



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 4:16-26

“True Worship”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Let's turn in our Bibles to John chapter 4. And I want to read beginning at verse 1 again, because it is important to understand this interview that Jesus had with a Samaritan woman to understand the full context of it. John chapter 4 and verse 1,

“When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John, (Although Jesus himself was not baptizing, but his disciples were,) He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee. And he had to pass through Samaria. So he came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. And Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from his journey, was sitting by the well: it was about the sixth hour. There came a woman of Samaria 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 therefore said to him, how is it that you, being a Jew, ask me for a drink, since I am a Samaritan woman? For Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. (Or as I mentioned two weeks ago, this probably means for the Jews do not use the same utensils that the Samaritans do.) Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that says to you, give me a drink; you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water. She said to him, Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: whence then do you get that living water? (Or where then do you get that living water?) You

are not greater than our father Jacob are you, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself, and his sons, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said to her, everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again: but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life. The woman said unto him, Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty, nor come all the way here to draw. He said unto her, Go, call your husband, and come here. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said to her, you have well said, I have no husband: for you have had five husbands; and the one whom you now have is not your husband: this you have said truly. (Now this little statement that he makes here in that last clause may be understood in a different way. Not so much this you have said truly, but this true thing you have said. Now that would seem to suggest that he regards some of the other things that she has said as being somewhat reckless. But at least in this instance he said, you have spoken that which is true.) The woman said to him, Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and you people say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus said to her, Woman, believe me, an hour is coming, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father. You worship that which you do not know: we worship that which we know: for salvation is from the Jews. (I guess there is no place really in our Lord's ministry where he does not more clearly distinguish himself on the human level of things, from the Gentiles. And he lays stress upon the pronouns here, you worship that which you do not know, we worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews.) But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such people the Father seeks to be his worshippers. God is Spirit: and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. (Now, I'm not going to have time to say a whole lot about that expression God is spirit, but that of course means for us he's not a material being. He's not limited in space. And so God is spirit and they who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.) The woman said unto him, I know that Messiah is coming, he who is called Christ: when that one comes, he will declare all things to us. (The Samaritans did have a Messianic hope which they derived from the Samaritan Pentateuch

which was their Scriptures. Then the climax of the interview,) Jesus said to her, I who speak to you am he.”

Now that is a most remarkable statement. Perhaps one of the most remarkable of the statements made in the earlier chapters of this gospel and one of the remarkable statements of all the gospels because if you have noticed in the reading of the gospels, the Lord Jesus did not go out of his way to stress that he was the Messiah in the early stages of his ministry. And in fact, he does not really confess that he's the Messiah publicly aside from this instance until the trial when he stands before Caiaphas and acknowledges under oath that he is the Messiah. We'll say more about that in the message. May God bless this reading of his word.

The subject for today in the exposition of the Gospel of John is, “True Worship.” What is true worship? How is it performed? Where is it performed? Where does it take place? When does it take place? In fact, what is worship? Well, if you were to look in the dictionary and seek to find a definition of the term worship for clarification, your dictionary would probably say what mine did, that the term worship is a word derived from an old Anglo Saxon word, weorthscipe, which ultimately is traceable down to our words of worth plus ship. So that worship is a word derived from worth ship. To worship is to recognize his worth-ship. When we go into churches and we are given a bulletin frequently at the top there will be a little heading like, “The Worship Service,” or perhaps one of the old terms so commonly used in the last century, “Divine Worship.” Now a long time ago the elders of Believers Chapel decided that they would not speak of this service as the worship service and the reason that they didn't is because they felt that there was a difference between worship and ministry of the word. And in fact, the differences may be represented by two simple arrows. One arrow pointing toward Heaven, and then another arrow pointing from Heaven down to earth, and worship, the arrow points to Heaven and represents the accumulation of the praises of individuals and the offering of them toward the Triune God in Heaven. When we worship, we

recognize the worth-ship of the Triune God in our praise and gratitude and also in our other activities that may make up worship.

