

Grow, Pray, Study for the Week of July 13, 2025

Weekly Prayer

Gracious and Living God, I come to you today, thirsty for truth, longing for renewal, and in need of Your living water. Open my heart to encounter You today so that Your Spirit can well up inside of me, filling me with life, hope, and joy. Amen.

Monday, July 14

Scripture: John 4:1-6

Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was making more disciples and baptizing more than John (although Jesus' disciples were baptizing, not Jesus himself). Therefore, he left Judea and went back to Galilee.

Jesus had to go through Samaria. He came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, which was near the land Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there. Jesus was tired from his journey, so he sat down at the well. It was about noon.

Observation

The story we'll study this week began as Jesus went from Jerusalem in southern Israel to Galilee (the north). Between Judea and Galilee lay Samaria. Hatred and distrust between Samaritans and Judeans went back over 500 years, to Israel's return from exile in Babylon (Ezra 4:1-5). Judeans saw Samaritans the way many Israelis today see Palestinians, and vice versa. Not Jesus. He went through Samaria by design (he "had to go"—verse 4) and reached Jacob's well at noon.

Application

John said Jesus "had to go" through Samaria. He did not need to save the three days He could gain by passing through this ill-regarded province. The Father had sent Him into the whole world—not just part of it. Does God's love still call you to go to places that human divisions tell you to avoid? How can you break down barriers between you and other people in your day-to-day life?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you needed to rest. Often, I do, too, emotionally and spiritually as well as physically. I'm so thankful your steadfast love never rests but is always there to support me. Amen.

Tuesday, July 15

Scripture: John 4:7-10

A Samaritan woman came to the well to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me some water to drink." His disciples had gone into the city to buy him some food. The Samaritan woman asked, "Why do you, a Jewish man, ask for something to drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" (Jews and Samaritans didn't associate with each other.) Jesus responded, "If you recognized God's gift and who is saying to you, 'Give me some water to drink,' you would be asking him and he would give you living water."

Observation

In the hot Middle East, most women enjoyed morning or evening social time as they drew water at the town well. This woman came alone at noon, which probably meant the other town women shunned her. John gave non-Palestinian readers a key explanation of why this conversation

was remarkable— "Jews and Samaritans didn't associate with each other." Jesus made the first move, asking matter-of-factly, "Give me some water to drink."

Application

According to Jewish tradition, a Samaritan woman was continually unclean; it was therefore impure to drink from her vessel. Yet Jesus not only asked the woman for a drink but sent his disciples into the city to buy him some food. How did his willingness to ask for a drink, a simple kind of help, start to break down barriers that separated him from the Samaritan woman? Are you willing to ask for help as a way to connect in tense or awkward situations?

Prayer

Dear Jesus, you were willing to ask for, and to accept, help even from unlikely people. Give me an openness to understand and share how your living water can quench the deepest thirsts of my heart. Amen.

Wednesday, July 16

Scripture: John 4:11-15

The woman said to him, "Sir, you don't have a bucket and the well is deep. Where would you get this living water? You aren't greater than our father Jacob, are you? He gave this well to us, and he drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks from the water that I will give will never be thirsty again. The water that I give will become in those who drink it a spring of water that bubbles up into eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will never be thirsty and will never need to come here to draw water!"

Observation

Jesus' offer of "living water" (in common speech, that meant the freshest, cleanest running water, not stagnant water from a cistern or well) was intriguing. But the woman was skeptical at first: "Where would you get this living water?" (verse 11) Her doubts didn't discourage Jesus. He described the spiritual water he offered in such appealing terms that the woman's thirsty soul responded, "Give me this water!" (verse 15).

Application

By how naturally he speaks to her, Jesus is clearly at ease with this woman, which frees her to confront her deepest needs. Who are the people who, because of beliefs or lifestyle, make you uneasy? How can the example of Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well help you find ways to relate more naturally and comfortably to them?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, John 3:17 said you had not come to condemn the world. You didn't condemn the woman at the well, and you don't condemn me. Thank you! Please teach me how to relate as you did. Amen.

Thursday, July 17

Scripture: John 4:16-24

Jesus said to her, "Go, get your husband, and come back here." The woman replied, "I don't have a husband." "You are right to say, 'I don't have a husband,'" Jesus answered. "You've had five husbands, and the man you are with now isn't your husband. You've spoken the truth." The woman said, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but

you and your people say that it is necessary to worship in Jerusalem.” Jesus said to her, “Believe me, woman, the time is coming when you and your people will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You and your people worship what you don’t know; we worship what we know because salvation is from the Jews. But the time is coming—and is here!—when true worshippers will worship in spirit and truth. The Father looks for those who worship him this way. God is spirit, and it is necessary to worship God in spirit and truth.”

Observation

The woman rightly said she didn’t have a husband. Scholar Jaime Clark-Soles wrote, “The Samaritan woman is the most misinterpreted character in the Bible. She is often construed as a woman of loose morals, but she has husbands, not customers.” * Medicine then was limited—some of her husbands may have died. Men, not she, would have ended her other marriages—women could not initiate divorce. But she did try to shift the subject.

