

Teaching Points

What kind of a response would you expect from a woman whose deepest wounds, most embarrassing truths, and sinful choices have just been exposed? You might expect her to be angry, silent, or resentful. But what if she found, at that exact moment, the One who could forgive her of all those sins and give her new life and meaning and purpose before Almighty God? Then you would get the response we read in our passage.

The woman at the well excitedly tells her neighbors about Jesus

When the disciples return from town, they are surprised to find Jesus speaking to a woman, a Samaritan woman. How could He? But they rightly don't interrupt or question Him as if He is doing anything inappropriate. Though Jesus is pushing the bounds of what was culturally appropriate, they knew enough about Him to know that He always has a good reason for doing whatever He does.

The woman leaves her waterpot and goes into town inviting the people to "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did."

Discussion Questions: What "things" did Jesus point out in her life? What did He tell her and why would she say those are "all things" that she ever did?

Thoughts: *In verses 15-19 we find the place where Jesus points out that she is living with a man (by telling her to call her husband) and that she has five husbands (after she says she has no husband). Because Jesus was able to reveal His knowledge of these details in her life, she believed Him to be a prophet. She didn't deny any of it.*

Her invitation to her neighbors includes this startling and hope-filled question, "Could this be the Christ?" How did she get to this conclusion? By revelation from Jesus about His true identity (see verses 25-26). The Messiah (the Christ) is the long-awaited Savior of God's people. He will make all things right.

The Samaritan woman was so impressed by the love of Jesus—even as He confronted her in her sin—that she forgot that she would rather everyone else forget all things that she ever did! What a sense of love and security and conviction she experienced! How did the people in her city respond to her invitation (v.30)?

The disciples learn the source of Jesus' strength and satisfaction

The disciples often misunderstand the sayings of Jesus. We would too. But Jesus is gracious to teach them the truth, to reveal it to them as He just did with the woman. When they ask about eating physical food, He takes the time to teach on what it is that actually sustains Him and gives Him great joy and satisfaction.

Discussion Questions: What is Jesus' "food"? That is, what sustained Him in His coming to Earth? What was His purpose?

Thoughts: *Read verse 34 and also read John 5:36, 6:38, 8:29, 17:4. Jesus came to do the will of the Father.*

Jesus is including others in His work (v.38). What a privilege to be a part of His great mission of doing the Father's will! They understand his agricultural analogy. There's sowing and reaping and a harvest with laborers. What does it mean? The harvest is people who are coming to eternal life and the laborers are spreading the seed of the Word of God. And there is great joy in seeing people come to new life. Who are the people in this passage "working" the Lord's field? Answer: Jesus, the woman at the well, and the disciples. All of this redemptive activity is set off by Jesus and others get to join in.

Jesus is the Savior of the World

Notice the word "believe" and "believed" in this portion of the story. It's there 3 times. This is the point of this section and of the entire Book of John: Jesus is to be believed, trusted for eternal life (20:30-31). Included in His work is salvation and life for the world—even the Samaritans.

Discussion Question: What do you make of John going out of his way to say the Samaritans believed because of Jesus, and not merely because of the woman's testimony?

Thoughts: *We recognize the importance of her testimony, report, and invitation. But we also recognize how essential it is to "get people in front of Jesus Himself" and not merely take our word for it. We do that today, by pointing people to Christ in His Word, the Bible.*

Prayer Focus

Praise God for such a great salvation. This story displays God's grace in wonderful and hope-giving terms.

Pray that your life will exhibit the same joy and evangelistic zeal as the Samaritan woman. She was genuinely excited to proclaim her experience with Christ to others.

Pray that you will be faithful as a worker gathering in the harvest. May we be ready and willing to serve Christ as He brings others into our life who need to know Him and His word.