

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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Living Stream Ministry
Anaheim, CA • www.lsm.org

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In John 4:15-26 we see the way to take the living water. The Samaritan woman was attracted and asked the Lord for the living water. “The woman said to Him, Sir, give me this water so I will not thirst, nor come here to draw” (4:15). The Lord was a good preacher. He seemed to say, “If you knew who I am and if you knew God’s gift, and if you knew the living water that I give, you would certainly ask for it.” The woman asked for it immediately. The Lord Jesus spoke very briefly and the woman was attracted and asked for the living water.

TO REPENT OF AND CONFESS HER SINS—“HUSBANDS”

When the woman asked the Lord for the water, He did not rebuke her, telling her to repent and make a thorough confession of her sins. No, the Lord spoke softly and gently saying, “Go, call your husband and come here” (4:16). The Lord seemed to be saying, “I want your husband. You ask Me for the living water, and I ask you for

your husband. Let us trade. You trade your husband for the living water.” This word was intended to touch her conscience with her immoral history that she might repent of her sins. “The woman answered and said, I don’t have a husband. Jesus said to her, You have well said, I don’t have a husband; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband; this you said truly” (4:17-18). Did the woman lie or tell the truth? It was a truth, yet it was a lie. It was a truthful lie. The woman then said to Him, “Sir, I see that you are a prophet” (4:19). The Lord’s words frightened her. She seemed to say, “Isn’t this man a Jew? He has never lived in our town. How did he get to know my background? Who told him that I had five husbands and that the one I have now is not my husband?” This is the way to have a gospel talk. Do not talk vainly to people, but touch their conscience, not in the way of rebuking them, but in the way of unveiling them. By the Lord’s gracious and wise words that woman’s conscience was touched.

The thirst of this Samaritan woman had led her to many wrong things, such as having five husbands and living with a man who was not her husband. That was the kind of life she found herself in. She sought the physical things

to satisfy her, but found only dissatisfaction. The six men represent the physical and material things, which could never satisfy people.

Besides the physical things, she also had sought satisfaction in religion. She was very weak, yet it is strange that she talked about religion ([vv. 19-20](#)). Mere religion can never help. Furthermore, she had tradition, for the well of Jacob represents the traditional things ([v. 12](#)). She had a traditional heritage which she inherited from her forefathers. But soon she found emptiness in her tradition. Therefore, this Samaritan woman had three categories of things—the physical things, the religious things, and the traditional things. These three categories represent everything we can get out of human life. There is nothing else in human life other than that which is physical, religious, or traditional. None of these physical, religious, or traditional matters can ever satisfy people, for the more they get these things, the more they become thirsty. There is never an end to their thirst.

The husbands of this woman are a sign. Christ should be the only husband. In [2 Corinthians 11](#), the Apostle Paul told us that he has espoused us to Christ. In other words, he has engaged us to Christ. Christ is the real Husband. But this woman had five husbands besides one other man. The

reason this woman was wicked and immoral was because she was thirsty. Because her many husbands could not satisfy her, she remained dissatisfied. When the first husband did not satisfy her, she sought satisfaction from her second husband. But her second husband did not satisfy her inner thirst either. Then she married the third one, but this one also could not satisfy her; neither could her fourth and fifth husbands satisfy, because the living water was her only need. Regardless of how much she drank the earthly water in her many husbands, she still felt thirsty. Therefore, the Lord told her that whoever drinks of this water shall thirst again. Anyone who drinks the water of physical, religious, and traditional things will thirst again. Only the Lord Jesus has the living water that can quench our thirst.

What do her husbands signify? They signify anything that is other than Christ. Anything outside of Christ may become sinful. If we depend upon anyone or anything other than Christ, that may be quite sinful. The husbands of the Samaritan woman became the history of her whole sinful life. As we have seen, the Lord touched her sinful history in a very wise way. He did not condemn her sinfulness as a sinner or legally make her repent and confess her sins practically as

some evangelists would. Since the Lord knows everything, He simply touched her conscience by asking her to bring her husband. By this way, the Lord helped her to confess her sins and repent.

Because the Lord's word about her husbands touched her conscience, she immediately changed the conversation to the matter of worship. She was quite clever in doing this. Although she was such an immoral woman, she still talked about the worship of God. People may discuss religion and still live in immorality. This woman did not confess her sins, but turned the subject from her husbands to that of worshipping God, saying, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men must worship" ([John 4:20](#)). This change of subject was the subtlety of the Samaritan woman. When the woman changed the subject from her husband to worship, the Lord Jesus took the opportunity to reveal to her the proper way of receiving the living water.

