

The Transformation of an Outcast

John 4: 4-19, 28-30

What is sin?

Setting up the scene

Now [Jesus] 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. (John 4: 4-6)



John 4: 4-8

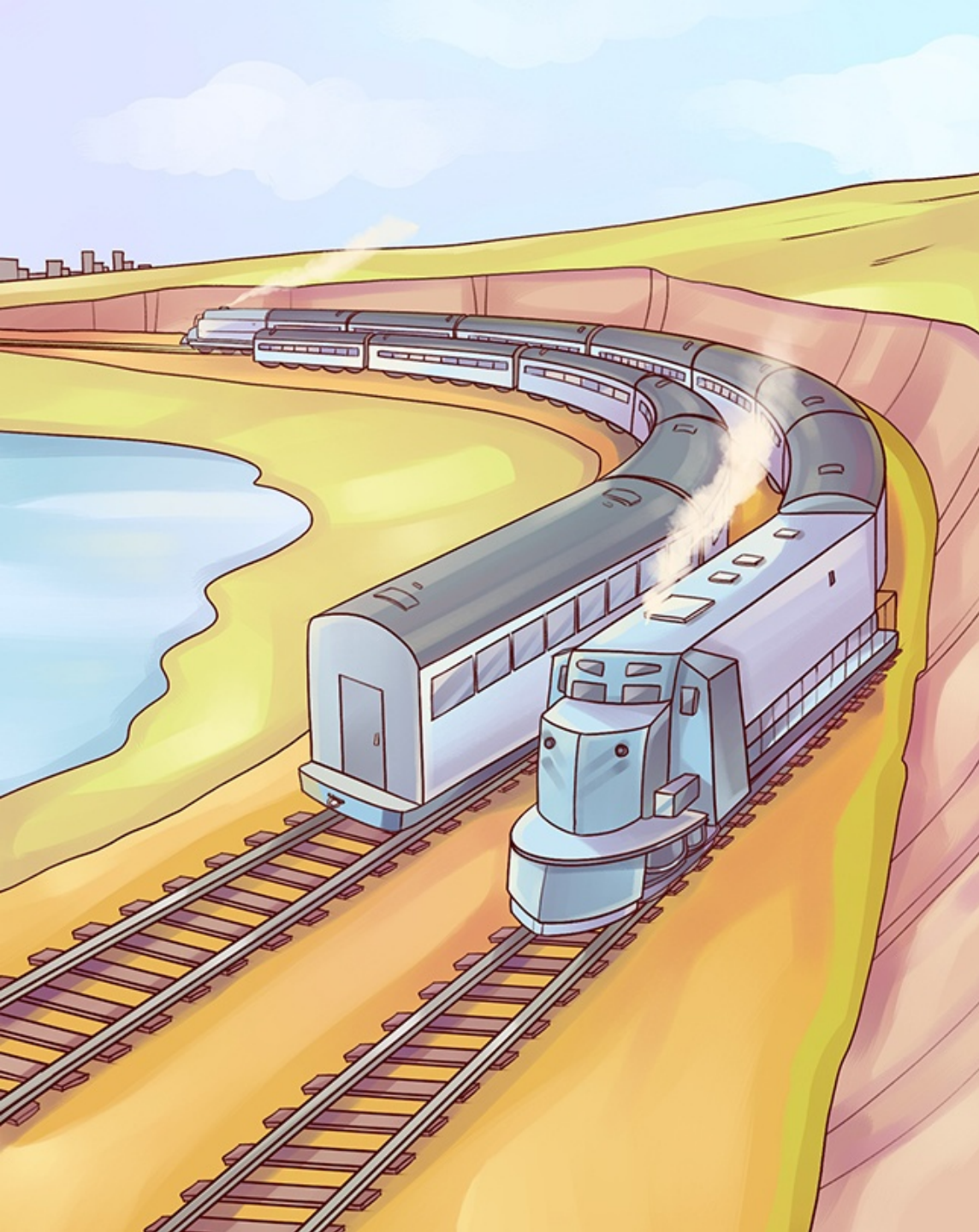
- Jesus travels through Samaria with disciples
- When they reach Sychar, Jesus is tired and thirsty
- He sits down by the well ... while disciples go into town to buy lunch (v. 8)
- It is noon (the 6th hour)
- A woman approaches the well to get water

- Jesus: “Will you give me a drink?”
- “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.)

What's wrong with this?



How about
this?



And this?

- Jesus: “Will you give me a drink?”
- “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.)

What's wrong ?

- Jesus initiating a conversation with a woman

Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?” (John 4: 27)

- a Samaritan woman
- a Samaritan woman with sinful lifestyle

John 4: 10-11

- Jesus: “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.”
- “Sir, you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?”
- Jacob’s well: 120 to 200 ft deep
- Wells usually have “stagnant” water; “living” water is fresh and/or flowing (“running”)

Jesus continues to arouse her interest

- “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.” (paraphrase of John 4: 10)
- “If you knew who I was, you would ask me for living water; and if you drink this water, you will never thirst again.” (paraphrase of John 4: 13-14)

Ever experienced real thirst?

