

## WEDNESDAY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

Christ Church, Crouch End Hill

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No: 89

### "Encounters with Jesus" 2- Samaritan woman (Part 2)

Brief Talk on John 4: 26-42

#### **General Introduction**

During our study last week, we learnt the truth about Jesus that He is everyone's rescuer regardless of their status, background or location and this is underscored by the contrast deliberately being made between the person Jesus has just been speaking to in chapter 3- Nicodemus, and the person he is addressing in chapter 4, the Samaritan woman.

To this woman, Jesus gave the clearest witness to who He was, and is. The Samaritan woman began to see something that made her realise Jesus was no ordinary man. She commented: "Sir,".. "I can see that you are a prophet... "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will explain everything to us." Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he." (John 4:25,26)

And the record says that this woman at the well quickly ran to tell all of the people in her hometown what the Lord had done for her. And "Many Samaritans from that city believed in Jesus because of the woman's testimony" (John 4:39). In other words, the people in her village saw that Christ had caused such a change in her that they, too, were attracted to Him. She was no longer afraid of the people because Jesus the Saviour had set her free. Free to live in newness of life and to share the joy with others. And that's what "evangelism" is - "One beggar telling another beggar where to find bread." Or, in light of this chapter of the Fourth gospel, we might paraphrase it, "Evangelism is one thirsty person telling another thirsty person where to find water." Thus, this five times divorced woman from Samaria became the first Christian evangelist. She had a rather chequered past, but Jesus did not seem to be as much concerned about her past as her future. Whatever the past may be, He deals in futures.

## Questions for discussion

1. (a) How do you think the Samaritan woman felt when Jesus revealed himself to her that he is the Christ (vv.25,26)? (b) What does "leaving her water jar" reveal about Jesus' impact on her? (c) How did she affect others?

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2. What is significant about Jesus choosing the Samaritan woman as the first person to whom he revealed himself (see also vv.39-42)

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3. Why were the disciples surprised to find Jesus with the Samaritan woman (v27) ?

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4. (a) In verse 29 the woman said to the townspeople "Come, see a man, who told me everything I ever did: Could this be the Christ?" What strikes you about how she explains her conversation with Jesus? (b) List 3 things the woman actually knows about Jesus based on her encounter with him.

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**Note:** Notice that little detail, 'Leaving her water jar' (v.28). The symbol of her emptiness and estrangement was left behind. She went to meet the people she had previously so studiously avoided and she wanted to introduce them to Jesus. The result? Many of them believed too. That is the effect knowing God through Jesus makes. And you know, the same is true today. Just listen to these words a client said to her counsellor after she had become a Christian: ' Before I came here, I was involved in a life of sexual fun and games and in a real sense I felt good. It was exciting. Since I have decided to truly commit myself to Christ , I've found that life has become a struggle . The worldly life was easier and happier than the Christian life. But I wouldn't go back for anything. I've tasted reality. Painful though it sometimes is, I want more. It's what life is really all about. For the first time in my life I feel truly alive, I'm together. It hurts like blazes but its worth it, because now I am a person.'

5. (a) How was the disciples' confusion about food (vv31-33) similar to the woman's confusion about living water? (b) List at least 5 things Jesus tells his disciples in verses 34-38. (c) Why did Jesus say these words and what lesson for daily living do we learn from these?

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6. How is Jesus' figurative speech once again misunderstood (see 2:19; 3:3; 4:10)? Why does he continue to speak like this? In what ways is God's will like food for him?

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7. (a) Given the social barriers between Jews and Samaritans, what do verses 40-42 teach you about Jesus? (b) As a disciple, how would you feel about spending two days as a guest of people against whom you were prejudiced? (c) What has Jesus taught you in this chapter about your sensitivity and response to people around you who are in need?

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8. Considering our interest in spiritual things, have we been more like the disciples or the Samaritan woman? Why? Give examples

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## Conclusion

When we look at people , we see all the distinctives which immediately place a barrier between us and them-they are the wrong class, the wrong colour, having the wrong education or the wrong background, with the wrong accent, we can't possibly relate to them. But God in Jesus simply sees human beings aching with an emptiness he longs to fill.

Salvation comes from the Jews, in that it is out of the Jewish race that the Christ was to come and be the Saviour of the whole world. This means that the label we attach to ourselves is irrelevant if we do not know Jesus Christ. The Anglican who has not bowed his heart to Jesus is in the same position as the Muslim who has not bowed his heart to Jesus. The religious person like Nicodemus can still be as empty and bereft of saving knowledge as the irreligious Samaritan woman. Both have to come to the same position and the same person to be saved, and that is precisely where this woman stood in v 25 'The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he." In fact it should read, 'I who am speaking to you , I am'. And those last two words would have sent a shiver down her spine, for this is the self-designation of God in the Old Testament- the great 'I am.'

And the moment those words were uttered, her life and that of the villagers were never to be the same again, as we read in v 28 Then, leaving her water jar, 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?" They came out of the town and made their way toward him. v39 - 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.'