Samaria, or Shomron, 1 Kings 16, 24. When Shalmaneser, in 722 B.C., carried Israel away into Assyria, a small number of the inhabitants remained in the country. To these were added heathen from Mesopotamia, and the result was a mixed population, in whose midst Jehovah was still nominally adored, but who also worshiped the gods of the heathen. When the Jews returned from their captivity, the Samaritans made an attempt to join them, and when this effort proved unsuccessful, they built a temple on Mount Gerizim. Their religion, in which they accepted only the Pentateuch as the inspired Word of God, was a strange mixture of Judaism and paganism. The territory of Samaria at the time of Christ was included in the tetrarchy of Archelaus and was under the procurator Pontius Pilate. On the north and east was the country of Herod Antipas, Galilee and Perea. (Kretzmann)

4:5-26 Our text is an outstanding story of Jesus Christ's love—overcoming ethnic and religious prejudice for the sake of a soul. What a Christ-like challenge for us, in opposition to the concept of exclusive homogenous church growth! Jesus uses a chance meeting to speak of salvation to a Samaritan woman. Christ wants all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Not long after Jesus shares “the Gospel in a nutshell” with Nicodemus, he is speaking with this woman in Samaria. How better could the evangelist show that Jesus really meant what he said when he told Nicodemus that God loved “the world”? Who is it that struggles with the thought of Jesus as the Messiah? In ch 3 it is the religious establishment (in Jerusalem, Nicodemus, the Pharisee, a true Jew) and the religious uprising (John's disciples, true followers of a new way). In ch 4 we see quite a contrast as Jesus encourages a dialogue with the religious opposition (in Samaria, a Samaritan, a woman and one of bad reputation!). Leave behind your opinions of a local savior (Gerizim vs. Jerusalem) and see the One who comes for all people, “the light of the world,” so that all the world may know him as Abraham did, by faith. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

4:5 HE CAME – erchetai puts the stress on Jesus coming. While the disciples are along this is all about Jesus.

The divine “necessity” of v 4 (*Edei*) brings Jesus to Sychar's well. Geography is not involved; the will and plans of God are. Not to be overlooked is the specificity

of John's account: this place, this time of day, this woman at this particular point in Jesus' life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

Jesus enters Samaria. Pious Jews traveling between Judea and Galilee usually took the longer route on the east side of the Jordan in order to avoid Samaria. The statement in v 4 that Jesus "had to" is best understood as meaning that it was the Father's plan for his Son to begin the ministry to all nations. St. John often uses the word *dei* to denote the divine compulsion of Jesus to fulfill the mission for which he was sent (Jn 3:14; 9:4; 10:16; 12:34; 20:9). Contrast Mt 10:5, where Jesus ordered his disciples not to enter Samaria, but to concentrate their first efforts on the people of Israel. The church began to reach out to other peoples in earnest only after Pentecost. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Sychar. A small village near Shechem. Jacob bought some land in the vicinity of Shechem (Ge 33:18–19), and it was apparently this land that he gave to Joseph (Ge 48:21–22). (CSB)

Probably the modern city of Askar, just east of Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, c 1 mi NE of Jacob's well. (TLSB)

On His journey north with His disciples, Jesus came to the little city of Sychar, which was located almost in the center of Samaria. Near this town there was a piece of land which the patriarch Jacob had given to his son Joseph in addition to his share of the country, Gen. 48, 22. (Kretzmann)

4:6 *Jacob's well*. Mentioned nowhere else in Scripture. (CSB)

Intercepts an underground stream. (TLSB)

It was on this piece of land that Joseph was buried. And here was also a well or cistern which Jacob had dug after his return from Mesopotamia. The well, which is now known as Jacob's Well, is within ten minutes walk of the present village of Askar. (It is about a hundred feet deep and is protected by a wall and a coping. (Kretzmann)

paga means spring. The well was fed by a spring.

TIRED – *kopiao* means to work hard and indicates a state of fatigue. Jesus has walked from Judea to Samaria – a distance of 40 or 50 miles, perhaps spread over several days – and he needed rest. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 2)

Reveals Jesus' true humanity. (TLSB)

The humanity of Jesus is on display in the word “wearied.” The “well” itself will be the site and source of the conversation to follow. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

Jesus, being a true man, had become very tired literally, tired out — by the long journey of the morning; for it was now high noon. So He sat down at the well, either on the low wall which served as a railing, or on one of the steps leading to the water's edge. (Kretzmann)

The perfect participle of *kopiaō*, “to work hard; to be tired” indicates a state of fatigue. Jesus has walked from Judea to Samaria—a distance of 40 or 50 miles, perhaps spread over several days—and he needed rest. While St. John often stresses Christ’s divinity more clearly than the other evangelists, he does not shrink from also stressing the true humanity of our Lord, as here and in v 7, where his thirst is implied. The Word made flesh—the Word who is God (1:1, 14)—is tired! It is John who also records that Jesus wept (11:35). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

about the sixth hour. About 12:00 noon. (CSB)

Depending on John’s reckoning of time, the hour may be noon or 6 a.m. (TLSB)

4:7 *to draw water.* People normally drew water at the end of the day rather than in the heat of midday (see Ge 24:11 and note). But the practice is attested by Josephus, who says that the young ladies whom Moses helped (Ex 2:15–17) came to draw water at noon. (CSB)

antlasai denotes purpose. She came for water and had no idea what else she was going to get. People still are looking for food and support and we can use those opportunities to give them more.

While Jesus was sitting there, exhausted, hungry, and thirsty, there came a Samaritan woman out of the city to draw water from the well, the work of the Oriental women to this day. (Kretzmann)

JESUS SAID TO HER – Jesus came first and foresaw all this. It was planned.

