

Gospel of John - episode 9

Chapter 4 part 2

We continue sharing in John chapter with this wonderful dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. We have reached the point where the woman begins to respond to Jesus, and I pick up at verse eleven. "You have no bucket, sir, she said, and the well is deep. How could you get this living water? Are you greater than our Father Jacob, who gave us this well? He drank from it himself, his sons and his cattle". Jesus said, "whoever drinks this water will get thirsty again. But whoever drinks the water that I will give them, they will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give will turn into a spring of water inside of them, welling up to eternal life". "Oh, sir", she said, "give me some of that water". Fascinating.

The woman has made quite a jump in her mind, and she now associates Jesus with Jacob. John has already given us that association and I have already told you about it in this gospel. You always have to go back to understand what you're dealing with now - and there's also a forward movement as well. So, let's go back to chapter 1:51 where Jesus said that he was the fulfilment of Jacob's ladder, that it was through him that all communion was going to go between human beings and God.

So, the woman making the connexion with Jacob is actually very important. Jacob's water was very good for people who were thirsty. It was only going to satisfy them for a while. What Jesus was offering was an eternal gift, so, I want to give you some of the references from the Old Testament. What we call the Old Testament or the Hebrew scriptures, to let us know that what Jesus is saying to her.

Everybody knew the language about living water, and to talk about salvation as 'water' was not an unknown language to them. Listen to Psalm 36:9, and Revelation 22:1-2. I am going back and forward in the scriptures with texts which speak about the river of life.

Going back: Isaiah 12:1-3 said that you will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.

Going back: Isaiah 35:7 said that water would gush from the desert when the Messiah came.

Going back: Jeremiah 17:13 said that God was the fountain of living water.

Going forward: Revelation 21:6 says that the water of life is offered to everyone.

Going forward: The shepherd leads them into springs of living water in Revelation 7:17

Going back: Zechariah 13:1 said that a fountain would be opened up in the house of David.

Going back: Zechariah 14:8 said that running waters would issue from Jerusalem.

Going back Isaiah 58:11 said, the Lord will make you like a spring of water, welling up to eternal life.

So, when Jesus uses this language - he is the Word of God. He is using the language of the Word of God. These people were feeding on the Word of God - not just the Samaritans - but all Israel was feeding on the Word of God, so this is very familiar language to them. Hence it would not be that unusual that she would make the connexion with Jacob.

The woman is thirsting for meaningful knowledge and understanding of her relationship with God, and of course, she will find both in Jesus. She takes the risk to ask him for the gift. That was something that Nicodemus did not do in chapter three. He did not take the risk to say, 'yes, bring me to this new life'. Because the woman takes the risk, Jesus will do it. 'You ask me, I will do it'. That is his approach to us. She is thinking about it on the wrong level, but he does not mind; he is used to dealing with that. And we find when you go forward in the books of the New Testament, that Acts 2:21 and one Timothy 2:5 tells us, "for there is one God and one mediator between God and man, and that is Christ Jesus himself". St. Paul tells us in Romans 10:13 that "if you call upon the name of the Lord, you will be saved". This woman, in asking for the gift that Jesus is offering, whether she understands it or not, he is going to give it to her. She has stumbled on a great truth. She does not understand it yet, but she has stumbled on it, that there's a gift of eternal life actually being offered to her, and this new life will free her from her past life.

She gets that one, and it's going to be completely new. The Lord is doing a new thing. So, she also sort of thinks that she won't have to offer animal sacrifices on Mount Gerizim, which is rather interesting. She has reached a very important point. There has been dialogue between herself and God, but she must do something to open the door of her heart to grace. To open the door of the heart to grace, repentance has got to move in, so, what Jesus does is that he helps her by bringing her to what I call 'the door of self-knowledge'.

Now, if you go back to the Books of Wisdom, you will be told that the very beginning of progress spiritually is to know yourself. Self-knowledge is the beginning, because if you don't know yourself, how can you truly repent? Jesus actually opens the door for her and lets her see that he does, in fact, read people correctly, as we were told at the end of chapter two. So very gently, he said to her, "go and call your husband and then come back". We'll take it from there. She made her first confession rather rapidly. She said, "I don't have a husband". You are dead right, you don't! You have had five of them. The man you have now couldn't be called a husband. In this rapid exchange between the two of them, huge knowledge is given to her. 'He knows me better than I know myself, but he's not talking to me in judgement. He's not putting me down. He is not telling me I'm worthless. He is asking me to acknowledge the truth about myself, but he is offering me something so great that I'll risk going ahead'. And you see what we were told in John 3:16, that "God sent his only Son into the world not to condemn the world, but that through him the world would be saved".

