

## **The Woman At The Well: Known for her location not by her name, then later by her faith!**

So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar ... John 4:5

Not a normal place for a Jewish man or Rabi would be.

Jacob's well was there ... John 4:6

Usually it was just women at the wells. Rebekah was wooed at a well by Eliezer on Isaac's behalf. Rachel was courted by Jacob at a well at Haran.

... and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. John 4:6

Jesus shouldn't have been there. But he was. Was there a time in your life that Jesus shouldn't have been but thank God he was?

When a Samaritan woman came to draw water ... John 4:7

She had two strikes against her already: (1) She was a Samaritan, not a Jew, and (2) she was a woman, of all things. John, the only gospel writer to record this story, didn't even include her name. Non-Jew, non-male, who cares? Jesus cared.

He cared so much he spoke to her directly.

The Lord reaching out to someone who was in all ways a social reject.

Notice he didn't command her; he asked her.

The start of a lengthy conversation—the longest found in Scripture between Jesus and anyone, let alone a Samaritan. Let alone a woman. Let alone that kind of woman. Her gender and her nationality are not incidental to the story; they are integral, because they drive home the universal truth of God's fountain of grace:

She chose the one time other women from Sychar wouldn't be likely to show up and ventured toward the outskirts of town where a well—and a wise but weary man—waited for her. The woman wasn't expecting him, but clearly Jesus was expecting her.

(His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) John 4:8

The 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.) John 4:9

## Culturally unacceptable

Jesus didn't allow religious traditions to get in the way of her journey to faith. What are you allowing to get in your journey?

Jesus 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." John 4:10

The subtle shift from temporal thirst to eternal satisfaction had begun. "If you knew" left the door wide open. He didn't say, "Duh! Don't you know who I am?" Well water was common, everyday stuff, but living water? What a concept! The Lord's words, full of mystery and intrigue, got her attention.

Jesus has a way of getting our attention.

She was very bold in answering. We could use some of her boldness. She pressed her point, tossing in a bit of history, perhaps to impress him...

"Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?" John 4:12  
One scholar called the woman "skeptical, intelligent, irrepressible."<sup>1</sup> In the vernacular, I'd label her a pushy broad. Maybe that's why I like her so much.

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again ..." John 4:13

Example: story of drinking water. We live in the hot desert...When you're really thirsty, you can down a huge tumbler of icy water in one gulp and quickly thrust your empty glass out for more...Unless Jesus is the one holding the pitcher.

"... but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The 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." John 4:15

One look at her and Jesus knew she was parched with thirst in both body and spirit. The first was easily solved with a dip in the well. The other thirst needed to be brought out in the open before it could be sated.

He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." John 4:16

Jesus wasn't being rude, just bowing to the custom of the day. Women—Good Girls, that is—didn't speak alone with a man in a public place. By asking her to call her husband to join them, the Lord was honoring her, saying in essence, "I know you're not a harlot." By inviting her to come back, he was assuring her of his interest in her welfare, rather than in something more carnal. No, she wasn't a harlot. Nor was she married, at the moment.

Now we see in this next part, "It just got real" real issues, real problems, real life...

"I have no husband," she replied. John 4:17

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband."

John 4:17

"The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband." John 4:18

Jesus speaks to the truth in our life. Men in those days didn't have lengthy life spans. Since a woman in that society was doomed to poverty or worse as a widow, it behooved her to keep remarrying. Clearly she wasn't a young woman, nor had life been kind to her. We can fathom the hope that was born in her heart five times, only to be crushed again and again, sending her on yet another search for someone to love her, support her, comfort her, and protect her. The truth was she was living in sin.

"What you have just said is quite true." John 4:18

So ... did she confess her sin? Rend her garments? Reach for sackcloth and ashes? Beg for forgiveness? No way, not this feisty female. She looked Jesus straight in the eye and, denying nothing, offered an astute observation:

Similar to Aaron in Exodus 32:24 when he said, they gave me the gold so I made the calf. Not really admitting just giving the facts.

"Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet."

John 4:19

She was merely grabbing for something, anything, that would divert attention from the sin that'd just been uncovered. Then she tries to get religious and theoretical..

"Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." John 4:20

Jesus declared, “Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.” John 4:21  
Note the strong language. Jesus was trying to get her attention. And never mind Jerusalem or Samaria. The Father had another throne of worship in mind altogether: her very human heart.

“You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews.” John 4:22

“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.” John 4:23

This Samaritan sister-in-waiting had been waiting for the messiah herself...

The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming.” John 4:25

“When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

The first mention of the Messiah—the Anointed One—and it came from her lips, not his own.

He did an extraordinary thing: He revealed his calling and his ministry to her.

Then Jesus declared, “I who speak to you am he.” John 4:26

Wait, Lord! What were you doing? Casting your pearls before swine? She was a ... she! And a Samaritan. And a fornicator! And she was ... Thirsty is what she was. Thirsty for the truth.

Jesus saw past her hardness to the parched interior of her heart and offered living water.

Just 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?” John 4:27

So glad the disciples didn’t ruin what Jesus was doing right then.

A Bad Girl was about to make the decision of her life. Did she challenge this stranger who’d called himself—gasp!—the Messiah? Did she shake her water pot at his followers and label them fools? No, she did not. She believed. Believed! Having made such a leap of faith, she abandoned her search for plain water.

Then, leaving her water jar ... John 4:28

Did she leave it on purpose or simply forget it in the excitement of the moment? It doesn't matter. She'd discovered something better, which enabled her to leave her sinful life behind her, forgotten in the dust, and move on. Filled with living water, she sought other thirsty souls, eager to offer them a drink too.

... the woman went back to the town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" John 4:28-29

Come see!! The Woman at the Well didn't wait for a door to swing open; she kicked it down herself. "Come, see ..." Why did the men of her city listen to her, a woman with a shady lifestyle? Simple: She had seen the Christ. Now the people of Sychar saw the Christ in her. A changed life gets people's attention every time.

Two things happen when we meet the Christ and see him for who he really is: (1) We confess our sins openly, and (2) we share the good news of forgiveness freely. That confession—testimony, if you will—comes effortlessly. It's the fragrant aroma of a heart set free.

They came out of the town and made their way toward him. John 4:30  
Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." John 4:39

Wow and that is what we should be doing also...Come see!

The women at the well with no name left behind her shame to never embrace it again, and then taught with her testimony!

(Notes from Higgs, Liz Curtis. Bad Girls of the Bible)