Jesus speaks to her, breaking the social barriers between Jews and Samaritans and between men, especially a rabbi, and women. He who has been left behind by his disciples (v 8) leaves these barriers behind to tell the woman about a better “water” that she could receive. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

Give Me a drink. More than a simple request to satisfy thirst. By requesting water from her, Jesus ignored traditional hostility between Jews and Samaritans as well as denigrating attitudes toward women. (TLSB)

Jesus asks this woman for a drink; he initiates the action that breaks the Jewish tradition. His disciples aren't there, or they possibly would question what he is doing. Often our private acts of love are needed to break down cultural barriers, to evangelize those who are different. And "the way to gain a soul is often to ask a service of it" (Godet, quoted in L. Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971] p. 258). See Morris, p. 259, n. 25 for a discussion of what the Jewish customs were in dealing with Samaritans, and what constituted uncleanness. Jews deemed Samaritan women the worst: "The daughters of the Samaritans are [deemed unclean as] menstruants from their cradle [i.e., from birth]" (Talmud, Mishna, *Niddah* 4:1). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Here was an opportunity to do work in the interest of saving a soul, and Jesus took good care to make use of the chance. He deliberately began a conversation with the woman, by asking her for a drink of water. (Kretzmann)

4:8 TO BUY FOOD – Another indication of Jesus' true humanity. Not only was he thirsty. He was also hungry.

Time and occasion were auspicious, since they were undisturbed, the disciples, as the evangelist notes, having gone to the city to buy food for the little company. (Kretzmann)

4:9 HOW CAN YOU ASK ME FOR A DRINK – It speaks primarily of Jewish attitudes toward the Samaritans.

The point of the NIV text note (and probably of the text) is that a Jew would become ceremonially unclean if he used a drinking vessel handled by a Samaritan, since the Jews held that all Samaritans were "unclean."

This Samaritan woman knows that the cultural and religious barrier is falling. She questions Jesus' simple request, for she knows Jesus may be considered unclean as a result. Jesus knows that what makes one unclean is not who one drinks with, but sin in the heart. To that subject he will turn in v 16 as he tactfully probes her to cause her to recognize and confess her sin. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

The woman was surprised at the request of Jesus. In her astonishment she asks how it came about that He, of whom she could tell that He was a Jew, yet asked this favor of her who was a Samaritan. The evangelist explains this by saying that there was no communication between Jews and Samaritans, the hostility

going so far as to exclude even all courtesies by the way. Cf. Luke 9, 53.
(Kretzmann)

4:10-26 “Living water” is one of many concepts on which Jesus expands as he talks with the woman. She came for water; Jesus offers her living water. She refers to our father (Jacob); he speaks of the Father. She mentions a prophet; Jesus is the Prophet (especially for Samaritans who accepted only the Pentateuch and were looking for the great prophet like Moses from Deuteronomy 18). She speaks of worship in Samaria and Judea; he speaks of worship in “spirit and truth.” She hopes for a messiah; he is (*egō eimi*) the Messiah! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

4:10 IF YOU KNEW – Jesus responds to her question by offering her a gift from God. Living water is fresh, flowing water, water that supports life. The connection of water and life was a very obvious one for the inhabitants of the Holy Land. The Sea of Galilee, alive with 30 species of fish, is slowly flowing water as the Jordan River runs into it on the north and out on the south. The Jordan River twists and squirms for 200 miles in its path down to the Dead Sea, which does not flow and does not support life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

But Jesus has no time for racial prejudices when there is a chance to speak of the heavenly wisdom. Instead of being surprised at the question, the woman should have turned right around and, on her own part, made a request.
(Kretzmann)

gift. The Greek for this word is used only here in this Gospel and emphasizes God’s grace through Christ. Jesus gave life and gave it freely. (CSB)

Gk *dorea*, occurs only here in the Gospels; stresses God’s bounty. (TLSB)

The “gift” of God is the grace of God. Here it is an invitation into that grace by inviting the woman to continue the conversation. The conversation moves to the satisfaction of another kind of thirst by “living water.” This is “flowing water” that creates and sustains life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

If she had any idea of the fact that the gift of God in the person and work of Jesus is free for all men; if she had an inkling of the beauty and glory of that gift; if she were aware of the identity of Him that had spoken to her, she would waste no time in idle questions as to proprieties. She would have begged Him at once most urgently and eagerly, and He could and would have given her living water. Jesus here testifies of Himself, of His own person. (Kretzmann)

living water. In 7:38–39 the term is explained as meaning the Holy Spirit, but here it refers to eternal life (see v. 14). (CSB)

Hebrew expression for flowing water. Cf. John 7:38-39, where the expression refers to the gift of the Holy Spirit, who creates new life (3:5; 6:63). *Didache*: “Baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living water” (*ANF* 7:379). (TLSB)

Living water, in the spiritual sense, from Him, the fountain of life, a water to refresh the soul, a water that gives life. Christ's Word and His salvation, which are given freely according to the grace and mercy of God, were here offered to the woman of Samaria. Incidentally, Jesus challenged the curiosity of the woman by emphasizing living water. The pool before them was probably rainwater, gathered here from the surrounding hills. But the water which He had in mind was far from being stagnant: it had life and strength in fullness. (Kretzmann)

4:11-12 The best wells contain water flowing from a spring. If a well had only standing water, and it became stagnant, it would take life and not give it. Her question indicates that she is thinking only of alternative sources of water. Is there a better, faster-flowing well nearby, greater than the well dug by Jacob? Notice that her concern has also shifted to the person of Jesus. Who is he? But she begins her question with *mē* (not *ouk*), and so she expects a negative answer (*BAGD* 517a, C.1.); at this point she thinks he is not greater. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

