

Jesus, the Christ of God

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[0 : 00] Please turn with me in your Bibles to John chapter 4, verses 1 to 30. We've been going through various passages in the Gospel of John for this Advent season to talk about who Jesus is. And we're in John chapter 4 today.

And let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's Word. Heavenly Father, as John the Baptist prepared the way for the Lord in the wilderness.

So it is our desire that this Advent season, as we go through the Gospel of John, as we sing Christmas carols, that we're preparing room for Christ the King.

In our hearts, in our lives. That you may reign over our lives more fully. It is our desire to submit to you.

And so we incline our ears to you again this morning. Speak to us, address us from your Word. Reveal Jesus to us in all his glory.

[1 : 21] That we might behold him. Worship him. Bow before him. It's in his glorious name we pray.

Amen. If you are able, please stand for the reading and preaching of God's Word. I will read John 4, 1 to 30. Now, when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John, although Jesus himself did not baptize but only his disciples, he left Judea and departed again for Galilee.

And he had to pass through Samaria. So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.

Jacob's well was there, so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman from Samaria came to draw water.

Jesus said to her, Give me a drink. For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?

[2 : 44] For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered her, If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, give me a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.

The woman said to him, Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?

Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock. Jesus said to her, Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again.

But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

The woman said to him, Sir, give me this water so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water. Jesus said to her, Go, call your husband and come here.

[4 : 00] The woman answered him, I have no husband. Jesus said to her, You are right in saying I have no husband, for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband.

What you have said is true. The woman said to him, Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.

Jesus said to her, Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know.

We worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. The woman said to him, I know that Messiah is coming. He was called Christ. When he comes, he will tell us all things.

[5 : 12] Jesus said to her, I, who speak to you, am he. Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with the woman, but no one said, What do you seek?

Or, Why are you talking with her? So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did.

Can this be the Christ? They went out of the town and were coming to him. This is God's holy and authoritative word.

Please be seated. The classic Chinese historical novel, Romance of the Three Kingdoms, begins with these famous words, The empire, long divided, must unite.

Long united, must divide. Thus, it has ever been. A nation weary of wars and divisions tend to unite under a single strong leader.

[6 : 14] While a nation weary of the abuses of a leader with too much power tends to divide into factions. It's a cycle that has been observed over and over again throughout human history.

As people living in the democratic West, we are the children of the French Revolution and the American Revolution. We're familiar with the rallying cries of liberty, equality, and fraternity, and no taxation without representation.

And the U.S. in particular has historically clashed with Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia and today increasingly with communist China. And for these reasons, we're acutely aware of the dangers of absolute monarchs, dictators, and tyrants.

But probably because of this background, it's harder for us to appreciate a desperate people's longing for a king. Why people living in an impoverished and immoral and embattled society crave the steady leadership of a strong ruler?

Now, don't hear what I'm not saying. I'm not endorsing authoritarian governments. I share Winston Churchill's sentiment that, quote, many forms of government have been tried and will be tried in this world of sin and woe.

[7 : 31] No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time. Division of power and a system of checks and balances is probably the best way to govern in a sinful, fickle world.

But of course, it's a different story when Christ, the perfect, sinless king, is on the throne. The book of Judges captures that longing for a strong ruler in a disordered, uncertain society.

And the refrain and thesis statement of the book of Judges that comes up again and again is this, quote, in those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

To each his own. Do what you want. You do you. That's the mantra of a free-for-all society that has no king. Judges describes Israel's downward spiral of sin and decadence and the divinely inspired author laments that this is because there was no king in Israel.

In this way, the book sets up an expectation and gives the rationale for the rise of the Davidic monarchy. That's the way the world is when Jesus comes on the scene.

[8 : 50] People are both theologically confused and therefore morally confused and much like our times. They don't know what to believe. They don't know how to live. People are also politically confused due to their idolatry and unfaithfulness to God.

They had been conquered and oppressed by foreign nations, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, and at the time of Jesus by the Romans. Israel has not had a king, a true Davidic king on its throne since Jehoiachin who was captured and exiled to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in the 6th century BC, 600 years ago before Jesus' coming.

All of this happened despite God's covenant promise to David in 2 Samuel 7 that David's throne shall be established forever. So God's people had been asking and waiting for 600 years, where is the promised son of David?

Where is the Christ, our king, who will liberate us from oppression, who will bring steady leadership, guidance, knowledge of God, who will restore the true worship of God, who will show us the way of God?

Where is the Messiah who will establish his eternal kingdom? And it's in this season of ferment and expectation that Jesus comes on the scene and we see him here in John 4.

