

Old Lessons from An Old Well

Introduction; People often resist the help they need.

- A. Some of us are good at giving advice.
 - 1. If everyone would just listen to us then the world would be a much better place.
 - 2. However the world doesn't listen to us so we still have pain, problems and wickedness in the world.
 - 3. Surprisingly we still have problems in our own lives as well, despite our great wisdom.
- B. We oftentimes have needs that we can't meet ourselves.
 - 1. We need to turn to others and ask for help. We need to turn to family, friends and brethren and especially God. Some are too proud to do this. They hate being dependent on others.
 - 2. Some are too stubborn to ask for help. They especially do not want to ask for help from strangers or from those whom think they are better than them.
 - 3. Some think that asking for help is a sign of weakness. Some suffer when they do not need to because of pride or stubbornness.
- C. In John 4 there is a women who was in need.
 - 1. She was a sinner and needed salvation. She was an outcast in several ways. Jesus came to her and offered her help. At first she resisted.
 - 3. Yet she finally accepted and was greatly blessed. We need to accept the help Jesus offers. We all need His help.
 - 4. The Holy Spirit had this event recorded for us that we might learn from it. We are to study and see lessons for today.
 - 5. *Rom 15:4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*
- D. Today we will consider the 'Woman at Jacob's Well'.

I. Jesus at Jacob's Well

- A. Jesus began His ministry in Judah —John 2.
 - 1. However opposition soon made it unsafe for Him and he had to leave. This is the occasion of Jesus going through Samaria.
 - 2. **John 4:1-2;** The Pharisees were the religious leaders of Judea. Very early in Jesus' ministry they became his enemies. The crowds follow Jesus and this causes jealousy among the Pharisees —Matt 21:46, Mark 15:10.
 - 3. **Vs 3-4;** Jesus left Judea to go to Galilee where He spent most of His ministry. Verse 4 says He *needed* to go through Samaria. Some think this simply refers to Samaria being between Judea and Galilee and so Jesus had to go through Samaria.
 - 4. However many Jews would not go through Samaria because of how they felt about the Samaritans. They considered them unclean. Most Jews would cross over the Jordan near Jericho and go up the east side of the Jordan.
 - 5. Many think Jesus *needed* to go through Samaria because he knew they needed to hear the gospel. This is what does happen.
 - 6. **Vs 5-6;** Sychar was in sight of the ruined temple of the Samaritans. The Jews had destroyed it over a hundred years earlier. We do not have a specific account of Jacob digging this well. However Jewish and Arabic tradition has affirmed it for thousands of years.

7. This account is condensed from the one given by Edward Fudge when he traveled to the Bible lands and went to where Jacob's well was. Today it is surrounded by a Greek church.
8. *The Orthodox caretaker watches as Saliba, our Syriac guide, turns the hand-crank and lowers the bucket into the soft limestone well. The well bottom has varied in depth through the centuries, from 240 feet in A.D. 670 to 67 feet in A.D. 1881. It was "very deep" in Jesus' day (John 4:11). Our guide feeds out what he says is 125 feet of rope before the bucket touches water, then begins the arduous task of raising the bucket back to the surface. Several of us gather around and drink from a common brass cup. This well, from which Jesus once asked a drink, is fed by underground springs, and its water is fresh and cool. Because the water is moving and not from a cistern, the ancients called it "living water" -- a term to which Jesus gave a new and special meaning.*
9. *Although called "Jacob's Well" from Jesus' time forward (John 4:6, 12), the Old Testament does not mention its origin. The Genesis saga does say that Jacob purchased land at the village of Shechem, modern Nablus, very near this Samaritan site of Sychar, now known as Askar (Gen. 23:18-20; see Joshua 24:32; John 4:5). But the authenticity of this well is undisputed. Samaritans, Muslims, Christians and Jews all agree that this is the place where the story took place which is recorded in John chapter four. We reflect for several minutes on what happened here, almost 2,000 years ago, then climb the steps back to the courtyard and exit to our bus. As we leave, we view Mount Gerazim not far away, atop of which are the ruins of the Samaritan Temple. But that is a story for another day —Edward Fudge.*

B. Thus begins one of the most heartwarming stories in the Gospels.

1. Jesus takes time to preach to one person. To a Samaritan. To a woman. And to a woman, as we will see, who was immoral —and probably an outcast.
2. **John 4:7-10;** Jesus begins a conversation with her with a common request. He asks for a drink of water. As Jesus often does he turns the conversation around to spiritual things. He offers her a drink of *living* water.
3. **Vs 11-15;** Jesus tells her that those who drink this living water would never thirst. There is probably sarcasm in her voice when she says, "Give me some." It would be great to not have to walk out to the well every day for water.
4. **Vs 16-18;** This may be the reason she is alone. Usually in ancient times the women came to the well in groups for safety. She may be an outcast because of her lifestyle.
5. **Vs 19-24;** This amazes the woman and she realizes Jesus is a prophet. She changes the subject and asks a question that the Jews and Samaritans debated. Jesus tells her about *true* worship.
6. **Vs 25-26;** Jesus admits something to her He has not admitted to anyone else yet, even His disciples. He admits He is the Messiah.
7. **Vs 27-30;** The woman goes into the city to tell the men about Jesus. This may also suggest she is an outcast to the women.
8. **Vs 39-42;** Many Samaritans believe because of the woman's testimony. The city of Samaria that Philip preached to in Acts 8 is just a few miles away.
9. **Vs 43;** This shows us that Jesus purposely came to Samaria. He was in no hurry to get back to Galilee.

