

Jesus is Our Supreme Satisfaction

Thesis: For the Christian, both ultimate satisfaction and salvation into true worship have the same source, namely Jesus. There are three implications of this fact. One, all sin is a substitute for true joy. Two, all worship is found in a deep satisfaction in who God is. Three, the Christian life is about seeing this satisfaction spread to all people.

John 4:1-30

1 Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John 2 (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), 3 he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. 4 And he had to pass through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 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]

7 A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." 8 (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) 9 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.) 10 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." 11 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? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." 13 Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.[b] The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." 15 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."

16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." 17 The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." 19 The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." 25 The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." 26 Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."

27 Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why are you talking with her?" 28 So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, 29 "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" 30 They went out of the town and were coming to him.

Prayer:

Father, we thirst for living water. We need you. As we come to your word we recognize ourselves in the woman at the well. Some of us are dying of thirst. Some of us have been going to well in the heat of the day for years. We too are swayed by the world around us to believe lies. We too try to fix the longings of our hearts with things that will never satisfy. We too change the subject when you address our sin. We read this story of a woman who was thirsty and found all of her thirst quenched in you and we pray that would be our story. Father, break through our stubbornness, help us drink deeply of the living water you offer through the Gospel. Quench our thirst. Make us into real worshippers that worship in spirit and in truth. Let us be so totally consumed in passion for you that we have no option but to spread your gospel and make Jesus famous. I pray that true worshippers would be born into the kingdom of heaven today. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Message:

I. Throughout the gospel of John we get a perspective on Jesus that we don't quite get in the other gospels. Whereas Matthew, Mark, and Luke focus largely on Jesus' public work, the gospel of John drops in on highly personal and unique conversations between Jesus and different people throughout his earthly ministry. In all of these conversations Jesus wastes no time getting to the person's heart. When they try to dance around issues, he asks pointed and direct questions. When they go off on rabbit trails, he manages to go with them and bring the conversation full circle. Understand this about Jesus, he always questions his questioner. Don't think that you can come to the Bible without your questions being turned back on you. Jesus is not satisfied to be the subject of loose theological musings. He's not an intellectual idea you entertain once a week at church or reading a blog post. He's after people he can make into disciples. He wants to be the center of your life. He wants true worshippers. The gospel of John reveals a Jesus that actively pursues a relationship with lost, confused, and sinful people. I love these conversations, because they show us so much about our own stubbornness and ignorance, but they show even more how merciful and patient Jesus is.

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II. So let me set the scene. Jesus and his disciples are traveling from Judea to Galilee because they've caught too much attention from the Pharisees and they choose to take a route through Samaria.

A. Now Samaria, as I'm sure you've heard, was not well liked by most Jews. The Samaritans were a group of people of Jewish ancestry that had been mixed with other cultures when the King Assyria bought in people to settle Samaria after he conquered the northern kingdom of Israel. The Israelites of the Northern Kingdom had intermarried with other cultures who then willingly adopted a lot of Jewish practice and even had Jewish priests teach them the Hebrew Law. So they had a version of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, that differed in various ways from the Jewish text, but they rejected the rest of Jewish scripture. They also built their own temple on mount Gerizim, while the Jews worshipped on mount Zion in Jerusalem.

B. So the Jews were hostile to the Samaritans because they had created a hybrid of Judaism that contained elements that were not pleasing to God. They considered all Samaritans to be in a perpetual state of ceremonial uncleanness, and therefore tried to avoid interaction with Samaritans as much as possible. Especially devout Jews might even take a longer route and avoid Samaria all together, but Jesus and his disciples chose instead to cross through Samaria, because Jesus has work to do there. So they stop at the town of Sychar and the disciples go into the town and Jesus waits by this well because he's tired, and also because he knows that this woman is going to come out.

So the Samaritan woman comes up to the well to get some water, and Jesus does the unthinkable. He, a Jewish man, speaks to her, a Samaritan woman. So as we go through this conversation I want you to keep in mind the cultural and social barriers that Jesus is working against with this woman.

III. So Jesus strikes up a conversation by asking for a drink from the well. She responds “How is it that you, a Jew ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” Jesus responds “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.”

A. He challenges her cultural assumptions about who He is. Don’t miss this, the woman at the well had an idea about who Jesus was before he had spoken a word to her, and she’s not the only one who has objections to Jesus that are rooted in her time, place, and ethnicity. All of us have proclivities to reject The Gospel because of forces working both around and in us.