[10 : 15] And John tells us in no uncertain terms that Jesus is the messianic king who gives us eternal life in the spirit. We're going to talk first about the water of the spirit that Jesus gives and then secondly about the worship in the spirit that Jesus as the Christ enables.

Verse 1 tells us that Jesus learned that the Pharisees were starting to take notice of his increasing popularity and that's ominous because the Pharisees were already wary of John the Baptist and they were trying to kind of marginalize him and so if they're noticing that Jesus is becoming even more popular than John, baptizing even more people than John, then that's a threat.

And so Jesus knows that it's not his time yet to go to the cross, to die and so he leaves, he goes to another place toward Galilee. And it says in verse 4 that as he went to Galilee that he had to pass through Samaria.

That's an interesting way to phrase that because while not, while it's the normal route from Judea to Galilee did pass through Samaria, strictly speaking, Jesus didn't have to pass through Samaria.

As I will explain further later, Jews believed that keeping company with Samaritans caused ritual defilement and so strict Jews would go around Samaria by crossing the Jordan and traveling around on the east side.

[11 : 46] So Jesus didn't really have to go through Samaria. And yet John writes here that he had to pass through Samaria. This is an expression that recurs throughout the Gospel of John and it's John's way of indicating divine necessity.

He uses this Greek word which means he had to or it was necessary to. For example, in John 3, 7 when he says, you must be born again. It is necessary that you be born again.

John 3, 14, and as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness so must, it is necessary for the Son of Man to be lifted up. Or John 20, verse 9, for as yet they did not understand the Scripture that he must, that it was necessary for the Son to rise from the dead.

John always uses that word in these ways to indicate something that has been ordained by God's sovereign will, something that had to happen. So likewise, Jesus had to pass through Samaria because he had a divinely made appointment there, a divinely ordained mission to fulfill there in Samaria.

So there must be some really important work to do, some very important person to meet. And we find out what this appointment was all about in verses 7 to 9. He says, a woman from Samaria came to draw water.

[13 : 13] Jesus said to her, give me a drink, for his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, how is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?

For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Three times in three verses we are told that this was a woman and that this was a Samaritan.

That's not one strike but two strikes in the historical and cultural context of this time. In several ways, women at this time were second class citizens.

For example, Jewish rabbis did not accept women disciples. First century Jewish rabbi Eliezer expressed a popular cultural sentiment of the day when he said, rather should the words of the Torah be burned than entrusted to a woman.

Whoever teaches his daughter the Torah is like one who teaches her lasciviousness. That's why later in verse 27 when Jesus' disciples returned from buying food, it said that they marveled that he was talking with a woman.

[14 : 20] And she wasn't only a woman, she was a Samaritan woman. Verse 9 tells us that Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. The verb translated as having, have dealings with, more specifically means to use together with, to share a vessel or cup or bowl, something like that with someone else.

It was not true that Jews had no dealings whatsoever with Samaritans because obviously his disciples went into the Samaritan city to buy food so they're having some dealings with them. It's referring to sharing vessels which strict Jews, observant Jews at the time believed caused ritual defilement.

And so, there was a historical reason for this enmity between Jews and Samaritans. Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel during the era of the two kingdoms, the northern kingdom and southern kingdom of Judah.

And the name of the capital came to be known to refer to the entire northern kingdom sometimes called Samaria. And when the Assyrians captured Samaria in 722 BC, they deported all Israelites who had means, who had status, who had wealth.

And then they left the rest of the people, the rest of the Jews there in Samaria. And then they resettled the land with foreigners who then intermarried with the remaining Jews.

[15 : 39] And so, what happened was, what resulted was some syncretized religion. Not orthodox religion, but heterodox religion.

And so, because of this, Jews who had been deported and later returned to the land of Israel viewed Samaritans not only as children of political traitors, but also as ethnic half-breeds whose religion had been adulterated.

So, we think of politics, religion, or racial tension or ethnic tension, these things. Even one of those things is enough to divide a family to cause tension among the holidays.

Between Jews and Samaritans, there's all three. Political tension, religious tension, ethnic tension. Samaritans only accepted the first five books of the Bible, rejected the rest of the Old Testament, and they worshiped not on Mount Zion in Jerusalem where the temple is, but on Mount Gerizim.

And sometimes, this hostility bubbled over into real conflict, violent conflict. And as recently as 400 B.C., a Jewish ruler had destroyed the rival temple on Mount Gerizim, the Samaritans' temple.

