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## **JOHN 4:1-42 (PART 1)**

John Series: Get a Life in Jesus

I want to tell you a story about Melanie. When Melanie was eighteen years old she was in love with her high school sweetheart. She's a nice looking girl and she could have had a number of people that she would be with. But she fell in love with this guy, her high school sweetheart, and they were going to get married. So they did. It was one of those... She was looking forward to happily ever after. It was great. Oh everything was great. The problem was he turned out to be a jerk and their relationship ended within a year. That was discouraging for her because she had a lot of hopes in marriage and what it would mean for her.

But then Robert came along. Robert was a little bit older. And Robert promised her the world. Ah this is it. So she got married to Robert. It turned out Robert had a real anger problem and within a couple of years their marriage ended.

Now she's really skittish of this idea of marriage and what it would be like. Want to be very careful in any area with guys and what happened. But then came along Rudy. Wow. Rudy was different than the other two. This is a guy who's spontaneous and he was fun loving and just fun to be around, made her laugh. It was totally different. So they got married. In fact they flew off to Las Vegas on a spontaneous moment and got married and that was great. But his spontaneity had a downside to it. His impulsiveness led him into an affair. So that marriage ended as well. And Melanie was rather discouraged.

Skip ahead ten years. She's in her late thirties. Been married five times and divorced five times. Totally given up on marriage and now...well she met Bill at work, but this marriage thing just hasn't worked out at all. So she just decided she would move in with him.

Her life was characterized by being dreary and monotonous and routine and discouraging. And then someone invited her to come to church. When she came to church she heard the message about Jesus Christ. Something about something inside of her that wasn't externally based, but something inside. And it totally changed her. It was as if in the room nobody was there but her and Jesus. In the midst of that experience, she understood more about what that looked like and it changed her life.

Let me put a pause on that story for just a moment and tell you I'm really grateful for our church. I'm grateful for the people who are interacting with other people because there's a lot of Melanies that come into these doors. People are broken, people are hurting. Or it could be Michaels. It's not gender related. But people who have struggles in relationships, or their job situation has failed, or their health is in trouble and bad things are going on, addictions exist.

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There are a lot of Michaels, Melanies. I'm just grateful for a church like this that welcomes people, dialogues with them. You guys come early. At 9:45 we're here interacting with people. It's the time before our worship service starts and after it's over where ministry is taking place. We get to talk to people, interact with them.

The story about Melanie is a story from my imagination. But it comes out of my thinking today about this woman at the well who met Jesus and changed her life. I think there's a lot of people that are just waiting for that, they're needing that. And Jesus is waiting to share that message with them.

So what I want you to do is stand with me as we read the first fourteen verses of our forty-two verse passage today. I'm actually going to teach on this same passage next week. This week I'm actually going to skip some verses that I want to look into next week – verses about worship and spirit and truth and the challenges that the disciples had as they were trying to understand this food that they went to get and what's Jesus doing here. We'll skip those parts so we can come back in more depth and deal with them in a valid way next week. But let's just look at the woman and Jesus. A beautiful picture. Let me read the first fourteen verses to you from John 4.

*Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John— although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.*

*Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.*

*When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)*

*The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)*

*Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."*

*"Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"*

*Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

Notice the word *life*. It's the theme of the whole gospel of John and here we're introduced to this idea again as Jesus meets this woman at the well.

You may be seated.

In order to understand this idea of what's happening in this story, we have to go back and look at some of the geography and the history of the time. If we understand the geography and the history then it will make more sense as we come to the story.

So let me show you a map. This is a map of Israel. Israel is about the same size as New Jersey. You can notice three provinces on the left-hand side – Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. Those are the three provinces talked about in our story today. The passage is going to tell us that Jesus goes from Judea to Galilee and He had to go through Samaria. It makes sense geographically that he had to go through Samaria. But let me help you understand why that's such a problem.

