



## Woman at the Well: A Story of a Loving God

**Bible Story:** John 4:4-42

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The story of the woman at the well is one of the most well known in the Bible; many Christians can easily tell a summary of it. On its surface, the story chronicles ethnic prejudice and a woman shunned by her community. But take look deeper, and you'll realize it reveals a great deal about Jesus' character. Above all, the story, which unfolds in John 4:1-40, suggests that Jesus is a loving and accepting God, and we should follow his example.

The story begins as Jesus and his disciples travel from Jerusalem in the south to Galilee in the north. To make their journey shorter, they take the quickest route, through Samaria. Tired and thirsty, Jesus sat by Jacob's well while his disciples went to the village of Sychar, roughly a half-mile away, to buy food. It was about noon, the hottest part of the day, and a Samaritan woman came to the well at this inconvenient time to draw water.

### Jesus Meets the Woman at the Well

During his encounter with the woman at the well, Jesus broke three Jewish customs. First, he spoke to her despite the fact that she was a woman. Second, she was a Samaritan woman, and the Jews traditionally despised Samaritans. And, third, he asked her to get him a drink of water, although using her cup or jar would have made him ceremonially unclean.

Jesus' behavior shocked the woman at the well. But as if that weren't enough, he told the woman he could give her "living water" so that she would never thirst again. Jesus used the words *living water* to refer to eternal life, the gift that would satisfy her soul's desire only available through him. At first, the Samaritan woman did not fully understand Jesus' meaning.

Although they had never met before, Jesus revealed that he knew she'd had five husbands and was now living with a man who was not her husband. He had her full attention!

## Jesus Reveals Himself to the Woman

As Jesus and the woman discussed their views on worship, the woman voiced her belief that the Messiah was coming. Jesus answered, "I who speak to you am he." (John 4:26, ESV)

As the woman began to grasp the reality of her encounter with Jesus, the disciples returned. They too were shocked to find him speaking to a woman. Leaving behind her water jar, the woman returned to town, inviting the people to "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did." (John 4:29, ESV)

Meanwhile, Jesus told his disciples the harvest of souls was ready, sown by the prophets, writers of the Old Testament and John the Baptist.

Excited by what the woman told them, the Samaritans came from Sychar and begged Jesus to stay with them.

Jesus stayed two days, teaching the Samaritan people about the Kingdom of God. When he left, the people told the woman, "... we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the savior of the world." (John 4:42, ESV)

## Points of Interest from the Woman at the Well Story

To fully grasp the story of the woman at the well, it's important to understand who the Samaritans were--a mixed race people, who had intermarried with the Assyrians centuries before. They were hated by the Jews because of this cultural mixing and because they had their own version of the Bible and their own temple on Mount Gerizim.

The Samaritan woman Jesus met faced prejudice from her own community. She came to draw water at the hottest part of the day, instead of the usual morning or evening times, because she was shunned and rejected by the other women of the area for her immorality. Jesus knew her history but still accepted her and ministered to her.

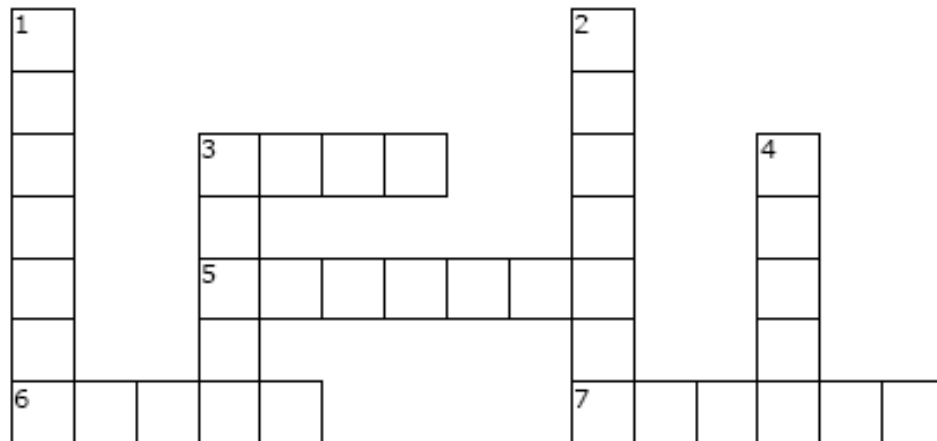
By reaching out to the Samaritans, Jesus showed that his mission was to all people, not just the Jews. In the book of Acts, after Jesus' ascension into heaven, his apostles carried on his work in Samaria and to the Gentile world. Ironically, while the High Priest and Sanhedrin rejected Jesus as the Messiah, the outcast Samaritans recognized him and accepted him for who he truly was, the Lord and savior.

## Question for Reflection

Our human tendency is to judge others because of stereotypes, customs, or prejudices. Jesus treats people as individuals, accepting them with love and compassion. Do you dismiss certain people as lost causes, or do you see them as valuable in their own right, worthy of knowing about the gospel?

# The Woman at the Well

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." John 4:10 (NIV)



## ACROSS

3. A deep hole in the ground from which we get water
5. The one expected to come and save the world
6. To take in liquid through the mouth
7. The need or desire to drink something, especially water

## DOWN

1. The man to whom a woman is married
2. A person who tells what will happen in the future
3. An adult female
4. A clear, colorless liquid which is necessary for life

PROPHET	THIRST	DRINK	WELL
WOMAN	WATER	HUSBAND	MESSIAH

# The Woman at the Well

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The puzzle is based on John 4:5-26 (NIV)

1. Find the hidden words. The words have been placed horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. When you locate a word, draw a circle around it.

A F X V C K G I F T P U S S D  
M Z Y M R S C V Y H R I R O Z  
V N Q P J B C M E I O W T U E  
R B F G Q N F U F R P O N H O  
M P M A L I F E E S H M J C K  
L F C H M U K Q Q T E A R H G  
D S P R I N G H Z Y T N R X O  
W E L L L I V I N G D R I N K  
I M U M T U I G B D U P E B H  
V E R K T M Z Y U V D O T E W  
J S S A M A R I T A N N E F A  
E S B L E H U S B A N D R P T  
S I U D Q A H Y R K T A N K E  
U A Q P B O K M O T O N A S R  
S H Z U M R Y P H D E Q L Y F

PROPHET  
LIVING  
THIRSTY

WELL  
WATER  
LIFE

GIFT  
ETERNAL  
SPRING

DRINK  
JESUS  
SAMARITAN

MESSIAH  
WOMAN  
HUSBAND