4:11 *deep*. Christian pilgrim sources as early as the fourth century mention a well in this area that was about 100 feet deep. When the present well was cleaned out in 1935, it was found to be 138 feet deep. (CSB)

According to archaeology, it was the deepest well in Israel at that time. (TLSB)

phrear well, not spring. The best wells contain water flowing from a spring. If a well had only standing water, and it became stagnant, it would take life and not give it. Her question indicates that she is thinking only of alternate sources of water. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 2)

The Lord had gained His first object; He had awakened the curiosity of the woman; He could now expect to draw her out. The dignity of His speech and bearing caused her to address Him as Lord, but her answer showed that she was very skeptical about His ability to perform what He had promised. He had no vessel to draw water with, and the cistern or well was too deep for Him to get water without the aid of such a vessel; how could He, then, produce water, and living water, that is, water from a spring, at that? In this way, the woman understood His words as referring to physical, earthly water only. (Kretzmann)

The invitation for the woman to drink living water still rings as something physical and part of this life. She is puzzled at how Jesus would be able to draw such water from this, Jacob's well; he has no bucket. “Where” takes on a twofold

meaning; both wells (Jacob's and the flowing well of God's kingdom) are truly "deep." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

4:12 *our father Jacob*. Respect for the past prevented her from seeing the great opportunity of the present. (CSB)

The comparative "greater" means more than it says even if offered in a contemptuous manner. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

Though surprised, the woman was confident that Jesus could not be greater than the patriarch. (TLSB)

She puts Jacob on a level with herself, a drinker of physical water. Actually, Jacob was a true believer who drank the water of life. (CSB)

If Jesus could give her living water at this place, that is her argument, then He must be greater and mightier than Jacob, whom the Samaritans also, having Israelitish blood in them, regarded as their forefather. Jacob had done much for them in providing this well, out of which he himself had drunk, and his children, and his cattle. If Jesus could give the Samaritans better water than that of this well, then He must be a greater, mightier man. The understanding of the woman was altogether carnal. (Kretzmann)

4:13-15 Here Jesus extends to her the full offer of salvation. No longer is he speaking of well water. The key parallel to these verses is Jn 7:37–39, where Jesus again invites all who are thirsty to drink the living water of eternal life that he alone supplies. There John clarifies that this water relates to the Spirit, who had not yet been poured out. However, the subsequent history of the church after Pentecost shows clearly that this water is connected to the water of Baptism. Time and time again, the promise of the forgiveness of sins, incorporation into God's people, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit occur in conjunction with Baptism (Acts 2:38–39; 8:36; 10:44–48; 16:33; 18:5–6; 22:16; etc.). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Is 55:1–2 is a similar offer of free water to the thirsty by God's grace. The theme is continued in Rev 21:6; 22:17, in the context of the new heavens and new earth—heaven. That is the destination of all who respond to Christ's invitation and drink his life-giving water. In that place there will be no unquenched thirst—physical or spiritual. Though not fully understanding Jesus' message, the woman is moved to request, "Give me this water." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

4:13 WILL BE THIRSTY AGAIN – How often don't have to drink water! We can live without food much longer than we can without water.

Jesus tries to open her understanding by an explanation. Every person that drank of the water of that well would become thirsty again. The physical thirst of a person may be quenched for a little while by a drink of water. (Kretzmann)

The transition from water for a thirsty body to water that quenches a thirsty soul (the fourth beatitude). “Everyone,” “drink,” “water,” and “thirst” move the conversation into the matters of the kingdom of God and of the Spirit (ch 3, Nicodemus). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

4:14 NEVER THIRST – In contrast to the temporary satisfaction ordinary water brings. (TLSB)

“Never thirst” and “eternal life” are now plainly connected, even if the woman is slow to comprehend the truth Jesus is speaking to her. (In Wisconsin, a water fountain is a “bubbler”—an apt term for water “welling up,” “leaping.”) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

People cannot live without water. But this water (the Gospel) will quench thirst forever. Furthermore, in the person whose thirst has been satisfied there will be a spring of water which springs up into everlasting life. He is saying that the reception of God’s gift of life becomes a permanent possession.

welling up. The expression is a vigorous one, with a meaning like “leaping up.” Jesus was speaking of vigorous, abundant life (cf. 10:10). (CSB)

This is a metaphor of a bubbling spring and pictures the life of the Holy Spirit within believers, which will come to full realization in eternity. (TLSB)

The water to which He is referring is not that which is drunk with the mouth. It is of a nature that it quenches one peculiar thirst forever. In all eternity such a person will never be bothered by thirst again; for the water which He proposes to give will become in him that drinks of it a fountain of water bubbling up into eternal life. His gift is living water with the power to produce life and to keep bubbling with life and strength, and thus daily producing new power, enabling the possessor to gain eternal life. All the thirst, all desire and longing of people, is satisfied forever by this water; for that is His salvation, which He has brought and proclaimed. That alone can fully satisfy the heart. The salvation which Christ gives works a new, a spiritual life, and this life is fully realized and completed in eternity. The Lord’s purpose to arouse interest, to stimulate desire for this wonderful water, was successful, though the woman did not yet understand what He was referring to. (Kretzmann)

4:15 GIVE ME THIS WATER – At first he awakens in her a longing for something higher and nobler than the earthly considerations which have been her focus to this point. She still doesn’t understand. She wants this water for only two

purposes: to quench her (physical) thirst once and for all, and so that does not constantly have to come here.

She is still stuck on a thirsty throat. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

Her one concern is that she may be saved the trouble of coming out here every day to draw water and then to carry it home the long distance. The two qualities of the Lord's water have attracted her: the fact that it quenches thirst forever; the fact that it bubbles up ever anew and needs no drawing. (Kretzmann)

Cf. the misunderstanding of Nicodemus (3:4). In both cases the way was opened for further instruction.