If we go way back to the time when God gave the Promised Land to Moses and under Joshua's leadership to come into the land, God gave some promises to Moses and Moses gave these promises to the people. They're found in the end of Deuteronomy. The promises basically go like this: If you do the right thing and you follow my ways, you will experience blessing. If you do the wrong thing and you disobey me, you are not going to experience blessing. Basically that's the message of the end of Deuteronomy as Moses is passing on the message to them.

Unfortunately the Samaritans, the people in the middle, the people from Samaria didn't do the right thing. They worshiped other idols. They didn't practice the ways of God. So God opened them up to the problems that would come as a result. Obviously some of you know that. You do the wrong thing and you experience problems in your life. Well that's what happened. And in the course of that, an army came in in 722 B.C. and took over Samaria.

The way the Assyrians did their conquering is that they would take some of the people out of the area and they would put them somewhere else and they would put Assyrians in to mix with the people and some of the young people of the Jewish people fell in love with the Assyrians and they intermarried. That was a problem in Jewish thought and in the way God was working with them. He wanted them to be pure and they intermarried. It's a problem.

So now we zip ahead 750 years to the time of Christ. Now we've got the Samaritans, the people from Jerusalem, they went through their own challenges and so on, but now we're at a place where the Jews who were purebreds (they married Jews only) look down up the Samaritans who were half-breeds. This is years and years and years of this. So now there's a rather passionate exchange. It's not that they would just look down on them. There was racial tension. There was some places you didn't go in Samaria if you were a Jew because it was dangerous. So they would often avoid it. In fact they would not take the turnpike to get from Judea to Galilee the fast way. They wouldn't even take the Garden State Parkway that goes around the side. They would take Route 1. And they would go over here around Samaria. It would take them three days longer to walk from Judea to Galilee and they'd have to cross over the Jordan River in two places in order to get up north, but they would do that to avoid the tension, to avoid the problems that existed there.

So it's in the middle of this story, it's fascinating if you look at verse 4 of our passage today, it says he had to go through Samaria. I'm thinking why did he have to go through Samaria? He

didn't have to go through Samaria just because geographically it's in the middle. You know why he had to go through Samaria because there was a lady there who needed some touching. There was a woman there with some needs.

Do you believe in divine appointments? Well if you believe in the sovereignty of God then you must believe in divine appointments. The fact that you're here today is a divine appointment and God wants to do something special in your heart today. Whether it's the fact that you come every week because it's on your schedule, Sunday mornings you go to church, or this is your first experience here, this is a divine appointment for you. And I pray that God will speak into your heart in a special way.

But it's not just coming to church that's a divine appointment, It's those things that exist in our lives where God is working in sometimes surprising ways that are these divine appointments that we can't plan. We don't know what's going on, but we trust the Lord. We surrender ourselves to Him because we know that He's orchestrating events and we come across people and things, and in the midst of that, God does something in and through us. He had to go through Samaria because there's a woman waiting there and she doesn't even know it yet.

Verse 5 says – *So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar.*

Verse 6 – *Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well.* This is God tired by the journey. Because God lived in a human body when He came here to earth. He did that in part to identify with us. We live in human bodies. Some of us wish we had someone else's body, right? But we don't. We have our own body and that body gets tired or it gets sick or it has challenges. So you know what it is to live in a human body and Jesus knows too. He did that in part so He could identify with our weaknesses, says the book of Hebrews, so that we can trust Him, so that we can come to Him and say, "Lord, I have a challenge in my life. I have a problem," and He says, "I understand." *He was tired by the journey*, it says, so He *sat down by the well*.

Now don't imagine a wishing well with stones all around it and a wind up bucket there because that's not what wells looked like in those days. Usually it was a mound leftover so the animals wouldn't trip into it. A big hole in the ground there and you'd have to bring your own bucket. It was a BYOB experience there. Bring your own bucket to the well, and when you did you'd be able to drop it down there with your big rope and get some water way down. It's many feet down in this particular well.