[16 : 54] And so, they hated each other. A Jewish oral commentary, Mishnah, it says this, the daughters of the Samaritans are menstruants from their cradle, implying that they're in a perpetual state of uncleanness.

So, it is no wonder then that this woman reacts this way to Jesus' request. How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?

What this Samaritan woman doesn't realize is that Jesus is no ordinary Jew. Jesus answers in verse 10, if you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, give me a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.

John is fond of word plays throughout his gospel. He often imbues words with double meanings as we see here. And so, Jesus had asked the Samaritan woman, give me a drink.

He was probably thirsty, but unless this passage is omitting that detail, the Samaritan woman never actually gives Jesus any water. water. That wasn't Jesus' primary purpose, to get water.

[18 : 14] As a 19th century Swiss theologian Frederick Louis Gaudet remarks, Jesus is not unaware that the way to gain a soul is often to ask a service of it.

Sometimes when we are in the position of helping unbelievers, a position of superiority, so to speak, there can be unexpected barriers to openness, to sharing the gospel.

But sometimes when we are actually receiving help in a position of weakness, that can open unexpected doors of conversation for the gospel. And that is what Jesus is doing. This is not him primarily wanting some water.

Jesus' request to the Samaritan woman is a gracious overture. It is an invitation. And what an honor it would have been to be able to offer Jesus water.

And though Jesus was the one who asked, give me a drink, it's not ultimately the Samaritan woman that has something to offer him. Jesus is the one who offers the gift of God.

[19 : 15] And even though it is Jesus who asked for water, Jesus is the one who can offer her living water. What's that? Living water can refer in a literal sense to fresh running water from the springs in contrast to water that's been stored up and stagnant, sitting in cisterns.

And so running water was valuable in those days because in some cases, according to Jewish law, for example, Leviticus 14, purification, ritual purification required running water, fresh water.

But the meaning of the word, the expression living water goes even deeper than that because sometimes in the Old Testament, the Lord God describes himself as living water.

So God declares in Jeremiah 2, verse 13, my people have committed two evils. They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

God says that he himself is the fountain of living water. He himself is the source of life, an unending supply of fresh running water, but his people have instead abandoned him.

[20 : 26] and chosen instead the stagnant water of cisterns. And not even cisterns that work, broken cisterns that can hold no water. If God is the fountain of living waters and Jesus here offers the Samaritan woman living water, you can make the connection.

What is Jesus claiming to be? He is making himself out to be God. He's assuming for himself the prerogative of God himself. And this living water that flows from the fountain of God is nothing less than the Holy Spirit himself.

Jesus had already connected these images of water and spirit in chapter 3, verse 5, saying that unless one is born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. And later in chapter 7, John makes this connection even more explicit.

He says, Jesus stood up and cried out, if anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

Now this, he said about the spirit whom those who believe in him, believed in him, were to receive. For as yet the spirit had not been given because Jesus was not yet glorified.

[21 : 43] So the living water that Jesus offers is the spirit of the living God. The thirst that Jesus promises to quench here is not of a parched throat but that of a withered and dry soul.

The Samaritan woman, however, doesn't quite catch on to all of this yet. She thinks that Jesus is speaking of literal water, H₂O. And so she replies in verses 11 to 12, Sir, you have nothing to draw water with and the well is deep.

Where do you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob? She's saying, Jesus, you don't have any equipment to draw water with.

And by the way, this is the well of Sikhar, the very well that Jacob, the great patriarch, dug for his family and his descendants. You think you can provide better water, better source of water than this?

Do you really think that you're greater than our father Jacob? And Jesus' response, is an emphatic, yes, yes, I am.

[22 : 51] He says in verses 13 to 14, everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

Have you guys ever reflected on this fact? No matter how much water you drink, it could be the hard tap water of Cambridge or the premium \$5 water you get from your pharmacy.

It doesn't matter how much you drink, you're going to get thirsty again. There's this cyclical aspect of life, a kind of futility, a transience, a vanity, and a striving after the wind, as the author of Ecclesiastes puts it.

We eat, and then we get hungry again. The wind blows south, and then it blows north. The sun rises, and then it goes down again.

People are born, and then people die. All streams flow to the sea, and yet it rains, and the streams flow again, and the ocean is never full.

[24 : 28] Buildings are built, and then they are torn down, peace is won by war, and then peace is broken by war. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

What has been is what will be, and what has been has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. Ecclesiastes 1.8-9.