Ministry however, is the Triune God coming down to us in the teaching and exposition of the Scriptures and exhortation from the Scriptures through his servants that we might receive the truth of God. So that ministry is essentially God speaking to us through his servants, worship is our response in praise and gratitude to God because of what he has done for us. And so the service on Sunday morning has been called the ministry of the word service to recognize that fact. We don't mean by that that in other services in which we have a title above them, “Worship Service” that no ministry takes place there, nor do we mean when we say that this is the ministry of the word service that there is no worship, but the preeminent thing is not worship, the preeminent thing is ministry. And then in the meeting tonight around the Lord's Table there is much opportunity for response in worship. So that worship more predominantly characterizes our evening observance of the Lord's Supper and the meditation that attends that and ministry of the word here.

To worship is to recognize the worth-ship of the Lord God. I had a friend who's now with the Lord he was a Bible teacher and he wrote a book on worship and in this book on worship which I have read, he seeks in one of the pages of it to distinguish between worship prayer and praise. And devising an illustration, he imagines a man who falls into a river and cannot swim, and he cries out, “Help! Help!” And he said, “That's prayer.” And further he went on to say that there was an old Puritan who made a comment on Psalm 107 where sinners are crying for deliverance and the old Puritan's comment was, “Misery wonderfully indoctrinates a person in the art of prayer.” Now there is a lot of truth in that, misery wonderfully indoctrinates us in the art of prayer.

Now as Mr. Prier stressed to you, I went in the hospital recently and I didn't really think it was too serious, it could have been serious, but I didn't think it was serious, I guess that's the way we do. But I want you to know I did engage in a bit of prayer. Sometimes I think the Lord brings those things to us just to see that we occupy ourselves in prayer. He looks down and says, “Well Jane has not been praying as she should, I think I'll send her a little something that will wonderfully

indoctrinate her in the exercise of prayer.” [Laughter] And so he sends her a little experience that causes her to pray. Now one of the reasons we have these experiences is because we neglect the great privilege of prayer. Now I don’t suggest that you ought to pray in order to avoid misery, but I really do believe that if you prayed a lot you probably would avoid a whole lot of misery that the Lord is going to have to send you in order for you to become more indoctrinated in the spirit of prayer.

Well, my friend went on to say that what happened after he called out, “Help, Help!” was that a well-dressed gentleman brought him safely to shore at the risk of his life. And when the man was delivered from the waters of the river, he overwhelmed his rescuer with words of appreciation and he said, “That’s praise.” And that’s like our words of appreciation for Jesus Christ and the cross, because of what he’s done, we have everlasting life, and we ought to overwhelm him with words of praise and thanksgiving. He has saved us.

Astonishment however gripped the man later when this man turns out to be a very wealthy man who invites him to come to his home and to have a meal with him. And during the meal he comes to know the man a whole lot better and he comes to admire the man not only because of the fact that he saved him from death in the river, but also because of the excellencies and virtues of the man which he has now come to know. He said, “Now that illustrates worship, the appreciation of the excellencies of an individual.” So, prayer and praise and worship, worship is the expression of gratitude to the Lord God not simply for what he has done, but also because of the excellencies of his person.

Well our Lord is continuing his lecture on spiritual hydrology to the woman of Samaria. He had passed on the way to Judea through Samaria. In fact he had to pass through Samaria we were told by the Apostle John, not because that was absolutely essential if one was to get from Judea into Galilee because one could avoid Samaria, but there was a divine intention in our Lord passing through Samaria. That’s why he had to pass through Samaria. He had to meet this woman and this woman evidently with whom God intended that our Lord should deal.

So he had come to Jacob's well, he was weary with the journey, he sat down weary and thirsty. Where could you find a more wonderful exhibition of the humanity of our Lord Jesus than this? In theological seminaries when one studies the attributes of God in the person of Christ, and stress is laid upon the true humanity of the Lord Jesus, in order to illustrate that invariably, theologians point to this incident in John chapter 4. Here is the one who in a moment announces that he is the Messiah, the one who is able to give living water, but here is the man Jesus by the side of Jacob's well, tired and thirsty and unable, so far as his human nature's concerned, to reach the water that is in the bottom of the well. It is a wonderful, powerful exhibition of the humiliation of the Lord Jesus, his self emptying. Here the creator of all things sits exhausted under the glare of his own created sun, water underneath him, but with no means to procure it for himself. Magnificent picture, and all the time he's the eternal Son.

