

You are Invited

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Elisha Bronner: Jesus is not like other people. He invites those in who nobody else wants to invite in. He wants something to do with us when nobody else does.

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And now for 6512, you are invited.

Elisha Bronner: Welcome to Brothers of the Word because brothers and sisters, you need the word. So, Eli and (00:01:05) have been going through the Book of John and actually, I started probably in August just reading through the Book of John and so I read through it once and it was wonderful, it's great and so then, I was talking to a friend and she was like (00:01:21) I was like, "All right, let's read it again."

So, we read through it again and again it was really, really great and it was so wonderful and then I was talking to another group of young Christian women and they were like, "Okay, we're going to read the book of John, are you going to join us?" And I was like, "I just read it twice, but sure I'll read it again." And recently a different group, these are four different groups, four different instances. I've read the Book of John. Again, I'm going through it for the fourth time in the past like three or four months and there's something new every time.

So, God is good. So, tonight I'm coming from the Book of John and I'll be coming from John, Chapter 4 and my title for this message is "You Are Invited."

So, before I get started, I'm just going to pray and then we'll jump right in. So, Heavenly Father, I just thank you so much just for this night. Lord God, I just thank you for allowing all of us to be here, Father and I thank you just for your Word, which is so good and just so full of life. God, it's so, just for full of your love, Lord God and your promises, Lord God, and just a reminder of how good that you are, Lord, and how much grace that you have for Your people, Father.

I just thank you, Lord God, for what you're about to do tonight, Lord Jesus, and I just thank you for just the way that you're going to speak through me, Lord God. I pray that you will touch people's hearts, open their minds, Lord God, open their ears, Lord God. I pray that this world does not fall on deaf ears, Father, but they will have open hearts, Lord Jesus. Just leave them, Lord, just in all of you and all of who you are and all of your love, Lord God, and so I just praise you for this night. I praise you for this opportunity, Lord, and I give You all the glory, the honor and the praise, Father. It is in Jesus name that I pray, Amen.

So, John Chapter 4, starts of it says, "Now Jesus learned of the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John--although in fact, it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. So, he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. Now he had to go through Samaria. So, he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey sat down by the well. It was about noon. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" His disciples had gone into town to buy food."

So, there are three things that I want to start of pointing out in this chapter just in the section here. The first one is that in Verse 4, it says, "Now he had to go through Samaria." The second one is that in Verse 6, it says that, "It was about noon." And the third one is that in Verse 7, "Jesus asked the Samaritan woman for a drink of water." And so, as I said, I've been reading the Book of John several times recently and throughout the whole book, you just see Jesus being just submissive to the Father, just obeying God, just living his life of obedience to the Father, just living his life of humility, whatever God wanted from him, he did it and he did that coming from heaven to earth in the first place. He did that every instance of his life on earth and he did that obedient to the point of the death on a cross for us. He did that out of obedience to the Father and so, here, where it says that he had to go through Samaria, I read this and I think, okay, he did this because God instructed him to go through Samaria, but it's deeper than that.

He did it because he had to do it in obedience to the Father, but he did it because he knew that there was a Samaritan woman that he would come across. So, he had to go there and he had to do it, not only because he wanted to obey and please his father, but because he had this yearning in his heart for this woman that he we would encounter. That she had no idea about, but he knew so he had to go there in order to meet her there. That's the first thing.

The second thing, it was about noon. So, in this time in this culture, you have women that are going to these wells to get the water and bring it back for their families or for whatever they needed it for and usually, they would go either in the morning or in the evening when it's not really hot outside. They avoid the sun, they usually go in groups. But this woman went by herself and she went at noon. So, later on in the chapter during Jesus' conversation with her, we see that she is a woman who has not had a great reputation in this society. She is a woman who is probably been an outcast, probably has a lot of shame, probably has a lot of guilt from what she has done. So, she goes alone at a time where she knows that nobody else is going to be there because it is noon and nobody goes at noon. And so, she went at noon hoping to avoid people, hoping to avoid humiliation more than she had experienced already. So, she goes and she see Jesus where she is probably not -- okay, I'm just going to keep walking. I'm not going to pay him attention, just going to go get the water, do what I have to do and come back and just leave and go, which leads to my third point.

