



**OASIS: SHARE TRUTH
DONE IN SYNC WITH
OUR “SHARE THIS” SERIES**
The Passage – John 4

***Preface:** Welcome to our LC Bible study in our sermon series “Share This: Encountering Jesus Encountering Others.” These LC studies will complement the sermons, often using the same biblical texts, and will help your LC go deeper in personal understanding and application. These italicized portions are meant to resource and help you in leading and not to be distributed to the entire group (it limits conversation).*

Study’s BIG Idea: The woman at the well responds to the truth of the person of Jesus, not “data” about Jesus.

John 4

Jesus Talks With a Samaritan Woman

Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John— **2** although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. **3** So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

4 Now he had to go through Samaria. **5** So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. **6** Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

7 When 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.)

9 The 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.)

10 Jesus 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? **12** Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?”

13 Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, **14** but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

15 The 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.”

16 He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”

17 “I have no husband,” she replied.

Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. **18** The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

19 “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. **20** Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

21 “Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. **22** You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. **23** Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. **24** God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

25 The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

26 Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”

The Disciples Rejoin Jesus

27 Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

28 Then, 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?” **30** They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

O – What are some details you notice about in the first nine verses?

I – Why is there such tension between Jews and Samaritans?

(The Samaritans are considered a “half-breed”—half Jewish and half Assyrian. Tension can be traced back to the Assyrian occupation in 721 BC—see 2 Kings 17. But the rivalry really heats up around 200 BC because they are disputing the correct location of the worship center of the God of Abraham. Samaritans had built a shrine on Mt. Gerizim and of course the Jews believed the Temple in Jerusalem was the proper center of worship. Samaritans in Jesus’ day could never forget that their shrine on Mt. Gerizim was destroyed by Jewish troops in 128 BC.)

A – Who do you think can relate to being treated like a Samaritan? How have you felt like the Samaritan?

O – What do you notice about the woman from vv. 10–20?

(Getting water alone at noon, she knows her Samaritan/Jewish history, she’s reluctant to help Jesus, she has five husbands and the one she’s with is not a husband.)

I – Does Jesus meeting this woman remind you of any Old Testament stories?

(Reminds us of the story of Elijah and the widow of Sidon—1 Kings 17:10-11. Also reminds us of the betrothal stories of Isaac, (Gen. 24:10) Jacob (Gen. 29:1-20), and Moses (Exod. 2) where they met their wives or their wife was found at the well. The bridegroom/bride imagery is a reoccurring theme in the first 4 chapters of John but Jesus is not looking for a bride but for a witness. This wedding imagery is part of the “eschatological joy and fulfillment” Jesus brings, which is a fancy way of saying, Jesus is fulfilling the promise of God’s salvation to humanity.)

I – What are we to think of the woman having 5 husbands? How can she have so many in the ancient world? How does Jesus respond?

(Perhaps the woman, like Tamar in Gen. 38, is trapped in the custom of levirate marriage [See Deut. 25:5-10], and the last male in the family has refused to marry her. Perhaps there was a divorce or two, perhaps some of it was due to tragedy, perhaps lack of morality but perhaps she was unable to bear sons. In the Jewish/Samaritan world, a woman could not initiate a divorce. In any case, the reasons for the woman’s marital history intrigue us but do not concern Jesus.

A – What can we learn from Jesus in our judgment towards others?

O – What details in the text do you see in verses 21–30?

I – How do the Samaritans/Jews worship differently?

(Again, Samaritans built a shrine on Mt. Gerizim during the Persian period and of course the Jews believed the Temple in Jerusalem was the center of worship. Furthermore, the Samaritans were looking for the Messiah, too. They called their expectant savior “Ta’heb”—“the one who returns.” They thought of him as a teacher, which helps us understand the statement “he will explain all things to us.”)

I – Jesus allows the woman to see one meaning of the living water while the reader sees another. What is the point that Jesus is trying to show the woman (as well as the one that John is trying to show the reader)?

(In essence, they are the same but Jesus wants the woman to realize that there is something in this life greater than physical water—and that is the person and truth of the Messiah. John wants the reader to see similarly.)

I – How does the woman respond?

(She believes in Jesus! It’s necessary to note that she is not actually responding to the water, nor the data/information, but ultimately she is responding to Jesus being the Messiah.)

A – In verse 28, the woman leaves behind the water jug, demonstrating that she has discovered something even greater and is on her way to share that truth with those who have pushed her to the fringes. What would we leave behind and whom would we tell about the truth of who Jesus is?

Key: O – Observation. I – Interpretation. A – Application

- a. **Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single night.** Take some time and select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your LIFE Community group. Certain questions work better for certain groups. You are encouraged to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best.
- b. Complement OIA questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?).
- c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
- d. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
- e. Application: Pace the study to conclude with “difference making” application.
- f. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching,” rather than facilitating. It can cause people to feel distracted or de-powered.