

# Come Let Us Worship Week 1: Spirit & Truth

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KBF Sermon

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Dear KBF,

Good morning, my name is Lorne and I am one of the pastors here at KBF, it is great to see you here this morning. I hope you are hungry. It is BBQ day and I am already excited about burgers. In preparing for today, I did notice that over 40 people have signed up to serve and volunteer at the BBQ and this does not include all the other people involved in putting on the actual church service! I am so grateful that we have such an invested community here. Thank you all for what you do to facilitate Godly fellowship!

This morning it is the first weekend in October and therefore it is time to start something new. This morning we are starting a new series and as you can see, it is called *Come Let Us Worship*.

We just finished 5 weeks on the Upside Down Kingdom that Jesus presented through parables, and this month, I would like to focus on what happens when we encounter this upside down kingdom. What should our response be? What happens when we decide to enter into this upside down kingdom and become a citizen of God? In a word, Worship. Come, let us explore this together.

First, let me pray!

## *Part 1: The Encounter at the Well*

We will begin our series in John Chapter 4 with the interaction between Jesus and the woman at the well. This is not a parable, so the story is different to those that we read last month, however, as we read, we will still catch a glimpse of the upside down kingdom. In this story, we will also discover a beautiful reaction to this Kingdom.

The interaction takes place in John Chapter 4 and we catch up with Jesus as he travels through Samaria. Jesus is tired and weary so he sits down next to a well, perhaps to rest, rehydrate and recover. While he is sitting a Samaritan woman comes over to the well and our story has been set up.

To our modern ears this all sounds very natural and innocent. I can picture something like this occurring on a path in the hills here in Japan. In this case, both people would say Konnichiwa, get some water and then continue on their path. No troubles!

What is taking place here, however, is entirely different and the interaction we are about to read, should NEVER have taken place! This exchange would have, or should have, been forbidden for two reasons. One, women and men should not be talking in public, and two,

Jews and Samaritans would have also distanced themselves from one another. Culture and tradition would say that Jesus, a Jewish man, should not be speaking to this Samaritan woman.

This is a seriously scandalous and compromising position for a religious leader to find themselves in. Seriously!

Let us join the story and discover what happens.

#### **John 4: 7-18**

Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" 8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.[a])

10 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."

11 "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"

13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

15 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."

16 He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

17 "I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. 18 The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

There is a lot going on here, but let us identify a few things that happen in this conversation.

#### ***First, Jesus Initiates Connection***

It is Jesus that reaches out. He could not have been ignorant of all the barriers that should have separated them and kept them apart. Despite these, Jesus not only initiates an interaction but also asks to share her cup. This action would have made Jesus ceremonially unclean and yet he still initiates this. Despite culture, religion and tradition Jesus reaches out to initiate contact.

Jesus initiates connection.

### ***Second, The Woman Shies Away***

This must have been very confusing for the woman so it is not surprising that her reaction is one of confusion. How can **YOU** ask **ME** for a drink!? In her confusion it sounds like she shies away. Maybe she did not want to get in trouble for talking to this strange man making contact with her.

The woman shies away.

### ***Third, Jesus Reveals Who He Is***

The response of Jesus in verse 10 is kind of like how He teaches in the parables. Rather than describing things clearly so there can be no misunderstanding he begins to teach through an abstract picture. If you know who you were talking to, you would be asking me for living water! He is speaking in a strange way but what he is really doing is beginning to reveal to the woman who it is that she is talking to. It takes the woman a little bit of time to work out what Jesus is talking about but finally she is intrigued. Alright, give me this water so I won't be thirsty again. She is beginning to see who it is she is really talking to.

Jesus, reveals who he is.

### ***Fourth, Jesus Reveals The Obstacle***

The woman asks for the living water that Jesus is talking about but it is obvious to Jesus that she still does not fully understand what she is asking for. While Jesus is revealing his identity to her, she thinks that it will allow her to actually get some magic water. She will get some miraculous water provided for her that will stop her ever being thirsty again. Said another way, she thinks that she is going to receive an object, a thing, that will satisfy her desires and prevent her from having to work for it. By the way, how nice would that be!? I would want something like that.

