SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

John 4

Living Water for a Thirsty Town — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-10 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Jesus goes out of His way to find a thirsty outcast, tells her the truth about her life, and gives her water that ends thirst forever. Then He shows that the same word that saves a sinner at a well can heal a dying boy miles away — and all it asks of me is to believe Him.

00 The Text

JOHN 4 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John

2 (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were),

3 He left Judea and went away again into Galilee.

4 And He had to pass through Samaria.

5 So He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph;

6 and Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

7 There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink."

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

9 Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

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."

11 She said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water?

12 "You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?"

13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again;

14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."

15 The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw."

16 He said to her, "Go, call your husband and come here."

17 The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You have correctly said, ‘I have no husband’;

18 for ⚠ you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly.”

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

20 “Our fathers 🔁 worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to 🔁 worship.”

21 Jesus said to her, “Woman, 🔁 believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you 🔁 worship the Father.

22 “You 🔁 worship what you do not know; we 🔁 worship what we know, for 🕒 salvation is from the Jews.

23 “But an hour is coming, and now is, when 📄 the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people △ the Father seeks to be His worshipers.

24 “△ God is spirit, and those who 🔁 worship Him must 🔁 worship in spirit and truth.”

25 The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.”

26 Jesus said to her, “△ I who speak to you am He.”

27 At this point His disciples came, and they were amazed that He had been speaking with a woman, yet no one said, “What do You seek?” or, “Why do You speak with her?”

28 So the woman 🕒 left her waterpot, and went into the city and said to the men,

29 “📄 Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?”

30 They went out of the city, and were coming to Him.

31 Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.”

32 But He said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.”

33 So the disciples were saying to one another, “No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?”

34 Jesus said to them, “△ My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.

35 “Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, 📄 lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are 🕒 white for harvest.

36 “Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

37 “For in this case the saying is true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’

38 “I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored and you have entered into their labor.”

39 From that city many of the Samaritans 🔁 believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all the things that I have done.”

40 So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days.

41 Many more 🔁 believed because of His word;

42 and they were saying to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we 🔁 believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed △ the Savior of the world.”

43 After the two days He went forth from there into Galilee.

44 For Jesus Himself testified that ⚠ a prophet has no honor in his own country.

45 So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they themselves also went to the feast.

46 Therefore He came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a royal official whose son was sick at Capernaum.

47 When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and was imploring Him to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death.

48 So Jesus said to him, “⚠ Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe.”

49 The royal official said to Him, “Sir, come down before my child dies.”

50 Jesus said to him, “△ Go; your son lives.” The man ⟲ believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started off.

51 As he was now going down, his slaves met him, saying that his son was living.

52 So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. Then they said to him,
“◷ Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.”

53 So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, “Your son lives”; and ☆ he himself believed and his whole household.

54 This is again ◷ a second sign that Jesus performed when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

Marked in the text

- **v4** “He had to pass through Samaria” — Time / place / contrast
- **v6** “being wearied from His journey” — God — His character & actions
- **v6** “about the sixth hour” — Time / place / contrast
- **v9** “Jews have no dealings with Samaritans” — Sin / warning
- **v10** “If you knew the gift of God” — God — His character & actions
- **v14** “shall never thirst” — Promise / blessing
- **v14** “a well of water springing up to eternal life” — Promise / blessing
- **v16** “Go, call your husband” — Command / instruction
- **v18** “you have had five husbands” — Sin / warning
- **v22** “salvation is from the Jews” — Time / place / contrast
- **v23** “the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth” — Command / instruction
- **v23** “the Father seeks to be His worshipers” — God — His character & actions
- **v24** “God is spirit” — God — His character & actions
- **v26** “I who speak to you am He” — God — His character & actions
- **v28** “left her waterpot” — Time / place / contrast
- **v29** “Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done” — Command / instruction
- **v34** “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me” — God — His character & actions
- **v35** “lift up your eyes and look on the fields” — Command / instruction
- **v35** “white for harvest” — Time / place / contrast
- **v42** “the Savior of the world” — God — His character & actions
- **v44** “a prophet has no honor in his own country” — Sin / warning
- **v48** “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe” — Sin / warning
- **v50** “Go; your son lives” — God — His character & actions
- **v52** “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him” — Time / place / contrast
- **v53** “he himself believed and his whole household” — Promise / blessing
- **v54** “a second sign” — Time / place / contrast
- **v10** “living water” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v20** “worship” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v20** “worshiped” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v23** “worshipers” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v21** “believe” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v39** “believed” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

