

*He Loved Me . . .*

*He Loves Me Lots*

*The Gospel of John*

Text

John 4:1-26

Topic

God the Father sends Jesus to Jacob's Well where a Samaritan woman believes Him and is saved

Title

***"Saved By the Well"***

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In July 1975, Erskine Ebbin was knocked off his MoPed and killed by a taxi in Hamilton, Bermuda.

**It was the same taxi, with the same driver, carrying the same passenger, that had killed his brother Neville, in the same month, the previous year.**

Both brothers were 17 when they died, and both had been riding the same MoPed in the same street.

There are other, even more fantastic, versions of that story on the web, but this was fact-checked. It was an incredible coincidence.

**Do Christians think anything is coincidental?**

Not really. Theologians call coincidence God's "particular providence." Adam Clarke explains, "Nothing is more astonishing than the care and concern of

God for His followers. The least circumstances of their life are regulated, not merely by that general providence which extends to all things, **but by a particular providence, which fits and directs all things to the design of their sanctification**, causing them all to co-operate for their present and eternal good."

Non-theologians call coincidences *God-incidences*.

The story of the Samaritan woman at the well is a God-incidence that illustrates "particular providence."

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 God Is Above The Circumstances Of Your Life**, and **#2 God Appoints The Coincidences In Your Life**.

### **#1 - God Is Above The Circumstances Of Your Life (v1-4)**

How are you *positioned* in terms of living with your circumstances? We sometimes say that a person is doing as well as expected **under** the circumstances.

**The Christian does not live under circumstances, but far above them.**

We are in Christ and are described as being seated with Him in the heavenlies (Ephesians 2:6). God works all things together for our good (Romans 8:28). Troubles and trials refine us as fire purifies gold (First Peter 4:12). We can boast in our sufferings and take pleasure in afflictions (Second Corinthians 11:30). Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:39). We are more than conquerors (Romans 8:37). To paraphrase Simba, "We triumph in the face of danger."

When we started this series we decided to observe Jesus as a man filled with God the Holy Spirit. He was fully God and fully human, the unique God-man. But in His Incarnation, Jesus set aside the independent use of His deity and was wholly dependent upon His Father:

- Jesus said of His time on Earth, "I have not spoken on my own authority. Instead, the Father who sent me has himself commanded me what to say and how to speak" (John 12:49).
- He said, "the Son can do nothing of His own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise (John 5:19)."

### **Jesus lived above circumstances by obeying His Father.**

So can we.

Joh 4:1 Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John

Joh 4:2 (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples),

Joh 4:3 He left Judea and departed again to Galilee.

John the Baptist preached that the King was coming and the Kingdom of God on Earth was at hand. Jews needed to prepare to become citizens of the Kingdom by repenting of their sin, signified by water baptism.

One glorious day, John identified Jesus as the King who would baptize with the Holy Spirit. Afterward, Jesus' disciples began baptizing Jews for repentance.

The Lord baptized none because, if He had done so, they would have mistaken water baptism for repentance, which was *external* and *preparatory*, with Spirit baptism, which is *internal* and *permanent*.

The messenger heralded the King; His subjects were preparing themselves to be ruled; His ministry was increasing day-after-day; the Pharisees were taking notice.

Everything seemed to be going great. It was the perfect time to... *Leave and go through Samaria?*

Joh 4:4 But He needed to go through Samaria.

"Needed" can mean *ought, should, must, or necessary*. Remember, Jesus only, always, obeyed His Father. Jesus obeyed by leaving Judea, and only then did He understand He ought, should, must, of necessity, "go through Samaria." Let me support that biblically by reminding us of a similar story.

Philip was involved in a successful Gospel ministry, coincidentally in Samaria (Acts 8). God via angel commanded Philip to leave Samaria and sit along the desert road that led from Jerusalem to Gaza. He went, immediately, obediently. Philip had no idea he would encounter the caravan of the Ethiopian Eunuch, lead him to faith in Jesus, baptize him, so that he could take Jesus back to the court of the Candace.

Both of these circumstances end as God-incidences. They end that way because Jesus and Philip lived above their circumstances. They obeyed God and found themselves uniquely used.

A Christian has the same Holy Spirit in them as Philip and Jesus. The Holy Spirit will always *encourage* obedience, and He *enables* our obedience.