TO CONTACT GOD THE SPIRIT

Listen to the Lord's words about the matter of worship. "Jesus said to her, Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall you worship the Father. You worship that which you do not know; we worship

that which we know; for salvation is of the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and reality; for the Father seeks such to worship Him. God is Spirit; and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and reality” ([John 4:21-24](#)). This word was given to instruct her regarding the need for exercising her spirit to contact God the Spirit. To contact God the Spirit with her spirit is to drink the living water, and to drink the living water is to render real worship to God.

In typology, the worship of God should be (1) in the place chosen by God to set His habitation there ([Deut. 12:5, 11, 13-14, 18](#)), and (2) with the offerings ([Lev. 1—6](#)). The place chosen by God for His habitation typifies the human spirit, where God’s habitation is today ([Eph. 2:22](#)). The offerings typify Christ; Christ is the fulfillment and reality of all the offerings with which the people worshipped God. Hence, when the Lord instructed her to worship God the Spirit in spirit and reality, it meant she should contact God the Spirit in her spirit instead of in a specific place, and through Christ, instead of with the offerings, for now, since Christ the reality has come ([John 4:25-26](#)), all the shadows and types are over.

When He said, “An hour is coming and now

is,” it meant that the age had changed. In the past, according to the Law of Moses, God ordained that His people worship Him at a specific place where He would establish His habitation with His name ([Deut. 12:5](#)). All of God’s worshippers had to go to that unique place. That was a type. Now the age has been changed, and the type is fulfilled. Typically speaking, the place of worship should not be a place any longer; it must be the human spirit, where God is going to set up His habitation with His name.

Why did God ordain in the ancient times that His people had to worship Him in one place? It was for the purpose of keeping unity. God would never allow His people to worship Him in any place other than the place He had chosen. If anyone had worshipped Him in another place, the unity among His people would have been damaged. Where can we keep the unity today? In our human spirit. In our mind, understanding, teaching, doctrine, and concept we all differ from one another. Everyone has different concepts. You have your concepts, and I have mine. You have your way, and I have mine. You have your view, and I have mine. How could we ever be one according to our differing concepts, ways, and views? We must forget about them all and come

to our spirit. When we all turn to our spirit, we are one. We all must be reminded that we have a spirit wherein is God's habitation. Our spirit is the place to worship God, that is, to contact Him. Whenever we worship God in our spirit, it means that we drink God as the living water. When you praise God with your spirit, you immediately have a drink.

The Lord also said that now is the time for the true worshippers to worship God not only in their spirit, but also in reality. In ancient times, God ordained that His people worship Him at the appointed place and with the offerings. The people could not worship God at any place they chose and they could not worship Him without the offerings. They needed the offerings because they were sinful. When they came to contact God, they had to offer many types of offerings—the trespass offering, the sin offering, the peace offering, the meal offering, the burnt offering, the wave offering, and the heave offering. All the offerings were types of the various aspects of Christ. Christ is our real trespass offering. He is also our real sin offering, meal offering, peace offering, and burnt offering. Today, instead of worshipping God in a specific place, we should worship Him in our spirit. Furthermore, instead

of offerings, we should worship Him with Christ as the reality of all the offerings.

Now is the hour, or the age, in which we must worship God in our spirit as the unique place and with Christ as the reality. How can we do it? How shall we apply the matter of worshipping the Father in our spirit? Suppose several brothers come together for the purpose of worshipping God, yet they do not exercise their spirit. Instead they exercise their minds. They begin to discuss the matter of worshipping God and soon are divided due to their conflicting opinions. What these brothers need to do is simply to exercise their spirit, praise the Lord, call upon His name, and see what He will do.

How shall we apply the second point, that is, to worship God with Christ? The traditional way is to call a hymn and then, after the hymn has been sung, to offer a prayer to our Father in heaven. However, when meeting together for worship, we must exercise our spirit. If we do this, the Holy Spirit who indwells our spirit will have the opportunity to move. He may move in one brother, giving him a burden to offer a living testimony of Christ. In doing so, he will offer Christ as one of the offerings. When you give a testimony of your experience of Christ, in the eyes of

God, that is offering Christ to God. Eventually, such an offering will become food to the brother who gave the testimony and to all of the other worshippers. This is the real worship of God.

