



TIME OF GRACE®

Fake News/Real Jesus: The Satisfaction You Crave

Study Notes

Summary

When a “bad Samaritan” met Jesus, she was shocked by his behavior. He engaged her, confused her, and then saved her, turning her into the Bible’s most unlikely missionary. This message reminds us that Jesus is still offering the Water of Life to the most unlikely people in the most unlikely places.

- **John 4:3-15:** ³ So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. ⁴ Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. ⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” ⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) 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.) ¹⁰ 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.” ¹¹ “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? ¹² 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?” ¹³ Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ 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.” ¹⁵ 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.”
- Two Problems:
 1. Getting water is _____.
 2. Most water doesn’t _____.
- **John 4:16-18:** ¹⁶ He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.” ¹⁷ “I have no husband,” she replied. Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ 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.”
- Six “waters” that don’t work:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

- **Jeremiah 2:13:** My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.
- **John 4:25,26:** ²⁵ The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” ²⁶ Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”
- The Solution: Jesus’ water _____ (and it’s not _____).
- **Revelation 22:17:** Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.

Points to Ponder

1. Which of the six “waters” do you most often turn to for a satisfying life? What kind of work does it take to get them?
2. **Evaluate:** Good things that turn into “God things” are just as spiritually dangerous as bad things.
3. Meditate on Psalm 63. Name three connections you see between that ancient song and John chapter 4?

Homework for Next Week

Read Acts 1:6-11.

Time of Grace Ministry
Fake News, Real Jesus: The Satisfaction You Crave
John 4:3-26
May 24, 2020

Pastor Mike Novotny

What do you think would happen if you could have a conversation with the 10 year old version of yourself?

How would you explain it? To have so much entertainment, so many resources, so many experiences, to have traveled so much, made so much, had so much, and yet, you still have the same struggles as you did when you were 10 with fear and anxiety and worry and loneliness. I wonder if the 10 year old you would look back and ask this question: "So it doesn't work?"

I want you to remember that question because when you leave church today, you are going to face the exact same temptation as you did when you were ten. The temptation to think that if you could just get "that" in your life, you'd be good. I'm not sure what the "that" is or how you fill in the blank but we all have "that." Something that we think if we could just get it and hold onto it, possess it or become it, like we'd be satisfied and it'd be enough and we would have the life that we always dreamed of. But if it didn't work the last time when we were 10, what makes us think it would work now? The Bible talks a ton about having a real satisfying, what Jesus called, abundant life. But the Bible's also really clear that getting that life is not maybe down the path that you think. And that's why I'm so glad that we get to listen to Jesus today. In John 4, we're going to eavesdrop in on what I think is one of the most interesting conversations Jesus ever had with a woman who thought she knew what to fill in the blank with that would finally make her happy. But when Jesus met her, it simply didn't work so he offered her something better; something that would work and something that could work for you, too.

So before you spend the next day, the next week, the next year, or the rest of your life pursuing that thing that you think might satisfy, listen to the incredible words of Jesus from John chapter four. The story starts in verse three like this: "So Jesus 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."

Now if you're kind of new to the Bible and you don't really know the geography of Israel, I like to picture it like an ice cream cone with three scoops on top. The bottom scoop was a region called Judea; that's where Jerusalem was, the city where Jesus would worship at the temple. The top scoop was a region called Galilee, or on the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus lived and grew up. And the middle scoop that gets squished in between was a really interesting place called Samaria. I don't have time to tell you the whole story of the Old Testament but here's the bottom line: Samaria was a messy, sinful, backwards place. For hundreds and hundreds of years, they refused to worship the true God and they mixed many gods together. They sometimes sacrificed their own children, they gave into shrine prostitution and sexual deviancy, and it was so bad that

by the time Jesus was born, Jews thought the Samaritans were so ugly they had nothing to do with them. That's an interesting little line there in verse four: "Jesus had to go through Samaria." Most Jews would say, "No, I don't." And they'd take the long route from Jerusalem back up to Galilee just because they didn't want to see or touch or talk to or be close to Samaritans.

Most Jews felt that way, but there was one Jew who didn't; a Jewish man named Jesus. If John 3:16 was going to be true, that God so loved the whole world, then in John 4, Jesus would have to go into the whole world, Samaria included. And so he journeys through the region, he sits down by this well, and he waits because there's a woman he wants to talk to. We meet her in the next verse. Verse seven: "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'm 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 asked 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 this 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.' 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.'"

Jesus should do late-night infomercials because he's a good salesman, isn't he? He knows she has an issue, a problem that she can't fix, and he offers a solution. In fact, in those words, I see really two problems this woman had. If you're taking notes today, I'd love for you to write these down. Her problem, first of all, was that getting water was work. She kind of expressed it in the end: Give me this water so I don't have to keep coming back here to draw water from this deep well.