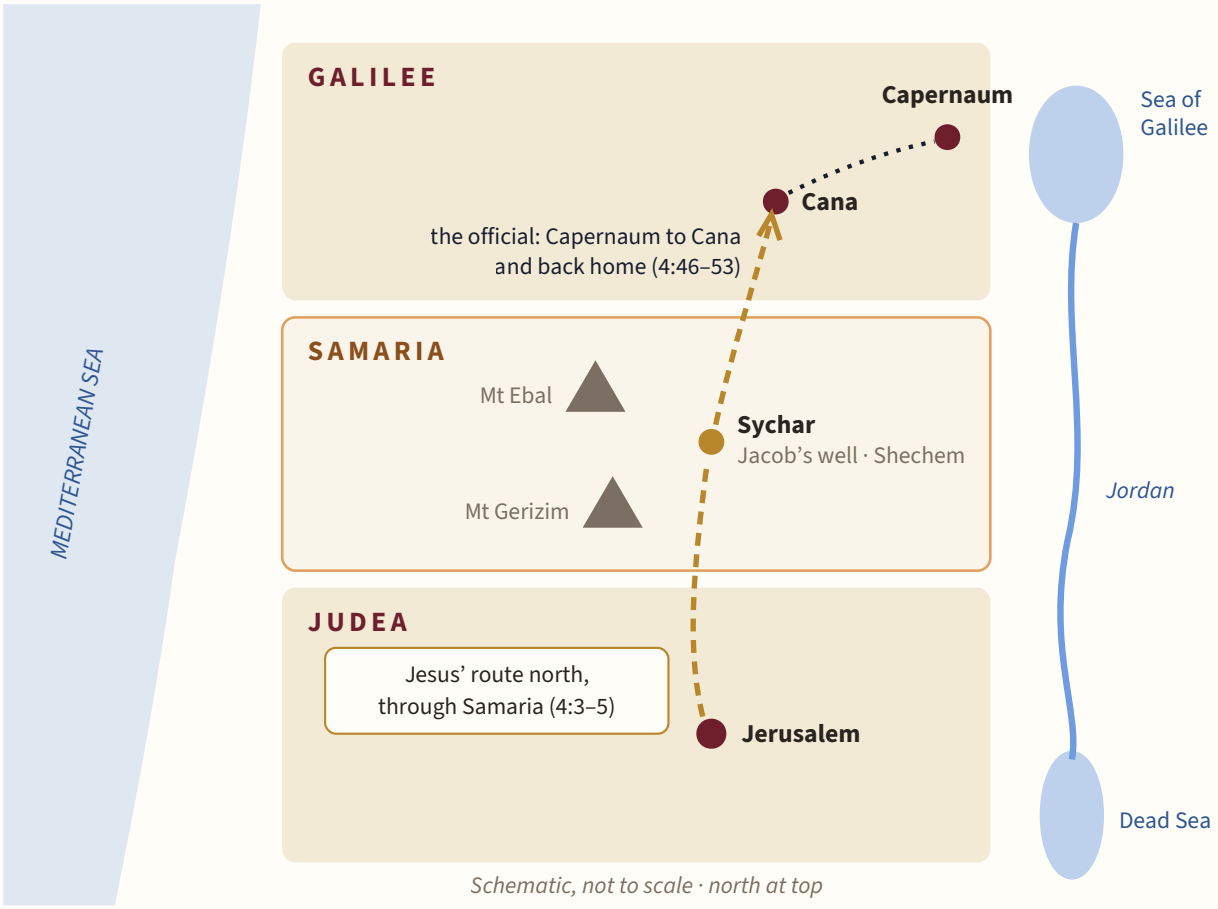
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · JOHN 4:4

"And He had to pass through Samaria."

FIGURE · JUDEA, SAMARIA, GALILEE



Jesus leaves Judea for Galilee by the road through Samaria, stops at Jacob's well under Mount Gerizim, and later speaks a word in Cana that heals a boy in Capernaum.