Well as he sits by the well, the woman comes and he asks the woman, “Give me a drink.” It startles her, she recognizes that he was a Jew, there was something about his accent or something about his looks that distinguished him from the Samaritans. And she said to him, “How is it that you being a Jew ask me for a drink since I'm a Samaritan woman? The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans in the sense they wouldn't use utensils that we use.” And the Lord said, “Why, if you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you give me to drink, you would have asked of him and he would have given you living water.” That must have startled her a bit, but she replies, “Sir, you don't have anything to draw with, the well is deep, where then are you going to get that living water? You're not greater than our father Jacob are you? He gave us the well, he drank of it himself with his sons and his cattle, you're not greater than he.” Well if our Lord had answered that of course, he would have said, “Of course I'm greater than Jacob.” But he answered and said, “Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.” And then she replies, not understanding yet, “Sir, give me this water so that I won't be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw.”

Now, the Lord in the 16th verse says, “Go call your husband and come here.” Now you can see that he’s going to make contact with her conscious now. Some have said the reason our Lord said, “Go get your husband,” is that he just wanted to change the subject, he had said all that he was going to say about the subject of water, “Go get your husband.” Others say, no what he’s really saying, “your case is hopeless, perhaps we can do something with your husband, go call your husband.” [Laughter] But I think when you read the account you surely will most likely come to the conclusion that he had an aim in calling for the husband, and his aim was probably two fold. First of all to awaken her own conscious concerning her sin with reference to the past men in her life and the present man too and perhaps also to win her husband as well.

There’s an old principle that pertains to physical things. The physician must often hurt us in order to heal us. I know that from experience, I have learned that, I think I have learned it well, but the Lord still puts me through experiences as if to say, you need to get it more firmly fixed in your mind. It’s true; the physicians often have to hurt us in order that they may heal us. Well that same principle works in spiritual things. It is necessary for the Lord to hurt us in order to heal us. He must bring us to an understanding of what we are before we will respond to the offer of mercy and grace through Jesus Christ. The reason the word of God seems so irrelevant to the world today is that they do not understand themselves. They do not understand the peril in which they stand. They do not realize that their eternal destiny is at stake. They think it’s an insignificant thing when the word of God is preached. They can get excited over physical food. Go into a restaurant, have them bring out a tender filet mignon, with all of the things that go with it. Have you ever seen a person go to sleep then? Here is the food before them, and this lovely meal is brought out and [Laughter] but in spiritual things, bring them into the presence of the spiritual food of God, [Laughter] don’t realize their need.

Now the Lord Jesus must create need. I think of the epistle of Paul to the Romans, it’s a great exposition of the gospel of God, that’s its great theme. But the apostle begins with several chapters in which he sets out the sin of the Gentiles and the sin of the Jews and the condemnation of

all the rests upon all men. That’s a fact of life. You ever notice how a life insurance salesman works? What does he try to do? Or any kind of insurance salesman, or any kind of salesman for that matter, what do they try to do? They try to create a sense of need. They will say to us things like, “Shouldn’t you such and such, shouldn’t you this, shouldn’t you buy this?” They want to create a sense of need; they want me to say, “I do need that. I want that.” Shouldn’t you? Shouldn’t you pay some attention to the word of God?

Well our Lord of course, he wants to create a sense of need in this woman, that’s what she needs, and so, “Go get your husband.” Now you could have called her Mrs. Talkative up to this point, because, not as talkative as some people I know, because men are just as talkative as women. But notice, in the preceding context in verse 9, twenty-six words she has uttered. In verse 12, forty-six words she has uttered, and even in verse 1 in the version I’m reading, there are nineteen words in verse 15. But now, when Jesus says, “Go call your husband,” four words. “I have no husband.” Three words in the Greek text, “I do not have a husband.” So, Mrs. Talkative has suddenly become very closed mouth about this man, this husband of hers.