C. The conversion of this woman has several lessons for us today, 2000 years later.

II. Lesson's from Jacob's Well

A. **At first she resisted what Jesus had to offer.**

1. She may not have believed Him. She certainly didn't understand Him. He was also an enemy. Why would He help her?
2. However, being an immoral woman of the Samaritans, she needed what Jesus had to offer the most. Many times those who seem to need the Gospel the most refuse to listen to it.
3. Many times the young, the rich and the outcast reject the gospel.
4. *Ecccl 12:1 Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near when you say, "I have no pleasure in them"*
5. *1 Tim 6:9-10 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*
6. *Luke 18:22-23 So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you*

*have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."*²³ *But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich.*

7. We need to accept the help we need when we cannot help ourselves. We should then be willing to help others in need.

B. We see there is a great difference between things spiritual and carnal.

1. The woman had a hard time discerning between physical water and living water. She did not take Jesus serious at first because she did not know what living water was.
2. Many today do not make a distinction between things that are holy and things that are common. They misuse holy things as if they are common and unclean.
3. *Ezek 22:26 "Her priests have violated My law and profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them."*
4. This was one reason ancient Israel fell. The priests did not demand the high standard of God's word. They did not enforce the Sabbaths and other commandments of the Lord. They treated the Sabbath day as if it was any common day.
5. *Lev 10:8-10 Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, saying: 9 "Do not drink wine or intoxicating drinks, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, 10 that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean,"*
6. Many see nothing wrong with drinking alcoholic beverages. The priests could not come before God after drinking them and offer sacrifices or they would die.
7. We are priests and offer up ourselves as living sacrifices. We need to stay away from drinking alcohol because it make us unclean.
8. *1 Pet 2:5 ...you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*
9. *Rom 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*
10. Many do not see anything wrong with wearing something at the beach or swimming pool that they would not be seen in anywhere else —especially if it was called underwear.
11. We need to be modest at all times and not just at church services or on the job. Being on the beach does not make indecency decent.
12. *1 Tim 2:9-10 ...in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, 10 but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.*
13. We need to be very careful we see the difference between what is spiritual and decent conduct and what is lewd and worldly.

C. There is a right & a wrong way in religion.

1. She asked about where to worship. The Samaritans worshipped Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They had the books of Moses and tried to follow them.
2. Many today would say they were alright if they were in Jesus' place. They would say it doesn't matter where you worship because you're all worshipping the same God.
3. Yet Jesus said, "salvation is of the Jews." He said the Samaritans did not know what they were doing. There is a right way and just being close is not enough.
4. Many today ask the same question about denominationalism. They ask which church is the right church. Many say they all are. They say they are all worshipping the same God and all go to the same place.
5. Jesus was very plain that there is not many roads to heaven. There is just one and it is hard and narrow. Most won't look for it.
6. *Matt 7:13-14 "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."*
7. There is just one true church. Christ's church is not divided. The church is His body. He is the head. He has only one body. There is just one true church, and all others are false.
8. *Eph 4:4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;*
9. *Eph 1:22-23 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23*

which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

10. We must go to the N.T. to find the true church of Jesus Christ. The N.T. describes its organization and its work. Any church not fitting the N.T. pattern is not the Lord's church. It is preaching a different gospel. If it is not the first century gospel it is a false gospel and a false church.
11. *Gal 1:9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.*

D. There is a right and wrong way to live.

1. When Jesus told the woman she was living with a man who wasn't her husband, she knew He was right. She knew she was wrong.
2. This is a somewhat odd question to suddenly ask someone. Jesus asked it on purpose because He knew she realized she was wrong. She immediately changed the subject. We do this often when we know we are wrong.
3. Jesus revealed something an outsider could not know so she would know He was a prophet. Nicodemus knew Jesus was a prophet because no one could do what He did unless God was with Him earlier in John 3:2.
4. *2 Cor 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*
5. *John 5:28-29 "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth; those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.*
7. There is a right way. We need to know what it is because we will be judged by it. We will stand before the judgment bench of Jesus Christ and hear a judgment based on whether we did good or evil.

E. Tradition often controls our thinking.

1. The Samaritans had worshipped on Mount Gerazim for hundreds of years. That was their tradition. It was not commanded by God. It stood between them and God. The Jews had their own traditions that stood between them and Jehovah.
2. *Mark 7:7-9 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' 8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men; the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do." 9 He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition."*
3. We also have our traditions. We have our ways of doing things that are not found in the divine word of God. We need to beware of these.
4. *Jer 10:23 O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.*
5. *Prov 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.*
6. We do what seems good and right to us. However we are not the standard. God's word is the standard. We need to follow God's word and use it as the judge for right and wrong and not our traditions, regardless of how long we have followed them.
7. *1 Thess 5:21-22 Test all things; hold fast what is good. 22 Abstain from every form of evil.*

F. These are just a few lessons from the woman at the well of Jacob.

Conclusion: We need to accept the help God offers in His Son.

A. There are some things we cannot do by ourselves.

1. One very important thing we can't do ourselves is to save our souls eternally in heaven. We all sin and are lost because of this —Rom 3:23, 6:23.
2. We need to let Jehovah save us by His Son Jesus Christ. We need to follow Jesus' law in the N.T. so our sins can be forgiven.

B. We are saved by faith, repentance and baptism.

1. We believe in Jesus Christ as God's only begotten Son and that Jesus died on the cross for our sins. We

repent and turn from our sins. We are then buried with Christ in baptism (Rom 6:3-7) so our sins can be washed away (Act 21:16) and become children of God.

2. *Mark 16:15-16 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."*
3. *Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*
4. See also Matt 28:18-20, Act 18:8, Rom 6:3-7, Gal 3:23-24, etc.

C. If we can help anyone obey the Gospel in any way, please let us.