

Interviews of Jesus #5

Speedway is a suburb community of Indianapolis. You have probably already guessed that the community of Speedway got its name from the Indianapolis 500 race track that is located in the area. One day, more than a decade ago, a policeman had set up a speed trap and was waiting patiently for drivers who were breaking the speed limit. Sure enough, a car soon whizzed by 20 miles an hour over the speed limit. The policeman flicked on his lights and siren and soon had the car pulled over to the side of the road. But after the policeman approached the driver's window and asked for license, registration and proof of insurance, he quickly realized that there might be another problem here - for there was a reek of alcohol wafting up from the open window. The officer politely asked the driver to get out of the car and perform some basic sobriety tests. And when the driver was unable to successfully navigate, he was arrested, not only for speeding, but for driving under the influence as well, and taken in the squad car down to the police station.

The first thing the accused requested upon arriving at the policestation was that he be allowed to make his one phone call. He was granted that request and then locked in a holding cell. But it wasn't long before the station phones began to ring off the wall. Citizen after citizen calling to complain that they didn't have any water in their house - their water had been turned off. It was only after a half an hour or so of these continuous calls that one of the policemen put 2 and 2 together. These complaints had begun after the man they had arrested had made his phone call. It then only took a few moments to confirm that Max Williams, the man who had been arrested on drunk driving charges, was the supervisor of the city water department. He had become so angry at the indignity of being taken to the police station that he had ordered all the water supply for the entire city to be shut off.

Water is one of the most basic necessities of life. If you want to stir a community into a fervor pitch, turn off all the water. Now in the day in which we are living, when so many professional advertisers spend so much effort trying to convince us that we can't live without their product, we are tempted to think that we need more than we really do to sustain our lives. But in the final analysis, if a person were living in a tropical climate, a person would need light, air, food and water to sustain his life. It is interesting that John used these very pictures of Christ in presenting him as the totality of what a person needs spiritually:

\*Christ said that he was the light of the world - John 8:12

\*He claimed to have the breath of God - John 20:22

\*Jesus said that he was the bread of life - John 6:48)

\*And in the passage that we will look at this morning, the Lord Jesus made the claim that he could provide living water that would make a person never thirst again.

Last week, we looked at the first of 2 interviews of Jesus which are found in back to back chapters in the gospel of John. You will recall the 4 pictures that Jesus presented to Nicodemus as found in John 3 if you were

with us last Sunday - pictures which helped Nicodemus see God's truth more clearly:

\*Birth - a person has to be born again in order to see the kingdom of God.

\*Wind - the working of the spirit of God in a person's life is as mysterious as the wind blowing across the earth.

\*the serpent on the pole - just as Moses made a bronze serpent in the wilderness by the command of God so that those who had been bitten by the poisonous snakes could be healed by looking at it, so Jesus Christ the son of God would be nailed to a cross so that all who would look to him in faith would be healed spiritually from their sins.

\*light and darkness - every person is born into a state of spiritual darkness. But when any person responds to God's truth, that person steps into the light being able to see the realities of life in a whole different way.

Now Jesus left the city of Jerusalem to journey back up into the northern region of Galilee following his interview with Nicodemus. The reason why he left is interesting. The Pharisees had found out that Christ's following was now eclipsing the number of John the Baptist's disciples, and they were trying to drive a wedge between Jesus and John the Baptist. They were unable to oppose the clear truth of God that Jesus was teaching, so they began to take a new tactic - trying to cause division and dissension among those who were sincerely trying to follow God. Jesus would have nothing to do with their childish schemes so he just left the area, dissolving the controversy. But it was this trip that would lead him to conduct the next interview that John records in chapter 4. As I read this interview with this anonymous Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well, notice with me how Jesus lead her to more fully understand who he was. For there are 4 stages which this woman came to in her knowledge of who Jesus was which are brought out in John's account.

1. When this Samaritan woman came out to Jacob's Well to draw water at 6:00 in the evening, she must have been surprised to see a Jewish Man sitting on a rock by the well. She would have been surprised because the Jews didn't usually travel through Samaria. They usually avoided this area by walking through the Jordan River valley. But she would have even been more surprised when he spoke to her, asking her for a drink of water.

Now today, we wouldn't think much about a man whatever race he was asking a woman whatever race she was for a drink of water. But this was something that just wasn't done in Christ's time. Jewish men just didn't speak in public to Samaritan women. And it would have especially been considered a breach of etiquette by most for a Jewish Rabbi to speak to a woman who was a stranger. And to ask for a drink of water? This absolutely astounded this woman. So she responds, *You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?* And John adds, *For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.* The term that John uses here literally means *to have a dealing with, or to use something jointly with someone else.* John is either indicating

that Jews didn't have dealing with Samaritans or that Jews didn't use articles jointly with Samaritans. It is unlikely that John was indicating that there were no business dealings between Jews and Samaritans because the disciples had just gone into town to buy some food - they were obviously going to have a business dealing with some Samaritans. So it is likely that it was a common usage that was being referred to here. And this was likely what amazed this Samaritan woman. That Jesus was asking her to pass her cup or vessel to him for a drink of water. That Jesus would drink out of the same vessel that she used would have astounded her. No religious Jewish man would drink out of an unclean vessel - especially one that was used by Samaritans. But it is clear here that Jesus was more concerned for the spiritual welfare of this woman's heart than he was in the observance of outward etiquette. So he goes on to point out to her that she was unaware of 3 very critical facts: she didn't know who she was really talking to; she didn't know what he had to offer to her; and she didn't know how she could receive what he had to offer. And this so piqued her curiosity that she moved to a second level of understanding about this unusual person.

