

Bookends of the Gospels: Matthew 5 and John 4

John's bookend

It's like John sat down one morning over coffee and picked up a good book to read. Matthew wrote a good book. John read that we thirst and hunger for righteousness. Then it hit him. Hey I remember Jesus at the well. It's interesting that theoretically the Disciples never heard the exchange between the woman and Jesus. They were gone for food. I bet there are two scenarios. One is that Jesus told them the exchange later. I just doubt that. Jesus telling his disciples her dirty laundry. Seems unlikely.

The other scenario is that some disciples left and others hung around near where Jesus was. Some times we read that Jesus is talking to someone and another person later talks about it. It's either gossip central or Jesus had people with him most of the time. Did you notice, at times, Jesus is said to go and pray alone? Those prayers are not recorded. Just a theory but I like it.

That said, John has recorded a great exchange between a Samaritan woman and Jesus. The theological banter is awesome. Don't mistake her knowledge. What is a simple Samaritan woman doing in knowing so much on theological issues. In that day, wasn't that men stuff? Sure, she was taught, but she knows theology really well and deeply too. Ah, and there at a well we have this exchange. Jesus offers her living water but she says the well is too deep and his bucket won't reach.

There it is. We have the knowledge of what it means to be Godly. Just give us a list like the Ten Commandments or the sermon on the mount. Even the rich young man knew what he had done right. Her bucket is good enough. Then comes Jesus and he answers Matthew's chapter 5 bookend. Those who thirst and hunger have righteousness. Jesus answer is living water. In Matthew 5 it's verse 6 "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*" In John 4 it's verse 24 "*God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.*" It's not food or water, it's the Spirit of God.

Jesus knows that in John 14 he mentions that the only way to the Father is through him. Jesus then says he will send the Spirit to give us life in God. We seek, hunger, and thirst for something more all the time. Our lives can look like the woman at the well at times. Salvation comes from the Lord. It's not about being better. Being better comes from accepting the living water called the Holy Spirit. That water changes us.

What's it all mean?

In Matthew 5 Jesus describes a complete Christian life. Yet, he calls on us to hunger and thirst. What it means is that we are not yet complete. Then in John 4 Jesus offers to complete us by offering living water. There are so many statements in the Bible. *We cannot live on bread alone. We need Spiritual baptism. We need living water.* It's funny that the disciples return and offer the food. Jesus then says he does not need that kind of food. I bet they were confused. The Woman gets it and books it back to tell others that she found what she had been looking for. The disciples ironically are blind to what they have found in Jesus.

The first bookend searches. It hungers and thirsts for what it cannot have. The sermon on the mount is ominous to keep. It's meant to be that way. Jesus is saying relax. Search for it and I will offer it. Hunger for God and he will provide. Throughout the Bible God has said over and over he will provide.

Jesus says he will send another to help us. The Spirit is a provider, helper, and comforter. It's interesting that Jesus says the Spirit will search the depths of God. The depth of the well of living water. The woman said Jesus had no bucket.

That's in a nut shell. To hunger and thirst means we have no water and food. The disciples often did not have enough food to feed anyone. Jesus had sent them for food at the market. The woman at the well had the bucket. Yet, there is Jesus standing there thirsty and hungry with no bucket. Where is Jesus in that moment? With a woman with a bucket. He had disciples going to get food. God provides, yet Jesus is full spiritually. He knows where his food comes from. He knows where his ability to be satisfied comes from. He did get hungry and thirsty. He was fully a man. Yet, he was not searching for spiritual food because Jesus was always seeking his father for spiritual nourishment. That is why his life was not a spiritual wreck like those around him. That is why Jesus was sinless, holy, kind, compassionate, peaceful, and everything else in Matthew 5. We are to be filled by the one who can fill us: The Holy Spirit. These are two great bookends to a great story.