



I. INTRODUCTION

Imagine for a moment: The Creator of the universe, the All-Powerful, sits down next to you, asks for a cup of water, and just wants to get to know you—yes, you! As it turns out, Jesus already knows you, but you get to know Him, and your world changes. You have hope for the first time, and you no longer feel so alone.

This is exactly what the Samaritan woman experienced more than 2000 years ago. A typical day of drawing water from a well changed her life.

"There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give Me a drink' ... the Samaritan woman said to Him, 'How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?' (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, "Give Me a drink," you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water' ... The woman said to Him, 'Sir, give me this water... I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.' Jesus said to her, 'I who speak to you am He'... So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city and said to the men, 'Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?'" (John 4:7–29).

John reveals two things in this passage: the woman's needs and Christ's ability to meet those needs. Understanding the Samaritan woman's needs will help us understand our own. Embracing both Jesus' ability to meet the needs of the Samaritan woman, and the manner in which He does, opens our heart to know Jesus more and to love others more meaningful ways.

"You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (John 4:9).

II. UNDERSTANDING OUR NEEDS

Jesus engaged the Samaritan woman at her point of need. Her words reveal very human, relational needs. She asks Jesus, *"You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?"* (John 4:9). The woman needed **acceptance** of who she was, **respect**, and **attention**.

A. Jesus met her need of acceptance.

"He [Jesus] said to her, 'Go, call your husband and come here.' The woman answered and said, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You have correctly said, 'I have no husband;' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly'" (John 4:16–18). The Lord's answer showed the woman He understood these needs and knew exactly how to meet them. **He accepted her** in all of her humanity, even her lifestyle!

In Jesus' day, Jews did not associate with Samaritans because they considered them, in blunt terms, "half-breeds." Jews believed Samaritans came from an impure blood line and practiced impure worship traditions.

B. Jesus met her need of attention.

"The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people [Jews] say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship'" (John 4:19–20).

The Samaritans worshipped on Mount Gerazim. This was considered heretical as the Jews believed that Jerusalem was the only appropriate place to worship. Proving that **Jesus believed her worthy of attention** and consideration, He stepped over the racist barrier and spoke to a *Samaritan*. He addressed the woman's hurt by speaking to her directly and refraining from judgment about how she worshipped:

"Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father...an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:21–24).

C. Jesus met her need for respect.

In the first century, it was very unusual for men to speak with women they were not related to and especially women with the Samaritan woman's lifestyle. Simply talking with an unfamiliar woman was considered shameful, illicit, and often scandalous. This explains why the disciples *"were amazed that He had been speaking with a woman"* (John 4:27).

How Jesus responded to the Samaritan woman's theological questions is also important to notice (John 4:19–20). Theology was typically reserved for the men of Jesus' day; women were excluded from theological discussions. By responding to the woman's theological inquiries, **Jesus showed her respect**, revealing that He valued her as one of God's beloved.

"...true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers" (John 4:23).

"...His disciples came, and they were amazed that He had been speaking with a woman..." (John 4:27).



L3. Experiencing God as He really is through deepened intimacy with Him

Colossians 3:16 Moment:
"Let the Word of Christ dwell deeply in you."

Pastor/Teacher:
Pause during this time and share with the congregation what these truths about the nature of Jesus cause you to feel.

The Samaritan woman was feeling alone, ostracized, and emotionally hurt. She was drawing water from the well in the middle of the day, when most women would have gone together early in the day to avoid the heat. Because of the social stigma, it is not far fetched to assume the woman was trying to avoid people—perhaps so she wouldn't have to face ridicule by the other women from town. In the midst of her aloneness, a Jewish rabbi initiated a conversation. His simple request of asking for a drink of water demonstrated that He valued her, accepted her, and showed her respect.

Jesus led the woman in a conversation that revealed her needs—relief from loneliness and from sinfulness. The way He received her began to connect at the point of her loneliness. Jesus' revealing His knowledge of her sin formed a connection at the point of her sinfulness, expressing God's desire to give her "living water" through the Messiah.

The exchange Jesus had with the woman at the well is the same exchange Jesus wants to have with each of us. We too are hurt and needy, but God offers us a relationship that removes our aloneness. Just as Jesus met the Samaritan woman's human needs of acceptance, attention, and respect, He met her spiritual needs for forgiveness and redemption—He offers the same for each of us.

Encounter Jesus

Take a moment to consider the heart of Jesus and what moved Him to meet the needs of the Samaritan woman.

- His desire that she wouldn't feel alone
- His love and respect for her as a person who had made some poor life choices, but was still worth the gift of forgiveness

Jesus looked past these choices to the hurting heart of the Samaritan woman. What do these truths about the nature of Jesus make you feel today? Would you allow Jesus to meet your needs and care about your life?