Back in, I think the year 1697, an English pastor named Henry Maundrell traveled through the Holy Land and actually came to this very well and he measured it. And in his journal, which you can read, he said that the well in Samaria was 105 feet deep; probably deeper in Jesus' day before erosion and soil filled it in but at least 105 feet deep. And do you know how ancient Jewish well pump systems worked? Like this: No electricity, no machine; you brought a bucket, you lowered it down 105 feet and you pulled it back up. I Googled it - do you know a gallon of water weighs 8.34 pounds? Combined up with an old bucket, we're talking 10 to 12 pounds. Can you imagine this thick, knotty rope? Picture yourself standing on top of an eight-story building, a rope in hand, and a 12-pound weight tied to the bottom and you're dragging it up. It was work. And the worst part was, number two, all that work didn't work. I mean, in the beginning it did; she would drink the water and it'd be refreshing and satisfying and cool. She'd bring it home, perhaps share it with her children, but what would have to happen after a day? They'd be thirsty again. Someone would have an extra drink - I picture her sons wrestling and knocking over the bucket; ugh, she sighs. Back to the well, 105 feet, drag it back up again. She worked and she worked and she worked but in the end it didn't work; it didn't satisfy. And so she was an available customer and Jesus made an offer. He said how about I give you water that you

don't have to work for? Not in a well that you have to go down to get but it's like a spring that comes up to you. And what if you could have a drink of this living water and you would never be thirsty again? And her eyes light up and she says, "Sir, give me this water! I don't know how you're going to get it but I'll take it. I'm tired of the work that doesn't work."

And Jesus, when he has her leaning forward, he continues with some shocking and potentially offensive words in verse sixteen. Jesus told her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You're right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you've had five husbands and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

That seems like a total tangent, doesn't it? From nice, smiling Jesus who's offering this satisfying gift to very personal, offensive Jesus, who printed out screenshots of her relationship past and lays them out to embarrass her. But there's more to this conversation than you might think because Jesus is not on a tangent. He's still talking about the thing she was working for that didn't work. Have you ever heard of a guy called a tall drink of water before? She had five glasses and she was pouring number six and Jesus, in love, did not want her to make the same mistake. He knew that another relationship wouldn't fix it. And we don't have her whole story; you know, we don't know if her husbands died or if they divorced her unfairly or if it was all her fault but it seems there was something wrong, something messy, that Jesus would bring it up. And full of grace and truth, he gave her the truth and said another guy's not going to satisfy. You could get another drink, another glass of water, but it might not work.

So what about you? If I could be as personal and maybe as offensive as Jesus, what's your water? Like what do you think, if you could just get a drink of it, it would be enough to satisfy your soul and give you a good life? What are you working for, striving for, thinking if I just got it and could hold onto it, it would be enough for me? And God, then I'd be content with the life you've given. I don't know what it is for you but I know it's something.

And as you think about what that might be in your personal life, let me give you six of the top waters that I see in people's lives that simply don't work. The first one, like this Samaritan woman, is love. You think if I could just find the one, if I could just make my romantic life work, if I could just get the guy at school to notice me, if I could just convince that girl from class to give me her number, if he would start liking my Instagram post, if she would direct message me, if we could connect, if we could go out on a date, if he would finally commit and we wouldn't just be roommates but spouses, if we could have the perfect wedding and the kids and the family, if I could find love that lasts, like true love, the one for me, I'd be good. And the honest truth is that works for a while, but not forever.

Maybe for you romance isn't the draw; maybe number two is lust. It's pleasure; it's a desire for more. You think if you could hook up, if you could have sex, interesting sex, adventurous sex that you could talk about with the guys at work, you think if you just turn to another website and you find just the right video and just the right clip it's going to be enough to satisfy. And it will for a bit but talk to any porn addict and they'll tell you it doesn't work for very long.

Or maybe number three; your struggle is looks. You think if you could just be strong or beautiful; if you could look in the mirror and feel confident like life would be so good. If you could lose those 15 pounds that you gained with the baby. If you could walk into the gym and guys would respect you. If you could get the hair and the clear skin, if you're rocking the outfit, if the wedding pictures were beautiful, if you could find the right filter that everyone liked, like if you had the look, you'd be so confident and so strong and you'd feel so good. And you would the first time you stepped on the scale, but it wouldn't last for long.

