

Home Group Leader's Notes
Week of February 28, 2021
John 4:1-26

Hello Shepherds,

This week begins a two-part study through an amazing story. A few weeks ago we saw an encounter with a man in a group known for being highly educated, respected in God's chosen community, morally scrupulous, and meticulous to follow God's law. This week we meet a lady who is morally challenged, untrained in God's law, not respected, a gentile, and confused about what God has revealed.

AWKWARD?

In this week's section, Jesus has a conversation with a woman that seems 'awkward?' Have you had conversations with people about Jesus that became 'awkward?' What makes it feel 'awkward' to have conversations about Jesus?

It might be difficult for people to call up 'awkward' conversations – but we all feel this at times. It is healthy to see that Jesus went beyond the discomfort of a conversation and to remember to see people with God's eyes.

LET'S LEARN FROM THE BIBLE

Our study through John chapter four will be divided into two parts. For this week, we will focus on Jesus initial encounter. Next week, we will consider the results of the encounter. If you haven't been able to hear the message on this portion, you can find it at www.trinityonline.org Read John 4:1-26. Summarize the encounter into three sections or topics.

- 1) **An opening conversation about water**
- 2) **The conversation about husbands / personal life**
- 3) **The conversation about worship and who can answer the big questions**

Do some research on ancient Samaria. There are many resources available including commentaries. You might want to go to this website which is a commentary on the entire Bible to see what it says about John 4:4:

<https://www.planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/html/nt/john/john.htm#head31>

Todd covers this well in his message. Also, the above reference is to a website that can be trusted. You can also search for it under www.soniclight.com

- What was the history? Why did Jews and Samaritans not agree or get along? **Todd**
- Why was it unusual that Jesus would intentionally travel through Samaria?
- What would have made Jesus' encounter with this woman 'awkward?' (7-9)

How does Jesus' well surpass Jacob's well? (6-14)

The woman kept thinking in the physical/this world realm. But Jesus' well has living water that leads to eternal life.

Jesus used the phrase, "the gift of God." What is that gift? How did the Samaritan woman understand the gift? (10-15) Do you think she asked for a drink of Jesus' water?

How is Jesus' water unlike any other water? (10-14)

This gift is ultimately eternal life through Jesus.

The evidence shows that the woman believed in Jesus for eternal life.

Why do you think Jesus altered the direction of the conversation from wells to husbands? Why this subject? (16-24)

Jesus knew that this had been where she struggled. She kept turning to a husband instead of God.

What we need most we cannot find in this world. God calls us to Himself; we must turn to Him instead of idols (husbands). John the Baptizer's message was to repent and turn to God. Jesus message was/is to repent and believe. God often uses people to call us through a soul awakening – that no husband (etc.) can give us the life that we seek.

How did the woman then shift the conversation? Why that topic?

The woman shifted the conversation away from her personal life to a religious choice. It is something that people still do today. Instead of dealing with their own situation (being apart from God), they like to fog the conversation with a challenging question (e.g. why does God allow suffering, etc.).

How do you understand what Jesus said about worship? How was Jesus' statement about worship superseding or overwhelming Jewish worship?

Todd shared real clarity on this subject. The issue of worship isn't about a location or a method. Rather, real worship comes about by the supernatural work of the Spirit of God who reveals God's truth to us. Jesus superseded the methods and means of worship in the Old Testament by saying that worship isn't about a location (i.e. the temple).

The woman, in her discussion about worship, wanders into the idea that the Messiah will "explain everything." What, in her encounter with Jesus, might have prompted her to make this statement?

At this point in the conversation, Jesus (1) offered something that no one else has offered, living water that leads to eternal life, (2) showed supernatural "prophet" insight into her life, and (3) had insight into what God seeks of those who worship Him.

How does this encounter compare to that of Jesus and Nicodemus?

Thought the people (Nicodemus and the woman) have great differences (see above), they both need the same thing: to be born again through belief in Jesus, the messiah. We would see them as radically different people in our world today. Yet both are important to God, both need God's grace and forgiveness through Jesus, both needed someone to ask questions and share the truth, and both needed the work of the Holy Spirit.

It's always important to consider what we learn about God as we read Scripture. What do we learn about Jesus from this encounter and conversation? (7-26)

This is a masterful revelation of Jesus:

- **We see His humanity (tired, hungry, down to earth)**
- **We see His compassion, love, valuing of every person**
- **We see His wisdom, insight, and masterful leading**
- **We see His desire and call for us to know the truth and turn to Him**
- **We see His plan to bring us into eternal life**

DISCUSS TOGETHER

Can you remember conversations about Jesus before you followed Him? Or, conversations with people who didn't yet know Him? What were they like?

Some grew up hearing about Jesus throughout childhood. Others (like myself) came to faith later in life. But we all have had conversations as adults with people who didn't follow Jesus.

What things about Jesus' character and actions from this chapter impress you? What does this reveal about God and His desires?

I personally am amazed at His compassion on every person – from the elite to those with a questionable reputation.

Are there insights that we can we learn about encounters and conversations with people from this example?

He reached out to people beyond what was considered comfortable (a woman, gentile, Samaritan)

We can learn from the way he showed love and compassion, opened up with gracious and genuine interest in her (he was sensitive to why she would be getting water at that time of the day), asked good questions, salted the conversation with insight, and did not shy away from sharing the truth

May our Lord fill you with His great compassion and wisdom as you love and lead,

Steve