

Sheds Light on the Meaning of Brotherhood through the Samaritan Woman an Integrated Exegetical Approach to John 4:1-42

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Abstract

The story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman is an unusual moment. This encounter conveys two figures that have conflicting cultural backgrounds. Starting from this unusual encounter, the researcher is interested in exploring the Gospel of John about the story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman. The goal to be achieved is to determine the spirituality of the encounter towards proper brotherhood. The dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman has a very valuable example for building a true brotherhood correlation through an attitude of openness, and accepting differences without judgment. The differences that occur are not a reason for hostility but it exposes the uniqueness of brotherhood. The research method used is a literature study. This study uses an integral exegetical approach which a literature study to explore important messages from the story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman. This story reveals how important the aspect of a sincere encounter of true brotherhood. Jesus asked for water from Jacob's well and the Samaritan woman's willingness to give water to Jesus. This story imparts the meaning of life. The implication of this study is an invitation to build true brotherhood.

Keywords: brotherhood; encounter; samaritan woman; spirituality

1. Introduction

Part of the Gospel of John 4:1-42 is a very interesting story. Why? It is because the Gospel of John clearly describes the openness and humility of Jesus towards different personal differences. The woman was a Samaritan and Jesus was a Jew who had nothing in common with each other, in fact they were two tribes that were enemies of each other.¹ Jesus' foundation on the relationship did not follow the cultural tradition. He dismantled the relationships that

¹ Stewart Penwell, *Jesus the Samaritan: Ethnic Labeling in the Gospel of John* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2019), 1.

were limited only to people from the same group. Jesus' encounter and conversation with the Samaritan woman had shown a way of life that was different from cultural teachings. Jesus showed everyone the importance and valued relationships without prioritizing the differences they have. Purnanto in his research mentioned that foundation of relationship should be based on compassion. Thus, the relation will bring positive dealings and our actions are based on compassion.²

It should be noted that the Yahwistic Samaritans had a different history from Jesus. This argument is systematically explained by Anderson and Giles referring to research conducted by Knoppers writing about the background of the differences between the tribes of Israel and Samaria in Chronicles as follows:

The Chronicler acknowledges, even promotes, features shared by all Israelites over the centuries. He openly affirms a common identity for all people who see themselves as the descendants of Jacob (almost always called 'Israel' in Chronicles). He does not stigmatize the residents of the former northern kingdom as the descendants of foreign settlers or even as a mixed race. The northern remnant addressed by Hezekiah is as Israelite as the southern remnant is.³

The explanation given by Anderson shows that the two different communities may have the same principle, namely having one God, one nation, and one place of worship. However, the two nations still experienced deep divisions over the agreement on the center of the place to worship God. Anderson is guided by Knoppers' research on the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4.⁴ The Gospel of Luke describes a friendly good Samaritan. Powery remarks on the attitude of Samaritans who help others "To love a neighbor requires clarification because contexts, circumstances, relationships, laws, and a multiplicity of other factors have bearing on how people might interact with others."⁵ Similar story with the Samaritan woman who did not expect to meet anyone else at the well, because the Samaritan woman deliberately came to Jacob's well during the day. The Samaritan woman was sure that the situation at Jacob's well was deserted and that there would be no one she would meet at Jacob's well. The Samaritan woman did not know that Jesus was also at the location of Jacob's well and was watching the woman's movements. Lieber explains that outside of modern Israel, the Samaritans are known not by their own identity, but through the eyes of others. This is seen in the New Testament parable of the Good Samaritan (cf. Luke 10:30–37). On the other hand, the story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the Well (cf. John 4:4–26) is another portrait of the view of the Samaritans.⁶

² Antonius Hari Purnanto, "Welas Asih sebagai Sipiritualitas Perjumpaan," *FORUM Filsafat dan Teologi* 53, no. 2 (2024): 162, [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.35312/spet.v21i2.401](https://doi.org/10.35312/spet.v21i2.401).

³ Robert T. Anderson dan Terry Giles, *The Samaritan Pentateuch: An Introduction to Its Origin, History, and Significance for Biblical Studies* (Atlanta: The Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 20.

⁴ Anderson dan Giles, 20.

⁵ Emerson B. Powery, *The Good Samaritan Luk 10 for the Life of the Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2022), 119.

⁶ Laura Suzanne Lieber, *Classical Samaritan Poetry* (United States of America: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2022), 92.

