

Jesus Talks with a Samaritan

Here he was again, Orlando thought as he pulled into the gas pump behind the pickup truck with a sizable, offensive flag sticker in the cab back window. Orlando had observed his one-time student, Justin, in that truck at a nearby car wash about 30 minutes earlier. Orlando remembered Justin from his time of coaching as a substitute teacher. He recalled him being moody, troubled at home, and not liking that Orlando was Black.

Justin was now at the pump, searching in his pockets.

“Hello. Justin, right?” Orlando said, approaching.

Justin turned with a surprised look, mingled with a frown.

“I’m Mr. Lewis,” said Orlando, “the substitute assistant football coach at your high school.”

Justin looked back, the surprise was gone, and the frown relaxed into stern passivity.

“Are you OK?” Orlando asked, his voice compassionate.

“I’ve misplaced my credit card,” Justin said, “and I’m on empty.”

“Here,” Orlando said pushing his credit card into the reader.

“Why would you do that?” Justin said, astonished.

“Because you need help,” smiled Orlando. “How are you doing?” Orlando was surprised at Justin’s honesty, but not at the heavy load he was carrying. “Justin, I want you to really listen to this with your heart.”

For the next 20 minutes, Orlando spoke about the loving, powerful, and saving grace of Christ.

1. *What barriers have been placed in the world to halt the teachings of Christ?*

2. *In what ways is your church overcoming those barriers?*

3. *How do you contribute to your church’s efforts?*

The Samaritan Woman's Conversation with Jesus

John 4:7-15, KJV

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of

John 4:7-15, NIV

⁷When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" ⁸(His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹The 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.)

¹⁰Jesus 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."

¹¹"Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" ¹²Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"

¹³Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks the water I give them will never

the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

¹⁵The 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.”

It was around noon when Jesus came to Jacob’s well. A low stone wall possibly encircled the spring-fed well and formed a ledge upon which a weary and exhausted traveler such as Jesus could sit (John 4:6). In that culture, it was the job of women to draw water from wells by using jugs or animal skins attached to ropes. Because the heat was probably most intense at this time of the day, women normally drew water at sunset. So this woman may have come to this well then to avoid the other women of the community. The woman might have been shunned by her female peers due to her scandalous character.

Jesus’ disciples had gone into the village to buy food, so this left Him alone at the well when He asked the Samaritan woman for a drink. A Jewish teacher did not speak with a woman in public and would never make himself unclean by drinking from a Samaritan’s cup.

Given this cultural context, it is understandable why the woman at the well was astonished by Jesus’ request. She even noted the centuries-old wall of enmity between the two groups of people. Rather than get drawn into a long-standing racial conflict, Jesus redirected the woman’s attention to her deepest spiritual need. By identifying Himself with the “living water” (vs. 10), Jesus wanted the woman to recognize that He could give the woman water much greater than that from the well.

The woman responded with two questions. How did Jesus plan to get this water, especially since He had no bucket? Also, was He greater than their ancestor Jacob?

Jesus sidestepped the woman's questions by noting that even water from Jacob's well quenched thirst for only a short time (vs. 13). The eternal life Jesus offered, however, would abundantly satisfy the spiritual thirst of people forever (John 10:10). God's gift of salvation was comparable to a fountain of water that vigorously welled up inside believers in an unending, overflowing supply (vs. 14).

This idea intrigued the woman, who pictured it as something that would replace her daily trips to and from the well. She took Jesus literally and thought of personal convenience rather than anything spiritual (vs. 15).

4. *In what way did the Samaritan woman respond to Jesus' request?*

5. *At first, what prompted the Samaritan woman to doubt Jesus' claim?*

6. *What was the nature of the "living water" (John 4:10) Jesus promised to give?*

7. *What comparison did the Samaritan woman make between Jacob and Jesus?*

The Belief of Many Samaritans in Jesus

John 4:28-30, 39-41, KJV

28 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that

John 4:28-30, 39-41, NIV

²⁸Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ²⁹"Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" ³⁰They came out of the town and made their way toward him. ...

³⁹Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's

ever I did.

40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

41 And many more believed because of his own word.

testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹And because of his words many more became believers.

Jesus then showed the woman that He knew every detail of her personal life, including her many husbands, and that He could answer her deepest spiritual questions (vss. 16-24). She started to wonder if He was more than just a prophet, and Jesus directly told her that He was the Messiah. Just then His disciples returned, surprised to find Him talking to a Samaritan woman in public (vss. 25-27).

Meanwhile, the woman abandoned her jug of water at the well and hurried back to the village. In her effort to tell others in the village about the newcomer, she forgot about her initial reason for going to the well. Instead, she seemed thrilled that Jesus was able to tell her "everything [she] ever did" (vs. 29) and still talk with her and accept her. The woman did not say, "I have found the Messiah," but asked if Jesus "could... be the Messiah."

The woman's excited testimony and question generated considerable interest. Verse 30 gives the impression that many residents of Sychar responded to the woman's invitation to come and see this man who had such incredible insight into the life of the woman they knew so well. As a result of her testimony, many Samaritans put their faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and they even insisted He remain with them, so Jesus stayed for two days. As more villagers heard Jesus, they believed in Him for eternal life.

8. *What prompted the Samaritan woman to change her mind about Jesus?*

9. *What was the basis for the Samaritans' belief in Jesus?*

Barriers No More!

There are numerous barriers in the world in which we live: borders between countries, fences among neighbors, even walls within homes. The psychological barriers between people, however, can be even more difficult to scale, and one of the most formidable is that barrier between Jews and Gentiles.

From the day God marked the Hebrews as His own, a barrier stood between Jews and Gentiles until Jesus came to tear down that barrier. For Jesus “is our peace,” wrote the apostle Paul, “who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility” (Eph. 2:14). What that also means is that within the fellowship of believers no barrier should exist among believers.

Probably the most daunting barrier is the one between God and humans. Jesus, however, bridged the gap: “For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people” (1 Tim. 2:5-6). And, since Jesus has extinguished the barrier between God and us, He can remove the barrier between God and unbelievers.

Although Jesus has torn down all barriers, it does not mean that Christians can stand back and be passive observers. Each of us is called to be His ambassador in this world, conveying the Good News to those He brings into our lives: “We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors as though God were making his appeal through us” (2 Cor. 5:20). Therefore, let no barrier stop us from sharing the Gospel with those who have not received God’s grace.

10. *What barriers do you encounter when you know that you need to share the Gospel with someone who needs to hear it?*

11. *How does prayer and Scripture help you break through those barriers?*

12. *What blessings occur when you do share the Gospel?*

Sharing the Gospel

Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well was not by chance. God brought the two together, and their conversation had a profound effect first on her life and then the lives of many of the townspeople who heard Jesus. He shows us we must cross any barrier that stands between us and those who need to hear the Gospel.

► *Write the name here of someone you feel led to share the Gospel with this coming week. Pray about the lifting of any barriers that may keep you from sharing.*

KEY VERSE

And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. —John 4:39, KJV

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, NIV

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSONS

Week of March 20 through March 26

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

- Mon.** James 4:1-10—Resist the Devil.
- Tues.** 2 Corinthians 10:1-6—The Weapons of Our Warfare.
- Wed.** Psalm 106:1-7, 36-41, 47-48—Lord, Remember Your People.
- Thurs.** Psalm 34:1-15—The Lord Delivers the Fearful.
- Fri.** Numbers 10:29-36—Let God's Enemies Be Scattered.
- Sat.** Mark 5:1-13—Jesus Sets a Demoniac Free.
- Sun.** Mark 5:14-20—Sent to Bear Witness.