Application

The woman’s effort to deflect the conversation focused on what separated Samaritans and Jews. Jesus twice repeated the phrase “the time is coming” and spoke of “true worshippers” in terms that were inclusive rather than exclusive. How did Jesus’ response reveal God’s desire to draw the human family together, rather than breaking them into quarreling sub-groups? How vital is that message in today’s world?

Prayer

Jesus, too often my shame makes me shrink from honesty with myself and you. Help me to trust you and embrace the truth of your love and mercy so that I can more fully worship you. Amen.

* Jaime Clark-Soles, “Portrait: The Samaritan Woman” in *The CEB Women’s Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2016, p. 1342.

Friday, July 18

Scripture: John 4:25-30

The woman said, “I know that the Messiah is coming, the one who is called the Christ. When he comes, he will teach everything to us.” Jesus said to her, “I Am—the one who speaks with you.” Just then, Jesus’ disciples arrived and were shocked that he was talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?” The woman put down her water jar and went into the city. She said to the people, “Come and see a man who has told me everything I’ve done! Could this man be the Christ?” They left the city and were on their way to see Jesus.

Observation

“She tries a different tack. Perhaps this will put the stranger off. ‘One day the Messiah will come,’ she says brightly. ‘Why don’t we wait till then? He’ll make it all clear’.... ‘That’s me,’ says Jesus. And he goes on saying it. Whenever people come round to the key questions, and say, ‘If only someone would come and sort it all out!’, then there he is. ‘That’s me.’” * Amazed, the woman went into town to tell the very people she’d been avoiding about Jesus. In wonder, she asked, “Could this man be the Christ [Greek for “anointed one,” or “Messiah”]?”

Application

Upon their return, Jesus’ disciples were “shocked” to find him talking to a Samaritan woman. They knew Jesus sided with rabbis who did not favor free-and-easy divorce (Matthew 19:3-8). But his grace prevailed over “the rules,” and she met a caring Savior willing to offer a beautiful

future regardless of her painful past. Have you ever had to weigh strict rule-following against human pain and need? How can Jesus' example help you to find your way in those cases?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you showed why a living, breathing Savior could better represent God's love than a static rule book. You're my Lord and Savior—keep showing me how to treat others the way you did. Amen.

* Wright, N. T., John for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1-10 (The New Testament for Everyone) (p. 45-46). Westminster John Knox Press. Kindle Edition

Saturday, July 19

Scripture: John 4:31-42

In the meantime the disciples spoke to Jesus, saying, "Rabbi, eat." Jesus said to them, "I have food to eat that you don't know about." The disciples asked each other, "Has someone brought him food?" Jesus said to them, "I am fed by doing the will of the one who sent me and by completing his work. Don't you have a saying, 'Four more months and then it's time for harvest'? Look, I tell you: open your eyes and notice that the fields are already ripe for the harvest. Those who harvest are receiving their pay and gathering fruit for eternal life so that those who sow and those who harvest can celebrate together. This is a true saying, that one sows and another harvests. I have sent you to harvest what you didn't work hard for; others worked hard, and you will share in their hard work." Many Samaritans in that city believed in Jesus because of the woman's word when she testified, "He told me everything I've ever done." So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. Many more believed because of his word, and they said to the woman, "We no longer believe because of what you said, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this one is truly the savior of the world."

Observation

"The Chosen" gives a plausibly expanded version of the story we've read from John 4 this week (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ordhsDeAt60>) You may enjoy comparing it with a 5-minute clip from the superb 2003 film "The Gospel of John," which used only the text of John from The Good News Bible (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6bt_9NZe-E4) for that excerpt. Jesus told his disciples that doing God's will, reaping a harvest of willing followers, nourished him more deeply than any physical food could. The Samaritan woman who'd seen a request for a cup of water turn into a life-changing connection with Jesus became the first "preacher" in the Gospel of John. The Samaritans invited Jesus to stay in Sychar. He did, for two days, and many of the Samaritans there became the immediate fulfillment of his words that "the fields are already ripe for the harvest." They, like millions of people ever since, found in Jesus the unsuspected key to a meaningful, grace-filled life.

Application

Scholar N. T. Wright asked, "When were you last so excited about something that you didn't need to eat?" In an hour or less, the woman went from a social outcast trapped in a messed-up life to being the first evangelist to the Samaritan people. And Jesus had seen, firsthand, that "here, outside the boundaries of the chosen people, away from Jerusalem itself, there was a spiritual hunger which...was ready to hear what he had to say." * What excites and "feeds" you most about the ways in which you are able to serve God? What would you like to get involved in that would deepen that joy and excitement? How can you begin to plan to make that happen?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you said your kingdom belongs to people who hunger and thirst for righteousness.
Grow that appetite in me—and feed and sustain me as I join in your mission in this world.
Amen.

* Wright, N. T., John for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1-10 (The New Testament for Everyone) (p. 50). Westminster John Knox Press.
Kindle Edition.