

After Just One Drink

By Diane Boring

Our Ladies' Bible Study is going through the Gospel of John, and right now we're in John 4—the encounter that Jesus had with the woman at the well.

I've come to see that this is one of the greatest passages in the Bible. Over the course of a simple conversation, it makes very clear what God's gift to the woman is, and how she can have it.

THE FATEFUL MEETING

Jesus had just left Judea to go to Galilee but needed to go through Samaria on his way there. While passing through Samaria with his disciples he became tired and sat down by Jacob's well. The disciples left Him to go into town to buy food. As Jesus sat there, a Samaritan woman came to the well to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink" (John 4:7). The woman from Samaria was shocked to hear Jesus (a Jew) ask her (a Samaritan) for a drink. She said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" (v 9). Jews didn't usually speak to Samaritans. They did not consider them to be Jews because they had intermarried with foreigners and adopted their idolatrous religion.

Notice the sequence in their conversation.

First Jesus asked her for a drink. Then when she responds by asking Him why He would do that (her being a Samaritan and Him being a Jew), He answers her by turning the question around on her. He tells her that if she knew who it was who said to her, "Give Me a drink," she would have asked Him and He would have given her living water (v 10).

What does He mean?

THE REAL NEED

Jesus knows what this woman needs, and He is evangelizing her.

As you read on you will notice that the Samaritan woman is still thinking in physical terms (physical water). Jesus is going to help her see that the water that He gives is not physical. Nor is it temporary, where you have to keep coming back to drink again and again to quench your thirst. Notice what Jesus says in John 4:13-14, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst, but the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

One drink and you'll never thirst again! This is what all of mankind needs to see.

Jesus is offering her a gift that is permanent. In order for her to have it, she needs to know what He's offering and believe Him for it. He's making it clear that the water from Jacob's well will not quench her thirst permanently. But He's telling her that the water He has for her will quench her thirst forever by just taking one drink. She hears what He says and understands that it's permanent, but she's still thinking in terms of physical water. She wonders how this can be true. Jesus is going to help her understand.

Jesus told her to go call her husband, but she told Him that she had no husband. Jesus already knew that, but He was showing her that He knew all about her. He said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly" (v 18). Shocked to hear this Jewish stranger tell her intimate details about herself, things He could not have known, she said, "I perceive that You are a Prophet" (v 19).

Notice what the woman said in v 25, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.”

Jesus had gotten her attention. She knew the Messiah was coming but hadn't yet believed in Him for His gift of eternal life. At this point Jesus answers her.

“I who speak to you am He” (v 26).

THE DRINK OF FAITH

I believe that at this point the woman took that one drink from the fountain that springs up into everlasting life. She believed in Jesus as the Christ. She believed in Him for what He was offering her as a free gift. That's what it means to believe in Jesus as the Christ in John's writings (John 11:25-27; 20:30-31). She believed the message that He was telling her.

The reason for thinking she believed at this point is because that's the end of the conversation between Jesus and the woman. At that point the disciples come back and the woman leaves her water pot and runs back to the city to tell the others what just happened. She says, “Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” (v 29). The KJV says it this way, “Is not this the Christ?”

One might wonder why she said it as a question. This is not surprising since she did not have a good reputation among the men of the city. She said it in a way that caused them to go check it out for themselves. The men immediately went to check out Jesus for themselves because of what the woman said. Then in John 4:42 we read that they came back to the woman and said, “Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

John 4:39 says, “And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, ‘He told me all that I ever did.’”

Just one drink. That is all it took. That is all it takes. That is all it will ever take. Once we believe in Him, we have everlasting life that can never be lost. He guarantees it.

Diane Boring attended Calvary Bible College back in the sixties, is a grandmother, and regularly disciples a group of young moms from her church.