



Chapter 4

Crossing a World of Barriers with a Drink of Living Water

Introduction: We live in a world where people categorize groups or individuals as *unworthy*, *outsiders*, or even the scum of the earth. The same was true in Jesus' days. In John 4, Jesus deliberately crosses barriers that others avoid.

Jews versus Samaritans:

- Centuries of hostility, religious rivalry, and ethnic hatred
- Jews avoided Samaria whenever possible

Key Question: What would Jesus do?

Answer: He goes straight through Samaria.

A. Jesus' Pattern of Outreach and ministering to:

- A castoff woman (vv. 1-26)
- His disciples (vv. 27-38) – correcting their assumptions
- A grieving father (vv. 46-54) – calling for faith in His word

❖ This chapter shows that **God's grace is not limited by race, gender, morality, or status.**

B. Living Water! 'You're asking me?' (vv. 7-15)

The woman's Perspective - Her thinking is shaped by visible differences

- Jew vs. Samaritan, Man vs. woman, Rabbi vs. outsider

Jesus' offer vs. Her Understanding

- How does Jesus' offer of living water contrast with what the woman thinks he means (10-15)?
– She thinks in terms of relief from daily hardship. Jesus speaks of eternal life
- The woman's Past- 5 husbands – and now living with another man sixth man – why?

Important observation:

- Jesus exposes the truth without shaming
- Truth is spoken to heal, not to condemn
- Question: Did the woman admit that Jesus was right?
Yes – honestly, though cautiously, 'you must be a prophet'.

C. Worship! Where is the Right place? (vv. 19-24)

- Mount Gerizim (Samaritan worship)
- Jerusalem (Jewish worship)

Is a place important? How did Jesus answer? -

Reflection Question: Where – and how – do we worship this week?

D. Evangelism: From Encounter to Witness (vv. 28-42)

The Woman as a Witness

- Imagine the scene: An outcast woman crying out in the town, ‘Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did!’ – Your reaction?
- God uses **imperfect messengers**
- A changed life becomes a credible testimony
- The woman leaves her water jar behind
- Are there things in our lives we need to leave with Jesus?

Jesus and the Disciples (vv. 31-38)

- ‘My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work’ (4:34).
- What truly satisfies Jesus? What truly satisfies us?

Believing vs. Seeing

- Samaritans believed because of Jesus’ word
- Many today live by ‘seeing-is-believing.’
- Jesus calls us to **trust His word first**

E. Faith at a Distance – The Grieving Father (vv. 46-54)

- Jesus calls him to trust without signs
- The man believes Jesus’ word—and goes home

Faith trusts Christ before the outcome is visible.

Questions

1. What was unusual about Jesus stopping in Samaria?
2. How did the Samaritan woman respond to Jesus’ teaching?
3. How did Jesus respond to the official’s request to heal his son?
4. What has this chapter taught you about sensitivity to people in need?
5. How could you reach out to someone who has been rejected and offer Christ’s love?

Nicodemus vs. The Samaritan Woman

Two Encounters — One Gospel (John 3–4)

Nicodemus (John 3)	Samaritan Woman (John 4)
Nicodemus	Samaritan Woman
Male	Female
Jewish	Samaritan
Religious leader (Pharisee)	Social outcast
Educated in Scripture	No formal religious status
Morally respected	Morally broken
Member of the ruling council	Marginalized by her own community
Comes at night	Met at midday
Initiates conversation cautiously	Engages Jesus defensively, then honestly
Focused on theology and signs	Focused on daily needs and survival
Struggles to understand “new birth.”	Gradually recognizes Jesus’ identity
Leaves quietly	Leaves transformed
No immediate public witness	Becomes a public witness
Moves slowly toward the light (cf. John 7; 19)	Runs toward the town with good news

What John Wants Us to See

1. No One Is Too Religious

Nicodemus shows that **status, knowledge, and morality** cannot replace spiritual rebirth.

“You must be born again.” (John 3:7)

2. No One Is Too Broken

The Samaritan woman shows that **sin, shame, and rejection** do not disqualify a person from grace.

“Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst.” (John 4:14)

3. Jesus Treats People Differently—but Offers the Same Gift

- To Nicodemus: **New birth**
- To the woman: **Living water**

Different metaphors.

Same salvation.

Same requirement: **faith**.

4. Faith Is the Great Equalizer

- One is a respected insider
- One is a rejected outsider

Yet both are invited into **the same Kingdom**.

“God so loved the *world*...” (John 3:16)

“Anyone who believes...” (John 4:42)

Key Takeaway

Jesus meets people **where they are**, but He never leaves them **as they are**.

- Religion cannot save
- Shame cannot exclude
- **Only faith in Christ gives life**