4:16-20 Jesus wants the living water not only for her but for her husband. In her answer, the woman avoids the stigma of her sin, but Jesus brings in the history of her life and the facts of the law, further preparing her for the Gospel. She is not, at first, ready to hear. She rationalizes away her sin by pointing to the divisions in God's people. How similar to our times! People avoid their own self-condemnation by pointing to the problems in the church. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

4:16 CALL YOUR HUSBAND – Jesus was leading the woman to an understanding of her sin and guilt. (TLSB)

Jesus, throughout the conversation, showed the true missionary's skill. He had properly prepared the woman's mind to listen to Him as to one that might have a message worth listening to, and not mere idle talk to dispense. The next step is to bring her to an understanding of her sin, to a realization of its guilt. To this end Jesus tells the woman to call her husband, her legal spouse. He knew her heart, mind, and circumstances as well as she did, and better. (Kretzmann)

4:17-18 The Lord revealed His divine omniscience, as in the case of Nathanael (1:48–49). (TLSB)

4:17 NO HUSBAND –The admission that she has no “husband” is also the opportunity to confess, although she offers no more than necessary to answer the words of Jesus. The omniscient eye of Jesus peers into the woman's soul to tell her the truth about her words. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

The woman was struck by the question, but answered quite frankly: A husband I have not. This was a truthful answer, but did not go far enough. (Kretzmann)

4:18 five husbands. The Jews held that a woman might be divorced twice or at the most three times. If the Samaritans had the same standard, the woman's life

had been exceedingly immoral. Apparently she had not married her present partner. (CSB)

The emphasis falls on the “five,” the number of husbands this woman has had. This is far beyond the number allowed by rabbinical teaching (two or three tops). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

Jesus disposes of her doubtful meaning by emphasizing: Well hast thou said, A husband I have not. She had had five husbands, and had left them all in quick succession. The matter of divorces in Palestine at the time of the Lord was fast approaching the condition in which momentary likes or dislikes decided a woman's choice. This woman was now living with a man without the formality of a marriage ceremony, or at best in a common-law marriage. The Lord told her all this, by His omniscience, for the purpose of making her realize her sinfulness, of making her see the depth to which she had fallen. She must become fully conscious of her guilt against the Sixth Commandment and the entire Law before she would have the proper desire and longing for the riches of Christ's salvation. Note: It is always thus when the Lord converts a sinner. At first there are only a few faint sparks of penitence, which would be extinguished without the aid of the Holy Ghost. But then He deepens the consciousness of transgression and guilt, in order that the longing for salvation may be instilled by the sweet message of salvation, by the Gospel. Very often the real battle in the heart of a person begins only after the desire for salvation has been felt. Then Satan tries to drive the sinner into despair. It is then that grace must much more abound. (Kretzmann)

4:19 *a prophet.* Because of his special insight. (CSB)

With the recognition that Jesus must be a prophet (cf 7:39), the woman took a step closer to identifying Him as Messiah. (TLSB)

While the emphasis falls on the word “prophet,” there seems to be more to the substance of her comment and its relation to her present spiritual condition: this “prophet” has exposed her conscience, but this “Sir” did not fiercely judge her relational mess. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

The revelation which Jesus had just made astonished and disconcerted the woman. She had probably never given the matter of her loose living a serious thought, since the marriage-tie at that time was considered anything but binding. Yet Christ's way of putting it in such a naked, unvarnished way struck her conscience with peculiar force. Her words were therefore a confession of guilt, though veiled to some extent. She states, first of all, that she now understood and had the conviction; I see that a prophet Thou art. His knowledge of her sins compelled this admission; But she is sensitive upon the subject and would rather not go into details. Not that she was not conscious of guilt, for she had already shown some degree of longing for salvation. Her question rather showed how deeply she was moved. (Kretzmann)

4:20 *this mountain*. Perhaps the woman did not like the way the conversation was going and so began to argue. The proper place of worship had long been a source of debate between Jews and Samaritans. Samaritans held that “this mountain” (Mount Gerizim) was especially sacred. Abraham and Jacob had built altars in the general vicinity (Ge 12:7; 33:20), and the people had been blessed from this mountain (Dt 11:29; 27:12). In the Samaritan Scriptures, Mount Gerizim (rather than Mount Ebal) was the mountain on which Moses had commanded an altar to be built (Dt 27:4–6). The Samaritans had built a temple on Mount Gerizim c. 400 B.C., which the Jews destroyed c. 128. Both actions, of course, increased hostility between the two groups. (CSB)

Nearby Mount Gerizim, where, according to Josephus, the Samaritans built a temple in the fourth century BC. Remains on Gerizim include ruins of a large building (66 ft by 66 ft) and courtyard. (TLSB)

The shift is to the practice of religion (“worship”) by human choice. Many would say everyone may choose his god and that all religions or denominations ultimately offer the same god. “Jerusalem” or this “mountain”: one is your Jewish opinion; ours comes from our “fathers.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

She is coming clean because her thoughts now turn to worship. Her soul now thirsts for the living God, and desires to become clean with the God whom she has greatly offended.