It is here that Jesus reveals to her the obstacle. Now I want to be careful not to read too much into this, but check this out. At the start of the story it was religion culture and tradition that would have prevented Jesus from connecting with this woman. Jesus initiates contact, and despite the woman's confusion reveals who he is to her. He is showing her that He is the Son of God. The Messiah. But she is not understanding fully.

What Jesus does next is amazing. He reveals the obstacle in her heart that is preventing her from seeing Jesus. Go get your husband, well actually I know you have had 5 husbands and you are with someone who might become your 6th.

Could it be that this woman is looking for a man to satisfy her desire so she doesn't have to work again. Could it be that this is a source of vulnerability and insecurity and this is why the woman has had 5 husbands, not including men who were not husbands. Dear lady, the thing preventing you from connecting with Jesus, the thing that is preventing you from being satisfied in your life is that your desire is not properly aligned. You are looking for something that no man can give you.

Jesus, reveals the obstacle.

Now, imagine how you might feel if someone you had never met revealed some deep dark secrets about you. Something that you might be ashamed by or insecure about. Something you know others know but makes you feel really uncomfortable.

If it was me. Yikes! I would be SO uncomfortable. I might run away but this exchange must have been quite remarkable because this is what happens!

#### **John 4: 19-24**

19 “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. 20 Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

After Jesus, 1) initiates contact, 2) reveals who he is, and 3) reveals the obstacle of her understanding, the woman begins to recognise his divinity and expresses a need to worship.

The response to the Upside Down Kingdom, the response to encountering Jesus is a call or an urge to worship. Something greater, more insightful and pure has just interacted with her and she is recognising who Jesus is and recognising that she needs to respond in worship.

## *Part 2: Called Out Of My Mess*

As I was praying about this sermon, I was reminded of the most profound moment I have ever had during worship.

In 2011 I moved to Toronto and I remember looking for a church. It was difficult to find a church that I liked. The reason why, and this is really embarrassing to admit this, is because I was super judgemental. I had just come from leadership positions in 2 churches in Australia and I had even been an ‘apprentice pastor’ at the age of 24 and so I was filled with pride. Every church I went into I would start judging what they were doing.

‘Oh man, I could have done a better sermon.’

‘Oh no, why did they arrange the service like that, its boring!’

It is embarrassing to remember.

One particular week I decided to go visit a church in downtown Toronto. The church met in the basement of a community center that was situated in an area of the city that was known for being a place where there were lots of drug problems, fights and homeless people. Maybe, finally, I would find a ‘real’ church.

I arrived at the church on Sunday evening a little bit before the service started and walked down into the basement where they had the church service in a gym where people would play basketball during the day.

I was a little frustrated when I got there because the church was further away than what I thought and then when I arrived I was quite tired and uncomfortable. Then I looked around and saw the congregation. In one corner there was an overweight person mumbling and talking to themselves, a big huge man dressed in women's clothing was doing the welcoming, there were people that were unclean, dirty and smelled terrible. And if this wasn't 'bad enough' the worship team began practicing...and they sounded **horrible**.

They were out of tune and off key. The timing was bad and the singers... probably should have been welcomers.

I was just about to turn around and leave but before I could go, someone stood up and did an official welcome to church and the service started. I was stuck.

But then, the praise team started and... to my amazement it was the most beautiful thing I had ever heard. This team of people, who were far from perfect, began singing and playing their instruments and you could tell, so clearly, how much they loved Jesus and how great their adoration for God was. The music was playing, but you could truly hear how pure their hearts were! I was stunned.

And then, as the songs were going it was as if a voice inside my head said to me, 'Look around, this is what heaven will look like.'

And as I looked, I saw all the people I had been judging for smelling bad, or being overweight or for wearing women's clothes. I saw them all praising God. They were welcome and safe in the church. I felt like the voice inside my head was revealing to me how precious each person was. It was like I was seeing learning how much he loved each of these people whom I had been judging.

I felt so humbled, so convicted and so ashamed of how I had been thinking and it was like the voice revealed to me the obstacle that had prevented me from valuing the people around me. It was my own pride and desire to be recognized as a good person.

The truth that was revealed to me was so powerful, so convicting and so humbling that I had to work incredibly hard not to cry the entire time I was at that church. During that service, I knew that I had to repent and apologise. I knew that I had to realign myself and my values and I had to become more like God. I had to worship.

I walked out of that church a transformed and changed person.