1. We all have different cultures that interact and influence us on different levels. There’s the culture of our family, the culture of our workplace, the culture of our entertainment, the culture of our city, the culture of our political party, and the culture of our education to name a few. All culture, from the family we grew up in, to the media we consume, to the people we work with, is corrupted by human sin and therefore in some way opposed to the Gospel.

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2. I’m not saying that culture is inherently or completely evil, but in some way all culture makes demands or gives permission where only Jesus should be making demands or giving permission. So because of the cultures we all are immersed in we all have internal objections to The Gospel, and it’s something that we need to be aware of.

a) I’ve had a number of very good conversations about this over the past several weeks with some people I really love and admire talking about the challenges we face in following Jesus in our respective cultures. Because if we don’t think out how are cultures differ from Jesus, we will just naturally attach Jesus to what are culture values without thinking about it.

b) In America we value individualism and liberty, and both of those are good things, we celebrate the freedom we have in Christ and we love the gifts that he gives us as individuals, but when my independence gets in the way of Jesus’ command, I have to lay down that part of my culture. If some loving brother or sister challenges me and says that what I am doing is sinful or misguided, my American, independent, culture says they have no right to tell me what to do, but the Bible actually commands that we stir up one another to love and good works, so they actually do have a right to speak into my life.

c) I’ll give you one more example. I’m a millennial, and millennials think in very relational terms and we’re very concerned with acceptance and love. Again good things that are part of the gospel, but as a millennial I’m prone to think about Jesus in terms of his love and acceptance and not in terms of his call to discipleship that demands something from me.

3. I would encourage you to spend time in prayer and in conversation with other believers trying to understand the ways in which you might be rejecting some part of the gospel because it isn’t palatable to your world view.

B. So this woman is using her culture to justify rejecting Jesus. But Jesus cuts through all of that. He says “you think you call the shots, that you get to decide whether you except me, but the truth is I’m the one with living water, so its actually the other way around.

You think this is about you being a Samaritan, and what your tradition or culture affirms, but it's actually about me having living water that you need."

- IV. What she says next is very telling: "Are you greater than our father Jacob?" What an incredibly ironic question. Of course he's greater than Jacob! He's infinitely greater than Jacob. In saying this she draws a direct line through the old testament from Jacob to Jesus without even knowing it. Jesus is the one that every promise given to Jacob is riding on. He's the fulfillment of everything the nation of Israel longs for. What she's really asking is this: "I've gone to my tradition and my culture for answers for years. I've looked to it for self worth, for direction, for hope, for joy and I've received nothing substantial. Are you telling me that you can provide something that gives true satisfaction, when the culture that I share with all my family and friends couldn't?"
- V. So Jesus responds "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again." His answer is yes, if you continue to go to places where there is no living water, you will always thirst again. But he offers a better alternative to inferior water: "whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again." Jesus is the substance of everything the prophets spoke about. Do you remember how the book of Hebrews begins?

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"Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. 3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs."

- A. She is so blind to how incredible the man standing in front of her is. Everyone before her only got a glimpse, but she has the culmination of the hope of the prophets. He is the radiance of the glory of God, the whole universe is held up by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he will sit down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, in other words, Jesus is rest from the toil of being thirsty. He's rest from going to the well of human tradition to find peace. There is no waiting to be satisfied by the prophecy anymore, the whole thing is complete in Jesus. He is the final word of satisfaction. Jesus is saying to the woman, "Do you want to stop being thirsty? Do you want to have all your longing satisfied? Stop drinking inferior water and take what I have to offer"
- B. So what does the water that Jesus offers to this woman do? Jesus says it "will become... a spring of water welling up to eternal life!" It doesn't just quench her thirst, but it becomes a spring that leads to a continual flow of love, joy, and peace. It doesn't just quench her thirst, it causes her to flourish, and then presumably it causes others to flourish.
- VI. And she says "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."
- A. She's tired of thirst. She wants her thirst to be quenched. Is anyone here tired of being thirsty? Do you desire this living water? Are you tired of moving from one weak pleasure to another? Are you tired of searching for answers in places that you'll never find them?

VII. Then Jesus seemingly out of no where changes the direction of the conversation: “Go call your husband, and come here.” He says this knowing that she has had five failed marriages and the man she is living with now is not her husband. She tries to avoid the subject by saying she has no husband, and Jesus calls her on it and brings up the man she is currently with.