The researcher only focuses on the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman (John 4:7-26). Knoppers has also suggested that newer evidence of north/south opposition as follows "The archaeological and epigraphic remains suggest that major contacts between Yehuda [Judea] and Samaria preceded the time of Nehemiah and continued after his term(s) of office ended."⁷ The researcher's basic reason for focusing on this passage is to explore the moral message contained in the text, especially in the morality of social interaction. This message is very important, especially in the context of modern society. Based on experience and also learning from the experiences of people encountered in missions and ministries, the researcher still finds that in general everyone still limits their relationships with people who come from the same group, such as similarities in culture, religion, education level, economic level and various other similarities.⁸ An attitude of humility, openness, and initiative to start a conversation with the Samaritan woman is an important beginning in meeting others.

The important lesson and moral message contained in Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman is that universal brotherhood is built based on openness and respect for everyone. This is very evident in Jesus' action of taking the initiative to start a conversation with the Samaritan woman. Jesus said: "Give me a drink." (v. 7). Of course, Jesus' request and words certainly surprised the Samaritan woman. Jesus tried to convey the good news about the Kingdom of God to everyone, including people who were different from Jesus, who in this context was the Samaritan woman.⁹ We can know and say that the story of the encounter and dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman ended happily. The encounter and happiness experienced by the Samaritan woman gave birth to an attitude of preaching to others. John tells the story that after meeting Jesus, the Samaritan woman left her pitcher and went to the city to tell people about her encounter with Jesus. The woman said, "Come, see! There is a man there who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" (v. 28). The author is interested in this story which truly shows that the foundation of mission is an encounter with Jesus. In explaining and interpreting the passage from John 4:1-42, we have used the New American Bible (NAB). Botha believes in his research that cultural context is important, but knowledge and interpretation are very useful factors in determining the style of communication such as the Gospel of John.¹⁰

2. Methodology

The method used to explain the story of Jesus' meeting with the Samaritan woman is the integral exegetical approach. Through this method, the researcher attempts to describe the meaning contained in the text in an interpretation or exegesis systematically and comprehensively. Therefore, the researcher uses the inductive methods which are precisely to

⁷ Gary Knoppers, "Revisiting the Samaritan Question in the Persian Period," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 53.

⁸ Kristine Meneses, "L'Arche, a Radical Reversal: Fearless Dialogue between Foucault and Vanier with the New Testament," *Journal of Disability & Religion* 24, no. 2 (2020): 151-73, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23312521.2020.1718571>.

⁹ Richard A. Burridge, *John: The People's Bible Commentary* (Tarxien: Malta: Gutenberg Press, 2008), 69.

¹⁰ Botha J. Eugene, *Jesus and the Samaritan Woman: a Speech Act Reading of John 4:1-42*, ed. oleh C.K. Barret et al. (The Netherlands: Brill, 1991), 77.

general things by applying the exegetical method to find the meaning and implications of the story of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well as told of the Gospel of John.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Content and Structure

3.1.1. Content

The context of the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman is their mutual trust. As Abbott stated as follows:

Under ordinary circumstances ... we might suppose the words ... to have been merely an asseveration meaning ... but we must have regard to the fact that this is an utterance of Christ... and the Gospel has hitherto appeared to be carrying us from stage to stage in the development of doctrine of trusting ... now the woman of Samaria is bidden to 'trust Him' in the assurance that worship (which is the 'looking up' of heart) will be effectual wherever it is offered 'in spirit and truth'.¹¹

The encounters and dialogues based on trust foster an attitude of openness and mutual acceptance. Such encounter situations resolve various issues, both personal issues and issues as cultural heritage. Jesus arrives at the city of Sychar or Shechem, a place with a history stretching back to the patriarch, Jacob (cf. John 4:5).¹² Here is where Jesus described himself as the connection between the heavenly realm and the earth, just like Jacob's vision of a ladder with angels ascending and descending. It was the same Jacob who bought the land on his return (cf. Gen.33:18-9).¹³ This sentence provides the background for what follows. Jesus returned to Galilee from Judea, where He had been baptizing with His disciples, because the Pharisees were becoming increasingly aware of His broadening influence among the Jews. He wanted to avoid unnecessary premature conflict with them.

