

John 4:5-42

For Reflection before Reading the Text

- What do you experience as the most difficult aspect of travelling?
- What aspect of travelling do you like best?
- What is your least favourite household chore?

Jesus Talks With a Samaritan Woman

⁵ So [Jesus] 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 worshipped 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 worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshippers 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.”

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.

³¹ Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.” ³² But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.”

³³ Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?”

³⁴ “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. ³⁵ Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. ³⁶ Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. ³⁷ Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. ³⁸ I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labour.”

³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹ and because of his words many more became believers.

⁴² 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 Saviour of the world."

Reflection on the Text

- What picture of the woman's personality do you get from this story?
- What is it about Jesus that most impresses the woman? Why does it have such an impact?
- Why does the woman leave her water jar (4:28)?
- What exactly does Jesus want his disciples to see in v.35? Consider v.30.
- What parallels can you find between Jesus' conversation with the woman (4:7-26) and his conversation with the disciples (4:31-38)?

For Personal Reflection and Application

- Has a seemingly chance meeting ever played a part in your coming to know God more deeply?
- Have you ever misunderstood when God tried to communicate with you, as the woman initially was unaware that God was breaking in on her ordinary day-to-day routine?
- What obstacles do you allow to prevent you from communicating God's word to the people around you?
- How much room do your earthly goals and dreams leave for the life in the Spirit that God wishes to give you? How could you make a little more space?
- How do you generally react when you hear about how God has acted in someone else's life? Does it build your faith, as it did for the Samaritan woman's neighbours? Does it stir up envy? What obstacles might stand in the way of your rejoicing at others' spiritual blessings?

Suggestion for Prayer

Take a few minutes to recall that Jesus is as present to you as he was to the Samaritan woman at the well. Ask him for a drink of living water: “Lord, I thirst for you, for your word, your truth, your Holy Spirit. Let your living water gush up in me and out to others.”

After a few minutes of silent reflection, end by praying these lines from Psalms 63 and 42:

*O God, you are my God,
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.*

*As a deer longs for flowing streams,
so my soul longs for you, O God.
My soul thirsts for God,
for the living God.
When shall I come and behold
the face of God?*