Setting. Jesus leaves Judea because the Pharisees have heard He is making more disciples than John (vv1–3). On the road north He stops at Sychar in Samaria, at Jacob's well, about the sixth hour (vv4–6). He stays two days with the Samaritans (v40), then goes on to Galilee and to Cana, where a royal official from Capernaum begs Him to heal his son (vv43–54).

Structure:

- vv1–6 — **the road and the well:** the Pharisees hear; Jesus leaves Judea; "He had to pass through Samaria" (v4); Sychar, Jacob's land and Jacob's well; Jesus, wearied, sits by the well at the sixth hour.

- vv7–15 — **living water:** "Give Me a drink" (v7); "How is it that You, being a Jew …?" (v9); the gift of God and living water (v10); "the well is deep" — greater than Jacob? (vv11–12); this water vs. the water I will give (vv13–14); "Sir, give me this water" (v15).
- vv16–26 — **spirit and truth:** "Go, call your husband" (v16); five husbands (vv17–18); "I perceive that You are a prophet" — this mountain or Jerusalem? (vv19–20); an hour is coming; salvation is from the Jews; the Father seeks true worshipers; God is spirit (vv21–24); "I know that Messiah is coming" — "I who speak to you am He" (vv25–26).
- vv27–42 — **the harvest:** the disciples are amazed (v27); she leaves her waterpot — "Come, see a man" (vv28–30); "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me" (vv31–34); fields white for harvest, sower and reaper (vv35–38); many Samaritans believe because of her word, many more because of His; "the Savior of the world" (vv39–42).
- vv43–54 — **the second sign:** a prophet has no honor in his own country (v44); the Galileans receive Him (v45); Cana, a royal official, a dying son (vv46–47); "Unless you people see signs and wonders" (v48); "Go; your son lives" — he believed the word (vv49–50); the slaves meet him; the seventh hour (vv51–52); he and his whole household believed (v53); the second sign (v54).

Repeated words, with counts:

- "come / comes / coming / came" ×14 — vv5, 7, 15, 16, 25, 27, 35, 40, 45, 46, 47 (×2), 49, 54.
- "harvest / reap / sow / labor" ×11 — vv35 (×2), 36 (×3), 37 (×2), 38 (×4).
- "worship / worshiped / worshipers" ×10 — vv20 (×2), 21, 22 (×2), 23 (×3), 24 (×2).
- "water" ×9 — vv7, 10, 11, 13, 14 (×3), 15, 46; "living water" ×2 — vv10, 11.
- "Samaria / Samaritan(s)" ×8 — vv4, 5, 7, 9 (×3), 39, 40.
- "know / knew" ×8 — vv1, 10, 22 (×2), 25, 32, 42, 53.
- "believe / believed" ×7 — vv21, 39, 41, 42, 48, 50, 53.
- "son(s)" ×7 — vv5, 12, 46, 47, 50, 51, 53; "Galilee / Galileans" ×7 — vv3, 43, 45 (×2), 46, 47, 54.
- "give / gave / gift" ×7 — vv5, 10 (×2), 12, 14 (×2), 15.
- "drink / drank / drinks" ×6 — vv7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14; "thirst / thirsty" ×3 — vv13, 14, 15.
- "hour" ×6 — vv6, 21, 23, 52 (×2), 53.
- "food / eat" ×6 — vv8, 31, 32 (×2), 33, 34.
- "lives / living" ×5 — vv10, 11, 50, 51, 53; "well" ×5 — vv6 (×2), 11, 12, 14.
- "husband(s)" ×5 — vv16, 17 (×2), 18 (×2).
- "Sir" ×4 — vv11, 15, 19, 49; "Father" ×3 — vv21, 23 (×2); "spirit" ×3 — vv23, 24 (×2).
- "told me all the things that I have done" ×2 — vv29, 39.

Contrasts: Judea ⟷ Galilee, with Samaria between (vv3–4). A Jew ⟷ a Samaritan woman (v9). This water ⟷ the water I will give; thirst again ⟷ never thirst (vv13–14). This mountain ⟷ Jerusalem ⟷ spirit and truth (vv20–24). What you do not know ⟷ what we know (v22). Physical food ⟷ the Father's will (vv32–34). Four months ⟷ white for harvest now (v35). Sower ⟷ reaper (vv36–38). Because of what you said ⟷ we have heard for ourselves (v42). Signs and wonders ⟷ the word that Jesus spoke (vv48–50).