We make the terrible mistake of condemning people and judging them, and therefore we make it impossible for them to come forward.

Jesus gave her this knowledge about herself. And I think it's a wonderful thing that all of a sudden she has found somebody who truly knows her, but even knowing her in her worst aspects, he still loves her - that's Jeremiah 31:3. "I have loved you with an everlasting love, and I am constant in my affection for you". God does not love us because we're good, and He does not love us because we are bad. He loves us because we're His. We are his creation. Of course, the woman's Life had been chaotic. Her personal life reflected the problem that was in her nation. She has got to make a journey. Now, I've told you before the different kinds of love, and we have to use the Greek words for it. She knows all about Eros, which is human fleshly love, and she knew all about lust as well. She could write a book on that one. Jesus had to

lift her up two flights of stairs, not just to 'phylus', the love of friendship, but to 'agape', the love of God, and God's love operating in us. So, this, for her, is going to be a major transformation of life.

She is going to have to discover not only for herself, but for her people, that doctrine and life go together. If you go to the letter of St. James, he will tell you there's no point in just reading the Word and not doing it. It will only bring condemnation to you. It is the part of the Word of God that we actually live that transforms us. Doctrine and life go together, and we have to learn at some point that religion without morality is monstrous - that is the temptation facing our society today. They want to just believe in the theory of religion, but they want to have all kinds of sexual freedom and do what they like. That does not work. That is not it. Religion and morality go together. This Woman must have a huge change happen in her heart and in her Life. She's got to give up the stagnant waters of her past. She brought this water jar with her, and it represented her whole past life. But her past life represents stagnant water. It has no use. It is not helpful anymore. It is not Life giving. She must give that up. She must pour that all out. She must let it go. And if she does not pour it out and let it go, there isn't any space in her heart for the new living waters of grace to flow in.

So, this little symbol, the water jar, becomes central to the transformation of this person's life. I ask many people that I try to help 'bring me your water jar and tell me what is in it, and we will pour it out, and then we will offer this empty jar to the Lord. We will lay it at his feet, and we will say, 'Jesus, you be my saviour. You take over''. And he will do it, because that is what this woman is going to do. She is going to lay the water jar at his feet and leave it there. She will not pick it up again. We know that the Samaritans were expecting the Messiah. The woman said to him, "I know that the Messiah, the Christ, that he's coming. And when he comes, he'll tell us everything. And Jesus said, I, who am speaking to you? I am he".

This, for me, is one of the most astonishing statements in the entire Bible. You do realise that Jesus is talking to a woman, a foreigner, a heretic, a sinner, and he makes this personal revelation about himself as the Messiah, but not just the Messiah, but that he is the Lord. This woman is having a greater experience, in my opinion than Moses, and she has all these disadvantages. This is the most incredibly good news that you could ever hear. We need to tell everybody who is In need out there that the Lord wants to reveal himself to them, to transform them, and that he wants to come to them not to condemn them, but to save them. That's what we're being told here. It's really incredible.

He reveals himself to this one soul. Now we are going to discover in chapter seven that the family of Jesus, that is, his brothers and his cousins and so on.... they misunderstand him, and they say, "why don't you go to Jerusalem and show yourself to the whole world?" That is not the way God works. God works away quietly with each individual, as if that person was the only one who existed. The Messiah was expected. The Samaritans and the Judeans knew that when the Messiah came, he would settle the problem of Jerusalem and Gerizim. The temple in Mount Zion was the orthodox one. The one in Gerizim was heterodox; it was heretic. Who is right? It would be a bit like Protestants and Catholics saying, 'who's right?' Is it us or them? And Jesus' response to the woman is actually very, very interesting. He said, "Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father, neither on this mountain nor in

Jerusalem". The time has come when both Mount Zion and Mount Gerizim are obsolete. Because Jesus is going to bring the covenant of Moses to its completion, and then it will be all over.

The completion comes when Jesus dies on the cross, and the veil in the temple was torn in two from head to foot. So, he said, "you worship what you do not know. You do not realise who the true God is. You are trying to worship God. I will give you that one, but you don't even know him. I think that is the situation of even many Christians today who will go to Mass and assist at Mass. They might not even know the reality of what they are involved in. 'You worship what you do not know. We worship what we do know'. Now, the 'we' there are the Judeans, the ones who have the right temple, and the right worship and everything. 'We actually know who the God of Israel is'.