Notice the next statement in verse 6. *It was about noon.* I'm impressed with the detail in this story, that we're given all these little pieces of information. Why is it important that it's about noon? Well the reason that's important is because a woman wouldn't normally gather water at noon unless she needed extra water, if she ran out of the water that she got in the morning. But usually what would happen is that the women would gather the water together in the morning. They'd come from the village because that was their face time. They would show their Pinterest pictures and they would show the pictures of their grandchildren and they would talk about things in the village. If there was some news going on, it would be passed on in the village through the morning dialogue among the women, or by the city gates if the men would

sometimes be sitting by the city gates, or the marketplace if they would go to market. That's where news was passed. If you want to know what's going on in the world, you go in the morning and go to the well with the other women. Because when you're going there it's not just about gathering water; it's about learning other things. *It was about noon.*

We're going to learn more about this woman in a moment that she had had five husbands. And the man she's with now isn't her husband. I'd say she has a problem with relationships. Of course in a small town like that, everybody knew who she was or knew one of her husbands. Anybody who's been married and divorced, you know there's complications. When you've got five of them, it's really complicated. I think she's kind of given up on relationships. She's given up on people. Just let me get to the well and get my water. That's all I want to do. It's noon. She's approaching the well and she sees ah man, I thought I'd get here by myself. There's somebody already here. A man no less. Not her forté.

*When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?"* Now that must have been very puzzling for her because somehow she could tell looking at this guy that He wasn't one of them. Maybe it was the tassels on His garment, maybe it was His accent. I'm not really sure what it is yet that drove her attention to know this guy is not one of us. He's a Jew. So she's, I think, at least intrigued by the idea that this guy would ask her for a drink. *"Will you give me a drink?"*

Verse 9 – *The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)* In fact what would happen is that the men would look down on woman. In fact what would happen is that the men wouldn't even talk to women. When it came to Samaritans they would turn the other way and go a different direction. They would not even associate (that's the word there). Because *Jews do not associate with Samaritans.*

This is what makes the story of the Good Samaritan so powerful. Because in the story of the Good Samaritan, a man who is a Samaritan sees a Jew hurt on the side of the road overcome by robbers. Two other Jewish leaders pass by in the story, yet they don't even stop for their own. But the Samaritan, he was a Good Samaritan, and he stops by. It's all the more intriguing because, well, he was a Samaritan and there was racial tension there. Yet he takes time and stops and helps him. I suppose we could call this story the failed Samaritan. We've got the Good Samaritan. Now we've got the failed Samaritan because this particular woman had certainly had some real challenges in her life in the relationship department.

I think we can identify with her. I think we can feel her pain. Maybe it's not in the relationship department, but sometimes it's in the addiction department, or sometimes it's in the financial department, or the job situation department. Whatever it is, sometimes we just feel dreary.

So she comes at noon to do her chore. Life is a chore for her. She's doing her chore, she's getting her water, she's going back, and now she has an interaction with a guy that she doesn't really know who he is. And she says to him, "How can you ask me for a drink?" So Jesus answers her and says these words: *"If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."*

Now notice what He's done. He's taken this common physical issue, this chore that's going on and He's bringing new life into that. The word *life* here is a good word. *Living water*. He's bringing new emphasis, new meaning. What He's trying to do is to get her to think differently. I think she's stuck in the chores of life. Getting up, going to work, coming home, doing what she has to do in whatever situation she is. Going to bed, getting up in the morning, waiting till everybody else is done, and then going to the well. She's into the chores, but she needs something more and Jesus introduces her to something more. He introduces her to living water, to this spiritual thing we're going to learn more about in the passage. But it's just something different.

I think there's a good application for us here that in our own discussions with people sometimes we start with just the dialogue about life and it leads to something more about Jesus. We talk about Jesus and what He's doing in our lives. It's bigger. *He would have given you living water.*

*"Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?"* It seems she's still stuck on the physical, on the chore side of things. Maybe she's a little skeptical. Maybe she wants to challenge Him a bit to find out who He really is and what's going on. In fact I think that's what she is doing. She's basically going to say in the next sentence, "Who do you think you are?" to Jesus by saying these words: *"Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"*

Who do you think you are? I think that's just a great question for us to ask that of Jesus. Jesus, who are you? I want to know more about what means. How does that apply to my life, drawing water? Living life? Dealing with my challenges in life? Lord, what does it look like?