The purpose given for Jesus' departure from Judea at this particular time is not at all clear. Did he fear persecution? Certainly, he had openly contrasted the Jewish leaders before in the Temple. John doesn't tell us why Jesus chose this time to return to Galilee. Some have suggested that the Pharisees turned their attention to Jesus because John the Baptist had now been thrown into prison. But the text gives no hint of this. In any case, perhaps Jesus simply did not want to provoke a confrontation at this time (knowing that his "hour" had not yet come).

3.1.2. The general Structure of the text John 4:1-42¹⁴

3.1.2.1. Introduction (vv.1-6)

¹¹ Botha J. Eugene, 5.

¹² Burridge, *John: The People's Bible Commentary*, 113.

¹³ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Black's New Testament Commentaries: The Gospel According to St. John* (New York: Continuum, 2005), 63.

¹⁴ Some authors made the structure of John 4:1-42 into five sections: Verses 1-6 set up the story that follows by discussing Jesus' change of location and his arrival at a well near Sychar; verses 7-26 contain the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan women at the well; verses 27-30 there is a transition as the disciples arrive and the women depart. There is then a dialogue between Jesus and the disciples in vv. 31-38; finally, the episode concludes with the encounter between Jesus and Samaritan from Sychar in vv. 39-42.

3.1.2.2. First dialogue (vv.7-26)

3.1.2.3. Second dialogue (vv.31-38)

3.1.2.4. Conclusion (vv.39-42)

In this passage, it is important to understand that the characters in John's story, especially Jesus and the Samaritan woman, are characters who represent real-world characters who were deliberately presented by the author of the Gospel of Luke to explain the change in attitudes and views between previously warring tribes. Referring to Culpepper's opinion which emphasizes that Jesus as he is depicted in the story of the Gospel of John is not just a historical figure, but shows the character of Jesus who is present to proclaim the kingdom of God.¹⁵

3.1.3. Literary Context

3.1.3.1. Immediate context: John 3:31-36 and John 4: 43-45

John the Baptist's disciples complain about the success of Jesus. John the Baptist testifies that Jesus is the Messianic bridegroom and tries his best to persuade his disciples to become Jesus' disciples. As the best friend of the bridegroom, he is ready to die himself. He feels the fullness of selfless joy at the success of Jesus' baptismal ministry. He strongly desires that he must decrease and Jesus must increase. This is because Jesus is not only the Messiah but also the one who has come from heaven, the Spirit-filled Son of God whom the Father loves and has empowered to give eternal life to those who believe in him (cf. John 3:31-36).¹⁶

Like John 3:16-21, maybe the author's reflection on what he had written accords better with the style of John 3: 16-21 than with that of John the Baptist. It is valuable as a testimony to the person of Christ.¹⁷ It declares in no uncertain terms that: 1. Jesus came from heaven and spoke with a higher authority than one of the earth; 2. That Jesus spoke from observation, not from theory; 3. That Jesus spoke the words of God; 4. That the Father's love had caused Him to endow the Son with complete authority to execute His purpose.¹⁸

The Son, however, was not merely the messenger of God. He was the revealed object of faith. Once again, the dividing line is affirmed. The believer in the Son has eternal life. The unbeliever will never possess that life, for he is already under condemnation. John 4: 43-45, this text gives a brief overview of the relationship between the text before and after the events of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman.¹⁹ The progress to Galilee is closely connected with the episode at Samaria. John seems to focus his Gospel on clusters of events.

¹⁵ Botha J. Eugene, *Jesus and the Samaritan Woman: a Speech Act Reading of John 4:1-42*, 85.

¹⁶ George Mlakuzhyil, *Initiation to the Gospel of Life: A Guide to John's Gospel* (Bandra, Mumbai: St. Pauls, 2008), 60.

¹⁷ Alan Culpeper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (New York: Fortress Press, 1983), 119.

¹⁸ Frank E. Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary with The New International Version Volume 9* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973), 114.

¹⁹ Matthews Victor Harold, "Conversation and Identity: Jesus and the Samaritan," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 40, no. 4 (2010): 215-216.

Compare with John 1:19, 29, 35, 43, and John 2:1, as well as those chronological groupings that appear later.²⁰ The episode occurred with chronological Jesus' later visit the Galilee which recorded in this chapter. The author was applying to the immediate situation a principle that Jesus stated on two other occasions. While the immediate context might be taken to relate to some previous experience in Judea, there is no indication that Jesus had at this time been the object of a wholesale rejection there, though some hostility may have been manifested by the Pharisees (John 4:1).