People live to be remembered, but all are eventually forgotten, and yet Ecclesiastes 3.11 says, God has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

The futility and vanity of life is frustrating and wearying. We feel that there's gotta be more to life than this cycle. That's what it means to have eternity in our hearts.

We feel that there's gotta be more than this, and yet we can't quite figure out what all this changing of seasons and cycles of life are all about. We can't quite figure out what God is up to outside of what God has revealed to us in Jesus.

[25 : 32] C.S. Lewis writes in his book, Mere Christianity, quote, Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger, well, there is such a thing as food.

A duckling wants to swim, well, there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire, well, there is such a thing as sex. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.

If none of my earthly pleasures satisfy it, that does not prove that the universe is a fraud. Probably, earthly pleasures were never meant to satisfy it, but only to arouse it, to suggest the real thing.

Jesus is saying to the Samaritan woman, I am offering you the real thing that all the desires and pleasures of life suggest and point to.

I am not offering you water that will only temporarily satisfy you and your thirst and sustain you only for this temporal life. I am offering you living water that will give you eternal life.

[26 : 43] It will satisfy you forever. But the Samaritan misunderstands Jesus and thinks that he is offering some kind of miracle water that will never make you physically thirst again.

And she says in verse 15, Sir, give me this water so that I will not be thirsty or I have to come here to draw water. And we are too often like this Samaritan woman. We settle for less than what Christ offers us.

I am going to quote C.S. Lewis again, this time from a different essay called The Weight of Glory. He writes, If we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong but too weak.

We are half-hearted creatures fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us. Like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea.

We are far too easily pleased. Have you settled for the wearying cycle of thirst and drink? Thirst and drink.

[27 : 57] Thirst and drink. Earn and spend. Earn and spend. Earn and spend. Work and rest. Work and rest.

Work and rest. And ultimately, birth and death. As if that's all there is to life. Jesus offers you living water.

Imperishable wealth. Everlasting rest. Eternal life. Jesus offers you a relationship, communion with the triune God who has life in himself.

If you're not yet a follower of Jesus and you do not have the spirit of the living God indwelling you, then this very day, Jesus offers you the same thing he offered to the Samaritan woman. Whoever drinks of this water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.

The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. Will you take his cup? Prophet Isaiah spoke of a time when God's people will draw water from the wells of salvation when they will not hunger or thirst anymore.

[29 : 14] And God had invited his people in Isaiah 55, come everyone who thirsts, come to the waters that your soul may live. And that day has come in Jesus.

He's a fulfillment of that promise. So if you feel that there's more to life than this, come to Jesus and drink of his living water. Receive his spirit that you may live.

Because the Samaritan woman still doesn't quite get it. Jesus takes a slightly different approach. In verse 16, he says to her, okay, go. Call your husband.

Then come back. But the woman responds, I have no husband. And Jesus, who already knew this, answers her, you are right in saying I have no husband.

For you have had five husbands. And the one you now have is not your husband. What you said what you have said is true. That got awkward really fast.

[30 : 23] Jesus is, his insight into this woman's relational history touches her right to the core, which is why later she goes back to town and says, come see a man who told me all that I ever did.

At this moment, she's awestruck and she manages to stammer this response. Sir, sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Yes. And with her checkered past and her ongoing sins exposed, she abruptly diverts attention away from herself into this religious question that reestablishes the distance between Jesus the Jew and her the Samaritan.

She says, our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is a place where people ought to worship. Now some of the details of the narrative begin to fall into place.

Now that makes sense. Not only is this woman a woman of Samaria, she is also promiscuous. Verse 6 told us that this woman came to draw water at about the sixth hour.

The Jews count their hours from sunrise and so the sixth hour would be about noon when the sun is at its highest point where the heat is its strongest, especially in this Middle Eastern desert.

[31 : 40] Why in the world would a woman who comes to draw water from the well come at the hottest point of the day to do a work that is labor intensive, carrying heavy jugs of water.

And women also usually traveled in groups for company and for the sake of security. We see examples in Genesis 24-11.

It says that evening was a time when women, plural, go out to draw water. So everything is off about this picture. This woman is going alone to draw water and she is going at a time when no one else would go.

She is intentionally avoiding company. She is a social outcast. John includes these details intentionally.

Because of her sexual history, because of her failed marriages, since she has had five husbands and is now cohabiting with a man who is not her husband, this woman's sin, her past was no secret and her sin was not a respectable kind.

[32 : 49] She was what some people nowadays would call a slut, a home wrecker, a sexually available woman that men can have without the responsibilities and obligations of the covenant of marriage, a threat to other women's families and marriages.