- A. Here I think we get a picture of why she is so desperate for the water that Jesus offers. Jesus is touching on something very real and very tender. When she says “give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water,” it sounds like she’s putting special emphasis on having to come to the well. Why couldn’t she just say “so that I will not be thirsty and have to draw water”? It seems to me she is saying she’s tired of having to come out to this well in the heat of the day to grab water because of her shame.
- B. This is a woman who has had five husbands. We don’t get much detail on how she lost them, but the way she responds would suggest that it brings shame on her. And the one she lives with now is not her husband. There is an incredibly deep and painful longing to be loved in her. One that evidently six relationships with six different men can’t satisfy. She goes out to the well at midday because the people of the village talk, and she doesn’t want to show her face in front of them. As she comes back into the village she can see the people staring out their windows. She’s forced to live in perpetual shame. She’s got tremendous baggage from her previous mistakes. Her life is a wasteland. She spends it looking desperately for water that will satisfy all of her desires. She has to have this water.

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VIII. So notice how we’ve moved through the text so far. We keep narrowing in. First Jesus and the Samaritan woman talked about their cultures and how their cultures offer solutions to thirst. Then they talk about this enormous thirst that she has as an individual. Then they start talking about her sin and shame.

IX. And this is such a tender point for her that she gets off the subject and tries to go wide again with a question of who is righteous the way Samaritans worship is by saying “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” And Jesus just goes with it. So we move from culture being unsatisfying, to her personal need for living water, to her sin, and then to worship and righteousness

- A. So all the sudden we’re talking about how to worship and what is acceptable to God. She wants to have a debate about ceremony to get off the subject of her own personal sin. If she can move the conversation to what she thinks makes her righteous, namely her religion and how she practices it, then she can come out of this thing ok, or so she thinks.

X. So Jesus just goes along with her and says

“Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

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XI. She has the totally wrong view. She wants to know which mountain to worship on to be righteous and Jesus tells her she's asking the wrong question. True worshippers won't worship on either mountain. Instead they will worship in spirit and in truth. In other words, it doesn't matter where you worship if you're not a true worshiper. When Jesus talks about true worshippers he mentions two things, spirit and truth:

- A. Spirit here refers to the spirit of a person who has been born into new life by the Holy Spirit. When Jesus says "God is spirit and those who worship must worship in spirit and in truth," he sounds very similar to the previous chapter in which he is talking to the Pharisee Nicodemus. Nicodemus says something similar to the girl telling Jesus he is a prophet when he says "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." Jesus says "Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." So Jesus is saying basically what he said to Nicodemus, you must be born again.
- B. Truth refers to knowledge of who Jesus is through the scripture, which can only be understood by those regenerated by the Holy Spirit to understand his word.
- C. So true worshippers receive the truth, by the Spirit are transformed to understand it, and then through the Spirit worship in response to it.

XII. The only true worshippers are those who are reborn. True worshippers don't need to climb a mountain because the Holy Spirit dwells in them. What needs to happen for this woman is a savior needs to come to change her heart.

XIII. And she still doesn't get it. Upon hearing this incredible announcement of worship she says "I know that Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will tell us all things." She's waiting for the messiah who is standing right in front of her. She thinks worship is about duty and necessity, so she thinks the messiah is coming to show her how she can do her duty better. And Jesus responds "I who speak to you am he."

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XIV. This is an incredible statement. If you follow their conversation from beginning to end, it can be broken up into two major parts.

- A. The first, her desperate desire to be quenched of thirst; to encounter something so all satisfying that she never has need of anything again.
- B. The second is the nature of true worship and how right standing with God is achieved.
- C. When Jesus says "I who speak to you am he," he's showing her that those two issues are really one.

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- D. Jesus is both our ultimate savior, and our supreme satisfaction. The same water that is all satisfying is also all redeeming. Her problem is that she sees pleasure as a different issue from salvation that makes her a true worshiper. People who are redeemed find their deepest satisfaction in Jesus! The Psalmist recognizes this in Psalm 107:4-9.

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**Some wandered in desert wastelands,
finding no way to a city where they could settle.**

5

They were hungry and thirsty,

and their lives ebbed away.