See, I think God wants to take us into a new dimension of our lives that's above the mundane. If you're stuck in the mundane, doing whatever you're doing, I do believe God wants us to be introduced to something different than that. Certainly if you've never accepted Jesus Christ for the first time, you want to do that, because you'll learn more about what that means to have this life inside. But also those of us who are Christians, I think sometimes we get stuck in the mundane. Don't we? Just because you made a commitment to Christ doesn't mean you're always living for Christ. Sometimes we need this new dimension and Jesus is going to describe that right now.

It says in verse 13 – *Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water from the well here will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. (And then here comes the great statement that I love about this passage.) Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

There's this something happening inside of us that God wants to do. It's this well inside that springs up to something beautiful that we can be in touch with because Jesus Christ is living in us. It's not about all those things going on outside, but there's this well inside. Do you have that? It's like a spring, He says. It springs up. This well that springs up inside of us that helps us to see

life on a different level to experience God in a powerful way. Wow. I just think that's the whole key to the passage.

The woman is listening to the story. As she's listening to the story, she realizes that Jesus has something that she wants. Jesus is offering something that she wants. So let's look at the next verse in the passage. It says – *The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”* Maybe she's still thinking about the earthly chores, but there's something about this living water that intrigues her. She's still trying to integrate it into her life.

I think we go through that process of trying to integrate the spiritual and the physical in our lives, trying to understand how does this all fit together. She's doing that, but she knows she wants it. She wants this living water. There's something about this well inside that she doesn't have because she's probably been looking for solutions all around her.

Jesus knew her in particular. He knew that her needs had something to do with relationships with people. He knew that she had some challenges in this guy department. That she was investing in guys something that she should have been investing in the Lord and that she could have something different. He knew about her. And so He's going to talk to her about her particular need.

At other times in other places in the Bible, Jesus goes a different direction. For one man, He talks about His money and He goes, “Okay you go sell everything you have and give it to the poor.” Why? Because He knows that's that guy's challenge. I don't know. We all have those challenges. When I say challenges I mean idols, things that we go to to fill that place inside to give us meaning, to give us what we consider life. And God goes, “I got something else for you. It's this living water inside of you that has to do with a personal relationship.” So He says to this woman – *“Go, call your husband and come back.”* Go get your husband and bring him back and we'll talk more about this. *“I have no husband,” she replied.*

*Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”* This must have been shocking for this woman. Her life now is made bare to people, that this man can see everything about her.

See, I'm convinced that one of the things that needs to take place that we're going to experience that well inside is when we become honest before the Lord and say, “God, I have been searching in other places the wrong places. I have been doing the wrong thing or I have been going the wrong direction. What I thought is good isn't really where it needs to be. Lord, I need you.” And God just will come and spend time with us. He'll interact with us.

You know I just love the fact that here you have a picture of Jesus sitting with a woman and they're talking together about her needs. Jesus did surprising things when He was here. He didn't have a hard time crossing boundaries, spending time with people.

There's a whole crowd, a parade going on, and Jesus, as He's going through the parade one day, comes and stands under a tree where Zacchaeus is, a tax collector. Nobody liked tax collectors. Same thing was true today. Right? This guy was from the IRS. And He says, "Why don't you come down? I'm going to go to your house for dinner." So He goes to dinner at this guy's house.

Jesus spends time with people – people who are failures, people who are mistreated, people who've had a hard time in life. Jesus loves to do that. He loves to spend time with people, and that's what He's doing in this passage.

*"The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."* This is part of her testimony. This guy knows me. And of course Jesus knows each one of us in a real powerful way.