Similar to the woman at the well.

It felt like Jesus had reached out to me and initiated contact.

Similar to the woman at the well.

I almost walked away.

Similar to the woman at the well.

Jesus revealed more of who he was.

Jesus revealed the obstacle that was preventing me from seeing him.  
Similar to the woman at the well.  
I needed to worship.

If you are open, if you recognise that Jesus Christ is initiating a connection with you, if you are open to discovering who He is, and if you are able to be humble when your personal obstacles are revealed to you. You will discover God and it will change your life.

### *Part 3: Spirit & Truth*

Let us turn back to John Chapter 4. Let us rejoin the woman who stands before Jesus and has recognised her need to worship.

19 “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. 20 Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

21 “Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; **we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.**”

As the woman is beginning to recognise the urge to worship, she begins to wonder where she is supposed to do it. She is Samaritan and her ancestors worshipped on this mountain but your people, you worship in Jerusalem. Where do I go?

The woman references two physical **places** where there would be special **times** to worship. She continues by suggesting that there is a specific place and time when she should worship. She has encountered something divine, it has given her life more meaning, so in response she should worship but where, and when?

Again Jesus teaches. Instead of a place and a time He says that God is encouraging worship to be about spirit and truth. This is important because we could think similar things to what the woman thinks. That worship is only the songs that we sing at church. The place is Church and the time is Sunday morning. While it is great that we do worship on Sunday mornings, Jesus is encouraging us to think about worship as something that can be done anywhere and exists in the spirit and truth. From this point on, this woman does not need to go somewhere to worship, the time is coming and is indeed here, when she can worship in spirit and truth.

What Jesus means by this is that worship is first done in the spirit. Worshipping in step with the Holy Spirit, whose work it is to encourage a deeper reverence for God.

**John 15:26** — “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.

Worshipping in spirit is an inward cultivation of reverence for God. Like what we witnessed in the interaction here at the well and what happened to me at the church, the Holy Spirit is awkenning, inspiring cultivating a deeper reverence for God and it is happening in your spirit. (John Piper)

Worshipping in Truth is then about responding to true views about God. It is our daily actions, such as praise, teaching, prayer and giving. Worship begins with thinking in the spirit and then moves on to action that is inspired by truth.

Timothy Keller says that worship is about us placing ‘ultimate value’ in God. It happens as we encounter Jesus and the Holy Spirit reveals who Jesus is. Thankfully we have this example where Jesus initiates connection, reveals who He is, reveals obstacles in our thinking, and encourages us to live a life according to a greater truth.

The story of the woman at the well ends with this:

**25 The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”**

**26 Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”**

According to the Gospel of John, the Woman at the Well receives the most beautiful gift. She had the opportunity to know without a doubt that Jesus was standing before her and that he is the Messiah, the Christ.

This woman encountered the Upside Down Kingdom and responded by revealing an urge to worship.

Jesus Initiated Connection

Jesus Revealed His Identity

Jesus Revealed Obstacles to seeing God

Jesus Taught and affirmed.

As we begin this series on worship, my hope is that you would know that Jesus still reaches out to initiate contact. Jesus wants you to know his identity. Jesus will show you the obstacles that prevent you from seeing the divine and Jesus will teach and affirm you as you discover. In return you will discover this beautiful urge that is to worship and you will discover how incredible it is that we can worship in the spirit and in truth. My prayer is that you would recognise the value of Jesus who is offering you the opportunity to connect despite all of the reasons you might think you can’t.

Come! Let Us Worship!

## Benediction

### Romans 16: 25-27

25 Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, 26 but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from[f] faith— 27 to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen

1	Message Title	<i>Come Let Us Worship Part 1: Ultimate Value</i>
2	Scripture Verses	<i>John 4: 13-26</i>
3	Verse for the Bulletin	<i>John 4:23</i>
4	Bio	<i>As previous</i>
5	Sermon Script	<a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1E7jo7-H739SqlP1_3khDzCCUyMYvAqR0zx9bJ094B9o/edit?usp=sharing">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1E7jo7-H739SqlP1_3khDzCCUyMYvAqR0zx9bJ094B9o/edit?usp=sharing</a>
6	Benediction	<i>Romans 16: 25-27</i> 25 Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, 26 but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from[f] faith— 27 to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.