May the Lord impress us with what is proper worship. The proper worship is continually to drink the living water. God the Spirit is the living water, and our organ for drinking the living water is our human spirit. Whenever we exercise our human spirit to contact God, the living Spirit, we drink of Him as the living water in His Son, Jesus Christ.

TO BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST

Now we come to the last aspect of the way to take the living water—believing that Jesus is the Christ. When the Samaritan woman heard the Lord’s answer to her question about worship, she still tried to turn away to another subject saying, “I know that Messiah is coming, He Who is called Christ; when He comes, He will declare all things to us” ([John 4:25](#)). She seemed to be saying, “You are telling me so many things, but we are waiting for the Messiah to come. When He comes, He will manifest everything.” Then the Lord answered her, “I Who speak to you am He” ([4:26](#)). By this word, Jesus led her to believe that He is

the Christ in order that she might have eternal life (20:31). We see from [verse 29](#) that she believed. Although the Samaritan woman tried every way to escape the Lord, He, in His wisdom, caught her. The Samaritan woman was convinced, believed in Him, and received the living water.

The Lord revealed to the Samaritan woman that the real satisfaction in human life is the Lord Himself. The Lord revealed to her three aspects about Himself: that He is the gift, the Giver, and the way to obtain the gift. The Lord mentioned at least three things about Himself. In [verse 10](#) He said, “If you knew the gift of God,” indicating that the gift of God was the Lord Himself as life eternal. He also told her, “You would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water,” showing that the Lord Himself is the Giver. Finally, by careful reading, we shall discover that the way for the woman to obtain the gift was to contact or drink the Giver Himself.

THE SINNER BELIEVED, WAS SATISFIED, LEFT HER PREOCCUPATION, AND TESTIFIED

After the woman heard that the Lord Jesus was the Christ who was coming, she believed. There was a great change in her life. She left her

waterpot, went into the city, and gave a living testimony to the people. This testimony brought in a marvelous harvest (4:28-42).

According to our natural concept, it takes time to help a person to be saved. We must drop this concept. People can be changed in a second. According to our concept, a sinner needs time to consider, believe, and turn. This concept frustrates our gospel preaching and makes it impotent. We must have the faith that while we are talking with people, the Lord is working in a prevailing way. The Samaritan woman was turned in an instant. In the past, beyond our belief, we have seen many people turn in such a way. The Lord's way to turn people is in the Spirit, in the way of life, not in the way of education. Education takes time. It takes time to teach people. However, when the Lord regenerates people, He makes them a new creation and calls things not being as being. We must have this faith whenever we talk to a sinner. While we are speaking with him, we must exercise our spirit to believe that the Lord is working in him. Spontaneously, something will happen to him, and he will be turned from death to life. Although the Samaritan woman was so immoral, low, and deep in sin, she was turned within a fraction of a second. Her whole life was changed.

She went to the people and said, “Come, see a man Who told me all that I have done; is this not the Christ?” (4:29). This indicates that the woman believed that Jesus was the Christ and that by believing she received the living water and was satisfied. She was certain that Jesus was the Christ, and the Spirit came into her.

The picture in John 4 also shows us that after the woman contacted Christ, she gave up everything. She left both the well and the waterpot (v. 28). She left everything and went into the city to tell the people about Christ, which means that once she contacted Christ, she gave up everything in order to have only Christ as her satisfaction. What a testimony! It is only when we contact Christ, recognize Christ, and receive Christ that we can be satisfied. Then spontaneously we shall give up everything that is other than Christ.

I can never forget an incident that occurred in 1937 when I went to the capital of China for several nights of meetings. After the last meeting, a young wife of a highly educated man said to me, “Mr. Lee, I am much influenced by your preaching and desire to believe in Christ. But I have a problem. I like to go to the theaters and see the operas. If I am going to be a Christian, I am willing to give up all of my bad habits. But

there is one thing that I cannot give up—that is the dramas and operas. This I could not give up. What shall I do?" She was very serious. I was afraid to tell her that it is not right for a Christian to go to the Chinese operas, because she would refuse to become a Christian. Of course, I could not tell her that it was all right for her to become a Christian and still go to the theaters. I prayed that the Lord would give me wisdom. Finally, I said, "Suppose your little child is fond of a dangerous knife that is in his hands. What is the best way to take that knife out of his hands?" She said, "That would be easy to do, if you would scatter a lot of candy on the floor around him." I asked how that would help, and she replied, "The child would drop the knife in order to take the candy. Unless his two hands were full of candy, he would not drop the knife even if you told him to." I commended her on her answer and said, "Do you realize that once you receive Christ the same thing will happen to you?" Immediately, she became clear and was saved that very night.