Well, our Lord is a very courteous person of course, he’s very tactful. But notice what he says. He says to the woman, “You have well said, I have no husband, for you have had five husbands, and the one that you have now is not your husband, this true thing you have spoken.” That does cast a sense of doubt over the other things that she’s been talking about. Maybe she’s been somewhat reckless in some of the other things that she has said, but this thing she has spoken truly. He said, “You don’t have a husband.” It’s interesting to study the customs of the Jews with reference to marriage and divorce, because in Judaism, the woman could not file for divorce. Only the husband can divorce the wife. Wives could not divorce their husbands. Now of course there were ways of getting around this, you might buy your divorce by persuading your husband to divorce you for money. Or perhaps there would be some other way in which a wife might compel her husband to divorce her, but it was difficult for a woman to get a divorce. But here is a woman who has managed to get five or four or perhaps assuming that several of her husbands had died, looking

at it in the best way. But at least it's likely in the light of what our Lord said, that she's had a couple of divorces.

Jerome makes mention of a woman who had no less than twenty-two husbands. While I cannot comment on anyone specifically in our society because this will go out over the radio in about twenty different places, and I don't want to be sued, but there are people in our society who do have quite a few husbands in the course of time. I remember a man who was a playboy when I was a kid growing up. And almost every year it seemed there was a new account in the paper of how he had acquired a new wife. And he got up into the double figures, up around twelve or thirteen as I remember. And since he was a very wealthy young man, they were all publicized.

Well, our Lord said with reference to this woman, “It's true, you have had five husbands, you don't have a husband now, the one with whom you're now living is not your husband, you said this one thing truly.” Now that is a striking incidence again of how our Lord's omniscience, there are some instances already of that. So we see that this individual who is truly human and who sits around Jacob's well thirsty and tired from his journey, is at the same time an individual who is able to look into a person and know more than only a human could know. In the case of Nathaniel, he says, “Before Philip calls you I saw you under that fig tree.” So God occasionally in the experiences of our Lord draws the veil a bit and we look beyond the true humanity and see the full deity of our Lord.

Well, at this point now, there follows conflict with her difficulties. So in the 19th verse she says, “Sir, I perceive that you're a prophet.” Perhaps that's just a device to defer to him from anything further about that marriage, “Sir I perceive that you're a prophet.” Or there may be simply not the diversionary tactic, but also a sense of a growing need. Our Lord didn't shut her off, he didn't say, well don't start talking about worship; let's finish this matter of your husband. But she said, “Sir I perceive that you're a prophet, our fathers worshipped in this mountain and you people say that in Jerusalem is the right place where man ought to worship.”

Now this is an opening that is given to our Lord to speak about true worship. In order to understand this, I think we must understand that the Samaritans and the Jews differed over the

proper place to worship. The Samaritans who were a mixed breed of people believed that Mount Gerizim in Samaria was the place where they could worship perfectly acceptably. And so they had a temple on Mount Gerizim nearby. But the Jews, following the teaching of the whole of the Old Testament, believed that the only proper place to worship God in the Levitical ceremonies was in the temple at Jerusalem that was according to the Old Testament teaching. So, she speaking out of her Samaritan background said, “Our fathers worshipped in this mount,” that is mount Gerizim, “but you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.”

Now, there was a fierce dispute over this point among the Samaritans and the Jews. In fact, there’s an old story about a Rabbi who was on his way to Jerusalem and he passed through Samaria by Mount Gerizim and one of the Samaritans said to him, “Where are you going?” And he said, “Well, I’m going up to Jerusalem to pray.” And the Samaritan woman is supposed to have said to him something like, “Would it not be better for you to pray in this blessed mountain rather than in that dung hill?” So that’s what they thought about the Jewish practice of worshipping in Jerusalem, and it probably also represents to some extent the Jewish feeling regarding the false worship on Mount Gerizim.