And not only that, this woman is a heretic. she worships on the wrong mountain. Jesus corrects her very clearly in verse 22 that it is Jews who know God.

Remember what I said to you earlier from verse 4 that Jesus had to pass through Samaria. Divine necessity. Jesus had a divinely made appointment here, a divinely ordained mission to fulfill here.

It must be some very important work. It must be some very important person and it's her. It's a woman, a Samaritan woman, a promiscuous Samaritan woman, a heretical, promiscuous Samaritan woman.

Jesus had to pass through Samaria so that he could meet her, so that he could tell her about the gospel, so that he could tell her that he is the Messiah, so that he could tell her to go into town and tell the whole town about him, so that he could make a worshiper, a true worshiper out of her.

[34 : 34] This is the grace and mercy of our king. Maybe you too are a man or woman with a past.

Maybe you, maybe you've been a heretic, a blasphemer, believing wrong things about God. Maybe you haven't worshipped God or have had anything to do with God for many years.

But if you are hearing this sermon right now, if you're sitting here right now, Jesus has an appointment with you, he wants to replace your mud pies in a slum with a holiday at the sea.

He wants to satisfy you with living water, that you might have life more abundantly, that you might have eternal life. Jesus says, you too can be the true worshiper of God.

But how? Jesus directs our focus back to himself and to the promise he has made. He says in verses 20 to 24, woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.

[35 : 54] The hour is coming and is now here when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. For the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

Jesus announces a new age that will soon obliterate the debate about the proper location for worship. He says in verse 21, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.

Father, that pronoun you is plural indicating it includes all Samaritans. So Jesus is here saying that the time is here when even the Samaritans will truly worship the Father.

That day is here, the hour is here when the privileged position of the Jews in God's saving plan is fulfilled and brought to an end. Jesus says that that hour is coming and is now here because Jesus is the one who brings that hour.

It's kind of an oxymoron, right? It's coming but it's already here. It's like the new age has decisively dawned and you already see the sun gleaming on the horizon, glowing orange and red.

[37 : 06] The sun is already here but it's also coming. It's still rising in its fullness. Jesus brings about this new age through his life, death, and resurrection.

And with his arrival, the hour glass has been turned over. The hour is here and it's coming in its fullness. In this new age, the true worshipers will not be Jews or Samaritans but all who worship the Father in spirit and truth.

And the reason for that is that God is spirit. What does that mean? It means that God is not confined to space, time, existence like we are because he is spirit and not flesh.

imagine that you had a meeting scheduled with me and I'm waiting for you on my computer on Zoom and you are waiting for me at my co-working space.

If one person is virtual while the other person is in person, that meeting will not happen. This is obviously an imperfect analogy because the spiritual world is even more real than our physical world.

[38 : 16] But God is spirit. So those who worship the Father must do so in spirit and truth. This really should be translated as worship the Father in the spirit and the truth.

There is no definite article here but in Greek it's common to leave off the definite article when it's governed by a preposition. And a similar phrase in John 3, 5 is translated with the definite article even though it's not there.

In John 3, 5 it's unless one is born of water and the spirit. He cannot enter the kingdom of God. So it's referring to not our spirit, it's referring to the spirit, the Holy Spirit whom Jesus gives, God's very presence.

The true worshipers worship the Father in the truth also. And we also know from the context of John what that truth is. Christ's true identity is the question, the major focus of the Gospel of John all throughout.

And Jesus is described throughout the Gospel as the true bread, the true shepherd, the true son, the true resurrection and the life, the true vine.

[39 : 25] And later in John 14, verse 6, Jesus explicitly says, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

So to worship the Father in the spirit and the truth is to worship Him by the means of Jesus through faith in Jesus, in union and communion with Jesus, in the spirit, in Jesus.

So our worship is Trinitarian. When we gather, and this is a staggering reality, when we gather for worship in the name of God's Son, Jesus Christ, God Himself is present in His spirit.

We worship Him in spirit and truth. We're not just listening to a sermon or singing some songs or carols and saying some prayers. No, we are listening to God speak from His word.

We're listening to Him and we're praising Him in return, singing His praises, adoring Him, and we are pleading with God directly in our prayers.

[40 : 38] God is here. We're gathering in the very throne room of God when we gather in His name and that's why it is such a privilege. We worship Him in the spirit and in the truth.

But how can we, sinners and rebels, enjoy this kind of staggering privilege? Early in chapter 2, Jesus referred to His body as the temple of God and He said, destroy this temple and I will raise it in three days.

