

The Untold Story
Wake Up and Look Around
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TALK IT OVER

Key Scripture:

John 3:16-17 (NLT)

16 "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. 17 God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

John 4:1-15 (NLT)

1 Jesus knew the Pharisees had heard that he was baptizing and making more disciples than John 2 (though Jesus himself didn't baptize them—his disciples did). 3 So he left Judea and returned to Galilee. 4 He had to go through Samaria on the way. 5 Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. 7 Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." 8 He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food. 9 The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?" 10 Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water." 11 "But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water? 12 And besides, do you think you're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?" 13 Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. 14 But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life." 15 "Please, sir," the woman said, "give me this water! Then I'll never be thirsty again, and I won't have to come here to get water."

John 4:16-42

John 4:43-54

Start **talking**. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- Share with the group a time you had to cross a difficult boundary or overcome a difficult obstacle because you felt called to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others.

Start **thinking**. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- **Read John 3:16-17.** Revisiting this passage, this week Shawn asked us to focus on the phrase "the world". What are the implications that God loves everyone? How does this change how we view others?
- **Read John 4:1-26.** What does Jesus mean when he says "living water?" How does this encounter with the Samaritan woman compare to Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus?
- **Read John 4:43-54.** Compare the story of the woman at the well with the story of Jesus healing the centurion's son.

Start **sharing**. Choose a question to create openness.

- The woman left her jar at the well to run and tell the townspeople about Jesus. What are you holding on to that is keeping you from telling others about Jesus? Why?
- Like the Samaritan woman in the story, do you feel there are social boundaries today which are a challenge to you engaging with others and sharing the good news? What are some ways you could work to overcome these social challenges?
- In verses 43-54 Jesus heals a boy whose father went to Jesus and begged Jesus to heal the son, then the whole family came to believe in Jesus. What are you bringing to Jesus to ask for his help? What does that look like in your life?
- In this example of the centurion (vs 43-54), Jesus met the family's material needs. Discuss the impact of meeting people's material needs as compared to other ways of relating and engaging with them.

Start **doing**. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Identify what is holding you back from sharing or accepting the good news, and ask God to help you overcome.

Start **praying**. Be bold and pray with power.

- Father God, thank you for the grace that you extend to us. Please help us to feel secure and renewed by this living water. And father, we ask that you guide us and direct our paths to go and share the message. -Amen

Start **digging**. For further study.

- Read the 2nd page and discuss it.

Question: "What can we learn from the woman at the well?"

Answer: The story of the nameless Samaritan woman at the well, recorded only in the Gospel of John, is a revealing one, full of many truths and powerful lessons for us today. The story of the woman at the well follows on the heels of the account of Jesus' interaction with Nicodemus, a Pharisee and prominent member of the Jewish Sanhedrin (John 3:1–21). In John 4:4–42 we read about Jesus' conversation with a lone Samaritan woman who had come to get water from a well (known as Jacob's well) located about a half mile from the city of Sychar in Samaria.

This was an extraordinary woman. She was a Samaritan, a race of people that the Jews utterly despised as having no claim on their God, and she was an outcast and looked down upon by her own people. This is evidenced by the fact that she came alone to draw water from the community well when, during biblical times, drawing water and chatting at the well was the social highpoint of a woman's day. However, this woman was ostracized and marked as immoral, an unmarried woman living openly with the sixth in a series of men.

The story of the woman at the well teaches us that God loves us in spite of our bankrupt lives. God values us enough to actively seek us, to welcome us to intimacy, and to rejoice in our worship. As a result of Jesus' conversation, only a person like the Samaritan woman, an outcast from her own people, could understand what this means. To be wanted, to be cared for when no one, not even herself, could see anything of value in her—this is grace indeed.

But there are many other valuable truths we glean from this story. We learn that:

1) Only through Jesus can we obtain and receive eternal life: "Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 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'" (John 4:13–14; cf. John 14:6).

2) Jesus' ministering to those outcasts of the Jewish society (the Samaritans) reveals that all people are valuable to God and that Jesus desires that we demonstrate love to everyone . . . including even our enemies (John 4:7–9; Matthew 5:44).

3) Jesus is the Messiah (John 4:25–26; 1:41; Matthew 27:22; Luke 2:11).

4) Those who worship God, worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:23–24; Psalm 145:18).

5) Our testimony about Jesus is a powerful tool in leading others to believe in Him: "Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I ever did.' So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, 'We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world'" (John 4:39–42).

Additionally, we learn from Jesus' dialogue with the woman at the well three absolute truths about salvation:

1) Salvation comes only to those who recognize their desperate need for the spiritual life they do not have. Living water can be obtained only by those who recognize that they are spiritually thirsty.

2) Salvation comes only to those who confess and repent of their sin and desire forgiveness. Before this immoral woman could embrace the Savior, she had to concede the full burden of her sins.

3) Salvation comes only to those who take hold of Jesus as their Messiah. For the absolute truth is that salvation is found in no one else (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).