



**John 4**  
New International Version  
1984 (NIV1984)

<sup>4</sup> Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John—<sup>2</sup> although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. <sup>3</sup> So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

<sup>4</sup> Now he had to go through Samaria. <sup>5</sup> So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. <sup>7</sup> When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" <sup>8</sup> (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

<sup>9</sup> 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.)

<sup>10</sup> 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."

<sup>11</sup> "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" <sup>12</sup> 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?"

<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> 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."

<sup>15</sup> 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."

<sup>16</sup> He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

<sup>17</sup> "I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. <sup>18</sup> 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."

<sup>19</sup> "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup> Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

<sup>21</sup> "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup> You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup> Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

<sup>25</sup> The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

<sup>26</sup> Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."



# SERMON NOTES

## COME TO THE WELL!

"You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water." Psalm 63:1

### Grace is **Unpredictable**

"You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" v9

### Grace is **UNIMAGINABLE**

"The water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." v14

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." Ephesians 3:20-21

### Grace is **UNCONTROLLABLE**

*"In some strange way I am being reborn. I wonder what God means me to do with a life so specially spared?"*

"I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs." Isaiah 41:18

# SACRED JOURNEY

## What is Prevenient (preceding) Grace?

Earlier we learned that part of God's nature is the desire to reveal himself to us. God is not merely interested in giving us rules to live by. He wants us to know him and enter into a covenant relationship with him through Jesus Christ. This self-revealing nature of God comes out in many ways, including creation, our consciences, in Scripture and ultimately in Jesus Christ.

It is important to understand that salvation never begins with anything we do, but always as a response to something God had done. To think that salvation begins without repenting of our sins and asking Jesus into our hearts is not the way the scriptures reveal the whole process of salvation. Rather, salvation always begins with God's prior action. He acts, and we accept or resist. It always happens in that pattern.

One way of talking about all the ways God prepares us to receive the gospel is to use the term, prevenient (or preceding) grace." Prevenient grace refers to all those acts of grace in our lives prior to our becoming a Christian. We know that such grace exists because Jesus said that "no one can come to me unless the father who sent me draws him" (John 6:44). There is a "drawing" or "preparing" which precedes our actual conversion.

The other reason we know that God's grace must precede our decision to follow Christ is that the Scriptures teach us that we are dead in our trespasses and sin apart from Christ (Eph. 2:1) The Scriptures do not teach that we are merely sick or that our overall spiritual progress is slow, but that we are spiritually dead. (This is another great distinctive feature of Christianity). This means that we are incapable of helping ourselves or saving ourselves without God's prior action.

Most Christians believe in the doctrine of total depravity. That means that humans are dead in their sins and cannot do anything to help or improve their spiritual state before God. However, it is also a Christian position to believe in free will. This means that we affirm that God wants us to act and make decisions for him. The problem is this: How can a

spiritually dead person act or decide to give their lives to Christ freely? The Bible is full of injunctions to act – people are called to repent, to believe, to come, to decide, and so forth. The answer is the doctrine of prevenient Grace. This is the bridge between human depravity and the free exercise of human will. Prevenient grace is a sovereign act of God whereby he lifts the human race out of depravity and grants us the capacity to respond further to God's grace. It is God's act of unmerited favor. It is God's light "which enlightens everyone" (John 1:9) which lifts us up and allows us to exercise our free will and respond to the grace of Christ.

## Satisfying