Since this man was a prophet with the Spirit of omniscience, he would surely be able to give the solution of the standing problem of Samaritan religion, one which had now been bothering them for almost six centuries. She wanted to know where the living God was to be found and which was the true worship. She knew that forgiveness was to be found only with the living God. It was the question of a serious seeker after truth. The Samaritans had for centuries worshiped their god, whom they also called Jehovah, on Mount Gerizim, which was situated near Shechem and Sychar. There had formerly been a fine temple on this mountain, which, however, the Jewish ruler Hyrcanus had destroyed in the year 125 B.C. Since that time the temple had not been completely restored, the Samaritans being satisfied to worship in the ruins. But, on the other hand, as the woman correctly states, the Jews claimed that Jerusalem was the only place where people should worship, Ex. 20, 24; Deut. 12, 5; Num. 9, 5; Deut. 16, 3. 6. Now she wanted to know who was right, the Samaritans or the Jews. (Kretzmann)

4:21-24 Jesus answers her question by pointing to the time which is to come and has now come—the time in which salvation comes from him. All people will worship in spirit and truth, regardless of where they might be, but all such worshipers finally will be brought together in heaven. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Jesus takes the conversation to the reason he has come from the “Father” (the true God of all everywhere). “Believe me” bears double meaning since Jesus standing right before her is the “Truth” from the Father. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

Outside of the Jews, who were God’s vessels for conveying the Word of God, there is no “salvation.” For from the chosen (not favored) race would come the Christ, the promised Messiah, the “salvation” God has promised. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

4:21 THE FATHER – The Father is only one worthy of worship. It doesn’t matter where the “fathers” worship. The place doesn’t matter but the true sources is.

The Lord answers with one of the greatest and most far-reaching announcements of all times, earnestly inviting the woman, at the same time, to give full credence to His weighty words. The time was coming, was even now dawning, when the old earthly, outwardly visible forms of worship would no longer be reckoned as essential. Both places of the Old Testament cultus, that of Mount Gerizim and that of Jerusalem, would then be forsaken. This took place shortly after Christ's ascension. Then the apostles went out and founded a great many congregations, not only in Judea, but also in Samaria. Then the Samaritans that came to faith deserted Mount Gerizim and worshiped the true God in Jesus Christ the Savior. Incidentally, however, Jesus states that there is a difference, even now, though this difference lay not in the place, but in the object of worship. (Kretzmann)

4:22 *worship what you do not know.* The Samaritan Bible contained only the Pentateuch. They worshiped the true God, but their failure to accept much of his revelation meant that they knew little of him. (CSB)

salvation is from the Jews. The Messiah would be a Jew. (CSB)

Gk has a definite article, “the salvation,” a subtle reference to the salvation Jesus alone brings. (TLSB)

The Messiah Himself had to be from the tribe of Judah, according to the OT Scriptures. (TLSB)

The Samaritan religion had received so many additions through the influence of the heathen religions that the, God whom they still designated as Jehovah was in reality a figment of their imagination, just as the gods are which are worshiped by the lodges of the present day. He that rejects any part of the revelation of God will very shortly lose all light, all understanding. With the Jews it was different. They knew the true, living God. To the Jews God had revealed Himself not only in the Law, in the five Books of Moses, but also in the prophecies. All the books

of. the Old Testament were read and explained in the synagogues, and the true Israelites, accordingly, worshiped the true God. The services in Jerusalem were still the right services, as commanded by God. And the reason for this mercy of God, the reason why He had permitted them to keep the right form of worship in Jerusalem, was because by His will and intention salvation was to come from the Jews. The Messiah Himself was a Jew according to the flesh. When salvation had come, when Christ had fully earned the salvation through suffering, death, and resurrection, then the special time of grace for Israel alone was at an end, then salvation was preached throughout the world. (Kretzmann)

4:23 TIME IS COMING – The hour was simultaneously coming and present, since Christ was in the midst of accomplishing everything the Father had sent Him to do. Cf Lk 4:18–19. (TLSB)

The promised “hour” of that Messiah is “now” here (right in front of her). “Worship,” “the Father,” “spirit and truth” all come together. This is the character of worship in “spirit and truth.” The Father seeking such worshipers echoes Jesus coming to “seek and to save” the lost. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

With the coming of Christ the hour of God had come in which the external worship of God at Jerusalem must give way to the true service of God. Then those that worship and pray in truth would pray to the Father in spirit and in truth. Jesus purposely calls the true God Father, for He is now the Father of all believers through the merits of the Savior, His Son. All true believers call upon that God whom they know as their merciful Father, who is reconciled to them through the blood of Christ. The New Testament worship is not dependent upon external forms, sacrifices of animals, prescribed forms of altars and appointments, etc., but is done in the spirit; it depends upon the condition of heart and mind. And it is done in truth, it is the only true, stable, sound method of worshiping. (Kretzmann)

SPIRIT AND TRUTH – Because God is spirit, proper worship is not a matter of geographical location. True worship receives its genuine character from the Holy Spirit’s activity. (TLSB)

WORSHIPERS THE FATHER SEEKS – God actively seeks people out to save them (cf. Lk. 18:10; 1 Tim. 2:4). (TLSB)

4:24 *God is spirit ... worship in spirit and in truth.* The place of worship is irrelevant, because true worship must be in keeping with God’s nature, which is spirit. In John’s Gospel truth is associated with Christ (14:6; see note on 1:14), a fact that has great importance for the proper understanding of Christian worship. (CSB)

“Must worship” brings us to the nature of the words “spirit and truth.” God must give what God expects since we are never perfect. The “gift” offered is salvation. The God-given gift to receive the offered gift is faith. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

That God’s essential nature is spiritual, not material, reinforces the teaching that people should worship “with the inclinations of the heart and by faith (Ap. XXIV 27). Augustine: “Both the Father is a spirit and the Son is a spirit, and the Father is holy and the Son is holy... (The Holy Spirit) is referred both to the Father and to the Son” (NPNF1 3:93). (TLSB)