Do you know why people are thirsting after so many things other than Christ? Simply because they are not satisfied with Christ. If they were satisfied with Christ, all of the other things would be forgotten. The well and the waterpot meant

so much to the Samaritan woman, but after she recognized Christ, she spontaneously gave up those cherished things and went to the people, testifying that Christ was now her satisfying life. Do you have satisfaction in your human life? With what are you satisfied—with Christ, or with the physical, religious, and traditional things? We can be satisfied only with Christ and not with any other thing. If we are going to help others, we must first be satisfied with Christ in order to bring Christ as satisfaction to others. Only when we are satisfied with Christ can we let others know how to receive Christ and contact Him.

THE SAVIOR SATISFIED WITH GOD'S WILL IN SATISFYING THE SINNER

In the case of the Samaritan woman we see the picture of a thirsty sinner and a thirsty and hungry Christ. Both of them were tired because both had walked a long distance to that well. Consequently, both were thirsty and weary. The Lord was hungry, so He sent the disciples to buy food. He was also thirsty, so He asked the woman for a drink. However, it is very strange to note that neither of them ate or drank, yet both of them were satisfied. The saved sinner

was satisfied with the Savior, and the Savior was satisfied with the saved sinner. We know this by the fact that the woman gave up the well and her waterpot and ran into the city to tell about Christ. She was so satisfied that the people came to see if this was the Christ. We know that the Lord Jesus was satisfied because He told the disciples, who had returned with food and asked Him to eat, “I have food to eat of which you have no knowledge” (4:32). When the disciples asked each other whether anyone had brought Him food to eat, He said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him Who sent Me, and to finish His work” (4:34). The Lord’s food was to do the will of Him who sent Him, which means that His food was to save and satisfy sinners. We sinners are the satisfaction to the Savior. Your hunger signifies that the Lord is hungry, and your thirst signifies that the Lord is thirsty. But when you are satisfied, the Lord also is satisfied. The Lord had come to Samaria with a purpose—to find that sinner and to satisfy her. In doing this, He did God’s will. And doing God’s will was His food and satisfaction.

A MARVELOUS HARVEST WAS REAPED

In verse 35 the Lord said, “Do you not say,

There are yet four months and then the harvest comes? Behold, I tell you, Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are already white for harvest.” The Lord told His disciples that the fields were already white. Hence, they must go and reap the harvest. The principle is also true today. We must never say that it is not the time to preach the gospel. If we look on the field, we will see certain people who are really thirsty for Christ. Therefore, we must bring Christ to them and them to Christ. This is how to reap them for Christ.

In [verse 36](#) the Lord said, “He who reaps receives wages and gathers fruit unto eternal life.” The phrase “unto eternal life” is the same in Greek as “into eternal life” used in [verse 14](#). Firstly, you must receive Christ unto eternal life for yourself; then you must bring others to receive Christ unto eternal life. There is a Christ for you to receive as the spring within you bubbling up into eternal life, and there is a harvest for you to reap as fruit unto eternal life. The Samaritan woman did exactly these two things.

In [verses 36 and 37](#) the Lord mentions sowing. Who did this sowing? We may believe that the seed was sown by the Old Testament. The Samaritans were familiar with the first five books

of the Old Testament. Thus, they came to know God and also something concerning the Messiah, the Christ, although it was not very clear or thorough. I believe that that was the seed. Therefore, before the Lord Jesus and His disciples came, many people had been prepared.

Verse 39 says, “Many of the Samaritans from that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified.” Through the living testimony of the Samaritan woman, many more sinners were brought to the Lord. When they contacted the Lord, they all believed and received Him as their Savior. It was a marvelous harvest through her living testimony.

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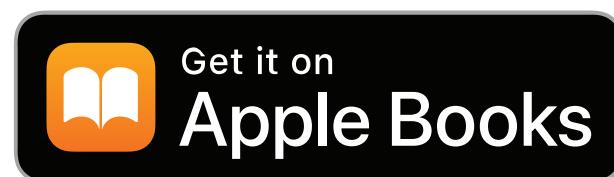
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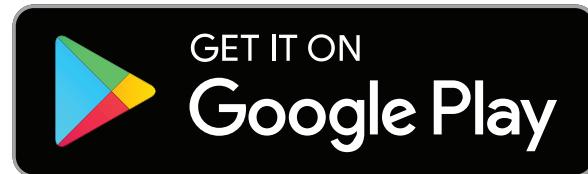
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