Consider praying something like this:

Jesus, thank You for welcoming me as I am. Thank You for your desire to relate to me, both at the point of my aloneness and my sinfulness. Thank You for your grace and compassion. Would You fill my heart with Your love and teach me to follow You?

Now turn to someone next to you and celebrate with them! Tell them, *"I am loved and forgiven, and so are you!"*

"Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; He rises to show you compassion" (Isaiah 30:18).

Jesus noticed the needs of the woman He encountered and was moved with compassion.

"...Accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us..." (Romans 15:7).

III. RESPONDING TO RECEIVING LOVE

When we consider that the Lord is interested in establishing both an intimate relationship with us and helping us become more and more like Himself, our perspective of the world around us can completely change.

Consider Isaiah 30:18, *"Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; He rises to show you compassion."* The heart of God is gracious and compassionate towards us. He rises to meet us and relate to us in our point of need. It's both our aloneness and our fallenness that move His heart with love. As we experience more of this compassionate love from the Lord, let's allow the Holy Spirit to move our hearts with the same for others. Just as we receive God's care for both our aloneness and our fallenness, might we share it with others.

A. Let us develop a deeper perspective.

When Jesus encountered the Samaritan woman, He hoped to relate to her because His heart and His ministry was to bring an end to aloneness and her separation from God and other people. The disciples only saw her gender and ethnicity, not her emotional and spiritual aloneness.

Jesus stopped that day at the well and **noticed the needs** of the woman He encountered. He was focused on her loneliness and suffering. He looked deep into her heart and was moved with compassion for her. He saw her suffering, her shame, her rejection, her sense of feeling used and alienated. He saw a person uniquely created by the Father and one with whom the Father wanted a personal relationship.

B. We can follow His example.

Jesus was moved with love and compassion. How can we love others like Jesus loved the Samaritan woman?

"...Accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us..." (Romans 15:7).

Since Christ accepts us, with all our short-comings, we can do the same for others. As we begin to embrace the truth that Jesus cares deeply for us, regardless of our failings, this realization challenges us to do the same.



- W3. Yielding to the Scripture's protective cautions and transforming power to bring life change in me**
- P3. Discerning the relational needs of others with a heart to give of His love**

Colossians 3:16 Moment:
"Let the Word of Christ dwell deeply in you."

Pastor/Teacher:

Pause during this time and share vulnerably with the congregation about a time you may have judged someone based on their surface appearance or have been the cause of someone else's hurt.

Experience Scripture

"Accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us..."
(Romans 15:7).

Pause to consider all that God has accepted about you:

- Your mistakes
- Times when you may have judged others, based on their surface appearance and not the neediness in their hearts
- Times when you may have missed the hurt in another person's heart or been a part of hurting them yourself

Pause to pray with a partner or small group:

Lord, when I consider all that You have accepted about me I feel _____. Thank You for seeing past my failings and loving me. I want to love others the way You have loved me. Father, let Your heart of compassion flow through me. Equip me to see others the way You see them. In particular, help me to love _____ the way You would love them.

(Fill in the blank with a name or person as the Lord prompts you.)

C. We can follow her example.

The Samaritan woman had a revelation about Jesus' identity, and her example is one we are called to follow.

"...the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city and said to the men, 'Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done'... [and] many of the Samaritans believed in [Jesus] because of the word of the woman who testified" (John 4:28–29, 39).

Moments before the woman's encounter with Jesus, she was jaded and ashamed. Jesus removed her aloneness, met her spiritual and emotional needs, and let Himself be known. The woman's grateful response was to share her story with the others in her community!

Remember how you felt moments ago as you reflected on Christ's acceptance and compassion for you? Were you filled with joy, gratefulness, or maybe a sense of peace? The Samaritan woman must have experienced similar feelings. She was moved with so much gratitude that she could not help but tell her story.



- M1. Imparting the gospel and one's very life in daily activities and relationships, vocation, and community**
- M8. Attentive listening to others' story, vulnerably sharing of your story, and a sensitive witness of Jesus' story as life's ultimate hope; developing your story of prodigal, preoccupied and pain-filled living; listening for others' story and sharing Jesus' story**

Colossians 3:16 Moment:

"Let the Word of Christ dwell deeply in you."

Pastor/Teacher:

During this time, share with the congregation about your own commitment to share your Jesus story with someone you meet today.

Engage Community

In a similar way, our story is powerful. People need to hear our experiences with Jesus. Because the Samaritan woman shared her story, *"many of the Samaritans believed"* (John 4:39). May the same be true for us.

Pause now and consider whom you might share your story—your experience with Jesus' love, acceptance, and compassion.

Now pray:

"Lord, would You fill my heart with Your love and prompt me to express acceptance, respect, and attention towards those You bring into my path today. Thank You for showing me how to see people the way You see them, needy of You and me."

Now commit to keep your eyes and heart open for those people God puts into your path. Be ready to share the incredible story of Jesus!