Jesus asked her for water. So, you have Jesus who is 100% God, a 100% man asking this woman for water. The water that he created back in Genesis. He asked her for water. You have Jesus where he is on this journey back and he is tired even though he is God and so, you have just all these different things being put together where he is in this position where he is asking her for water and the thing is, yes, he asked her for water, but he didn't ask because he had need, he asked because she had need and because he knew that she was going to avoid him. She wasn't going to look his way. She wasn't going to come talk to him. First of all, because he is a man and she is a woman. And in that culture, you just don't do that.

Secondly, because she is a Samaritan woman and he was a Jew and, in that culture, you just don't do that. Samaritans and Jews

had a lot of conflict with each other. They had a lot of problems so they didn't interact and you weren't just going to go up and talk to a Jew if you're a Samaritan and Jews weren't just going to go up and talk to Samaritans.

And so, she was avoiding him because he was a man. She was avoiding him because he was a Jew. Thirdly, as I mentioned before, she was avoiding him because she was so full of shame, so full of guilt. She didn't want anything else on top of that. So, because Jesus knew that she was going to avoid him, he came to her and so he came to her and told her that you are invited, that I'm going to talk to you and she is probably expecting someone come in to tell her about what a terrible person she is or all that stuff that she has done wrong, but Jesus came to give her an invitation.

He asked her for a drink of water and in that, she is like, "Okay, wait. Why is this Jewish man talking to me?" And so, they go through this conversation and you see later on starting on the next of Verses, starting in Verse 9. "The Samaritan woman said to him, "You're a Jew and I'm a Samaritan woman, how can you ask me for a drink? For Jews do not associate with Samaritans." Jesus answered her, "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," the woman said, "You have nothing draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who had given us the well and drank from it himself, and did also his sons and his livestock?" Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water that I give will never have thirst. Indeed, the water that I give will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

So, because Jesus asked her for water and she is like, "What? Why are you asking me for water?" He was able to show her that it's not that he really wanted some water. It's that she really needed his water, the living water because if he didn't come to her, she wouldn't have known that she was invited because she was covered in guilt, she was covered in shame, she thought she was unapproachable by people because that's how they treated her.

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But Jesus crossed the gap and he came to her just like he came to us from heaven. He crossed that gap and came to us to let us know that we are invited, to let us know that there doesn't have to be a distance between us and him. And so later in the Chapter, we see that Jesus makes himself known to her as the Messiah. In Verse 25 it says, the woman said, "I know that the Messiah is coming and when he comes, he will explain everything to us." And Verse 26 says, Jesus declared, "I, the one who is speaking to you -am he."

So, we see that if Jesus didn't come, she wouldn't have known that there was living water. She wouldn't have known that there was anything she was missing out on in the first place because she was fine. She was living her life, going to get her water and going back to her home but without this encounter with Jesus, she wouldn't have known. This encounter with Jesus made her aware that she was a sinner, but it made her aware that he was the savior. It made her aware that she had great sin but it made her aware that he had even greater grace and even greater love. And this encounter with Jesus that she had with Him made her aware that she couldn't hide from him but it made her aware that she didn't have to hide from him. She didn't have to hide in shame and in guilt and in everything that she tries to cover up herself with some other people because Jesus is not like other people. He invites those in who nobody else wants to invite in. He wants something to do with us when nobody else does. That's the kind of God that Jesus is.

And so, we see in Verse 27, Jesus' disciples come back. They had gone off to get food as we read earlier and they come back and they're not asking him questions but they're thinking among themselves like, "Why is he talking to the Samaritan woman," like, "What's that about?" Because they knew that Jews didn't have anything to do with Samaritans and she was a woman and he was a man and why even bother? Knowing who this woman was and what her reputation was, why would he even go out of his way and invite her in and talk to her? Because even though the disciples have been walking with Jesus and spending lots and lots of time with him, they are still trying to figure him out. I don't know about you all, but I feel like I've been walking with Jesus for a while now and I'm still like, "Jesus, I'm still trying to figure you out."

And so, the disciples here I feel like they were still trying to figure Jesus out because they knew he was love but they didn't really know what that was and what that really looks like. So, when they see Jesus talking to the Samaritan woman out of grace and out of mercy and out of love and they're like, "Okay, this takes it a step further than what we've experienced." And so, what happens next is probably my favorite part.