- “Dying” of thirst is real agony!

We need water (lots of it) to live

- Up to 60% of an adult's body is water
- brain and heart - 73% water
- lungs - ~ 83% water
- skin contains 64% water
- muscles and kidneys - 79% water
- bones are 31% water
- Men needs 3 L water/day; women: 2.2 L water/day
- <https://water.usgs.gov/edu/propertyyou.html>

- While “dying” of thirst is real agony ...
- To taste water after almost dying of thirst is about the most satisfying experience possible !

What is Jesus saying to her?

- “I am offering you something that’s as basic and necessary to you *spiritually* as water is to you *physically*. Something without which you are absolutely lost.”
- “The water I give you will become in you a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”
- “My water satisfies you from the *inside*”
- Deep soul satisfaction that does not depend on what’s happening outside of us

What is Jesus saying to us?

- What will give you a satisfying life? A contented life?
- What is that something that makes you say ...
“If I have that, if I get there, ...
 - then I’ll know I’m important
 - then I’ll know I have significance
 - then I know I’ll have security
- “I can give you unquenchable satisfaction at the core of your being ... regardless of what happens outside of you”

She wanted this “living water”

- “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

(John 4: 15)

Drinking this “living water” will transform every area of your life

- Jesus: “Go, call your husband and come back.”
- “I have no husband.”
- Jesus: “You are right when you say you have no husband. 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.”
- John 4: 16-18

What is Jesus doing?

- Understand that you've been trying to fulfill your "dream" through men
- Your need for men is eating you alive, and this will not end if you don't deal with it
- "You need to deal with your sin first"

Most of us are oblivious to our soul thirst

- We often forget how thirsty we are because we believe we will/can fulfill our dream(s)

And her response?

- “Sir, I see you are a prophet! We worship at this temple here and the Jews worship at the temple in Jerusalem. Who’s got it right?” (John 4: 19, paraphrased)
- The best topic for diverting attention from moral issues is ...
- RELIGION

Jesus' response

- “The time is coming when we would no longer need an actual temple to come before God. God is spirit; true worship has nothing to do with location and everything to do with spirituality and truth.”

She tries one more diversion tactic

- “I know that Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” (John 4: 25)
- Jesus: “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”

Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. ... Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town ...

(John 4: 27-28)

Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.” Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again. [or born from above]”

Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus

“How can someone be born when they are old?”
Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second
time into their mother’s womb to be born!”

Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can
enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of
water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the
Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be
surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’”

(John 3: 1-7)

Compare these 2 Persons

Nicodemus (John 3)	Samaritan Woman (John 4)
Religious & civic leader	Little status
Highly moral lifestyle	Immoral lifestyle
Financially well off	Financially challenged
“Insider”	“Outcast”

Compare Jesus' interaction with them

Nicodemus (John 3)	Samaritan Woman (John 4)
<p>Started forcefully; Physical mixed with spiritual (birth); Immediately confronted him with his spiritual need;</p>	<p>Started gently; Physical mixed with spiritual (living water); Slowly confronted her with her spiritual need;</p>
<p>“You must be born again”</p>	<p>“I can give you living water”</p>

To the Outcast (Samaritan Woman)

- Easier to see her as “sinner” in need of salvation
- Jesus didn’t start with: “You need to be born again”
- Jesus “teased” her with the offer of living water
- Jesus confronted her with her sin only when she asked for living water

To the Insider (Nicodemus)

- Rather than confront him on his lack of satisfaction, Jesus confronted his proud self-satisfaction
- “What did you have to do with being born?”
- We don’t contribute *anything* to being born!
- Life is a free gift from God
- Salvation is by grace; we can’t earn it through moral efforts
- “Why would Jesus tell this good man that he has done essentially nothing to earn a place in heaven?”

What is “sin”

- Looking to something/someone other than God for my salvation
- sIn: putting myself in the place of God
- I can sin by breaking moral rules in my pursuit of meaning, significance, pleasure, security, happiness ...
- I can also sin by thinking that if I live a good and moral life, God will bless me and answer my prayers
- What was giving meaning, significance and security to someone like Nicodemus?
- What was giving meaning, significance and security to someone like the Samaritan woman?

In God's eyes, no difference between the two

- Both were sinners in need of God's grace
- So are we

Fast forward to John 4: 28-30, 39-41

28 Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 29 “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” 30 They came out of the town and made their way toward him. ...

39 Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. 41 And because of his words many more became believers.

Why did the Samaritan woman find salvation?

- Because Jesus was thirsty
- In the gospel of John, Jesus would say “I thirst” a second time ... hanging on the cross
- Because Jesus Christ experienced the most agonizing thirst on the cross, we can have our spiritual thirst satisfied