The Father is anxious to have such people as worship and serve Him in this manner, as give Him evidence of the religion of Christ in their hearts, for He Himself is a spirit. God is an invisible being, with reason and will, with self-consciousness and power; He is a personal God. And in accordance with His person He wants to be worshiped in spirit and in truth. He that will worship God properly must direct his spirit, heart, mind, thoughts to Him, must deal with Him and speak with Him as one person with another. That intimate personal intercourse, without any intervening priesthood, that direct dealing of the believer with his heavenly Father, is a characteristic of the New Testament worship. Only believers can therefore truly pray. Such as have no knowledge of, and no belief in, the reconciliation of mankind through the blood of Jesus have no communication with God. Note: We have in these words of Jesus a glorious revelation concerning the true God as the Father of the believers through the reconciliation made by His Son. Through such messages the Lord intends to awaken and strengthen faith in the hearts of all men and trust in God as their true Father. (Kretzmann)

4:25-26 The woman speaks in the future tense of the Messiah’s coming. Jesus breaks into this future mindset—so understandable in one who may have been an outcast, discriminated against—with his present-tense declaration: “I who speak to you am he.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

4:25 *Messiah ... will explain everything.* The woman’s last attempt to evade the issue. The matter was too important, she reasoned, for people like Jesus and herself to work out. Understanding would have to await the coming of the Messiah (see note on 1:25). The Samaritans expected a Messiah, but their rejection of all the inspired writings after the Pentateuch meant that they knew little about him. They thought of him mainly as a teacher. (CSB)

Samaritans believed a prophet like Moses would restore an era of divine favor. (TLSB)

tell us all things. Perhaps reflects Samaritan views of the Messiah as teacher. Similar expectations appear in the Dead Sea Scrolls. (TLSB)

The Messiah this woman expected was Moses on a larger scale, an entertaining, informative teacher of “all things”—not bringing salvation, hope, or future with God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

The woman had listened to Jesus with increasing understanding, not unmixed, however, with some measure of bewilderment over the depth of wisdom which lay in the words of Jesus. But the drift of the Lord's speech seemed to be that the time of Messianic glory was about to be revealed. Now the Samaritans had some dim and uncertain idea of the promised Messiah out of the Pentateuch. And the woman now voices her hope in this Messiah, who is called the Christ; with His coming, she knows, all type, symbol, and prophecy would be at an end, for He would bring them a full and complete message, clear and unmistakable to their understanding, without type and external worship. (Kretzmann)

4:26 *I ... am he.* The only occasion before his trial on which Jesus specifically said that he was the Messiah (but see Mk 9:41). The term did not have the political overtones in Samaria that it had in Judea, which may be part of the reason Jesus used the designation here. (CSB)

Christ acknowledged that He was the Messiah, also using the enigmatic words “I am” (Gk *ego eimi*). (TLSB)

The “I AM” who was Jacob’s God, “greater than Jacob,” is standing in front of her, not as teacher but as Savior. (Sychar would come to give Jesus the rightful acclaim as “Savior of the world,” v 42.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

Jesus opens wide the floodgates of living water. With these words Jesus tightly fastened the bond with which he drew this soul to himself. Now Jesus helps her with her confession of faith.

Jesus now revealed Himself to the woman in a few simple words: I am He, the man that is speaking with thee. Jesus is the one Savior that can and will give to all men the full Gospel of salvation; He is the Savior of the world. There was no danger in this announcement of the Lord in Samaria; for, unlike the Jews, the Samaritans did not regard the promised Messiah as a king who was to inaugurate political changes, but as a prophet and teacher who would give them the full revelation of God's Word and will. But the plain words of Jesus had taught the woman the true meaning of the Messiah, and she, the sinner, believed Him to be the Savior of sinners. (Kretzmann)

The Disciples Rejoin Jesus

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 Christ?” ³⁰ They came out of the town and made their way toward him. ³¹ Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.” 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?” ³⁴ **“My food,”** said Jesus, **“is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.**” ³⁵ **Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.** ³⁶ **Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the 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.”** 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.** 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.”**

4:27 *were surprised.* Jewish religious teachers rarely spoke with women in public. (CSB)

Jewish custom did not allow a rabbi to speak to a woman in public. The disciples were shocked but held their tongues. (TLSB)

Just as Jesus had revealed Himself to the woman, His disciples returned from the city with the food that they had bought. The fact that Jesus was speaking with a Samaritan woman caused them to wonder as to the reason for this unconventional behavior. And yet none of them inquired as to His object in speaking with her or as to the subject of the conversation. They had learned so much that they must not interfere with His methods. (Kretzmann)

4:28 *left her water jar.* In her excitement, the woman forgot her purpose in coming to the well. (TLSB)

“Living water” is one of many concepts on which Jesus expands as he talks with the woman. She came for water; Jesus offers her living water. She refers to our father (Jacob); he speaks of the Father. She mentions a prophet; Jesus is the Prophet (especially for Samaritans who accepted only the Pentateuch and were looking for the great prophet like Moses from Deuteronomy 18). She speaks of worship in Samaria and Judea; he speaks of worship in “spirit and truth.” She hopes for a messiah; he is (*egō eimi*) the Messiah! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

But the woman, now that the interruption had taken place, forgot the object of her coming to the well. She was so excited over the revelation she had received and so anxious to tell her news in the city that she left her vessel standing at the well and hurried city ward. The faith which had just been kindled in her heart yearned for expression, it constrained her to become a missionary for the Lord. She went away to the city, where at this time of day there was an intermission in labor, and where groups of men could easily be found. (Kretzmann)

4:29 *everything I ever did.* An exaggeration, but it shows the impression Jesus made on her. (CSB)

Her missionary call was: Come and see! Cp. chap. 1, 46. And she based her invitation upon the fact that Christ had uncovered her past to her. Her saying was not an unconscious declaration of her sin. (Kretzmann)

