



Starting a Chain Reaction

John 4

By Dr. Floyd Paris, President,
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Intro:

I. Starts with a Common Task.

Going to the Well to fetch water.

Water for drinking, washing, etc., was carried in pitchers from a community well to the homes. Bits of detail enable us to see why the woman came alone at noon. She had been married five times, and at the time of this incident she was living in open adultery. She came alone because she was not welcomed by the women who came to the well at sundown.

II. A Guided Conversation

She asked Jesus why He would ask her, a Samaritan, for a drink. It was this question, this subject of water, that Jesus took and used...

- to discuss one of the greatest truths of spiritual life, that of living water.
- to present the good news about the Messiah

III. Great Commission Brings Great Conversion

"Go, call thy husband" introduced the woman to the personal pertinency of His message to her. She could never receive what she failed to see she needed. Jesus proceeded to probe her moral condition that she might know her spiritual need.

Look at the **three verbs** in this verse.

"**Go**" was the easy command (hupage, present imperative) for she was going, and He did not have to insist that she do it.

"**Call**" (phoneson, aorist imperative) means "to voice it."

"**Come**" (elthe, aorist imperative) stands for the command which involved obedience and faith.

Jesus gave such words of command to arouse her conscience. Observe the gentle and indirect method of His approach to her openly sinful life. Neither Jesus nor John ever mentions the woman by her personal name. How wonderfully He protects the person and exposes the sin!

4:18. Because of His divine omniscience Jesus knew of the five "husbands" and of the one she now had! (Jewish law allowed women two or three marriages.) She was living in adultery because the present "mate" was not really her husband.

Jesus knew all about the woman, that she had gone through five husbands. He knew the truth about her, what she had done to fail in so many marriages. He knew whether she was guilty...

- of making ungodly, worldly choices.
- of being argumentative and defensive.
- of being a poor housekeeper, wife, and mother.
- of being cold, distant, withdrawn, and indifferent.
- of being unfaithful and immoral.

Jesus knew the truth about her sin, and He knows the truth about every man's sin.—

Man has to face the truth, the fact of his sin, and renounce it if he wishes to receive the living water of spiritual rebirth. A man has to do what Christ is pointing out to the woman: renounce his sin. Once he has done this, he can then ask for the living water and Christ will give it. But note: drinking the water of Christ is essential.

Conviction, Response to: the woman was troubled. Jesus had confronted her with her sin (John 3:15-18) and she could either respond or react. She could have reacted by...

- being angry
- ignoring
- neglecting· arguing
- counting it as foolishness

However, she did not react. Instead, she was stirred and convicted, and she sensed two things.

1. She sensed that Jesus was a prophet, a man who was in touch with God; therefore, Jesus was a man who could help her.
2. She sensed her sin and the need to take care of her sin, to truly worship God. But where was she to worship? There was a dispute about where God's presence really was, a dispute about where a person could truly meet God. The Samaritans said that God's presence was in Mount Gerizim; the Jews said He dwelt in Jerusalem.

Standing before her was the prophet who wrought the piercing conviction in her that she was to worship. He was a prophet; therefore, He could help and direct her, so she asked Him where to worship. Where could she find help from God?

Thought

The woman was under a powerful conviction. She knew that she had to worship God, to make sacrifice for her sin. When a man is stirred and convicted, he needs to turn to God immediately. If he does not know how to turn to God, he needs to ask a person who is in touch with God.

Worship

Note *four points*.

1. Note the change in worship: "The hour cometh, and now is." Christ changed worship. Before Christ, men worshipped God in special places, for example, in temples and before altars. Since Christ, place and locality mean nothing. Christ has opened the door into God's presence from any place in the universe

.

2. Note the nature of worship. Man is to worship God in spirit and in truth.

a. To worship God *in spirit means to worship God...*

- with the spiritual drive and ability of one's soul, seeking the most intimate communion and fellowship with God.

- with the spiritual core of one's life and being, trusting and resting in God's acceptance and love and care.

b. To worship God *in truth means...*

- to approach God in the right or true way. There is only one way, through His Son Jesus Christ, to worship God sincerely and truthfully, not coming half-heartedly with wandering mind and sleepy eyes.

3. Note the reason for worship. The Father seeks men to worship Him. God desires worship, for He created man to worship and fellowship with Him. Therefore, God seeks men who will worship Him in spirit and truth.

4. Note the one essential in worship. It is **not the place** that is important in worship, **but how a person worships** God. A person must worship God in spirit and in truth. There is no other way. "God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

To worship in spirit means...

- from the spiritual drive and depth of the soul.

- from the spiritual core of the life and being.

To worship in truth means...

- as God dictates, that is, worship must be in the name of God's Son, Jesus Christ

- in sincerity.

IV. Conversion Brings Chain Reaction

Witnessing: there was the proclamation that Jesus was the Messiah. Note the tender, yet meaningful statement: "The woman then left her waterpot." She was very excited. The Messiah had confronted her; she had actually met Him, and He had met the need of her heart and life. She had to tell everyone about Him.

Note also the strength of the woman's witness. She was an outcast from society, had no friends because of the immoral life she had lived. However, meeting the Messiah changed all that. He dealt with her sin and shame. She could now face everyone. They, too, must have the opportunity to meet the Messiah.