3.1.3.2. Proximate context: John 2:1-4:54

The action of the narrative is framed by the movement of characters in the story, Jesus, his mother, and the disciples (cf. John 1:2, 12). There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee.²¹ The wedding at Cana is linked to the preceding text by a chronological tie: "on the third day." This may mean that "the next day" of vv.29, 35, and 43 refers to three events on the same day. The notation of succession in signs mentioned in v.54 is not repeated in the remainder of the Gospel. Though John says little about Jesus' Galilean ministry in general, he regarded it as important. The Galileans were unlikely to believe in Jesus because he was well known to them, the convincing character of the two signs recorded here and the forceful demonstration of God's response to the faith afforded by the second provided cogent illustrations for the main theme of belief.²²

The respectable relationship shown by Jesus towards the Samaritan woman triggered a very astonishing response and the Gospel of John obviously pronounces these reactions. Some elementary proofs about these shocking reactions comprise: first, the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well was an encounter between strangers who had very fundamental differences. Second, Jesus as a Jewish man met a woman, especially as a woman from a foreign tribe, namely Samaria. When, a moment of hospitable and conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman was impossible in the socio-historical context.²³ From this story, Jesus teaches us to treat other people with respect, care and not to follow cultural heritage that is not in accordance with the spirit of the Gospel. Purnanto refers to this concept with the term "*Principium Compassionis*.".²⁴

Jesus shows his compassion on the story the wedding serves merely as the backdrop for the occasion of Jesus's first miracle in this Gospel. John ends this section by pointing out that this was the second sign Jesus did (Cf. John 4:54), in the same way, that he began it by noting that the water into wine was the first (cf. John 2:11). For the evangelist, the important thing is not the event but the fact that Jesus was there (cf. John 2:2).²⁵ The Word made flesh, God dwells among us, goes to wedding parties, joins in our everyday activities, and gets involved

²⁰ Harold, 83.

²¹ Galilee refers to the name of a little town nestling in the hill country above the Sea of Galilee a few miles from Nazareth, Cana has become remarkably well known down through the ages and across the world by being mentioned at the start of the wedding liturgies of many churches.

²² Lieber, *Classical Samaritan Poetry*, 115.

²³ Botha J. Eugene, *Jesus and the Samaritan Woman: a Speech Act Reading of John 4:1-42*, 87.

²⁴ Purnanto, "Welas Asih sebaga Sipiritualitas Perjumpaan," 165.

²⁵ Burridge, *John: The People's Bible Commentary*, 92.

with human affairs.

3.1.3.3. Remote context: John 1:19-12:50

John 1:19-12:50 describes the public ministry of the Word. Having introduced the figure of the incarnate Word by the prologue, and having identified the forerunner by his name and by his mission, the author precedes to present the ministry of the Word in some detail. Broadly, the book can be divided into two chronological sections: the latter is brief and is closely related to the passion, which concludes the narrative.²⁶ In the text of John 1:19-12:50, the author begins at the point which is aptly called "The Book of Signs." It moves by way of narrative and discourse through seven distinguishable episodes, or themes, and seven sign miracles.²⁷ John's terminology regarding these sign miracles is very distinct: they are "signs" pointing to some deeper theological truth.

3.2. Analysis structure of the text

3.2.1. Grammatical Analysis

We will mention the main clauses in the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman in terms of narrative as follows:

V. 7: The Samaritan woman came...

V. 12: The Samaritan woman questions Jesus...

V. 14: Discussion between Jesus and the Samaritan woman...

VV. 15-19: The Samaritan woman understands...

VV. 20-26: The Samaritan woman recognized Jesus as a prophet...

In the text also there is a part to show the subordinate clause:

VV. 27-28: The disciples return and the woman flees, leaving her water jar behind.²⁸

This part shows us a change in time and situation, before only Jesus and the Samaritan woman were present, and after that, the disciples were included

3.2.2. Breaks in the pattern of thought or transition

This text shows the reality of transition in v. 27. This text gives the unresolved Christological confession of the women. It is a part of the disciples' experience as they return to the scene and marvel that Jesus is talking with women. The disciples join a scene almost already at its conclusion. The imperfect use of the verb "to speak" shows that the disciples are aware that Jesus has been speaking to this woman for some time. They are shocked. The situation was changing because the woman fled, leaving her water jar behind. This detail has been the subject of considerable speculation. It is simply a sign that although she may have departed from the scene, the Samaritan story has not yet come to an end.²⁹

²⁶ Burridge, 117.