**S**it down, next to your Lord, and look down through His eyes upon your circumstances.

He enjoys the view, knowing that He is working all things together for your good and His glory.

## **#2 - God Appoints The Coincidences In Your Life (v5-26)**

### **"Coincidence" may not mean what we think.**

One source said, "The word *coincidence* is translated from the Greek word *synkyrian*, which is a combination of two words: *sun* and *kurios*. *Sun* means "together with," and *kurios* means "supreme in authority." A biblical definition of *coincidence* would be 'what occurs together by God's providential arrangement of circumstances.' "

## **Coincidence is God's particular providence.**

I want to issue a brief disclaimer. Particular providence is *not* "meticulous providence."

R.C. Sproul summarized meticulous providence, saying, "There is no maverick molecule if God is sovereign." He meant that everything is foreordained by God to happen, down to the molecular level. I'll skip to the logical conclusion: If God's sovereignty means that everything is meticulously determined, *it renders God the cause of evil*. We believe the Bible teaches that, in His sovereignty, God created man with free will and works out His general and particular providences without reducing us to choice-less automatons.

Joh 4:5 So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

They weren't the Jets and the Sharks, but Jews despised Samaritans.

After the Assyrians conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722BC, they deported most of the Jews and replaced them with foreigners. They intermarried with the remaining Jews. Malfoy would call them half-bloods.

Joh 4:6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from *His* journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

High noon and a weary, thirsty Jesus sat by the well. Take that in. *God was tired and thirsty*. Jesus was fully human, understanding all of our experiences and urges, but without sin.

## **The Father used Jesus' weariness.**

We are taught to be at the top of our game, to give 110%, never to let them see us sweat, always to be ready, to leave it all on the field. Meantime, God uses our weaknesses to glorify Him.

I'm functioning at maybe 45% most days. Are you weary? Tired? Infirm? Unprepared? **Great** - you are ready to serve. God is guaranteed the credit.

Joh 4:7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink."

Joh 4:8 For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

Had Jesus not been weary, He might have gone into town with His boys. He might have missed this "particular providence" God-incidence coincidence.

Noon was an unusual time for a woman to come to the well. It was a social gathering place for the gals in the early morning. It suggests that our woman's immoral lifestyle factored into her well visits. She is the Bible's Bad Samaritan.

Why did *all* the disciples go into town? We're not told, so we shouldn't speculate. We can point out the obvious: Jesus was left alone.

Are you lonesome tonight? A new Harvard study says, "36% of all Americans - including 61% of young adults and 51% of mothers with young children - **feel serious loneliness**. Loneliness appears to have increased substantially since the outbreak of the global pandemic. The potentially steep costs of loneliness [include] early mortality and a wide array of serious physical and emotional problems, including depression, anxiety, heart disease, substance abuse, and domestic abuse."

I'd add suicide. A new report by The Well Being Trust released last month found that 75,000 additional people could die from what they called "deaths of despair" because of COVID19.

You've got an empathetic friend in Jesus. He's in Heaven, but He promised you the Holy Spirit would dwell within you. He is the Counselor, the Comforter, coming alongside you. *You are never alone.*

Joh 4:9 Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

I wonder, did she hesitate on her approach when she saw a Jew? *Be like when you spot someone at the grocery store and duck down an aisle.*

One commentator writes, "Imagine a white man in the South years ago, where they had separate drinking fountains for whites and 'coloreds,' asking a black woman if he could have a drink from her canteen."

Joh 4:10 Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

You could study this encounter as a primer on personal evangelism. Jesus started where this woman was at - drawing water from a well. He compared her *physical* thirst to her *spiritual* thirst.

### **We deduce that everyone is thirsty for God.**

He has put eternity in our hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:11) and has scattered people around the globe for the express purpose that they seek after Him and find Him (Acts 17:26-27). Creation declares His glory.

"Living water" means *running water*. Jesus wanted to establish that what He was offering could not be depleted and would bring unending satisfaction.

Joh 4:11 The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water?"

Commentators suggest that the Samaritan woman became cynical, rude, even hostile. It seems to me that she was genuinely baffled. She did not yet realize that she was in a spiritual conversation.

Joh 4:12 "Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"

This was a rhetorical question. She was disputing Jesus' claim because she thought He could *not* be greater than the patriarch from whom both Jews and Samaritans descended.