"But the hour will come. In fact, it's here already, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit - which will be an interior worship - and in truth, it will be what Jesus has revealed. "That is the kind of worshiper the Father wants. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth". And that is a lesson must be learned by every single one of us. That the worship of God must go in our hearts and in the depths of our being all the time. It is not just a case of going to church and attending a ceremony. It's much, much bigger than that. So, this Woman discovers that the Samaritan people have not only been worshipping on the wrong mountain, but they have been worshipping on the wrong level as well. Just material sacrifice to a God they did not understand. All of that had to change. Jesus wants to lift her to the level above. The new community of Jesus will be guided by the spirit of God. It will be based on Jesus' revealed truth.

We will worship God as Father. No Muslim can call God 'Father'; only Christians can call God 'Father'; this can only be done by His own children. These children have been born on water and the spirit. So, they have been born from above. It is only these children who have been born from above who can worship God in spirit and in truth. It is through the spirit that we will be able to enter the indestructible temple, which is Jesus himself. Everything is through him, with him and in him. So, it is only the Holy Spirit who can raise us to the level of worshipping God properly and relating to God properly. In giving this revelation, Jesus was actually telling the whole of Israel, not just the Samaritans, that he was the 'prophet like Moses', he was the one who was going to bring them into the whole truth. He was the one who was going to reveal everything that God had said through the Old Testament, that Jesus was going to explain what God was actually trying to say.

Nevertheless, he has something else to tell her as well, and that you find it in verse 22. "You do not realise, he said that salvation comes from the Jews" - that is from the Judeans. Jesus's name is Yeshua, which means 'salvation'.....that salvation was actually here in a person. Salvation isn't just a thing; it's a person. Jesus said, 'I who am salvation, am here. I happen to be a Judean in terms of humanity. And I'm here offering the new life to you, not because you deserve it, but because I love you. None of us deserve it. The Judeans did not deserve it; nobody deserves it; you couldn't possibly deserve it. What Jesus is offering transcends the whole business of being Judean or Samaritan or any other nationality or any other rationality that we can think of; it is above. It is coming from God; It is heaven; it is heavenly. Jesus was offering everyone the privilege of calling God, 'Father'. He was giving us the privilege that he had of being

a Son of God and of being in communion with God. This enormous privilege is given to absolutely everybody.

He brought her to this extraordinary moment that I call the moment of truth, when Jesus said - and this is verse 26, "I who am speaking to you, I am He". This is the revelation of the divine name. So, Jesus was saying to her, 'I am the one that carries the divine name'. To this very day, the people of Israel refer to God as Hashem: **The Name**. The name above all names, Hashem. Jesus was saying, 'I carry this divine name. I am he'. This woman starts off with a young Jewish man, and then she begins to realise he has to be a prophet because he is not speaking like ordinary people, then he has to be greater than Jacob. GOSH, maybe he is the Messiah! Then it is even higher than that. It is The Lord himself!

We have known this since chapter one, that the Messiah of Israel is the Lord himself coming to them, because Isaiah had said that, that no angel was going to save them, but the Lord himself was going to save them. So, this revelation is given to her - to the most unlikely human being you could possibly imagine. Yet then when the Lord reveals himself to us, we are the most unlikely human beings as well, and he wants to reveal himself to each one of us. It's a great tragedy if we keep Christianity in a book. The words have got to come out of the book and become a reality in our lives. He says to you as an individual, and to me as an individual, 'I am He'. That is when the light really dawns; that is when your life actually changes. That is when everything is transformed.

This woman is making huge progress. She has had this wonderful discussion with Jesus about Mount Zion or Mount Gerizim. He has brought her to the revelation of herself that she needs to open up and let the past go. Then he makes this extraordinary revelation to her. Now we come to this moment, which is absolutely fantastic. I call it the moment of truth. It is really wonderful. Jesus is sitting before this woman, telling her who he is. And then all of a sudden, verse 27, 'I'm going to finish with this and we will start the next episode with this. "At this point, his disciples returned, and they were surprised at seeing him talking to a woman. And the woman took her water jar, left it at the feet of Jesus, and ran" I'll see you next week. Goodbye. God bless you.

