

**John: An Encounter with the Truth****RECAP:**

John 4 opens with Jesus recognizing the Pharisees are tracking His growing influence. As a result, He leaves Judea for Galilee and “has to” pass through Samaria. Arriving at Jacob’s Well near Sychar, weary and alone at noon, He initiates conversation with a Samaritan woman, crossing deep ethnic and social barriers. (vv. 1-9) From the outset, the text shows a Savior who moves toward unlikely people, not away from them. As His followers, we must ask whether our lives build barriers or bridges to those who seem far off.

When Jesus mentions the option of “living water,” the woman thinks physically, but He contrasts temporary satisfaction with eternal life. Before she can receive this gift, He exposes her history of broken relationships, revealing the false wells she has returned to repeatedly. (vv. 10-18) This section highlights humanity’s tendency to seek fulfillment in what cannot ultimately satisfy. Like her, we are called to stop returning to the wells that do not fulfill, and instead turn towards Jesus, the source of true life and fulfillment.

The conversation then turns to worship (vv. 19-24). The woman raises the debate over Mount Gerizim or Jerusalem, but Jesus announces a new hour has come; true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth. Worship will no longer center on a place, but on responding rightly to who He is. We are invited to align our hearts with the truth of Jesus, refusing to let feelings or cultural norms define who, and how we worship.

After revealing Himself as the Messiah (v. 26), the woman leaves her jar and testifies in town (vv. 28-29). Many believe because of her word, and more after hearing Jesus themselves, declaring Him the Savior of the world (vv. 30-42). Jesus uses her as the first evangelist in spite of her being a Samaritan woman with questionable character. Likewise, our simple testimony of encountering Him can draw others to see and believe for themselves and is our way of reaping in the ripe fields of harvest around us.

- 1. Icebreaker:** Can you think of a time when you walked into a situation and something just felt clearly off – like something was not right, even if you could not immediately explain why? What tipped you off?
- 2.** Looking back at your notes from this week’s teaching; was there anything you heard for the first time, something that caught your attention, challenged you, or confused you?
- 3. Read John 4:4-9.** The text says Jesus “had” to go through Samaria, even though it was not the safest route. What does this tell us about Jesus’ heart and mission?

4. Jesus says, “If you knew the gift of God...” (v. 10). What do you think He means by “the gift of God” in this moment? How does that phrase shape the rest of the conversation?
  
5. The woman kept returning to “broken wells” (*relationships with men*). What are the “wells” you are most tempted to dig – achievement, relationships, control, comfort, religion, identity, or something else? Why do you think we return to the same “wells” even after they disappoint us?
  
6. **Read Jeremiah 2:5-13.** While Jesus does not directly quote this text, he certainly had it in mind. Why? What connections might He sense between the days of Jeremiah and the days He was ministering in?

7. When the woman shifts the conversation to worship (vv. 19-24), do you think she is deflecting or genuinely seeking? What in the text might support your view?

8. Jesus tells His disciples, “Open your eyes... the fields are ripe for harvest” (vv 27-38). Where are the fields ripe for harvest around you right now – workplace, neighborhood, school, gym, online spaces, etc.? What might it look like to “open your eyes” this week?

**SUPPORT/PRAYER**

**(15 min)**

**Break into groups of 3 or 4 and pray together.**

For those that need God's grace to swallow any shame, pray that way. For those that need courage and boldness to step into the “fields that are ripe for harvest” and share with others as the woman in our story did, pray that way.