Could this be the Christ? Her question seems full of longing, as though she did not expect them to say "Yes," but she could not say "No." (CSB)

It was a humble confession of sin, combined with a free confession of her belief in Jesus as the Messiah. The people of the city should come and see for themselves whether this was not the Christ. She is sure that they will gain the same conviction which she has gotten from her interview. Note: That is always the first fruit, the first result, of conversion, that a person acknowledges himself to be a poor sinner and confesses Jesus, his Savior. (Kretzmann)

3:30 **THEY CAME** – The woman's announcement was not without results: the men left the city and came to Jesus. A missionary may not have the quick success which the woman here was pleased to see, but the word of confession concerning the Savior, the proclamation of the Gospel, is never without fruit; it will not return to the Lord void. (Kretzmann)

4:31 **EAT SOMETHING** – In the mean time, between the woman's leaving the well and the men's coming from the city, a little incident took place at the well which gave Jesus an opportunity to impart to His disciples some very necessary instruction. The disciples having brought food, they begged their Master to eat, and thus to renew His strength after the exertions of the morning. (Kretzmann)

The disciples had left their Master tired and hungry when they went to buy food (v 8). Jesus turned the disciples' exhortation into an occasion for teaching. (TLSB)

4:32 **I HAVE FOOD** – As true man, Jesus not only became tired and exhausted at times, but He ordinarily was obliged to partake of food to sustain His life. But here He had apparently forgotten all about His fatigue. He tells the disciples that He has food to eat of which they know nothing. The Lord made use of every possible chance to raise the minds of the apostles to heavenly things through the medium of earthly matters. (Kretzmann)

4:33 A misunderstanding similar to that of the woman (v. 15). (CSB)

But the disciples, with the usual carnal understanding which they exhibited, thought only of earthly food and of the possibility of some one's having brought Him something to eat in their absence. In this sense they discussed the matter among themselves. (Kretzmann)

4:34 *My food ... is to do the will of him who sent me.* John often mentions that Jesus depended on the Father and did the work the Father sent him to do (e.g., 5:30; 6:38; 8:26; 9:4; 10:37–38; 12:49–50; 14:31; 15:10; 17:4). (CSB)

“My” is emphatic in the Greek. In contrast to the disciples’ crassly physical misunderstanding (cf. 2:20; 3:4; 4:15), Jesus gave “food” a higher spiritual meaning: His completion of the Father’s mission to save the world (3:16). The OT idea of “portion” may figure into Jesus’ riddle, bringing the ideas of food, work, and standing in the family. (TLSB)

Jesus, therefore, explains to them wherein His food consists. That is food and drink, complete sustenance to Him, if He does the will of His Father that sent Him, and completes His work. Jesus is sustained by the feeling which He has concerning the world's need of salvation. It was the Father's, the entire Godhead's, will from eternity that this salvation should be gained for fallen mankind, and Jesus wanted to carry out the work imposed upon Him by that counsel of the God-head. (Kretzmann)

4:35 *Four months more and then the harvest.* Apparently a proverb that meant something like “Harvest cannot be rushed.” But, while the crops must take their time ripening, in the fields that Jesus referred to the harvest is already ripe. (CSB)

Probably a proverbial saying, used to contrast the period of waiting before harvest with the urgent necessity of realigning priorities for spiritual harvest. (TLSB)

Jesus tries to make His meaning clear to His disciples by an illustration taken from facts before their eyes. Jesus had gone to Judea in April for the festival of the Passover. About nine months He had spent in the southern province. It was now about December, four months before the beginning of harvest. (Kretzmann)

white. Bleached and dried by the sun. (TLSB)

4:36 *draws his wages.* The work, or at least part of it, had been done, and others were working hard. The disciples were not to think that the harvest was far off. Jesus was not speaking of grain but of “the crop for eternal life.” There was urgency, for the crop would not wait. (CSB)

The disciples should pay much closer attention to the spiritual harvest. Lifting up their eyes, they could see the men of the city coming to seek Jesus. Here was a field white for harvest. The Samaritans were ready for the message of the Gospel unto their salvation, the harvest of their souls could soon be gathered in. They were the firstlings out of the great mass of the heathen. That they turned to Jesus was a sign that the great harvest among the heathen of the world was at hand. And this fact was of great importance to the disciples, who were supposed to be reapers in this great harvest of souls for the kingdom of God. (Kretzmann)

CROP FOR ETERNAL LIFE – New believers being gathered into the kingdom of God. (TL SB)

glad together. There is no competition among Christ's faithful servants, and sower and reaper share in the joy of the crop. (CSB)

Emphasizes the urgency of missionary task. While the sower goes out to sow, the harvest is already coming in. Sowing no longer entails waiting. (TL SB)

He that gathers the harvest, by doing so gets his reward; and in the spiritual kingdom the reaper, the messenger of salvation, gathers fruit unto life eternal. In the great harvest festival, therefore, which will be held in heaven, both the sower and the reaper will rejoice together. Cp. 1 Cor. 3, 6—8. In the case of the Samaritans, the disciples, as reapers, almost trod on the heels of the great Sower, Jesus. (Kretzmann)

4:37 See 1Co 3:6–9. (CSB)

In general, it is a great truth that finds its application in the kingdom of Christ: One man has the joy of sowing, another that of reaping. (Kretzmann)

4:38 *Others.* May refer to John the Baptist and his supporters, on whose work the apostles would build. Or perhaps Jesus was looking further back, to the prophets and other godly men of old. Either way, he expected the apostles to be reapers as well as sowers. (CSB)

Perhaps the prophets before Jesus, such as John the Baptist, or maybe even Jesus Himself. (CC)

Jesus Himself had done the work of a sower in Judea, and the disciples had had the joy of baptizing many that were convinced by the Word of the Master. It is a truth which always holds true in the preaching of the Gospel. One pastor sows the seed of the Word, the older generation of people work to bring the Gospel to others, and, as a rule, they see but little of the results. But in later years, after the preliminary work has achieved its object, the successors reap the results in wonderful measure. (Kretzmann)

Many Samaritans Believe

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.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."