In Verse 28 and then Verse 29 it says, "Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, "Come see a man who told me everything I did. Could this be the Messiah?" And you see that she left the very thing that she went there for. She came there for water. She didn't even want that water anymore. She left it there and she ran back and she said, "You all, I just met Jesus!" And if that's not the kind of excitement that Jesus should place in our hearts, then I don't know what is.

We read the story of the Samaritan woman and we see all the bad things that she has done and what she's did but we ignore the fact that she left everything behind to go preach that Jesus is here and that Jesus loved her. He showed her love when nobody else did. Jesus showed her love. And so, she is asking, "Could this be the Messiah?" And I don't think she's questioning like, "Well, he said he was the Messiah but is he sure but like, could this Messiah have shown this great love like this is beyond anything I've ever known like could this be real? Like this is so good, it can't even be real." But it is real and that's just the kind of excitement that she had. She was so overwhelmed with joy, so overwhelmed with grace. She just went and preached to everybody. The very people that outcasted her, that made her feel the shame and the guilt, the very people that said, "No, you're not invited. You can't stay with us anymore because we don't like you because of what you've done."

She went back to them and said, "Jesus is here. Come, see the Messiah!" And so, this is what it looks like when we have a life that is transformed by Jesus. You have this woman that we meet in the beginning of this chapter where she's coming to the well, not wanting to be bothered by anybody.

Just trying to get in and get out without being noticed because she's so full of shame, she's so full of guilt. She just feels so condemned. But after she meets Jesus, it all changes. She goes by boldly and she's proclaiming that she just had this amazing encounter and that's what happens when we encounter Jesus. And we see that now. She used to be so full of shame and so full of guilt. But now she is full of life, she is full of freedom, she is full of joy. And so, she went back to the people and she told them that this is the Messiah. She experienced Jesus and as a return, she was able to trade her shame and her guilt for true life that was found in this living water and fortuitously(ph) that filled her of so much, she had to go share it.

And so, again, she left her water jar at the well because she experienced this living water. She realized that this feels like the water was meeting a certain need for a certain period of time but I was having to come back and forth and back and forth and I was getting tired and I was getting weary and it's hard. I don't know if you all have ever tried to carry a big bucket of water, that thing is heavy. And so, it's hard.

But she realized that this material water, this temporary water was only filling her for a certain period of time and it wasn't enough anymore. But now that she has living water, she doesn't even care. She doesn't even miss it. She left it there and she went. And she was filled because she was filled with life, with eternal life, with Jesus because she found the real thing. She stopped seeking satisfaction, what was only temporary because she found real joy and real satisfaction in Jesus who is eternal.

And lastly, she was able to lay down her burdens. Because, again, going to collect water is a big responsibility for even a lot of women in the world today around the world, that's their full-time job, it's going back and forth to wells and collecting water and bringing it back for their family. And it's a lot -- it takes a lot of time, it's heavy, it requires a lot of strength and that strength that some people just don't have. And so, going back and forth with getting this water and coming back with it, that's just carrying this water over and over again and you might have the strength in the beginning but after a while, you grow weary and you get worn out and you don't want to do it anymore.

And so, a lot of us, (00:17:45) carrying water but we're carrying burdens of some kind. We have stress, we have families, we have

jobs, we have school, we have just even shame like this woman did, we have guilt from what we know we've done or just from what has even happened to us. We're carrying these burdens and we're carrying the burden of trying to please people and make people happy and make them like us. We are carrying these burdens when Jesus just invites us to lay it down.

He says, "You are invited to be yourself and to be with me and that's all you need." You can let everything else down. You don't have to put in a façade to try and please Jesus, you can lay that down. He doesn't require a mask, he doesn't require perfection, he doesn't require or say get it right. You can lay all of that down and he extends that invitation. And so, look at this woman at the well and I'll say, "Jesus, I'm a lot like this woman, just carrying these unnecessary burdens and just having all kinds of issues with my life." And he says, "That's okay, you can just lay it down. You're still invited. You can still come and drink from my living water. You just need to lay that down so that you can taste and see that I am good."