Now Our Lord replies to the woman and gives us an exposition of what is worship. He said to her in verse 21, “Woman, believe me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem shall you worship the Father. You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know, for salvation is of the Jews.” This is a beautiful exposition of important facts about worship. And the first thing that we ought to notice is the where of worship. According to our Lord, worship will take place not on Mount Gerizim, nor in Mount Zion in Jerusalem alone, but worship will take place anywhere. “The hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall you worship the Father.” We tend to have the idea that there are certain places where we should worship God, in a cathedral perhaps, in a church perhaps, in a chapel perhaps, in a hall perhaps. But wherever the heart bows before God through Jesus Christ and offers praise and

thanksgiving to him, there worship takes place, in your home, in your bedroom, in your office, in your automobile.

There's a story of a rather saintly believer who was once asked the question, how far is heaven from earth? And he is said to have replied, “It cannot be very far, for I spent half of an hour there this morning.” Well he expressed the fact that by prayer he was able to enter into the presence of his heavenly Father.

Now, there is an error in localizing God. The woman says, where? Jesus says, everywhere. In fact, every place that is associated with holy things is usually associated with those things for purely subjective reasons. I know that everybody who prays naturally tends to begin to think of the place where he prays as somewhat significant. If I were to go into homes which I have lived in, there are certain places in those homes that would be particularly significant for me. If I were to walk into the bedroom of past homes in which I have lived, I would almost inevitably stop and there would come back to me a flood of memories of the times on my knees that I offered praise to God by the side of my bed. That's always been a significant place. But then in my study there's always been a chair. And there are particular chairs that I can think about that are chairs by the side of which I have kneeled and spent time in prayer to God. Now those are particularly meaningful to me, but that's purely subjective. There's no reason why that chair should have any significance more than another chair except that it so happens that's the chair by which I have prayed. So it's good for us to remember that as our Lord said, that we can offer prayer and praise to him from anyplace.

Now I want you to notice another thing about our Lord here. He says concerning the Samaritans, “You worship what you do not know.” Now that's very interesting I think because what that means in effect is that when they got down upon their knees and prayed, they actually were doing what Calvin says, “worshipping only a specter or a ghost.” That means that when a Muslim gets down on his knees five times a day, he does not pray to God that is the true God. The true God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, he's a triune God. They worship a ghost, they worship a

specter, they don't worship the true God. He said to this woman, “You worship what you do not know, we worship what we know.”

Now important in our Lord's reply is this, in any worship, there must be intelligence, knowledge. Only intelligent worship is true worship. There are people who tell us it's not really so important how you worship, it's just important that you worship. It's not so important that you go to a particular church on Sunday morning, it's just important that you go to church, the church of your choice. Samaritans would have loved that. Now people might think our Lord was being very rude and discourteous. He was only being truthful. He was only acting as a physician with a scalpel who must often wound in order to heal. “You worship what you do not know, we worship what we know, for salvation is of the Jews.” In other words, Israel has been the axis of divine revelation. It is through Israel that truth has come from the true God. He has determined it that way. And true worship does not take place until we intelligently worship as the Scriptures tell us to worship. Say all you want to about it's just important that you worship, you're being very prejudiced and bigoted. But that is the way the Bible is. That's the way our Lord is, that's the way God is.

Now, the where of worship then, “The time is coming when no worship will take place even in the appointed place only, Jerusalem, but worship will take place everywhere,” Jesus said. So they aren't to localize God.

The whom of worship? Well, the heathen tended to worship power. They tended to think of God as located in the wind, in the hurricane, in the tornados, so they tended to worship god in manifestations of power. Philosophers tended to worship god as wisdom. But believers worship God as Father. He says, “The hour is coming and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father.” So he's the who of worship.

The when of worship? Well this universal worship will take place soon. “The hour is coming and now is,” this is a critical point in the unfolding of the divine program of the ages. The Old Testament has been moving through countless centuries, the worship of Israel with the Levitical ceremonies up to the climactic fulfillment of those ceremonies in the saving work of Jesus Christ,

that he will cry out as he bears the penalty for the sins of sinners, “My God my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” And then say, “It is finished.” And then salvation will go out to the world of both Jews and Gentiles. “For God so loved the world of Jews and Gentiles that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Salvation shall be of the Jews, but for Jews and the Gentiles of the world.