²⁷ Robert J. Karris, *The Collegeville Bible Commentary New Testament* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 38.

²⁸ Moloney, *Sacra Pagina*, 129.

²⁹ Francis J. Moloney, *Sacra Pagina Series Volume 4 : The Gospel of John*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1998), 131.

3.3. Structure

In detail, we will understand the conclusions concerning the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman are as follows:

- V. 7: The initial talks between Jesus and the Samaritan woman began with the event: “The Samaritan woman came to draw water.” The woman came alone underlines the likelihood that she was not welcomed among the other women.³⁰ The Samaritan woman is a timeless figure-not only a typical Samaritan but a typical human being.
- V.12: That Jesus may be a special person, however, is suggested by her question which in Greek expects a negative answer: Jesus could not be greater than Jacob. Of course, Jesus is greater.³¹
- VV. 7-14: They were discussing the “living water”. The water of Jacob's well is surpassed by the water that Jesus will give, “a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (v.14).³²
- V. 15: The woman begins to understand but is still thinking of the quenching of this – worldly thirst.³³
- V.19: In this event there is transition: Jesus’ knowledge of the woman’s past moves her toward faith: “Sir, give me this water (*touto to hydōr*), so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here (*mēde dierchōmai enthade*) to draw water”.³⁴ Another response by the Samaritan woman to Jesus is, Sir, I can see that you are a prophet”³⁵ The genitive in ten dorean theou is objective, indicating that Jesus promises a gift that has its origins in God. But the term ‘living water’ (hydōr zōn) has two meanings. On the one hand, it can mean flowing water from a stream or spring, as opposed to the still water of a cistern or a pond. Jesus’ command, the woman’s answer, and Jesus’ rejoinder culminate in a startling revelation about herself, which she can only acknowledge as true (v.19). But the expression also has a long history in biblical and other religious traditions from antiquity. It takes to that point beyond the physical reality of the water (cf. Barreth, Gospel 233-234 for Jewish, Christian, and Hellenistic examples).³⁶
- VV. 20-26: The woman’s understanding regarding Jesus is changing. She recognizes Jesus as a prophet. Her question reflects the ancient dispute and tension between Jews and Samaritans (v. 20). The Samaritans were worshiping on Mount Gerizin and for

³⁰ Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John A Commentary Volume* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publications, 2003), 82.

³¹ Charles M. Laymon, *The Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary on the Bible* (Collins, London: Abingdon Press, 1971), 118.

³² Andrew E Arterbury, “Breaking the betrothal bonds: hospitality in John IV,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 72, no. 1 (2010): 63–83.

³³ Lieber, *Classical Samaritan Poetry*, 82.

³⁴ Moloney, *Sacra Pagina Series Volume 4 : The Gospel of John*, 186–87.

³⁵ Laymon, *The Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*, 113.

³⁶ Moloney, *Sacra Pagina Seriesd Volume 4 : The Gospel of John*, 95.

Jesus this is false worship. Jesus proposed a new way of worship for Jews and Samaritans, worship in the Spirit and truth. "Yet the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshiper will worship the Father in Spirit and truth" (v. 23).³⁷ The woman begins to think in terms of the Messiah. Jesus states that it is he. The woman's response to Jesus (v. 25) seems to reflect Jewish messianic expectations. But perhaps she refers not to the Davidic Messiah but to a prophet like Moses (cf. Deut 18:15-22). Jesus confirmed his identity to the Samaritan: "I am He" which is characteristic of the Gospel of John (cf. 8:12).³⁸

3.3.1. Semantic and Syntactical Analysis

3.3.1.1. Semantic Analysis

In this section, I focus on the keywords that would have an important meaning in the text. In my analysis of the text, I will focus on the first part of the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman (cf. John 1:7-26). In this part, the keywords are "living water" and "worship". In the first dialogue (cf. John 4:7-26), I will summarize the discussion between Jesus and the Samaritan woman regarding the "living water." In this dialogue there are different viewpoints regarding the "living water." For Jesus, "living water" means salvation, but the woman understands the "living water" as ordinary "running water" in the well.³⁹ Jesus was giving a more straightforward answer (vv.13-14), revealing that the water he gives is of a radically different sort and meaning.