INTERVAL

Welcome to our sharing on St. John's Gospel. We continue with the wonderful events of John chapter four. We now come to a very dramatic moment in the gospel where Jesus has just revealed himself in all his glory to this woman of Samaria. Just at the point where you expect the woman to bow down and worship him because she has met her Messiah and her God - just at that moment John says, and this is verse 27. At this moment, at this very dramatic moment, his disciples returned and they were surprised to find him speaking to a woman! Oh boy, they are coming from the level of below. They have no idea of the wonder that has been going on.

Yet none of them asked him, 'what do you want from her?' So, we are back to square one! When we started this chapter we had the woman coming to Jesus with wrong motives and he had to transform her.

Now we have the disciples coming to Jesus with wrong motives and he is going to have to change them also. What do you want from her? Why are you talking to her? After all, she is a Samaritan; she is a woman and she is a heretic! Can you see the transformation that Jesus is going to have to work in these men if they are to become beloved disciples and form this community of the beloved disciples and go out to the world to tell the world who Jesus is. They need a massive transformation. It is not just the woman; they need it also. Then you got a funny thing in Verse 28. The woman put her water jar down and hurried back to the town. If she came to Jesus with faulty motivation at the beginning, she might have been able to handle one man, but she had no intention of handling 13! So, she ran, but she left Jesus the very important sign. She didn't have an opportunity to bow down before him and worship him as the Lord. So, what she did was she left her water jar that represented her life. She left that at his feet. She did not say anything. There was nothing to say in seeing twelve more men arriving! So, the woman put down her water jar and she hurried back to the town to tell the people, "come and see a man who told me everything I ever did. I wonder if he is the Christ". I want you to notice that there is no question of signs and wonders. She invites them to actually meet the Lord and she tells them that he is somebody absolutely unique.

This brought the people out of the town and they started walking towards Jesus. Let us pick up and do a little bit of commentary on this. As I said about the disciples, they are coming now with faulty motivation. They are only thinking of Jesus as a young man who is 30 years of age, and they are questioning his motives in talking to a woman. I want to give you a little reflection from St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians. 1 Corinthians 2:10-16: And you will see the transformation that must take place in these disciples for them to become other Jesuses to the world.

St. Paul says, "the spirit reaches the depths of everything, even the depths of God". We saw Jesus reaching into the woman but as God He could reach the depths of everything.

Verse eleven, "the depths of God can only be known by God himself".

Verse 14, "an unspiritual person does not accept anything of the spirit of God. It's beyond him".

Verse 15, "a spiritual person can judge everything".

Now, these disciples have to change from being just religious people to spiritual people. In other words, they have got to go from the level of below to the level of above. Because they are Jewish and they are sons of Abraham, and they worship at the correct temple in Jerusalem, they think that everything they do is okay. Jesus has to show them that they, in fact, have a drastic change to take place in their lives. Initially, they simply see Jesus as flouting convention. He should not have come to Samaria anyway. He should have taken a different route and avoided Samaria. So, they don't see at this point in their lives that the will of God and the desire of God is very different to what they think. They also don't know that Jesus is the Saviour of all the world. They are going to learn that from the Samaritans! Now, no Jewish person ever thought they would learn anything from a Samaritan, but they are going to learn the most important thing, and that is that the Messiah is not simply the Messiah of Israel. He is the saviour of all the world!

These Samaritan people are going to teach the Jewish people something that they could not grasp by themselves. When the woman runs away we have to ask the same question as we asked back in chapter two. At what point did the water become wine? At what point did this woman become a missionary? I

don't think she knew what we are going to discover in the miracle that happens at the end of chapter four, that when the man walked away obeying the Word of God that the miracle happened in his very first step. So, as this woman turns to go back to Sychar or Shechem to get Jesus what he asked, she now knows it is not physical water in a well that he is looking for - that that is only a symbol of what he's looking for. He wants souls – that is what he is thirsting for. She goes back to the town to bring him these souls.

The most incredible thing is going to happen. She will bring him the drink that he asks for, and he will give her people the well of living water. What a wonderful exchange! O Admirable Commercium is what we used to say in Latin, what a wonderful exchange. And in spite of all her drawbacks and her disadvantages and her chaotic life and everything else, this woman actually does what Jesus asks her to do. So, it is in her movement of going back to the town to bring that town to him, that she is transformed into the first Christian missionary. when she proclaims who Jesus is, she does not tell anybody that he works miracles. She did not see a miracle. She does not know what he did in Jerusalem. She simply told the people who he was and that if he could transform her and her chaotic life, he could certainly transform them. Therefore, he had to be the Messiah. She was the most unlikely person to choose as a missionary.