“Other sheep I have,” Jesus said, “Which are not of this fold. Them too I must bring.” And we are living in the stage of this magnificent enfolding of the Gentiles into the family of God with the Apostle Paul as the apostle of the Gentiles. When? When the veil in the temple is rent in twain from top to bottom, God sweeping away the Levitical worship, then this universal worship shall take place.

How? Well Jesus said it twice, “In Spirit and in truth.” No limited worship, but in Spirit and in truth. Not outward, but inward. Not physical like the physical ceremonies in the Levitical ceremonies, but spiritual. Not visible like the Levitical ritual, but invisible. Not audible like the words of the priest which he spoke when he was carrying out his ceremonies but inaudible, not tangible but intangible. We shall worship the Father through the Son in the Spirit.

Now, isn't it a striking thing that the Lord Jesus said, “The hour is coming and now is when all that will be swept away,” that we look into the Christian church and we have these remnants of Judaism? A certain bishop was speaking to a believer about the many innovations which had been introduced into the ritual of his particular church and he said “this is all part of the development of the church since the New Testament times.” The simple believer said, “We call it by a different name, departure.” The early church worshipped simply through the Lord Jesus Christ in the Spirit in harmony with the Scriptures.

When I say there are a lot of accoutrements of religion today that are carried over from the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, there was a separate priestly class. Well today we have a man made clergy, separate from the people with certain official titles and supposedly certain official authority. In the Old Testament, the priest wore particular garments. They were a garment to carry

out the ceremonies of the Day of Atonement and other garments on the other days, garments of beauty and glory. And today into our churches, into our Protestant churches, into our Protestant Christian churches, individuals walking in robes with certain strange kinds of powers and during the week walk in them. That’s a carry over of Judaism. In the Old Testament they had an earthly sanctuary. And what do we call our buildings? Sanctuary, this is the sanctuary, this is the church, church, church building. What’s that? That’s a church. Do you know that in the Bible a building’s never called a church? That’s something we have originated. No denomination is ever called a church, but we speak of the Baptist church, the Presbyterian Church, the Anglican Church. No national church is referred to in the Bible, but we speak of the Church of Scotland, the Anglican Church. I’m not trying to pick on the Anglicans, they happen to come under a couple of these strictures, but we do too. In fact the church is never called the kingdom, but people look out over people in a church and say, “God’s kingdom, the church.”

No, what we have is a carryover of the Old Testament. In some of our churches as in Israel there were alters, so in our churches we have alters, candles, incense. In the Levitical ceremonies we had the most beautiful religion that you would ever have, it was divinely given, and it was potent with power for a time until God himself ripped the veil of the temple in twain. Not from bottom to top incidentally, but from top to bottom, it was God who did it. And we’ve been busy sewing it back up again. So we have ritual. I have friends who actually can say that they don’t really feel at home in a church unless they have ritual. Well I don’t know of anything in the Bible that says you could not have some ritual, we have some kind of ritual I guess. But we when talk about ritual like this, that’s something a little bit different. Ritual tends to make a fixed thing out of spiritual things, and the result is that individuals are not themselves challenged to participate.

I have a good friend he’s a preacher, in fact, he’s been president of a Bible College and he was president of a school in Canada, had a very good friend who was a Anglican and a Christian man, but a public official in the city and they were dedicating a new building and so he invited his friend who was a public official of one of the cities of Canada to come and on the spur of the

moment, this man was somewhat of impromptu in things that he did, in the midst of the ceremony which was at the kind of the inauguration of this building the blessing of it. He called upon the public official who he knew was a Christian to come and lead in prayer and the man got up and made a very weak feeble attempt at prayer. And when he finished and the service was all over he went up to his friend, my friend and said, “You know, that was the only time in my life that I’ve ever been ashamed that I was an Anglican.” He didn’t know how to pray. All of his prayer had been done for him by ministers out of the prayer book. He didn’t really know what it was to pray.

