



The Woman at the Well

Historical Background and Context:

- John 4 opens with Jesus traveling through Samaria on His way to Galilee.
- He stopped at a well in a town called Sychar where He met a woman while waiting for his disciples.

Here's what we know about the woman at the well:

- She was a Samaritan. Samaritans were despised by the Jews because they were descendants of the Jews who had intermarried with Assyrian people. The Samaritans weren't fond of the Jews either.
- She had five husbands and was now living with a sixth man.
- She was shocked to meet Jesus and be recognized by Him. The fact that Jesus (a Jew) was speaking to a woman, much less a Samaritan woman, and asking her for a drink were completely countercultural.
- This was the longest conversation Jesus has with a woman in the bible

It's important to note that this meeting between Jesus and the woman at the well would have shocked the Jewish people in this time. If we didn't know the history, it wouldn't seem uncommon for us to see Jesus talking to a woman. But, a Jewish man talking to a Samaritan woman in that day would never have happened. But Jesus wasn't afraid to push through culture and establish His Kingdom wherever He went.

John 4:1-30

When Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard he was making and baptizing more disciples than John 2 (though Jesus himself was not baptizing, but his disciples were), 3 he left Judea and went again to Galilee. 4 He had to travel through Samaria; 5 so he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar near the property that Jacob had given his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, worn out from his journey, sat down at the well. It was about noon.

In verse 4 where it says "He had to travel", "had to" in the Greek is "necessary". Jesus was purposefully passing through to meet with this woman.

7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water.

"Give me a drink," Jesus said to her, 8 because his disciples had gone into town to buy food.

Jesus was attempting to connect with this woman by doing the unthinkable... speaking to her first.

9 "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" she asked him. For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered, "If you knew the gift of God, and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would ask him, and he would give you living water."

11 "Sir," said the woman, "you don't even have a bucket, and the well is deep. So where do you get this 'living water'? 12 You aren't greater than our father Jacob, are you? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and livestock."

13 Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks from this water will get thirsty again. 14 But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty again. In fact, the water I will give him will become a well of water springing up in him for eternal life."

Jesus was famous for speaking in parables and metaphors. It was His way of helping those that were listening to really think about what He was saying and understand the heart of His message.

15 "Sir," the woman said to him, "give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and come here to draw water."

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

17 "I don't have a husband," she answered.

Jesus had exposed a part of this woman's life that she most likely wanted to remain hidden. He already knew the answer to this question, but He wanted her to know that He saw her, everything about her.

"You have correctly said, 'I don't have a husband,'" Jesus said. 18 "For you've had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true."

19 "Sir," the woman replied, "I see that you are a prophet. 20 Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem."

21 Jesus told her, "Believe me, woman, an hour 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, because salvation is from the Jews. 23 But an hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. Yes, the Father wants such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and in truth."

25 The woman said to him, "I know that the Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

26 Jesus told her, "I, the one speaking to you, am he."

Jesus reveals to her who He really is...the one she had been waiting for. A woman who was flawed, living in sin, broken, full of shame. He could have condemned her for the way she was living but He didn't. Jesus knew she would be at that well and He went after her to give her living water.

27 Just then his disciples arrived, and they were amazed that he was talking with a woman. Yet no one said, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?" 28 Then the woman left her water jar, went into town, and told the people, 29 "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" 30 They left the town and made their way to him.

A very unlikely woman was the one chosen to deliver the news that the Messiah had come!

Discussion Questions:

- 1. After reading this passage, what intrigued you about how Jesus interacted with this woman?**
- 2. How did this story help you see Jesus in a new way?**
- 3. What does this story communicate to us about Jesus' heart for women?**
- 4. Does this inspire you to begin looking for Jesus in a new way as you read through the Bible? Are you ready to deepen your devotion for Him?**

Take some time to pray over each other to return to your first love.