Shape of the chapter: a long conversation (7–26), a harvest (27–42) and a short miracle (43–54). It moves outward — one woman, one town, the Savior of the world — and then back to one father and one boy, and in both halves people believe His word.

Chapter theme (my words): Jesus crosses every wall to give living water to the thirsty, tells the truth about sin so He can give a new kind of worship, and gathers a harvest from the people nobody expected. His word is enough — enough to save a town and to heal a dying boy at a distance.

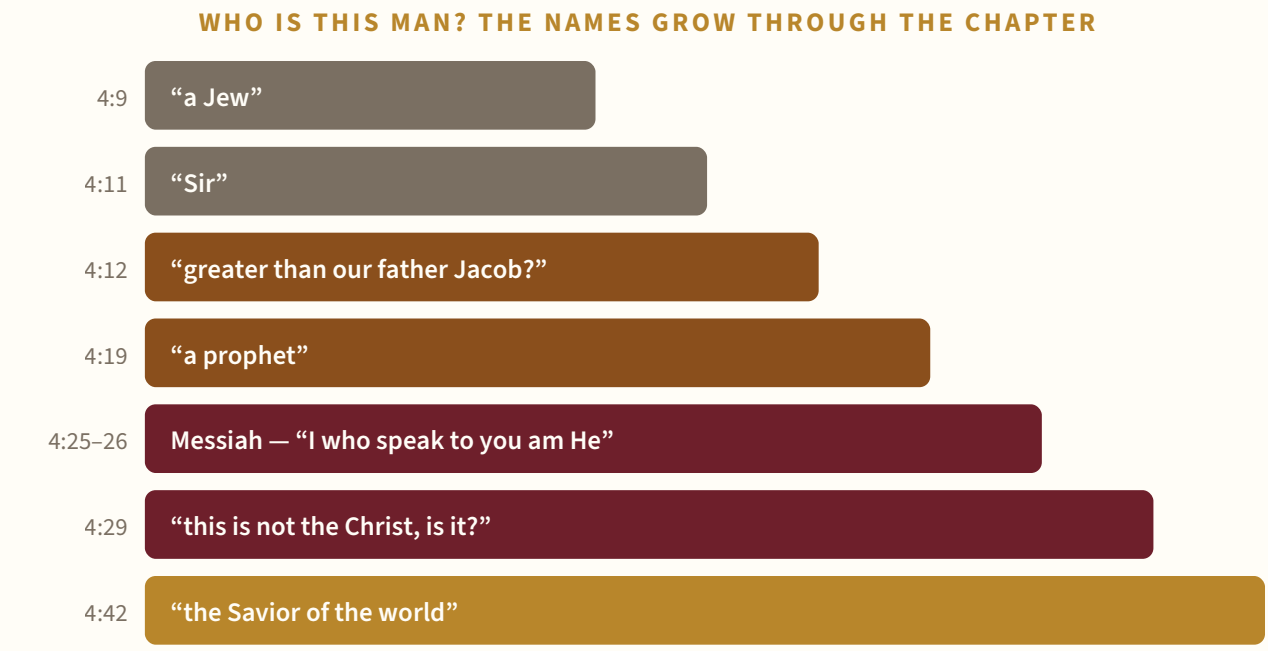
02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · JOHN 4:24

"△ God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

FIGURE · THE NAMES GROW



The woman starts with what she can see; the town ends with what they have heard for themselves (v42).

Follow the bars down the page: each new name for Jesus says more than the last, from "a Jew" at the well to "the Savior of the world" in the town.

Why "had to" go through Samaria? The direct road from Judea to Galilee ran through Samaria, and Sproul reads it simply: "Jesus may have been in a hurry." Guzik and Henry read divine purpose — "there were people there who needed to hear Him" (Guzik). John uses *edei*, the same "must" as 3:7, 14, 30. I land with purpose: a woman and a town were waiting.

What time was "the sixth hour"? Guzik and Sproul both take it as noon, counting from sunrise ("That means it was high noon"). Some commentators argue John used Roman reckoning (6 p.m.). Noon fits the woman coming alone in the heat, likely avoiding the other women (Sproul).

What is "living water"? The woman hears "running water" (v11). Jesus means the life He gives by the Spirit — John explains the phrase in 7:38–39. Guzik: "Jesus made a play on words." The water becomes a spring that "leaps up" (*hallomai*) inside a man (Sproul). Spurgeon: "You must be the emptiness, and he must be the fulness."

