

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Icebreaker Questions | December marks the last remaining month of 2021. Reflecting on this past year, what's one significant challenge you've had to overcome? What's one thing you haven't done yet that you were hoping to do when the year started?
2. Read John 4:1-42, which portrays an encounter that Jesus has with a Samaritan woman at a well. Then discuss the corresponding questions.

John 4:1-42 (NIV) – ¹Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John— ²although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. ³So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. ⁴Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. ⁷When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" ⁸(His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) ⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) ¹⁰Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." ¹¹"Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" ¹²Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?" ¹³Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

¹⁵The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." ¹⁶He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." ¹⁷"I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." ¹⁹"Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

²¹"Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²²You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." ²⁵The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." ²⁶Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

²⁷Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?" ²⁸Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ²⁹"Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" ³⁰They came out of the town and made their way toward him. ³¹Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something." ³²But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." ³³Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?" ³⁴"My

food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. ³⁵Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. ³⁶Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. ³⁷Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. ³⁸I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.”

³⁹Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹And because of his words many more became believers. ⁴²They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”

- a) What stands out to you from this encounter Jesus has with the Samaritan woman? Why do you think John, who was a close disciple of Jesus Christ, included it in his gospel account?

- b) Thinking back on this week’s sermon from Pastor Stevie, was there anything you heard for the first time or something that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

DIVING DEEPER

3. Describe the approach Jesus uses to connect with the Samaritan woman at the well. Support your description using specific references to the passage from John 4.

Pastor Stevie shared that Jesus will always meet you right where you are. Where were you when you met Jesus and began a relationship with him? What was that encounter like?

4. Jesus uses the location of his encounter with the Samaritan woman to teach about spiritual truth.

John 4:10-14a (NIV) –¹⁰Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” ¹¹“Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? ¹²Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?” ¹³Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst.

- a) Jesus offers the Samaritan woman ‘living water’ to drink. What does he mean by this?

b) Read John 7:37-39. What insight do these verses give on the meaning of 'living water'?

John 7:37-39 (NIV) –³⁷On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. ³⁸Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." ³⁹By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

c) Jesus describes a relationship with him as one that 'wells up to eternal life.' In other words, a life full of joy flowing from a knowledge of God's salvation. Does your life currently feel full of joy? If not, what might you do to recapture the joy found in knowing and following God?

5. Pastor Stevie shared that you can't change what you won't confront. When you first encountered Jesus, what did he call you to confront? What was that process of transformational change like? As you grow in your relationship with God, how does he reveal things that you need to confront?

TAKING IT HOME

6. The Samaritans were a racially mixed group of partly Jewish and partly Gentile ancestry, who were disdained by both Jews and non-Jews. Many Jews even considered Samaritans to be in a continual state of ritual uncleanness, and would not share things with them or even travel through their land. But Jesus cut through this prejudice in order to be a witness for the gospel to the Samaritan woman at the well.

a) Who today would be examples of people who don't engage with and even disdain one another?

b) Are there people of different beliefs and/or cultures that you struggle to relate with? If you're willing, share about that with the group.

c) How can we press forward to engage with people we disagree with us or who may even dislike us? What should be our primary motivation for doing so?

7. Read John 4:31-35 together and then discuss the corresponding questions.

John 4:31-35 (NIV) – ³¹Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.” ³²But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.” ³³Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?” ³⁴“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. ³⁵Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.

Jesus uses another metaphor, this time with food, to convey the importance he places on doing the will of God. Do you find yourself with similar longing to do God’s will or do you find that doing God’s will is of secondary importance to you? Explain your answer.

PRAYER REQUESTS

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RIVERS CROSSING – THINGS TO KNOW

1. Men’s Ministry Event | Men’s Ministry is hosting a watch party for the Thursday Night Football game on December 9th. The event begins at 8:00pm and will take place offsite at COhatch Mason. Snacks and drinks will be provided and men are encouraged to invite a friend to join. For additional information, including an address for COhatch Mason, visit <https://subsplash.com/riverscrossing/lb/ev/+5j2z7y9>.
2. 2022 Discipleship School | Discipleship School is a one-year program that helps Christians from all backgrounds become fully engaged followers of Christ. The school helps students learn to hear God’s voice clearly, experience a full and free life, develop intimacy with God, develop Christlike living, and understand their spiritual gifting. For more information, or to apply for the Discipleship School, click on the link below. <https://riverscrossing.com/discipleship-school/>
3. Plan A Visit | Have an individual or family you want to invite to Rivers Crossing? If so, we’d love for them to utilize our Plan A Visit tool. Share this link with them: <https://connect-card.com/zTE3I3TXmFGOTgizStLj>.