Number four, what I think is one of the most common ones, is like. This water comes in a dozen different flavors, like if people at school liked you, if they liked your sense of humor or your sense of fashion, if the professors liked your intelligence or your wittiness. If people laughed at your jokes. Or maybe it's at work, if people like your work ethic or your potential in the company, if they liked you and gave you the promotion, if they were impressed with your projects and your problem-solving abilities. Maybe it's social media; you think I get 10 likes now, if I can get 100, I'd be so happy. If I have 100 and then I got 1,000, it'd be enough. And I've got to tell you, it feels really good in the moment when you're noticed and people compliment and praise; when they like you. But ask the biggest Instagram stars if it's ever enough.

Maybe number five; for a lot of you it's loot. It's money. If I could write you a \$1,000 check you'd be so happy, wouldn't you? If you won the lottery, if you could remodel the kitchen, if you could buy that muscle car and the boat you wanted and the cabin up north, if you could pay off the credit card debt, if you didn't have the pressure of your school loans, that'd be - you'd be so much happier, right? Yeah, for a bit.

Or finally, maybe for you it's leisure. If you could just get away from work, if you could just catch a break from the kids. If you could just have a day to yourself or a week on a beach somewhere. If you could just retire early or grow the business enough that you didn't have to work such crazy hours, you'd be so content. And you would, right? On the plane ride to that beach you'd feel so happy and so excited but do you know what happens seven days later? That water just wouldn't work.

And so, here's a huge question and, spiritually, you need to look in the mirror and ask this of yourself: What's your water? Just ask the guy who sold Minecraft. Ever heard of Minecraft before? Wildly successful video game. A guy about my age named Marcus Persson invented it and back in 2015 he sold it to Microsoft for \$2.5 billion. Billion. And he splurged. Marcus bought himself a \$70 million mansion in the Hollywood hills with an infinity pool, expensive champagne in the fridge. He threw epic parties, Selena Gomez would show up and DJ Scrillex would be on the ones and twos pumping the best music that you've heard. But do you know what he said? Right after he started living the life that many of us want, he tweeted, "I have never felt lonelier in my life." He worked to find massive success, to get the loot and have the leisure, be liked and have the look and guess what? It didn't work. And before you waste the rest of your life, listen to Jesus.

I love what the prophet Jeremiah said when he recorded the words of God back in the Old Testament. God says, "My people have committed two sins. They have forsaken me, the spring

of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water." To me, this virtually encapsulates the spiritual struggle that every human being has, that we turn our backs on God and we turn to something else except that something else is cracked; like a water bottle that's broken or a cistern with a hole in the bottom and the water's never enough to satisfy. Because we are created with this desire in our heart for things that last; for living water that we don't have to work for and that always is available to refresh our souls.

The woman at the well knew it. And thankfully, Jesus knew a solution. You know, there she was next to the well feeling very uncomfortable about Jesus' personal questions and so she tries to take him on a tangent to talk about Jews and Samaritans and where you should worship and what's the truth and eventually, she plays the ultimate get-out-of-uncomfortable-conversation card. She says to him, "Well, I guess we'll agree to disagree and one day God will figure it out." Here's how she said it John 4:25. "The woman said, 'I know that Messiah,' (called Christ) 'is coming. When he comes, he'll explain everything to us.'" Like I know that you think that and thanks for your opinion, sir, but we'll have to wait and let God say who's right and who's wrong. And do you know what Jesus says in return? Verse 26: "I, the one speaking to you, I am he."

I don't know what water you turn to, how big your struggle, how ugly your sin. You might be as backwards as a Samaritan or as moral as a Jew but I know this: Jesus is offering all of us living water. And here's the two reasons why it's going to work. If you're taking notes, I'd love for you to write these down. Number one is that Jesus' water works. He said whoever drinks this water will never be thirsty again. Do you know the reason why that's true? Because what Jesus is offering you is not a bottle but a river. It's what the phrase "living water" means. It's not just like sitting there, stale and dead. It's moving and it's alive; it's constantly refreshing itself. So I want you to imagine you're dying of thirst and you come to this fresh river that's moving along, and you could scoop up that water in your hands and drink it. And then guess what would be right below you? More water and you could drink it! And right now and in five seconds and in two days or in 10 years, you could scoop up the same water and drink it and that is why Jesus' water works.

Some of you are like my family in that before you sit down to eat a meal, you remind yourself of that fact. You pray, "Oh give thanks unto the Lord for he is good, for his mercy endures forever." That's why it works! So if you're looking for love and you think if I just found that person, their companionship would be enough for me, Jesus said, no, that won't work. Their love will be there and then it won't; he'll treat you nice and then he won't. She'll be complimentary and then she'll give you attitude. Like it will work sometimes, but what I'm offering you is love and then love and then love and then love. And you can enjoy the relationship and I'm all for it; it's a great gift from me. But please, find the satisfaction for your soul in the constant eternal love that never fails; the spring that comes up from the ground and wells up to eternal life.