Why bring up her husband? Not to shame her but to heal her. Guzik: "her sinful life had to be confronted." Henry: "Reproofs are ordinarily most profitable when they are least provoking." Sproul thinks her "prophet" remark was a deflection — and Jesus let her ask, then answered.

Does the place of worship matter? Henry and Guzik stress that worship is no longer tied to a mountain (v21). Sproul presses the other half: Jesus "answers that question" — "It is the Jewish way that is the correct way, the way God has ordained," because "salvation is of the Jews." Both are true. God's plan of salvation came through Israel's covenants, prophets and Messiah, and I believe God is not finished with Israel (Rom 11:1–2, 26). But the hour has come when true worshipers worship the Father in spirit and truth, wherever they are.

What is worship "in spirit and truth"? Sproul: "the worship we offer is to come from the depths of our souls," and it must follow God's Word, not felt needs — or it ends at a golden calf. Guzik: "To worship in truth means you worship according to the whole counsel of God's word." Henry: "God is a spirit, for he is an infinite and eternal mind."

"I who speak to you am He" (v26). The plain sense is "I am the Messiah." But it is the first *egō eimi* in John, and it will grow into 8:58 and the name of Exodus 3:14. Sproul: "But here, to a despised Samaritan, a despised woman, Jesus reveals Himself."

What is the harvest? The Samaritans crossing the fields (v30). Jesus' disciples reap what others sowed — the prophets, John the Baptist, the woman (vv37–38). Henry: "gospel time is harvest time." Guzik and Bruce wonder whether this is the town Philip later reached (Acts 8:5).

Is verse 44 a contradiction? Sproul: "it would be surprising to me if John contradicted himself." Whether "his own country" is Judea or Galilee, the Galilean welcome in v45 was for signs, not faith. Henry: pride and envy scorn the hometown prophet.

What kind of faith did the official have? Spurgeon traces four stages — spark, fire, flame, blaze. Sproul: the man believed God, not just in God, and that is saving faith. Guzik: "In fear, the nobleman ran from Capernaum to Cana; in faith he walked from Cana back to Capernaum."

Word study (Greek):

- **had to — *edei* (G1163):** the divine "must" again (3:7, 14, 30; 4:4, 24).
- **well — *pēgē* (G4077):** a spring or fountain; 4:6 (×2), 14.
- **well (dug) — *phrear* (G5421):** a shaft or cistern; 4:11, 12.
- **living — *zaō* (G2198):** living water, running and alive (Jer 2:13; John 7:38–39).
- **springing up — *hallomai* (G242):** leaping; John 4:14; Acts 3:8; 14:10.
- **worship — *proskyneō* (G4352):** to bow down; NASB "worship" words ×10 in vv20–24.
- **I am — *eimi* (G1510):** *egō eimi*, "I am [He]" (4:26; 6:35; 8:58; Exod 3:14).
- **waterpot — *hydria* (G5201):** only John 2:6, 7; 4:28.
- **food — *brōma* (G1033):** "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me" (v34).
- **Savior — *sōtēr* (G4990):** only Luke 1:47; 2:11; John 4:42 in the Gospels; 1 John 4:14.
- **royal official — *basilikos* (G937):** a king's man, probably of Herod Antipas.
- **signs — *sēmeion* (G4592) / wonders — *teras* (G5059):** *teras* only here in John.

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **"Had to" is the same word as the cross** — *edei* (4:4).
2. **God was weary at a well** — and would not work a miracle for His own comfort (Spurgeon).
3. **He asks before He gives** — "Give Me a drink" breaks three walls.
4. **A spring, not a cistern** — *pēgē* that leaps up, not a deep shaft (Jer 2:13).
5. **Jesus exposes in order to heal** — 0 for 5 (Sproul), reproof least provoking (Henry).
6. **Not where, but whom and how** — the Father, in spirit and truth; salvation from the Jews.
7. **The first "I am" goes to an outcast** (v26).
8. **She left her waterpot** — and gave Him drink by believing (Spurgeon).
9. **Testimony leads to His word** — vv39, 41, 42.
10. **Faith takes Jesus at His word** (Guzik, Sproul).