6

**Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.**

7

**He led them by a straight way
to a city where they could settle.**

8

**Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love
and his wonderful deeds for mankind,**

9

**for he satisfies the thirsty
and fills the hungry with good things.**

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So it says they cried out in distress and he delivered them, and how did he do it? By satisfying their thirst! I remember when I first heard Psalm 16:11, it blew my mind. It says “You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

Ultimately the woman’s problem is not that she worships incorrectly, but that she’s not a worshipper. Because if she really found all of her joy and hope in Jesus, she would be satisfied in her worship and she wouldn’t have to run to anything else for satisfaction. She needs to be reborn in the Spirit to love God.

- E. Some of you have been lied to for years to believe that glorifying God is a stoic thing that involves you giving up your joy. You try to pray for God’s will to be done in your life, you try to repent of sin, you try to evangelize, you try to read your Bible, but you find no joy in it. The reason is because you view enjoying God and glorifying God as different things. So of course you’re going to struggle to pray. Of course you’ll have sin in your life you can’t seem to beat, of course you will struggle to read your Bible. There’s no joy in it, just as there was no joy in this woman.

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- F. Listen to what John Piper says about this: “A fountain is not glorified by us hauling buckets of dirty water up the mountain and pouring them in. A fountain—a spring in a mountain—is glorified, rather, by us lying down at the edge of the stream, putting our face in, drinking our fill, and getting up and saying, “Ah!” That’s called worship.”

XV. The woman evidently finally gets a hold of what Jesus is saying, because she responds by going down to the village and telling everyone about Him. And she leaves her jar because she doesn’t need it anymore. She has living water.

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XVI. Now I want to take some time and draw three points about this interaction between the woman at the well and Jesus.

- A. All sin is a substitute for true satisfaction.
- B. True worship is found in a deep satisfaction in God.
- C. The Christian life is about seeing this satisfaction spread to all people.

XVII. All sin is a substitute for true satisfaction.

- A. This is why Jesus goes straight from the subject of quenching the woman's thirst to her sin, because he wanted her, and us, to see that she was choosing a weak substitute for being filled with the Spirit. Do you recognize your sin as knock-off joy? When you lose your temper do you recognize that you are substituting assurance that God is just and taking care of you, for quick solutions that make you feel secure in the short term? When you lie do you see that you are substituting true innocence and purity of heart in Jesus for passing under the radar and not getting caught? All sin is a substitute for the true satisfaction found in Jesus.

XVIII. True worship is found in a deep satisfaction in God.

- A. Of course we're not just talking about praise or singing. We're talking about our whole life. If we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, we can worship at anytime and in whatever we are doing. I was talking with Caleb Daniel the other day and he said something amazing and very true. He said "When I read my Bible, it increases my enjoyment of everything else, and it makes my desire to do things well and to the glory of God increase too." In other words, being reborn actually makes you want to glorify God that much more in your enjoyment of his gifts and your work.

XIX. The Christian life is about seeing this satisfaction spread to all people.

- A. We saw this of course when the Samaritan woman went back into town to tell the people about what Jesus had said to her.

XX. But I want to take a look at one more example of this passion for seeing other people treasure Jesus. She's young, she just got transformed. Let's take look at what this joy in Jesus looks like in maturity. Turn to John 3:26.

- A. John the baptist has been warning people and baptizing them in the wilderness for a while now, but Jesus has come and all of John's followers are going to Jesus. John's ministry is falling apart. He's ruffled some feathers with the people in authority and he doesn't know it but very soon he's going to be beheaded. Listen to how he responds when his disciples come in a panic as their ministry is falling apart.

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26 And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him."

27 John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. 28 You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.' 29 The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. 30 He must increase, but I must decrease."

XXI. John is so passionate about seeing Jesus made famous and seeing other people find their satisfaction in Him that he doesn't even care that his ministry is ending. John treasures Jesus. All of his joy is in him. So when his disciples come and they're distraught that all their hard work is failing, he says "Are you crazy? I'm the happiest I've ever been. This joy of mine is now complete." The Bridegroom is going to receive His Bride. How could I ever be upset about that? He must increase, but I must decrease!

- A. I wonder if that's how we respond when we lose a source of inferior water. John could have looked at the size and success of his ministry as the thing that gave him joy, but instead he rejoiced that Jesus was glorified. He didn't lose anything. His ultimate satisfaction was Jesus, so when Jesus was being glorified because John had prepared the way, John's joy was complete!

- B. Do you find Jesus all satisfying, so that if what happened to John happened to you, you could respond the same way? This is my deepest prayer for City View and for myself. I want to see Christ so magnified in that nothing can take away our joy. Pleasure and worship are not different things. They're the same. Lets pray.