2. She had recognized him to be a Jewish man, but now she asks if her were Greater than Jacob- *Are you greater than our father Jacob?*

Now it shouldn't surprise us that this woman would be lead to compare Jesus to Jacob. After all, they were standing before Jacob's Well. They were standing on land that Jacob had purchased and had passed down in inheritance to his son, Joseph. And Jacob was a patriarch who was recognized by both the Jews and the Samaritans.

But Jesus was not interested in getting into a debate with her, proving that he was greater than Jacob. So he begins to speak to her of the water that he had to offer that would quench her thirst eternally. Indirectly, of course, Christ was claiming that he was greater than Jacob. Because she had to keep coming back to Jacob's well day after day in order to quench her thirst. But he could give her water that would permanently quench her thirst. *Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 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. 4:13,14.*

We shouldn't be surprised that this woman was intrigued. I think any of our curiosities would have been aroused. Nor should we be surprised that her immediate response was to ask for this magical water - water that would keep her from thirsting again. But Jesus knew that she hadn't reached the level of understanding him where she knew exactly what he was talking about yet. She knew that he was a Jewish man - and she was beginning to see that he was an unusual man, perhaps even greater than Jacob. But before she could have the spiritual healing that she needed, she first had to be confronted with that which separated her from fellowship with God - namely her sin.

3. So Jesus moves on to reveal himself to her as A Prophet-

<sup>16</sup> *He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."*

<sup>17</sup> "I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. <sup>18</sup> 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."

<sup>19</sup> "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup>

Now this woman is beginning to see that Jesus is a very unique man. Here she had just met him moments before. But he reveals knowledge about her that only an intimate friend would know. He must be a special prophet.

But her response to this insight is very interesting, isn't it? It really shouldn't surprise us, because it is the common human response when being confronted with a fault or sin. She tried her best to change the subject as the conversation got too close for comfort.

*Our fathers worship on this mountain, but you claim that Jerusalem is the place to worship.* If she could get the conversation back on religion in general and especially a debate over the differences of their religions, she would feel more comfortable. Anything to take the spotlight off of her immorality. And Jesus' response is most interesting. He doesn't press her weaknesses and sins, hammering them and belaboring them. He has brought her sinful condition to her mind showing her need for a savior and that is sufficient. So Christ takes a further step in leading her to spiritual help. For spiritual help for her would only come through the Messiah, the Savior. So Jesus says without equivocation that *Salvation is from the Jews.* And she immediately sees that he is referring to the Messiah. For she responds *I know that the Messiah (called Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.*

4. The Messiah- Jesus simply responds *I who speak to you am he.* I am that Messiah. I am the one who is a Jewish man, but more than a Jewish man. I am the one who is greater than Jacob, but more than greater than Jacob. I certainly am a prophet, but I am more than a prophet. I am the Messiah who has been sent by God to bring spiritual deliverance to people who have been bound in the sins of their immorality and greed and addictions and pride and every other manner of transgression.

It is only as this Samaritan woman sees the truth that Jesus is the Messiah that she receives the spiritual help that she so desperately needed. Before, she had been trying to avoid her immoral plight. She was willing to discuss and debate, but she would do anything to avoid getting too personal. But like a skillful surgeon, the Lord Jesus Christ continues to probe until he reaches the innermost recesses of her heart. He then brings to her the revelation that is needed to deliver her from her helpless condition. We don't have time to follow the rest of the story as given here by John, but let me just summarize it by saying that this woman became so excited with her personal deliverance that she left her water jar at the well and ran back into town. Just on the basis of her excitement and testimony alone, many in the town believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. Imagine that! Here was a woman who could not have had the best reputation in town - but many believed just from her faith and

enthusiasm. And they came out in search of Jesus Christ the Messiah. And when they found him and heard his teachings from his own lips, many more believed. The last verse of this account concludes:

*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. 4:42.*

The stages that this Samaritan woman went through in her knowledge of and acceptance of Jesus Christ are the same stages that every person must go through if he or she is to be born again into God's family and have an intimate relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Some take quite a while going through these stages - it is a journey of faith. Others travel through these stages more quickly. It just depends upon the way the Holy Spirit works - and he works in different ways with each of us.

\*But everybody must come to the point where they realize that Jesus was a Jewish man - that he lived in space and time history. And most would certainly accept this historical fact.

\*But we must also come to the place where we realize that he was the greatest of men - greater than Jacob. That there was no man who ever lived who was like him.

\*And we must also come to the place where we recognize him to be a great prophet. A prophet is a man who speaks on behalf of God, who represents God to man. The teaching of Jesus Christ were divine teachings. He taught God's truth. And we must recognize that fact.

\*But there is that final step that must be taken. Sadly, there are many in the world who would agree that Jesus was a Jewish man, a great man - greater than Jacob, and a prophet from God. But we must also accept him as God's Messiah - the Savior of the world. That is what the name Jesus means - Jehovah is salvation. We must come to that place where we confess our own sins and inabilities to have fellowship with God in our own strength and recognize our need for help, our need for a savior. We must accept Christ's claim to be divine, God in the flesh. If he was a prophet and spoke God's truth, then all of his claims must be true. When he said *I and the Father are One* - that must be true. WE must accept that. And then we must believe that Jesus Christ died for our sins on the cross of Calvary. We must accept God's free gift of forgiveness as we trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and invite him into our lives. It is only then that we can know freedom and deliverance from our sins. Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Messiah, your spiritual deliverer, your savior this morning?