

6

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN: FAITH WORTH SHARING



*What events in your life
do you most love talking about?*

QUESTION #1

THE POINT

Your life-changing encounter with Christ should be shared with others.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

On March 2, 2018, millions of people watched the funeral of Billy Graham. One of the most memorable moments of the service came from Graham's youngest daughter, Ruth, when she told about going through a messy divorce and desiring a fresh start. She moved away and started dating another man. They quickly married, but within twenty-four hours, Ruth knew she had made a terrible mistake. She told the audience, "You don't want to embarrass your father. You really don't want to embarrass Billy Graham."

As she drove to her parents' home, Ruth said, "My father was standing there waiting for me. As I got out of the car, he wrapped his arms around me and said, 'Welcome home.' There was no shame, there was no blame, there was no condemnation, just unconditional love. My father was not God, but he showed me what God was like that day. When we come to God with our sin, our brokenness, our failure, our pain, and our hurt, God says, 'Welcome home.'"

Ruth's testimony of her father's faithfulness and forgiveness was a powerful reminder of our heavenly Father's love.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

John 4:10-14

¹⁰ Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.”¹¹ The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.”¹³ Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

A failed marriage. Seasons of disappointment. Embarrassed and shunned by others. It’s not as uncommon as one might imagine, especially in today’s culture. But five marriages and a current live-in boyfriend was not the cultural norm in the first century. No wonder the woman we encounter in John 4 found herself gathering water at the hottest part of the day when no one else would be around.

The Samaritan woman’s meeting with Jesus at the well was extraordinary. Of course, every encounter with Jesus is remarkable, but this conversation was especially unique.

- ▶ **Jesus spoke to a Samaritan.** Samaritans were a mixed-race people: Jews who had intermarried with people from other nations. The Jews considered them a threat to the purity of Israel—unclean and pagan. Even the utensil the woman used to gather water would have been considered unclean, yet Jesus was willing to accept it from her for a drink of water (John 4:7).
- ▶ **Jesus had a theological conversation with a woman.** Women were not invited into theological discussions, yet Jesus discussed authentic worship and spiritual matters with her.

What do you appreciate about the way Jesus approached the conversation with this woman at the well?

QUESTION #2

- ▶ **Jesus revealed His humanity.** Jesus is fully God, but He is also fully man, and He experienced the same physical hunger and thirst any traveler would.
- ▶ **Jesus revealed His divinity.** This is the first recorded incident where Jesus acknowledged He is the Messiah (vv. 25-26). On other occasions, Jesus wanted His identity concealed.

All this centered around a basic need. Jesus needed water to drink—but He turned the conversation from His physical need for water to the woman’s greater need for spiritual water. It was apparent from her life that she was thirsty for the “living water” Jesus offered, but she just didn’t know how to quench her thirst.

In a physical sense, the prospect of never thirsting for water was highly appealing. To be continually filled was an engaging idea for anyone, but especially for this ostracized woman who was forced to walk to the well by herself in the heat of the day. But Jesus had something far greater in mind, and she was now thirsty to hear more. Jesus brought her to the point of seeing her need—a need that only God could fill.

What are some obstacles that keep us from engaging with others to share the gospel?

QUESTION #3

John 4:15-18

¹⁵ The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.” ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” ¹⁷ The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; ¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.”

Jesus wasn’t afraid to confront the woman in her sin. She didn’t deny her sin either. Just as we saw Jesus’ humanity in His need for water, we now see His omniscience as fully God.

MY STORY

*Write an outline that will help you share your testimony.
Then offer a prayer to the Lord for courage to share it.*

Decisions I made that kept me far from God:

The decision I made to follow Christ:

The decisions I've made since I trusted in the Lord:

My prayer:

"O God, you are my God; earnestly I
seek you; my soul thirsts for you;
my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and
weary land where there is no water!"

—PSALM 63:1

We may see our need, but until we openly confront our sin and turn from it, we'll never have that need met. We will remain without the living water that comes from a forgiven relationship with Christ.

Confronting our sin is only the first step. What we do once we confront it makes all the difference.

- ▶ **Confession.** We must confess our sin. Confession is more than admitting wrong; it is seeing our sin as God sees it—He hates sin—and desiring to have nothing more to do with it.
- ▶ **Repentance.** Confession and repentance go hand-in-hand. With confession, we express sorrow for the sin we've committed, and with repentance we turn and go in the opposite direction. Repentance is turning totally from sin and turning to Christ; it is a determined decision to walk with God and make Him the Lord of our lives.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

- ▶ **Joy.** When we confess and repent, God forgives and the result is joy—joy for the sinner here and joy in heaven over the one who repents.

"Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Ps. 32:1).

"Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10).

Why is it so difficult to confront people about sin in their lives?

QUESTION #4



John 4:28-30

²⁸ So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, ²⁹“Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” ³⁰ They went out of the town and were coming to him.

In that moment, the Samaritan woman tasted the “living water” (John 4:10). She left her water jar and ran to tell others. She didn’t forget her jar—she wasn’t being absentminded—she just couldn’t wait to go into town to tell others about the stranger who knew everything about her—the Messiah and His gift of living water. She was eager to tell everyone—even those who had kept her at arm’s length because of her lifestyle.

When Jesus the Messiah . . .

- ▶ . . . meets us where we are and redeems our failure . . .
- ▶ . . . relentlessly pursues us and never gives up on us . . .
- ▶ . . . gives us a righteousness we cannot attain except through His grace . . .

. . . we want others to know. This woman’s testimony spread and verse 39 gives us the result, “Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.”

A changed life is one that others notice, and a changed life comes from being forgiven. The Samaritan woman understood and accepted the forgiveness and grace extended to her.

Every heart has a thirst that can only be quenched with the living water found in a new life in Christ. Just as water is vital to our lives, spiritual water that feeds our spirits is a gift of God that can only be received through forgiveness of sin.

How can our group help one another be more active in sharing our faith?

QUESTION #5

LIVE IT OUT

Share your encounter with Christ. Consider one of these options for the days ahead:

- ▶ **Write.** Contemplate your personal faith story. Write it down and pray for the Lord to open the door for you to share it with someone this week. Post your written testimony online.
- ▶ **Pray.** Begin a list of people you know who need to accept Christ as their personal Savior. As a group, begin consistently praying for them. Consider prayerwalking as a group in an area close to your church or in your neighborhood.
- ▶ **Share.** Learn a simple evangelistic presentation you can use when you begin gospel conversations. Incorporate this presentation with your own personal testimony of a changed life in Christ.



Billy Graham's daughter, Ruth, gave a powerful testimony of what God's love and forgiveness looks like. The Samaritan woman at the well certainly had a story to tell too. And so do you.

My thoughts