



HG258: Sharing Our Faith Like Jesus
The Woman At The Well

John 4:1-26

Home Group Study Notes

28 May 2023 - Revd Christine Williams



PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION
BEFORE THE MEETING!

*Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group
with you, along with any previous notes and other
resources which might be helpful for your discussions.*



Welcome (10 mins)
Ice Breaker

Share with one another experiences you have of the Holy Spirit working in your life.



Looking Upwards (10 mins)
Worship

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...



HG258: Sharing Our Faith Like Jesus *The Woman At The Well*

John 4:1-26

Home Group Sermon

28 May 2023 - Revd Christine Williams

Our series is called, ‘Sharing faith the Jesus Way’ and our story has lots of unexpected things that Jesus said and did which show remarkable ways of sharing the good news and in his case, being the good news. It is a story that shows how a ‘chance’ meeting can have far-reaching results.

I love this story but it’s all wrong. Jesus never went through Samaria in the normal way. None of the Jews did; they went the long way round, so they did not get contaminated by these people who only had half of the scriptures and didn’t worship God properly. Also, Jesus had a broad plan to go to the Jews first before anyone else (Matt 15:24, Matt 10:5-6). It was only after Pentecost that Samaria was added to the list of places to go.

Why did Jesus **have** to go through Samaria? Maybe he was in a hurry to get to Galilee. Possibly he went that way because of the unwanted interest of the Pharisees mentioned in the first 3 verses of the chapter, and the time had not yet come for a confrontation with them. They certainly would not follow him into Samaria. He went somewhere that he did not normally go.

Have you ever gone somewhere unusual and unplanned that you did not choose? Maybe that unplanned journey was exactly where God wanted you to go in order to meet the person he wanted you to meet. Perhaps the thing to do if you find yourself with a plan B, is to say something like this. ‘I was not planning to do this but if this is where you are taking me today, Lord, show me what you want me to do and the people you want me to meet.’

It was midday when Jesus rested by the well at Sychar on his own because he was hot, tired and thirsty. It was all wrong that a solitary woman came out to get water at midday as Jesus watched. Normally the women would gather together early in the day and chat as they drew up the water from the well.

When you are really thirsty what you need most is a drink of cool refreshing water and Jesus broke all the rules by asking her for a drink. In their culture it was wrong for men to talk to a strange woman. She was a Samaritan and Jews did not speak to them at all. I think she was shocked that he would ask her, a Samaritan woman, for a drink. He was asking her for help.

Have you ever had to ask a complete stranger for help and ended up getting into conversation with them? Most of the time people are only too willing to help out when there is a need. Maybe asking someone to give you a hand is a way in to a deeper conversation with them.

She saw him as a strange Jewish man but what he saw was a very needy Samaritan woman. He said 'If you knew who it is who is asking for water then you would ask him and he would give you living water.' When people talk about living water they usually mean running water, gushing water, perhaps water from a spring that is aerated and refreshing to drink, unlike standing water that tastes flat and stale. The woman was thinking about physical water from the well. She asked him how he was going to get water from a deep well when he had nothing to get it with. Jacob had dug the well. Was Jesus greater than Jacob?

But Jesus was talking here about a more profound thirst, even more basic than thirst for physical water; thirst for the spirit. Thirst for God. our most basic need. He might have been thinking about Isaiah 55:1. Isaiah 55 talks about our need for spiritual food and drink but asks the question, 'why do you spend money for that which does not satisfy? Seek the Lord!'

Jesus was thirsty for physical refreshing water but she was in desperate need of spiritual refreshment. Everyone what has ever lived has a spiritual need; Jew or Gentile, male or female, good or bad we all have a thirst for God. Most people do not recognise it for what it is. They try to satisfy their inner thirst through, drink or drugs, sex or thrills, food, hobbies, busyness, money and 100s of other ways but it is Jesus alone who can bring us into the presence of God. He is the way. It is the Holy spirit filling us that satisfies the thirst that we have for God. We need a new life, a new start that Jesus gives us, that brings a joy that the world cannot give and cannot take away.

Jesus here had gently turned the conversation towards himself as the source of new life and spiritual refreshment.

When we drink and keep drinking from the spring of the Holy Spirit of God, we will be refreshed and satisfied for ever. We all need to keep drinking in the holy spirit, breathing in the breath that he gives us, feasting on what Jesus offers us. He offers us himself – living in us through the indwelling of the spirit. I don't think the woman understood that Jesus was talking about spiritual water.