Do you want to be liked? If your boss likes you, your teachers like you, your classmates like you, your neighbors like you, that's great. Enjoy that as a glimpse of God. But let your soul be satisfied in the eternal like that comes from God. That because Jesus has taken away every sin and given you his perfect life, whenever God looks at your profile picture, he always clicks the same button and his face shines on you and he's gracious to you. This is a little trick I do whenever I'm having a bad day or I get a critical email or I'm driving home in my Town and

Country minivan. I always look - not too long cause I'm driving - I look at the passenger seat and I try to picture Jesus and he always likes me. He's never disgusted, or disappointed, never angry because what he gives is eternal acceptance that we find at the cross.

Do you want to be rich? You can be in Jesus. The Bible says the eternal inheritance of heaven itself is yours through faith in him. That you will find something that endures forever and ever and ever and that's better than the best vacation, the fanciest car, or the nicest clothes. Whatever you are aching for, searching for, leisure or rest, you can come to Jesus and find rest for your soul. This world gives you little bits of water but it quickly runs out and it's always expensive and so much work to get more. But Jesus is offering you something that lasts.

Or as the Bible summarizes all that: Eternal life. That's the second reason why Jesus' water works because it's not work. He just gives it. I don't know your story; maybe you feel like a Samaritan in a Christian church. But I do know that no matter how long, how bad, how ugly, how embarrassing, the beautiful thing about Christianity is that you don't have to work for it, earn it, or be good enough to get it. Instead, it works because it's not work. It's not rare water that you have to climb a mountain to bottle up; it's a spring that comes up from the ground of God's grace and it's always there, even for you.

And I hope you remember that this week because you're going to have to face the same struggle that Lil Wayne does. You all know Lil Wayne? He's a really talented rapper who has slept with a lot of women, made a lot of money, and gone to a lot of parties and he's also a very honest rapper. A couple years ago, he rapped with Eminem on this smash hit called No Love and he talked about that the life he thought he would have with all that money and all those girls, it didn't turn out that way. And he was searching for something that would satisfy. Here's what Lil Wayne said in the song. He said, "I'm married to the game," the rap game, his career, "but she broke her vows. That's why my bars are full of broken bottles and my nightstands are full of open Bibles." Folks, that might be the first time you hear a pastor quote Lil Wayne in church. But listen to him; he's wise. Whatever you're turning to, it's going to break the vow, the promise, to satisfy. So here's what you can do: You can turn to another bottle or you can open up this Bible. And in it, you can find living water that can truly satisfy the thirstiest soul.

I hope this week, when life leaves you thirsty, you know exactly where to turn. Like the Samaritan woman, you can run back and be really honest about your life and say, "But here's someone who offers me what no one else ever has, could, or did." God hopes that you do! "Let the one who's thirsty come and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life."

Are you thirsty for a good life? For peace and satisfaction? Then come to Jesus. He won't charge you anything. It's free and it's for you. Friends, that's why Jesus' water, it always works.

Let's pray.

Jesus, thank you for your generous heart. It would be reasonable if you expected a million good works before offering us something this good but you're not reasonable; you're gracious and it's why we adore you. I thank you that addicts and drunks and people with messy relational histories like us can be satisfied. Thank you, Jesus, that you never preach karma but instead you

showed compassion. Thank you, Jesus, that you never struck deals with people to earn salvation. Instead, you just offered it as a free gift. And thank you, Jesus, for going to the cross to make it all possible.

I pray as we leave here today that we could be satisfied, content people. We desperately crave what the apostle Paul found; what he called the secret of being content, believing that because of Jesus you were always with him. We want the amazing faith of David who said that if you were his shepherd guiding him through life, he would not be in want and he would lack nothing.

I pray especially for the young people who are here today, God; that they would not make the same mistakes that many of us have. That they would not pursue power and pleasure, career and prestige, thinking that it's going to work. It won't. Instead, help them to be those rare teenagers and 20-somethings who are so satisfied in you that they radiate joy and confidence and find their strength in you as their portion. And God, use that bright light. Use this abnormal satisfaction and faith to draw people to Jesus. That just like that Samaritan woman, our world could find living water in him. I thank you, Jesus, for being kind. I thank you for loving us no matter what and I thank you that through simple trust in you, all of us can have eternal life. We pray these things with grateful hearts and we pray them in your name, Amen.