4:39 MANY...BELIEVED – The woman did her missionary work well. She spoke with such earnestness and conviction that she persuaded many of the people of the city. Their faith was the result of the woman's testimony, even before they saw and heard Jesus Himself. If we only, individually and collectively, see to it that the Gospel is proclaimed throughout the world, we may rest assured in advance that the blessing of God will attend our efforts, and that there will always be some that will come to faith and acknowledge Jesus as their Redeemer. (Kretzmann)

4:40 STAY WITH THEM – And the testimony of the woman caused also the petition of the Samaritans that the Lord should stay with them. For two days they were privileged to have the Savior in their midst. He taught these souls that were hungry for salvation; He gave them the information which they needed concerning His person and work. And the harvest was rich and plentiful. (Kretzmann)

Jesus had already put aside the division between Jews and Samaritans by speaking to the woman. Now the Samaritans asked Him to stay, something He did not experience in Jerusalem. (TLSB)

4:41 MANY MORE BELIEVED – And the harvest was rich and plentiful. A great many more were gained through the preaching of Jesus, who frankly told the woman that they no longer believed on account of her narrative.

4:42 *the Savior of the world.* In the NT the expression occurs only here and in 1Jn 4:14. It points to the facts (1) that Jesus not only teaches but also saves, and (2) that his salvation extends to the world (see note on 3:16). (CSB)

Expression used only here and 1Jn 4:14, but Christ's objective—deliverance of the whole world—pervades NT teaching (e.g., Jn 3:16; 2Co 5:19). (TLSB)

They themselves had heard the words of eternal grace, they had the firm knowledge and conviction that this man was not a mere teacher or prophet, but that He was truly the Christ, the Savior of the world. That is the simple, but unshakable certainty of Christian faith. That is the right faith, that we do not only

believe to be true what we hear in regard to the wonderful spiritual experiences of others, but that we have the personal conviction regarding Jesus that He is our Savior. (Kretzmann)

Jesus Heals the Official's Son

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.) ⁴⁵ When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, for they also had been there. 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. 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 miraculous signs and wonders," Jesus told him, "you will never believe." ⁴⁹ The royal official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies." ⁵⁰ Jesus replied, "**You may go. Your son will live.**" 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, "The fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour." 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 all his household believed. ⁵⁴ This was the second miraculous sign that Jesus performed, having come from Judea to Galilee.

4:44 *a prophet has no honor in his own country.* Nonetheless, Jesus went to Galilee, because he came to die for our salvation (cf. 1:29). (CSB)

Both the Samaritans (vv. 4-42) and Galileans (vv. 43-54) received Him, while His own people in Judea did not. (TLSB)

4:45 *welcomed him.* The welcome of the Galileans actually was a kind of rejection, for they were interested only in his miracles. They were not welcoming the Messiah who could save them, but only a miracle worker who could amaze them. (CSB)

all that He had done. Miracles Jesus performed while at Passover. The Galileans welcomed this great worker of miracles. (TLSB)

4:1–45 Jesus graciously reaches out to a Samaritan woman, leads her to recognize Him as the Messiah, and through her brings other Samaritans to receive His life-giving blessings. Christians sometimes allow social and cultural barriers to hinder their witness to Christ and His love for all people. Just as Christ forgave the woman her past and present sins, He now freely offers His forgiving love to us and calls us to spread this Good News. • O Lord, let me experience the joy of freely sharing Your Word with others, whoever they may be. Amen. (TLSB)

4:46 ONCE MORE HE VISITED CANA – Mention of Cana and Jesus’ miracle there suggests He was going to build on His past work. (TLSB)

royal official. Evidently an officer in Herod’s service. (CSB)

Probably one of Herod Antipas’s court officials. Or, possibly a relative of the royal (Herodian) family. (TLSB)

4:48 *Unless you ... see ... signs and wonders ... you will never believe.* † The general attitude of Galileans, not that of the official, for the verb in Greek is second person plural. (CSB)

The “you” is plural. Jesus was addressing all the Galileans. He did not want anyone to come to Him merely because of miracles He performed. (TLSB)

4:50 *Your son will live.* Not simply a prophecy, but words of power. Jesus was healing, not forecasting a happy ending (see vv. 51, 53). (CSB)

MAN TOOK JESUS AT HIS WORD – The official came to faith (v. 53) without needing a visible sign. He simply believed what Jesus said. (TLSB)

4:53 *believed.* Cf. the aim of this Gospel (20:31). (CSB)

Genuine faith in Jesus as the Messiah and Savior of the world. (TLSB)

4:54 *the second miraculous sign.* There had, of course, already been many such signs (2:23; 3:2), but this was the second time Jesus performed a sign after coming from Judea to Galilee. (CSB)

Second sign in Galilee recorded by John (cf 2:11); Jesus acted for a specific purpose (20:30–31). (TLSB)

4:46–54 The official, whose dying son Jesus heals in Galilee, comes to a genuine faith in Him before the sign, the wonder, is done. Unlike this official, many today will not believe God’s Word unless they are first shown demonstrative proofs. Despite such unbelief, the Lord Jesus hastens to call all people to faith; He would forgive them and bear their burdens and needs. • Lord Jesus, give me and my entire family unquestioning faith in Your promises. Amen. (TLSB)