Yet, when you go to the gospels, you have something not entirely the same, but on the same level - and that is that Jesus healed a man and delivered him from demons. When that man wanted to join him, he said, “no, go back to your people and tell your people all that the Lord has done for you”. He sent the healed demoniac back to his own people to say ‘that’s what I was; this is what Jesus did, and this is what I am now’. That is the message of amazing grace. ‘I was blind and now I see’.

This woman will say, ‘I was a sinner but He has transformed me completely. The demoniac will say, ‘I was completely under the dominion of Satan, and now I'm completely free’. That is the way to proclaim the true saviour of the world. When Jesus goes into this town, he won't have to introduce himself, he won't have to tell a long story. These people will know who he is. And what is more, they will not be demanding miracles. Now, the interesting thing in John's Gospel is that chapter four is sandwiched in between the ministry to Jerusalem, where all the Jews were demanding miracles, and the ministry in Galilee, which is coming up, just one little section of it where they will demand miracles! The Jews demand miracles. The Samaritans did not. The Samaritans accepted the Lord for who he was. The woman realised that whatever was going on inside of her, her thirst had been satisfied. Her need for God has been answered. She now realises she is on a new road as well; she is on the road of the redeemed. It's a very wonderful thing that she brings the people to the Lord.

Now, the disciples say to Jesus, “why don't you eat? And he says, I'm not hungry, Rabbi. They said, why don't you have something to eat? And he said, but I have food to eat, of which you know nothing at this particular point. So, the disciples said to one another, has somebody brought him something to eat?” They have complete incomprehension of what is going on. But Jesus is looking at a group of Samaritans coming towards himself, and he begins to talk about a harvest.

Okay, let me give you a little bit about harvest. In the Old Testament: The great harvest was one of the messianic signs. This is what the prophet Amos said in chapter 9:13: “The days are coming when the

harvest will flow directly after ploughing” - which, of course, is a miracle. And this is exactly what happened in Samaria. The harvest came directly after ploughing. “The treading of grapes will come soon after sowing, when the mountains will run with new wine and the hills will flow with it”. Psalm 126:5-6 said, “those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed for sowing, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him”. Now, what Jesus begins to try and communicate to the disciples, (John does not call them apostles here) is that he has been sowing seed for Samaria. The amazing thing is that he sowed it in this one soul! Yet you know, one person really transformed will do more for God than a hundred who only half heard the message. The Lord knows what he is doing. Who but the beloved Son - who has been in the bosom of the Father for all eternity - who but he would know that this woman was the key to Samaria? The Lord chooses the most extraordinary people to do the most extraordinary things. On a human level, we might say they are the wrong people; they have the wrong background. They are the wrong sex or the wrong age.... they are the wrong whatever..... they do not have the right education or whatever else. God alone knows who is right for a situation. A calling from God is a very mysterious thing and a very wonderful thing.

Jesus has been sowing a seed of God's Word in Samaria, and he will go on to sow it in the world. Now, the Synoptic Gospels dealt with that in the parable of the Sower going out to sow the seed. What Jesus is going to tell the apostles is that the seed has got to be watered, otherwise it is not going to produce anything. The seed has to be drenched with the tears of Jesus's laborious ministry, and then it is going to be drenched with the tears of his martyrdom, and then it will produce a good harvest. He is going to tell us that himself in chapter 12;24: “Unless the wheat grain falls to the ground and dies, it will only remain a single grain. But if it dies, it will bear a rich harvest”. Then the disciples, when their time comes, will have to sow the seed of God's Word, and they will have to first of all reap Jesus's harvest. You see that in acts chapter eight, where the apostles reap the harvest of Samaria.

Jesus sows the seed now and they reap the harvest. When the disciples go out to sow the seed for the next generation they will have to drench that seed with the tears of their own repentance and conversion, and also with the tears of their martyrdom. And then the next layer of Christians will reap their harvest and will go on to sow a harvest for the next generation.... That is the way it's going to go forward in history. This is what Jesus said. “My food is to do the will of the one who sent me”

Jesus will tell us in chapter five that he continues the work of God. So, ‘I complete his work’. The Father's work was creation, and the Son's work is redemption, and the spirit's work is sanctification; “Have you not a saying that there is four months and then there's the harvest? Well, I tell you, look around you. Look at the fields. They are already ripe for harvesting. Already the reaper is being paid his wages. Already he is bringing in grain for eternal life. And thus, the Sower and the reaper rejoice together. For there is a proverb that holds good. One sows, another reaps, and I send you out to reap a harvest you have not worked for.