He was predicting His death and His resurrection on the third day. Jesus had to die on the cross for our sins because we had defiled the temple of God.

We had adulterated His worship. Instead of living for God, we have lived for ourselves in a sinful rebellion. We have worshipped false gods and we have worshipped the true God falsely.

We have been unfaithful to Him by whoring after the desires of our sinful flesh. And that's why Jesus came as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world as we talked about two weeks ago to make atonement for our sins as the ultimate once and for all sacrifice.

[41 : 48] And it's by His death and resurrection that Jesus wins for us the gift of God, the very spirit of the living God. And so in John 19:34, after Jesus' death, when a Roman soldier pierces his side with the spear, John specifically notes that at once there came out blood and water.

The blood of Jesus that pours from His body is the blood that cleanses us from our sin. It's the atoning blood of the Lamb of God. And likewise, the water that pours out from Jesus' side represents the living water, the spirit of God who rinses us and revives us and renews us and regenerates us.

It's when we repent of our sins and believe in Jesus that we are born again into this family of God by the Holy Spirit and by the blood of Jesus. Zechariah 14:8 prophesied of a day when the Lord God will come to redeem His people and He said that on that day living waters shall flow out of Jerusalem.

Whenever the Bible describes a temple, the dwelling place of God in Scripture, whether it's the Garden of Eden at the beginning or the new temple of God in the New Jerusalem at the end in Ezekiel in Revelation, there's always water, living water flowing from that temple.

And so it is no wonder then that now Jesus, the new temple of God, flows with living water of the Holy Spirit who gives us eternal life. Now by this point of the conversation, the Samaritan woman gets the drift of what Jesus is saying and she concludes that the only person who could decisively bring about such a spiritual revolution is the long-awaited Messiah.

[43 : 46] She says to Jesus in verse 25, I know that Messiah is coming, He who is called Christ. When He comes, He will tell us all things. and Jesus responds, I who speak to you am He.

The Samaritan woman finally realizes the gift of God and who it is that is saying to her, give me a drink. And so He says in verse 28 that she leaves her water jar there at the well and she goes back into town to tell people, come see a man who told me all that I ever did.

Can this be the Christ? Christ, because she has found the fountain of living water. Christ, as I've mentioned before, is the messianic title that means anointed one because back in the day, kings were anointed with oil and consecrated for service to God.

But Jesus was not anointed with ordinary oil. He says in Acts 10, 38 that Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit. So at the beginning of His ministry, Jesus, in Luke 4, Jesus cites Isaiah 61 and says that He has fulfilled the prophecy that the Spirit of the Lord is on me because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

Jesus, the King, Christ the King, who is anointed with the Holy Spirit, now shares that anointing of the Holy Spirit with all of God's people, Jews and Samaritans, man and woman, slave and free, after His death and resurrection and ascension.

[45 : 18] Do you know this King? My King brings order into the chaos and confusion of this sinful world.

Do you know this King? He brings us into fellowship with the living God and enables us to worship Him in spirit and truth. He brings light into this dark world and shows us the way to live.

He gives us the eternal life, spiritual life, and promises resurrection life in His second coming. Instead of coming to condemn the world, He comes to save the world.

My King deserved more than anyone else in the whole world to be carried on a soft, luxurious carriage so that His feet never touched the bare earth.

but instead He carried His own cross on this lonely path to Calvary. My King deserved more than anyone else in human history to be seated on the most regal and grand and golden throne of them all but instead His throne was a wooden cross, the cursed cross upon which He was hung.

[46 : 32] My King deserved more than anyone else to wear the most bejeweled, bespeckled crown of them all and instead He wore a crown of thorns.

He deserved to be served but He came not to be served but to serve and to this day our King proclaims good news to the poor and liberty to the captives.

He approaches the ostracized, the promiscuous, the sordid and despised and He pours out His love, His atoning blood and His anointing water to set us apart for Himself.

Will you follow this King? Will you pledge allegiance to this King? Will you lay down your life for this King? He is worthy of it all.

Let's pray. Lord, that is our greatest boast, our greatest flex that we can point to the cross.

[47 : 57] We can point to the empty tomb. That we can point to Jesus and say that is our King. That is my King.

thank you for coming, Lord Jesus.

Thank you for your love, for your salvation. Reveal yourself to us more and more. Reveal yourself to our neighbors, our families, our friends.

So that every tongue confesses that you are Lord. So that every knee bows before you. We worship you.

in your name we pray.

[49 : 07] Amen. Amen.