

The conversation turns on a dime:

Jesus: ¹⁶“Go, call your husband, and come back.” ¹⁷

Samaritan Woman: “I have no husband.”

Jesus: “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; ¹⁸for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!” ¹⁹

Samaritan Woman: “Sir, I see that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you^[c] say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.” ²¹

Jesus: “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²²You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. ²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” ²⁵

Samaritan Woman: “I know that Messiah is coming”

Narrator: (who is called Christ)

Samaritan Woman: “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.” ²⁶

Jesus: “I am he,^[c] the one who is speaking to you.”

²⁷ Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you want?” or, “Why are you speaking with her?” ²⁸ Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, ²⁹“Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah,^[c] can he?” ³⁰ They left the city and were on their way to him.

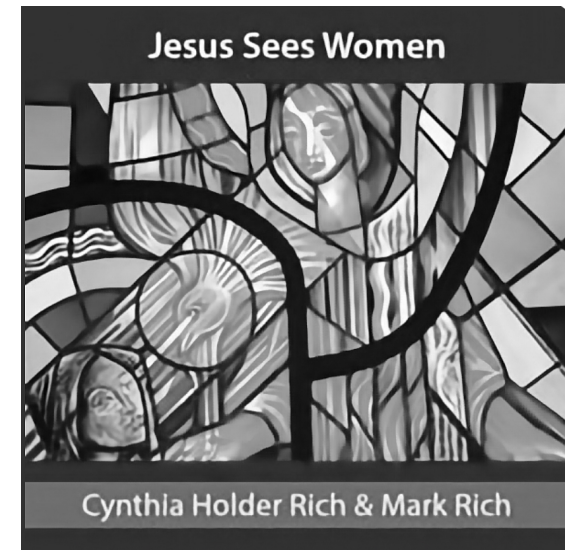
³⁹ Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I have ever done.” ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. ⁴¹ And many more believed because of his word. ⁴² They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world.”

Discuss reasons John put this story into his Gospel

1. First person to whom Jesus revealed his deity, woman evangelist?
2. Not mountain, temple, or sacrificial worship, but the indwelling Spirit?
3. Marriage proposal – Redemption of Samaria?

THINKING POINTS:

In what way does this lesson change, or enhance your understanding of God's nature?



TALKING POINTS

Lesson 4

"The Woman Who Had Five Husbands"

John 4:1-42

Focus scripture

John 4:25-26

"The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us."

Food for Thought:

Think of a time when you felt heard, and your words were considered valid.

Next week's lesson: "*The Woman Who Saw and Anointed Jesus*" Mark 14:3-9

“Attention is the beginning of devotion.” Mary Oliver

“He who has seen Me has seen the Father” – Jesus (John 14:9)

What did Jesus reveal of God’s nature to the widow of Nain?
What did Jesus reveal of God’s nature to the bleeding woman?
What did Jesus reveal of God’s nature Syro-Phoenician woman?

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND: *(Map Handout)*

Samaritans believed they were true Jews, sacrificed in their own temple on Mount Gerizim in Samaria. They believed the Judeans were fake Jews. The Judeans believed they were true Jews, sacrificed in their own temple on the Mount of Olives. They believed the Samaritans were fake Jews. The Judeans also believed the Samaritan scriptures and Torah were fake. Two different mountains, two different temples, offering sacrifices year round.

From our study notes:

“Those mutual accusations of fakeness being thrown about by both sides were very serious. They prepared the way for violence, and that is exactly what happened in 113 BCE under the Judean ruler John Hyrcanus. He led an army to destroy the Samaritan temple and to devastate the surrounding lands.

“So when the Samaritan woman says to Jesus, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (v. 9), she is questioning much more than just the sharing of dishes. Jews and Samaritans do not share Scriptures, worship places, ethnic origins, languages, and even God. The only thing shared between them was a history of suffering and bloodshed.” Jesus Sees Women, Session 4, p.2

Can you think of peoples or nations who are bound by centuries old mistrust and hatred?

This story begins with a woman coming to the well at high noon, when no other women would be there. We eventually discover she has had five husbands, but nowhere in the passage is it said she has done anything wrong. She could have been widowed, or discarded due to barrenness. Regardless, she is not part of the "well watering" community of women.

Some scholars connect John's scene to a wooing, or marriage proposal. Old Testament marriages of patriarchs and others were instigated at the local well. Using the background of the "Five Husbands of Samaria" this story can be an illustration of the Bridegroom (Jesus) wooing the wayward Samaria.

Both Jesus and the Samaritan woman represent groups of people by phrases-what “our ancestors” did, and in the change from the singular, “Woman” the plural in verse 21: “You (plural) worship what you (plural) do

not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews” (John 4:22). If the five husbands are the five foreign Gods; the sixth represents the incomplete worship of the God of Israel. This makes Jesus number seven, the number of fullness and completion. The woman comments of her understanding about the coming Messiah. And Jesus shockingly reveals himself as not only greater than Jacob, but the expected Messiah, using the term “I am” (ego eimi) invoking the name for God uses to describe their essence. (Exodus 3:14).

Setting the stage:

John 4:¹ Now when Jesus^[a] learned that the Pharisees had heard, “Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John”² — although it was not Jesus himself but his disciples who baptized—³ he left Judea and started back to Galilee. ⁴ But he had to go through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

Narrator: ⁷ A Samaritan woman came to draw water.

Jesus: “Give me a drink.”⁸

Narrator: His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.⁹

Samaritan Woman: “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?”

Narrator: Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.¹⁰

Jesus: “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.”¹¹

Samaritan Woman: “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?¹² Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?”¹³

Jesus: “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again,¹⁴ but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.”¹⁵

Samaritan Woman: “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

1. Why do you think Jesus is engaging her in a theological conversation?
2. From what perspectives are they communicating?