Joh 4:13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again,

Joh 4:14 but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

- With Nicodemus, Jesus used birth as a metaphor.
- With the woman, He used thirst.

Nicodemus and the woman were at opposite extremes. But their need for Jesus was equal, and so was His offer of salvation.

Drawing well water was hard work, and it was repetitive since the water drawn would run out. Religion is hard work and repetitive. I can't calculate how many "Hail Mary's" and "Our Father's" I prayed growing up Roman Catholic.

Joh 4:15 The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

She lived in the first century, oppressed by Rome, despised by Israelites and Samaritans. Her circumstances were awful. If Jesus could help her avoid the well, why not let Him?

Jesus made it clear that He was talking about more than well water.

Joh 4:16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."

Joh 4:17 The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,'



Joh 4:18 for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.”

Jesus, the God-man, as a man, received a supernatural word of knowledge. The Holy Spirit told Him something about the woman He could not have otherwise known.

In a gentle but firm way, the Lord confronted her sin.

**Eternal life is a free gift that cannot be earned or deserved, *but there must be the acknowledgment of, and repentance from, sin.***

She was a serial adulterer, currently committing fornication. God’s Word is pretty clear about what constitutes sexual sin. All of the stuff going on in the world to promote aberrant sexual values does not supersede God’s Word.

- There are two genders, male and female.
- Sexual behavior, apart from the benefit of the covenant of marriage, is sin. Homosexual sin is not worse than heterosexual fornication and adultery.
- Marriage is one biological male, and one biological female, in a monogamous, heterosexual, covenant of companionship that lasts a lifetime.

Joh 4:19 The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.”

Nicodemus had said, “We know you are a teacher come from God” (John 3:3). The woman’s statement is along those same lines. It isn’t sarcasm; it is quite complimentary. She may have thought Jesus was *the* Prophet predicted by Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy, who would have God’s words in his mouth (18:15-19).

Joh 4:20 “Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.”

This is something about which a Samaritan would wonder. A contemporary example might be confusion over so many Protestant denominations or the

Reformation vs. Catholicism. Believers must find agreement in evangelism on the essential doctrines.

It's like an Italian Soda in our Café. There are lots of different flavors, but the essential ingredients are always the same - soda water & flavor.

Joh 4:21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.

Joh 4:22 You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews."

The Samaritan religion was false. It was established by human decision, contrary to the commands of God. All religions are false.

The apostle Paul explained, "salvation is of the Jews" when he said, To Israel "*pertain* the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service *of God*, and the promises; of whom *are* the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ *came*, who is over all, *the* eternally blessed God" (Romans 9:4-5).

Joh 4:23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

Joh 4:24 God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Jesus dismissed the controversy, explaining that neither will be a prescribed place to worship very soon. One commentator writes, "The woman had talked about the worship of her *fathers*, but Jesus directs her to the worship of **the Father**, which suggests a personal relationship as opposed to ritualistic ceremonies."

In the Church Age, your body is the Temples of God, and when gathered, collectively we are His Temple.

"In spirit" refers to our human spirit, made alive by God when we believe Jesus. It is made alive so we may connect with God, whose nature is spirit.

"In truth" means we worship God as He has revealed Himself in the Person of Jesus Christ and in His inspired Word, the Bible. We uphold the character of God against all who would demean it.

"For the Father is seeking such to worship Him." Don't think for a moment God needs worshippers. He doesn't. The Tri-une God is perfect. The need is ours.

Adam and Eve sinned; they hid from God. He sought them out and promised to restore them and their descendants. He promised to bring them back to fellowship, for their sake, to worship Him.

Joh 4:25 The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things."

The Samaritans recognized only the first five books of the Bible. It was enough to believe Messiah was coming.

You might not know much, but if you are saved, you have a testimony.

Joh 4:26 Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am *He*."

The *Bible Knowledge Commentary* points out that, "Normally in His ministry in Galilee and Judea, because of political implications, Jesus veiled His office and used the title "Son of Man."

It is, therefore, exceptional that Jesus spoke with greater revelation to this sinful woman. In the end, she was thirstier than the religious elite.

If you are not saved, God has been talking to you. Not only this morning, but also in other God-incidents. Are you thirsty? Come to the fountain.

**T**here *are* coincidences in the truest, biblical understanding of the word. It might be fun to think back and recall some of the more notable ones in your walk with the Lord.

Do so, then realize God is appointing them all the time.