Day Seventeen: Lessons from the Samaritan Woman

John 4:3-42

We are more than half way through this study. We have had some lessons about women, but we have had more lessons about God’s plan for us. I love that! As the goal of this study is to show that the world lies about God’s treatment of women, the abundance of lessons that come from interactions with women is inspiring! Which of these women has God treated as less than any man in their story? Which woman did He silence? Every one of these examples should put verses like 1 Timothy 2:9-15 and 1 Corinthians 11:1-3 into their proper context and intent. But that’s another lesson entirely.

Today’s woman, as I read her story, struck me as proving the above as true. Let’s look and see what we learn.

In John 4 we see Jesus moving on to a different area because He knows the Pharisees are stirred up against Him (John 4:1-3). His journey takes Him through Samaria.

Jesus comes to the city of Sychar to the place that had Jacob’s well (Jn. 4:5-6). He is weary from His journey, so He sits by the well to rest.

A Samaritan woman comes to the well to draw water. The disciples have gone off to buy food, so Jesus asks her for a drink of water.

This woman is shocked! In those days, Jews did not have dealings with the Samaritans. She asks why Jesus would ask her for water since He’s a Jew and she is a Samaritan woman. Apparently, her being a woman would also have been an issue.
Instead of answering her question directly, Jesus instead says that if she knew what the gift of God was and Who it was Who was sitting in front of her, she would have asked a different question. Then she would have been given living water (Jn. 4:10).

Reading through the event we learn that this woman is practical, inquisitive, intelligent, and honest.

She, rightly, is not too trusting in the beginning. Those same prejudices have been on her side and used against her all her life. Jesus is an exception that she is not sure what to do with at first (Jn. 4:9, 11).

As she seeks to know more about this living water, she learns why this Man is different from other Jews. This Man has the power to offer her water so that she will never thirst, and she sees the bonus of never needing to draw water again.

When asked to go get her husband, she is truthful and says she does not have a husband. Jesus shows her even more of His power by declaring He knows her to be telling the truth. Furthermore, He knows she has been married five times and is currently living with a man who is not her husband.

She starts to see – this man is a prophet. This thought moves her to ask about the right place to worship. The Samaritans worship in the mountains, but the Jews say that only in Jerusalem is the right place to worship.

Jesus explains to her that she “worships what she does not know”. The Jews worship what they do know. In the Samaritans case, they are not worshipping God – their worship is something else. A day is coming when “true worshipers” will worship in spirit and in truth. These are the people the Father is seeking to worship Him.

The woman remembers what she has been taught. She knows that a Messiah is coming, He will be called Christ, and He will declare all things (Jn. 4:25).

Jesus tells her she is speaking to that One (Jn. 4:26).

Her response? She puts down her water pot and goes into the city telling the men to come and hear what Jesus has to say. I like how she doesn’t come shouting. She comes respectfully seeking knowledge and validation. She tells of how He knew all that she had done, and then asks the men “this is not the Christ, is it?” (Jn. 4:29).
We learn that many of the Samaritans believed in Jesus “because of the woman who testified” (Jn. 4:39). They went and listened because of her. They stayed because of the teaching (Jn. 4:41-42).

God gives her credit for bringing these people to Jesus. Jesus talks about how the spiritual work that was done that day, the disciples would help to reap the harvest, but they did not do the work (Jn. 4:35-38). Jesus and this woman did the work that day.

Here is a situation where men had made poor rules. It wasn’t from God that the Jews had nothing to do with Samaritans to the point of being hateful about it. Men did that. Men had set up laws that made life difficult for women.

Jesus ignored all the “rules”. His disciples questioned what exactly the woman was wanting and why Jesus was speaking with her (Jn. 4:27). I get the impression it was a good thing they kept their mouths shut. They still were schooled in the difference between spiritual and physical concerns (Jn. 4:31-38). It’s a long way from this point to when Peter finally understands that God shows no partiality (Acts 10:34; Acts 15:6-11). Even longer until he learned Christians are not to either (Gal. 2:11-14).

Ladies, there is so much to glean from Jesus’ conversation with the Samaritan woman. The smallest part is that Jesus gave the gospel to all – men and women alike. God used men and women alike to sow that seed even further.

The largest part is that Jesus gives LIVING WATER.

The world wants to focus on the small part and try to take away its truth. The world doesn’t want to focus on the living water, which is the part that makes the small part possible.

I want to encourage you to stop listening when Satan’s lies about how you should be treated in this world are told. Man’s equality and God’s equality are NOT the same thing. Compare what men (and women) of the world focus upon with what God tells you to focus on.

God promises that those who follow Him will suffer injustice, after all Jesus did. We are partakers with Him in these things (Col. 2:8-15; Acts 5:41). He suffered them FIRST (Lk. 24:26) to give us the hope that makes our suffering turn to joy (James 1:2-4).

Do not let the world tell you are less. They do not see you as God sees you.
Be like the Samaritan woman and learn to see yourself as God sees you.

The living water is meant for you. Be one who worships God in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24).

Enjoy!