They will reap the Jesus' harvest in Samaria in acts chapter eight. Others worked for it, but you come into the rewards of their trouble. This is a wonderful picture that Jesus gives of how the seed is sown for every generation to come. But if you are talking about harvest, then the disciples have a big lesson to learn on

this woman. They have lots of lessons to learn on this woman, apart from accepting a stranger and a foreigner and all the rest of it - and trusting that they are children of God. Apart from all of that, they have to learn that if God genuinely gets through to one person, that person can bring in a harvest for God. Look at the harvest that Mother Teresa of Calcutta brought in for God in the 20th century. It is just amazing. The disciples do not understand anything now of what Jesus is doing will learn in the future that women who will come from the gentile territories, as well as women who will come from the Jewish territories - will do great work for God. If you go to St. Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 16, you'll find him naming seven prominent women in the early church. And if you go to his letter to the Philippians, you'll find him naming two other prominent women in the early church. These were the prominent ones. That means there were lots more.

And it means that all the disciples of Jesus, whether they were male or female, they all must go out and sow a harvest and bring in a harvest for the Lord. So, we come across a most wonderful, wonderful grace now. And this is verses 39 to 42. This is way beyond anything the disciples could have imagined, and they are cutting a poor figure at this particular point. "Many Samaritans of that town had believed in Jesus on the strength of the woman's testimony when she said, he told me all that I have ever done. So, when the Samaritans came up to him, they begged him to stay with them". Oh, that is very important. Do you remember the first disciples joining Jesus in chapter one? They had to go and stay with Jesus, so they invite Jesus to stay with them. If you invite the Lord to your house or to your life or to your work or to your anything, he will come and he will transform everything.

He stayed with them two days, and on the third day, you get the spiritual resurrection of Samaria! You get the spiritual resurrection of Samaria in chapter four of this gospel. Will the Judeans ever allow a spiritual resurrection of Judea? No! That is very sad. The most unlikely people accept the Lord, and the most unlikely people reject him. It just does not make sense. It is a terrifying mystery. Jesus stayed with them for two days, and he spoke to them. "Many more people came to believe. And then the people said to the woman, now we no longer believe because of what you told us. We have heard him for ourselves, and we know that he really is the Saviour of all the world.

Now there is a huge lesson here, not only for the disciples, but for all of us, and that is that the people come to Jesus because of the testimony of the woman. But the woman does not put herself forward. She is putting Jesus forward. She is saying that he is the person. She is not saying, 'I'm important', so, they come to Jesus because of her. Then they respond to Jesus as she did, and they invite Jesus to come and stay in their town. They listen to the Word, they listen to his teaching, and they respond positively to his teaching, and they accept Jesus because of their own personal experience. That is what Jesus had said to the original disciples. 'Come and see. Come and stay with me'. Then you will be able to find out for yourself.

That is what made these men become his apostles, because they stayed with him. Here you have exactly the same pattern with the people of Samaria. You have this miracle of the resurrection of Samaria, which I think is absolutely astonishing. Not only that, but when they do discover who Jesus is they realise he is not just the Messiah of Israel, he is the Saviour of all the world. This is the most astonishing thing that

they could say. Now, if you go to the book of Leviticus, chapter 23:9-11 you will be given the teaching about the harvest, and you will be told that the first fruits of the harvest are very precious to the Lord. As soon as the harvest begins to show itself, you should bring the first sheaf to the Lord. The first sheaf if it is presented to the Lord, the rest of the harvest will be blessed. Well, the woman is the first sheaf of Samaria! The first group that came to Jesus because of the woman are the first fruits. The people who come to Jesus as a result of him staying with them, they are the rest of the harvest, and the harvest is so great that in Acts chapter eight, two of the apostles have to go down and actually deal with the enormity of the grace that is there in Samaria. So, John is telling us a very wonderful thing here; it's a truly momentous thing. He is trying to tell us and each one of us, no matter what country or culture or anything else, whatever language we have, the message is the same for us. Each one of us must come to the Lord individually. We must allow the Lord to change us. We must take the water jar of our own lives and pour out the old life. We do not need it. It is stagnant. Allow Jesus to give us the living waters of grace, and we go and bring him a drink. Each one of us can do that. Every one of us is in contact with somebody somewhere, and we need to give Jesus a drink so that the harvest goes on from generation to generation. It is a very personal ministry. It is not some big organisation. No. It is what I will do to try and bring people to Jesus. Thank you for listening.