So notice what she does. I'm skipping some verses and then we'll come back over the course of time. This is about the woman, the story of the woman. Verse 25 – *The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."* So she's kind of thinking theoretically, thinking about the future, and the Messiah coming, and we'll understand it all then.

And then Jesus says these words: *Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."* Now here's this personal invitation, this personal sense in which this person can now experience Jesus in a very powerful and unique way, and she's touched. He knows everything about her. He wants to spend time with her. This is something very different than what she's ever experienced before. This is something in her heart where she's actually experiencing God in a personal way. And she's just getting to know what that means.

It takes over her. I just think she's so consumed by this it just transforms her so much that she stops whatever she is doing. I don't know why she does this. But it says she leaves her water jar there. She's going back to town. She may as well take the water jar, fill it with water back there. But she's so consumed by this new view of life, this new understanding of what Christ is all about that she leaves the water jar. *The woman went back to the town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did."*

So do you see her testimony? Her testimony is He knows me and He still accepts me. That is her testimony. *"He sees everything that I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" They came out of the town and made their way toward him.* Here's one woman who shares her testimony. The testimony is basically He knows who I am and He accepts me. He knows who I am, everything about me. That's her testimony. She doesn't have like the four spiritual laws to share.

But notice what's happening. The town, the people start coming out. One woman affected a whole community of people because of her testimony. Wow. That's big. *They came out of the town and made their way toward him.* And notice now what happens. *Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him (why?) because of the woman's testimony.*

I just think this is how it happens in life. The many times people come to Jesus Christ because of someone else's testimony that says, "Let me tell you what God has done inside of me." It's



something bigger, deeper than you can ever imagine. And people look at this person who's failed five times in a relationship and say, "If God can do it for her, I think I better check in on this."

So the Samaritans came out because of the woman's testimony, *"He told me everything I ever did."* So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days.

I was just pondering the two days. Two days is a long time to spend with Jesus. What happened during those two days? Do you think maybe He looked at that person, and just the look and that person says, "Oh He knows everything about me. He knows everything about her. He knows everything about me." But there's still a connection going on. Two days when He's talking to them and interacting with them. He's teaching them and telling them something, as the next verses will show us. Because now's there's the interaction that was this person over here comes to Jesus because of the woman. Now this person is going to be straight on with Jesus. Watch what happens.

It says – *And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."*

Yes, it's true that sometimes children come to Jesus because their parents are Christians. But there's a point in every child's life, every young person's life where they say, "He's now my Savior. He's the Savior of the world. He's my Savior. He's not just the Savior of my mother, the Savior of my father. He is my Savior and I want to know Him personally."

You see this woman, I'm sure, must have went away a changed person. She must have gone back to get her water jar and come back and fill it and kept on with her chores. Life must have continued. But now she has something different. She has this well inside flowing inside.

I remember when I was a child...I was one of those homegrown Christians. I grew up in a Christian family and I'm so grateful for my Christian parents. But I remember this song we sang as I was growing up. I never knew where the song came from until this morning as I was remembering the song: "Spring up, O well, within my soul. Spring up, O well, and make me whole. Spring up, O well, and bring to me this life eternally." I go whoa! This comes from this story. I need that. Spring up that well, God, in my heart. I want to be in that place where I don't have to be consumed or under the circumstance or just dealing with the chores. I can deal with this well inside that comes from a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Be encouraged this week. Allow God's Spirit to work in you in powerful ways so that that soul, that squall that comes up within your soul comes from the word. It's not manmade. It's not humanistic. It's something that comes from God Himself, living inside of you that produces something new, something special, new every day. A delightful experience with God and who He is.

Would you stand with me and let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, I thank you that you changed this woman, that you took time with her. We thank you that you take time with us, that you give us something deep within our hearts that meets the needs that nothing else can meet. Lord, I pray that you'd speak to each one of us right now. That when we're tempted to rely on other things, any job or addictions or money or even family, that we'll recognize that we need that well inside that comes from you to enjoy that. In Jesus' name, amen.