3.3.1.2. Syntactical Analysis

Through the syntactical analysis of the text, the words "living water" and "worship" have a special and significant meaning. The "living water," means the gift of God through Jesus to lead the people to eternal life (cf. 3:16), but yet the woman is not in a position to realize the symbols of living water as Jesus understands them. Water and living water are commonly associated with the well, which is necessary for survival to obtain fresh running water.⁴⁰

The contrast between the word of Jesus and the response of the women is obvious in the following table:⁴¹

Table 1. Words of Jesus and the Response of the Women

| Words of Jesus | Words of the Women |
|--|--|
| (Whoever drinks) of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty | Give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty |
| (The water...) will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life. | Or have to keep coming here to draw water |

³⁷ Powery, *The Good Samaritan Luk 10 for the Life of the Church*, 72.

³⁸ Moloney, *Sacra Pagina Seriesd Volume 4 : The Gospel of John*, 101.

³⁹ Moloney, 97.

⁴⁰ Lincoln, *Black's New Testament Commentaries: The Gospel According to St. John*, 149.

⁴¹ Moloney, *Sacra Pagina Seriesd Volume 4 : The Gospel of John*, 127.

3.3.1.3. Literary Devices

In the same passage (vv. 20-26), Jesus conveys the profound significance of “worship,” highlighting the divide between Jews and Samaritans regarding the appropriate location for worship. “The time is approaching when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.” A new era will begin that allows for genuine worship of God, who is recognized and referred to as the Father, and will not necessitate following specific religious sites.⁴²

In the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, there is a contrast that identifies literary devices with an imperative. In two accounts Jesus should not speak to her because she is a woman and she is a Samaritan, but Jesus begins the dialogue with her, “Give me a drink” (v. 7b). The woman's response is an indication of the irregularity of the encounter. Also, in the text, we can see the contrasts between the question of the Samaritan woman and the answer of Jesus. The gift of God is living water, which Jesus promises (vv.10-14). Jesus' words and actions, especially by giving the water of life, show love for the good of others. Jesus' words and actions, especially by giving the water of life, show love for the good of others. Powery has expressed a similar meaning, “that is, one must act through the body for the sake of the physical well-being of another body.”⁴³

3.4. Circumstantial

3.4.1. Recognize Theological Themes or Metaphors.

In the narrative, John 4:1-42 presents a point of view about how to respond to Jesus and the result of such a response. The story of Jesus' presence among the Samaritans indicates that faith is not responsible for the presence of Jesus. (vv. 1-15). Here, it is important to note that the conversion of the Samaritans is affected, not by any miraculous sign, but by the force of Jesus' word: “many more began to believe in him because of his word... we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the savior of the world” (vv. 41-42). The Samaritan woman's belief leads her to bring everyone in her town to meet and believe in Jesus.⁴⁴ The Samaritan woman wondered if Jesus, who had the ability to tell her everything she had ever done, could help others become believers through her. However, Jesus' words have led many people to believe. (cf. John 4:41)⁴⁵ The accounts of others can help us understand how God influences each of our lives personally, but ultimately, we all need to hear and receive for ourselves that Jesus is truly the Savior of the world.

The passage of John 4:1-42 contains various theological themes, including the water that Jesus refers to, which symbolizes the Holy Spirit and His role in renewing us in the image of God and providing us with the eternal life that originates from Him. Jesus is a divine gift, a

⁴² Moloney, 93.

⁴³ Powery, *The Good Samaritan Luk 10 for the Life of the Church*, 68.

⁴⁴ Thomson Jeremy, “Well, Well, Well...What is Jesus Doing at a well,” *Bible Today*, 2012, 217–22.

⁴⁵ Moloney, *Sacra Pagina Seriesd Volume 4 : The Gospel of John*, 85.

source of water that flows into eternal life.⁴⁶ The conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman is incredibly impactful. Her encounter with Jesus transformed her life entirely, leading her to fully embrace Him as the Messiah. The passage provides guidance on how to forgive lost and sinful individuals, offering the courage to begin again through simple words. It highlights that true worship of God occurs in spirit and truth. Essential components of faith include both the testimonies of others and personal experiences with Jesus. Maloney said, "The unconditional and total directing of one's life toward God is the only acceptable act of worship."⁴⁷ Steadfast belief has the power to bridge divides and foster conversations with others. It represents the essence of sharing one's faith.

