

# Luke Farrugia: The Gospel of Photini (8/12/18)

Our passage for consideration today is John 4:1-42. This is a familiar story to most, but today you might be surprised, as was Luke, to see some rich gems beneath the often tilled surface.

Let's start by examining the context of the story.

## The Backdrop:

- The Characters (Jesus, Photini, Disciples)
- The Context (Jews vs Samaritans conflict)
- The Location (Jacobs Well - Samaria)

### 1. The Characters:

In early church tradition it was believed that the woman whom Jesus interacted with at Jacobs well was Photini. So, for the sake of personalising the story today, let's believe them and call her Photini. Some of the other players in the story were the disciples. Jesus takes His disciples to Samaria on His journey toward Galilee. The disciples went to get lunch and Jesus stayed behind to interact with Photini.

### 2. The Context:

#### 2 Kings 17:22-25

- In second Kings 17 we read about the beginning of a long term conflict between the Israelites and the Samaritans. Assyria took Israel captive and replaced them with other displaced peoples. They eventually learned about Yahweh and began to partially worship Him.

#### Ezra 4:1-5

- When the Israelites returned from exile they started rebuilding the city and the Samaritans want to help but the Jews block them because of their mixed worship - setting off many years of rivalry.

### 3. The Location:

The story was set at Jacobs well which was found in between Mt Gerizim and Mt Ebal. This spot has a very interesting history in scripture.

- Genesis 12:5-7 - God appeared to Abraham in a place called Shechem (which is commonly believed to be the same place called Sychar in John 4). There, God re-articulated the covenant to Abraham.
- Deuteronomy 27:11-15; 28:1-4 - In Deuteronomy 27 and 28 we find Moses telling half of tribes to stand on Mt Gerizim and the half on Mt Ebal while God gave the covenant blessings and curses through them to the people.
- Joshua 8:30 - Again Joshua renews the covenant from Mt Ebal. Here, in our location, God makes it clear (in the following verses) that this covenant is also extended to the "strangers."

So there was a conflict that was originally over whether or not the people of Samaria worshipped God correctly. Over time God used the location of our story today to reaffirm that His covenant of peace was to be for all men (though communicated through the lineage of Abraham).

## The Structure:

- Living Water (our connection to God)
- Worship (the way we live our lives)
- Witness (sharing with others)

## 1. Living Water:

John 4:13,14

- Isaiah 58:6-11 - This is the only clear Old Testament parallel with the idea of living water welling up inside of you. This had to do with a personal experience with the living God that translated to ministry in the life.
- John 7:38,39 - Later in the book of John it is made abundantly clear what Jesus spoke of when He talked of living water - the Holy Spirit.

"There is a causal relationship between the motivation to serve others and receiving the Holy Spirit."  
Luke Farrugia

## 2. Worship:

In a very real sense both the Samaritans and the Jews had good reasons for why they worshipped how and where they did.

- The Samaritans worshipped where they did because of Moses' writings (they were told to build an altar on a mountain and worship).
- The Jews worshipped where they did because of what they knew from the period of the Kings (the temple was blessed by God).
- Both had some level of scriptural integrity for why they did what they did.

John 4:24 - Jesus said that what was most important was not *where you worshipped*, but *how you worshipped*. We must worship in Spirit (from the heart and with the right attitude) and in Truth (with our minds fully engaged with God).

"Worshipping in spirit and truth is believing the right thing and having the correct motivation for applying it." Luke Farrugia

## 3. Witness:

John 4:31-35 - As we get further through the story Jesus talks to His disciples about how to witness. What He says to them might be a little surprising.

Jesus teaches that *witnessing is*:

- Watching for Divine appointments
- Devoting your energy to them
- Loving them

Jesus teaches that *witnessing is not*:

- Posting about Sunday laws on social media
- Telling an acquaintance that they're sinning by eating that Christmas Ham
- Leading with the Bible only works when the person hold it in high regard and is secure enough to not feel attacked by it.

"To confront people who don't care, with a Bible they don't know, is missiological suicide." Luke Farrugia

"Don't cast your pearls before swine." Jesus

"We need to earn the right to speak into the lives of others." Luke Farrugia

**Conclusion:**

This is the Complete Package!

- Living Water - Jesus calls us to be filled with the Holy Spirit
- Worship - Jesus gives us clear advice about how we should live (in spirit and truth)
- Witness - Jesus gives us an example of how to share the good news with others

Why did Photini leave her water pot?

- Commitment - She was coming back
- Speed - She was in a hurry to share the good news
- Something Better - She had tasted living water, so the literal water could wait

**Challenge:**

What do you need to leave behind?