Because what she really wanted was a source of water near her house so that she didn't have to keep coming out of the village every day to fetch water. Jesus changed the subject and suggested she bring her husband to the well so they could meet. 'Can you get your husband' was a way of leading into a delicate subject that the Holy Spirit had given him insight into. Some people call it a word of knowledge. Jesus knew that she'd had 5 husbands and the man she was with was not her husband. He knew her life was a mess. He was confronting her with the truth about herself. Suddenly she was alert. This man was making her confront the deep pain and failure of her life. it was a challenge for her to face the facts and to seek to change. Here was something even more weird than a Jewish man asking a Samaritan woman for a drink. He knew all about her sin and failures, and he was not being judgemental about her.

Her life was hard. She was probably getting her water at the wrong time of day so she could avoid the women who came early to the well because they gossiped about her. Everyone else judged her and cold-shouldered her. Who was this man? Was he a prophet? How come he knew all about her messy life and didn't blame her as a sinner. All the Old Testament prophets pointed a finger and said how bad things would happen because the people were sinners. But this man, Jesus, was good news because he had come to help and save. How did he fit into the religion of the Jews and the Samaritans?

Now it was her turn to change the subject. 'You Jews worship God in Jerusalem but we worship on Mount Gerizim'. (We can't both be right, was implied by these comments. If God is God then there must be a right place and a right way to worship him). But Jesus was looking beyond the present set up. Salvation was through the Jewish nation but in future there will be no special place to worship God because true worshippers would worship in spirit and truth wherever they were, all over the world.

The woman, I wish we knew her name, had a sudden realisation. 'When the Messiah comes he will explain everything.' Yes! I feel like cheering at this point in the story because she has made such an important connection.

She is one of the early responders. The penny is dropping. I can imagine Jesus smiling with joy as he said, 'I am he.' Jesus is the Messiah, the promised one who is changes the world for everyone including this woman and her Samaritan village.

Our reading stopped there but in summary what happened next was that at that point the disciples returned with the food and were surprised to find him talking to a woman. She went back to the village and told everyone to come and meet a man who knew everything she had ever done. He might be the Messiah! Jesus told the disciples that the harvest of people is not going to be later on but here and now.

Everything has speeded up on the time scale. There is going to be a great out-of-season harvest. An early Pentecost. People turning to Jesus and putting their trust in him. Lots of Samaritans came out to meet him and hear what he had to say and they believed in him. They invited him back to the village and suddenly there was no need to go quickly to Galilee because they stayed there an extra 2 days. Who thought that would happen?

Its's an extraordinary story. The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few. Pray to the lord of the harvest that he would send labourers into his harvest. The harvest in Sychar was plentiful.

It all started with a needy and sinful woman giving Jesus a drink. But she was curious about him and she wanted to find out more. A lot of people want answers to life, but so many look in the wrong places. We need Jesus. We need to confront our need to sort out the wrongs in our lives and trust in him for our future. We need his amazing Holy Spirit to help and guide us through our life. We need to be people who are prepared to walk by faith and use the gifts that the spirit gives us. We need the out-pouring of the water of life, the holy Spirit. And we need another Pentecost.

***Prayer:** Lord we are thirsty for you. Come Lord Jesus. Holy Spirit, Come.*

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Emmanuel Church Text for 2023

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace. Numbers 6:24-26



Looking Upwards (40 mins)

Bible Study

Read the text for this study, and any references given, then answer the following questions. You may find it helpful to listen to the sermon and/or read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, your answers with your Home Group and, remember, these questions are only a guide to start your discussions.

1: Can you think of a time when something happened that made you have to change your plans but something very good came out of it?

2: Have you ever had a ‘word of knowledge’ or some other gift of the spirit that has helped you to lead into a good conversation about your faith?

3: In what ways is thirst for water like thirst for the presence of God?

4: Many non-Christian people think that God does not like them because they know they have done a lot of wrong things. How would you share the good news with them?

5: Why might there have been a bigger harvest in this Samaritan village than among the Pharisees of Jerusalem?

6: Are you thirsty for the Holy Spirit? Pray for more of the Holy Spirit to be present in this group.



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



Looking Inwards (15 mins) *Caring For Each Other*

Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an opportunity to share, not something you have to do, however, 'It's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?



Looking Outwards (15 mins) *Concern For Others*

Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours or church, which you would like to share (please be sure not pass on anything that is confidential or which you think the person concerned would not wish to be shared) for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?

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