3.4.2. Involve the Text in a Conversation with Current Issues or Realities

The text of John 4:1-42, particularly the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, can be applied to contemporary society today. Jesus started his conversation with the Samaritan woman by addressing a human issue, specifically the requirement of water. Ultimately, this conversation resulted in virtues. Their acceptance of each other without judgment, willingness to understand differences, and respect for others as equal human beings was the reason for this dialogue. Today, there are many problems being caused by pluralism and discrimination against women. If each of us can create a dialogue with others as Jesus had done, it will create peaceful and prosperous lives. If every person can accept the beautiful differences of each other and treat all people as equal human beings, finally, every person will be happy and at peace, as was the Samaritan woman after Jesus accepted her at the well.

3.4.3. Significant of the Morality Text John 4:1-42 in Contemporary Time

The encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman affords several upright moral and character teachings for us, especially in today's modern society which tends to be individualistic. Jesus and the Samaritan woman are different in religion, but Jesus, as Jewish, was accepted and appreciated by the Samaritan women. Jesus has effectively shown that being suspicious of others damages human dignity. The same thing was also conveyed by Utomo in his research which said that acts of injustice are contrary to God's will and hurt human dignity.⁴⁸ Jesus and the Samaritan woman had a powerful connection that crossed all of that society's boundaries and separations. Is it probable for us to have similar connections, or have we isolated our lives from everyone different? This separatism is still relevant in today's society. There are differences in our society, such as culture, religion, and social class. If everyone is to appreciate the differences, then the difference has beauty and meaning. Discrimination and humiliation due to different tribes and because they are women as experienced by Samaritan women, are also experienced by Batak Toba women, especially regarding the status of

⁴⁶ Robert J. Karris, ed., *The Collegeville Bible Commentary: Based on The New American Bible* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 52.

⁴⁷ Moloney, *Sacra Pagina Seriesd Volume 4 : The Gospel of John*, 88.

⁴⁸ Kurniawan Dwi Madyo Utomo, "Panggilan Gereja dalam Realitas Ketidakadilan di Indonesia," *FORUM Filsafat dan Teologi* 52, no. 1 (2023): 13–24, <https://doi.org/10.35312/forum.v52i1.538>.

leadership.⁴⁹ Batak Toba culture is very firm that the person who deserves to be a leader is a man.

Jesus has demonstrated how to build a brotherhood that is harmonious. This is a model for us today. Everyone needs to repent and realize that others are companions on the journey towards the common good. Human openness and an attitude of being ready to accept others with love require awareness that everyone has a noble dignity. This attitude demands continuous and orderly development. Openness and an attitude of being ready to accept others with love require awareness that everyone has noble dignity. This attitude demands continuous and orderly development. This is also emphasized by Megawati about the development of prospective catechists of awareness of significant moral values.⁵⁰

The encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman which an invitation to all people to drink water from a different well and also to offer openness to other people with different cultures, religions, sex, and so on. When everyone accepts diversity, they will be enriched by others. We believe that encounter and dialogue with others is an opportunity to recognize the richness and value that are present in the other. Our differences become the beauty given by God. As a gift of unity and diversity, it is becoming a source for building friendship and brotherhood. We need to realize the beauty in the differences and how meaningful our lives will be if we can dialogue with all the people with ordinary lives.

4. Conclusion

The important note from the story of the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman is the words of Jesus that changed hearts to repent. The Samaritan woman repented not because of the miracles performed by Jesus, but because of the brotherhood shown by Jesus. The story of this encounter is an encounter that restores not only individuals, but also communities that are at odds with each other. Jesus shows that cultural heritage is important, but it is hoped that we will be wiser in understanding cultural heritage. Being positive and having an open attitude to accept others is the best step to foster true brotherhood. The differences that each person has in society are not a threat, but rather an important value to enrich each other in dialogue and brotherhood. Jesus has shown us a concrete example of how to dialogue in this way. Let us follow in the footsteps of Jesus, the true teacher.

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⁴⁹ Megawati Naibaho, "The Investigating the Oppression of Toba Batak Women: Call for Empowerment and Woman Leadership," *Studia Philosophica et Theologica* 23, no. 1 (2023): 156–74, <https://doi.org/10.35312/spet.v23i1.518>.

⁵⁰ Megawati Naibaho, "The Current Occurrences of Inequality: Formation Catechist for Awareness of Significant Moral Values.," *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research* 4, no. 11 (2023): 3912–22, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.04.11.12>.

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