Because when we're carrying these burdens, when we're carrying this water that is only filling us for a certain period of time, when we're carrying that, we're too full and too focused and we can't even focus on Jesus because our hands are so full of this stuff that is bringing nothing to us that we cannot focus on Jesus. So, when we lay that stuff down, we can see this is the Messiah, this is the savior, this is Jesus, God Almighty, who came, who closed the gap, who crossed the bridge so that we can be with him because if he did not come, we would not realize that we have need for him. If he did not extend that invitation to us, we wouldn't have known that there was even an invitation to be gained.

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And like I said, he doesn't come for those who have it altogether because Lord knows I would like to be invited to that party. He does not come for those who are perfect and those who are strong and those who just are living their best life. He doesn't come for those people, he comes for those who are weary, and those who are weak, and those who are tired and those who are burdened and those who nobody else wants.

Nobody else wanted this woman. Nobody else wanted her, but Jesus came and he let her know, I still want you, I love you, you

are mine. And when belong to Jesus, it doesn't matter what anybody else thinks, this woman did not care what the people in town thought of her because she knew that I belong to Jesus now. That I have Jesus now, so I'm good. I don't have to try to please you or your whoever, trying to make you happy and try to hide who I really am because I belong to Jesus now, and that's all I need.

And so, Jesus in Matthew 11:28, he says, "Come to me," not those who are strong and have it all together and are doing great in life. He says, "Come to me all you who are weary, all you who are heavy laden and I will give you rest." We go to all these different wells, all these different places trying to get all this different water, that's not going to give us what we actually need and what we are actually looking for. We need to come to Jesus because it is in him that we find this rest that our souls need. It is in him that we find true freedom, true joy, true life, true love. It is in him that we are accepted.

And so, in the same way that Jesus came to the Samaritan woman and asked her to get him a drink of water though he didn't need it, he wanted her heart and that's why he was asking for the water. So, Jesus comes to us and he says, "Can I have your heart and we're like --," because if you know me then you know that I don't really have nothing good to offer you but that's not the point. It's not that Jesus wants something from us, he wants us.

And it's the fact that Jesus knows that when he asks of us and then we're like, "What, you want me?" And he's like, "Yeah, I want you, I want you." And so, that's why he says even when we feel like we have nothing to offer him, we have nothing good, Isaiah 55 Verse 1, he says, "Come all you who are thirsty, come to the waters and you who have no money." If you have nothing to offer, you can still come. He says, "Come, you who have no money, come, buy and eat." Doesn't that sound like a great party? He says, "Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost." You're all invited to this wonderful party that Jesus has for us.

You can come empty handed with nothing to offer but yourself and we don't have to pay anything because Jesus already paid the price. We can just come on in. So, you are all invited and then there's a song I want to play as I close this in prayer and just keep that in mind like you're invited, doesn't matter what you've done wrong, it doesn't matter where you failed in life, it doesn't matter

the things you're not getting right, you are invited. It doesn't matter if you don't have anything to offer, he doesn't care, he doesn't want just stuff, he wants you. Just come, you can come empty-handed and Jesus is over the top thrilled with just having you. So, I'm just going to pray for us now.

Dear heavenly father, thank you so much, Lord God, just for your word just for your truth, just for the goodness of who are, Father. Thank you that we are invited, Lord. Thank you that you have this massive celebration and we don't have to pay a dime because you already paid the price for us to come on in, Lord. Thank you, God, that you desire us, you don't desire our stuff. Lord, you look past everything we've been through and everything that we've done wrong and everywhere that we have fallen short, God, you look past it all, Lord God, and you said, "Come on in," because you paid the price. You died our debt on the cross so that we can have access to you and eternal life with you father and so, God, I just thank you for that Lord God.

And I just pray, Lord Jesus, for every person in here, Lord God, who does not feel welcome or who does not feel invited into your kingdom. God, I pray that you will let them know that they can come on in, they don't need to have anything, they don't need to be better or anything. They can just come because you're just after our hearts and that's what we want, Lord Jesus, that's what you want from us, Father, and we can come and we can lay down these burdens.

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We can lay down this water that is not doing anything for us, Father, and we can be filled with you, filled with your love, filled with your joy, filled with your peace, Lord Jesus. Filled with the everlasting life that is found in you and in you alone, Jesus.

Thank you so much God for just giving us access to you. You're all we want, all we need, Jesus, and I just pray that you will make that known to us in a new way, Lord God. In Jesus name that I pray. Amen.

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