That’s why our Lord suggests, “The hour is coming and now is when men shall call upon the Father and the Father seeks such to worship him.” Isn’t that amazing? God is looking for men to worship him, looking for people who will get down on their knees and offer words of thanksgiving and praise to him, who will come to know him in that way. God’s seeking worshipers, God’s seeking you as a worshiper. Why don’t you respond to his invitation? He’s seeking men and women and children to worship him.

Well there are some other things that might be said, but we’re at the end of our hour. I want you to notice what happens when our Lord finally says, “God is a spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.” That is we must worship without any of the bounds of the old religion, and we must worship in truth, in reality, in accordance with the word of God. We must worship what we know from divine revelation.

The woman then said to him, “I know that the Messiah is coming, he who is called the Christ, and when that one comes, he will declare all things to us.” She’s called him a Jew, she called him sir, she asked the question, “Are you greater than Jacob?” she said “he’s a prophet.” Now, and it’s almost as if in the things that he has said the idea of Messiah has crossed her mind. She’s not yet made the identification it would seem, but it seems to have crossed her mind because the things that he says elicit from her a comment concerning the Messiah, “I know that the Messiah is coming, he who is called the Christ, and when that one comes, he will declare all things to us.”

Now our Lord has first in this account revealed herself to her by showing her that she's out of harmony with the will of God and the fact that this person with whom she's living is not really her husband. But now, after having revealed herself to her, he reveals himself to her. It's the climax. "I who speak to you am he." This is the one occasion in which before our Lord's trial when he was called upon to swear by Caiaphas to his Messiahship, that he unfolded his Messianic claims. He was always silent about it before. One indication previously is to the effect that he made an implicit kind of an acknowledgement of it. But here he plainly says it and is it not striking that he says it to the Samaritan woman? But think about it for a moment and you'll understand why. The reason Jesus did not reveal himself to the Jews as Messiah before the time of Caiaphas, was simply because they had false conceptions of the Messiah. They thought of him as a political ruler who would give them control of the world only. And therefore, he guardedly made reference to his Messianic claims.

But here with the Samaritan woman, it's not official and of course, they had no claims, no expectations to be the head of the nations as Israel did, and so he to her said, "I that speak unto thee am he." And this expression, "I am," is what it is literally. This expression is the highest claim that any person can possibly make for themselves, for it is the claim that he is Yahweh himself. When Moses was at the burning bush and was told that he would be the instrumentality whereby God would lead Israel out of the land of Egypt Moses said, "What's your name, I need to have a name in order to answer my fellow Israelites when they say who's the God who's leading us out?" And God said to Moses, "I am who I am." He cannot define himself. If he were to define himself by our human finite things, he would define himself in limitation. No absolute definition of God is possible, so he says, "I am who I am." I am, that's his name. "Moses, you tell them I am has sent you."

Now, he gives a relational definition, he says "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob. But my name is simply I Am." And all of this said amidst the burning bush, amidst the manifest presence of God. And you know those little pieces of shrubbery around Jacob's

well must have been shriveling from the heat when Yahweh himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, because that's who spoke to Moses in the third chapter of Exodus said, “I who speak to thee am he.”

Now in this context and in the context of the Gospel of John, it's this individual who invites men, “Come unto me, come unto me.” This you see is just another form of his invitation, come. To the Samaritan woman, to you, come. Come to him, come to Christ, come to him who is Yahweh the angel of Jehovah, come to him who led Israel out of the land of Egypt, come to him who offered the atoning sacrifice, come to him who today preaches the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ through his servants to you, come to Christ. Come to him, receive forgiveness of sins. Come; be justified by the blood of the cross. Come enter into life. Come, become a worshipper of the Lord God through the Son of God. The Father seeks such to worship him. You, you, yes you may be the one that he especially is seeking right now, come, come to him.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee for these wonderful words of revelation. O God . . .

[AUDIO ENDS ABRUPTLY]