

**Sent:** Wednesday, November 19, 2014 9:11 PM

**Subject:** Last Nite's MOB Session

Men! Well, believe it or not, we just completed Lesson #10 in our fast-moving study of the Gospel of John! And so, what did we learn from the encounter between Jesus and the "woman at the well"--the Samaritan woman?

First of all, Jesus, following the will of His Father, apparently had to get "out of town" (Jerusalem) and go back to Galilee--"passing through" Samaria--for a "divine appointment" with an unlikely subject! It was one of those "heavenly musts" that frequently led Jesus in His earthly ministry! So what was the point?

As Kostenberger noted: "Only if we understand the acrimony and animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans will we grasp the provocative nature of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman"! She came to "Jacob's well" apparently alone, during the hottest part of the day, to "draw water." And Jesus "just happened" to be there! And, almost "out of the blue," He offered her "living water"--promising that, if she received it, she would "never thirst again"! Now that sounded like an offer too good to be true! He was speaking spiritually, of course! But then He revealed to her that He was, in fact, the long-awaited Messiah--making this amazing revelation known to, of all people, a Samaritan! And a woman! A Samaritan woman at that! And a Samaritan woman who was an outcast apparently even to other Samaritans! Jesus was thus breaking all the rules, if you were a Jew--and a rabbi to boot in that day! The disciples themselves were baffled, and only put it all together years later!

There's a long history, described in the Old Testament, about why there was such "acrimony and animosity" (to use Kostenberger's words) between the Jews and Samaritans, and I won't go back into that here, except to say that Jesus was ushering in a new era--opening up God's "plan of salvation" to all people, no matter who they were or where they came from! "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." And so, John wrote how Jesus witnessed first to Nicodemus, the "high-up" Jewish religious authority *par excellence*; then to this "lowly" outcast Samaritan woman; and finally (in our next lesson) to a "certain royal official," believed to be a Gentile official in King Herod's government. This was recorded by John in a sequence which "just happens" to reflect the "great commission" that Jesus would one day (after His resurrection) announce for believers: that--after--receiving the Holy Spirit--they were to be His witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

And so it's interesting that the "first missionary" sent out by the church (in Acts 8) would be a man named Philip who went "down to Samaria...proclaiming Christ" with the result that "many believed and were baptized," and that there was "much rejoicing in that city." Also, that the apostles Peter and John (yes, the same John who wrote the book we are studying) were later sent down to do "follow-up" ministry with them--and include them as part of the "body of Christ (the church)! All of which "completes the story: and provides a fitting "epilogue" to the story of the Samaritan woman!

There are some great Old Testament verses, that we talked about last nite, that give this story more meaning and significance. Isaiah prophesied (in 44:3) that God would "pour out water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground...and (in 55:1) pour out My Spirit on your offspring and My blessing on your descendants." And later (in 55:1), we hear him pleading: "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters..." The "weeping prophet," Jeremiah, sadly noted in 2:13: "For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water; to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that have no water..."

John 7:37-39 put it all together when He records Jesus later "crying out" at a Jewish feast: "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said: "from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water." John adds: "But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

Well, there are many great "take-aways" from this story of the Samaritan woman, chief among them perhaps being that we're all "sinners" in need of God's love and grace and that the "good news" of the Gospel is available to all those who hear the message, and receive Him. Also, that we who have believed and experienced it now have the opportunity to share it with others!

Next week, we'll check out the story of that "royal official" of Herod's, in Lesson #11. But remember, we won't meet again to do that until December 2nd! And so, if you show up next Tuesday you just might be able to have your own "quiet time"! Ha!

Have a great Thanksgiving with your family, men! We all have so much for which to be thankful, don't we?

Lowell Mininger