Cross-references: Gen 24; 29:1–12; 33:18–19; 48:22; Exod 2:15–21; 3:14; Deut 18:18; Josh 24:32; 2 Kings 17:24–41; Isa 12:3; 55:1; Jer 2:13; John 2:1–11; 3:16; 6:35; 7:37–39; 8:58; 20:30–31; Acts 1:8; 8:5–25; Rom 11:1–2, 26; Heb 11:1; 1 John 4:14; Rev 22:17.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · JOHN 4:50

"Jesus said to him, "△ Go; your son lives." ▯ The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started off."

FIGURE · A FATHER'S FAITH GROWS

A FATHER'S FAITH GROWS · JOHN 4:46–53 · SPURGEON'S FOUR STAGES

THE SPARK vv46–47	THE FIRE vv48–49	THE FLAME v50	THE BLAZE vv51–53
he hears Jesus has come; he goes and implores Him "come down"	rebuked for wanting signs, he presses: "Sir, come down before …"	"Go; your son lives." He believes the word and starts off	"at that hour" — he himself believed and his whole household

THE HOUR CHECKS OUT

Cana, "the seventh hour" — Jesus speaks (v52) · next day on the road — the slaves meet him (v51)

"So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives"" (v53)

Spurgeon traced four stages in the official's faith; read left to right, and notice that the healing word came before the man saw anything.

Example to follow — Jesus at the well. He was tired, and He still had time for one woman everybody else avoided. Some of the men I serve have been that woman — the one the others won't sit with, the one with the record. Jesus "had to" go there. This week I will go where I would rather not, and sit with someone I would rather avoid, and ask him a simple question.

Sin to confess — drinking from broken cisterns. I have gone back to the same wells over and over — approval, pleasure, numbing out, staying busy — and I have been thirsty again every time (v13). Jeremiah called that forsaking the fountain of living waters for broken cisterns. I confess it by name, and I ask Jesus for His water: "Sir, give me this water."

Truth to face — He knows all the things that I have done. When He told her about the five husbands, she did not run home in shame; she ran home with good news: "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done." The One who knows everything about me still offers me living water. That is the only kind of honesty that doesn't crush a man.

Command to obey — worship in spirit and truth; lift up your eyes. God is not looking for a better building from me; He is seeking worshipers (v23) — from the heart, by His Word. And He tells me to lift up my eyes and look at the fields (v35). The men in my group, the guys at the facility, my own neighbors — the fields are white now, not in four months.

Promise to trust — "Go; your son lives." The official had only a word to walk home on. So do I. Much of what I pray for, I don't get to see answered right away. Saving faith is "trusting that what God says is the truth" (Sproul). I will take Him at His word today, before I see anything.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Jesus "had to pass through Samaria" — the place good Jews avoided. Who is the person or place I avoid that Jesus might be sending me toward? (4:4–9; Acts 1:8) *A divine appointment waited at the well.*
2. What "wells" have I kept going back to that leave me thirsty again — and what would it look like to ask Jesus for living water instead? (4:13–15; Jer 2:13) *Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again.*
3. When Jesus put His finger on her past, the woman changed the subject. What subject do I raise when God gets close to my sin? (4:16–20) *He was more interested in winning a soul than an argument (Guzik).*
4. Is my worship "in spirit" (from the heart) and "in truth" (by God's Word)? Which one am I weaker in? (4:23–24) *The Father seeks such people to be His worshipers.*
5. The woman's whole testimony was "He told me all the things that I have done." What would my honest one-sentence testimony be? (4:28–30, 39) *Those are most likely to do good that can tell what God has done for their souls (Henry).*
6. The official had nothing but a word to walk home on. Where is God asking me to believe His word before I see anything? (4:48–53; Heb 11:1) *Not believing in God but believing God (Sproul).*

Worship. The Lord of glory sat tired on a well in Samaria and asked a sinner for a drink. He is the fountain of living waters, the Messiah who said "I am He" to an outcast, the Savior of the world whom Samaritans named first, and the Lord whose word reached across the miles to a dying boy at the very hour He spoke it.

Prayer. Lord Jesus, You know all the things that I have done, and You still offer me living water. Sir, give me this water — I am tired of broken cisterns. Teach me to worship the Father in spirit and truth. Lift up my eyes to the fields, and make me a man who leaves his waterpot to tell others where You are. And when all I have is Your word, help me believe it and start walking. Amen.

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