

# Thirsty

## John 4 – woman at the well

At Bible College I had an irritatingly challenging lecturer called Mike Frost. Some of you would have heard of him, he is a local entity. Now the vice Principle of Morling College and has written extensively on 'The Missional Church' and the Church in a 'Post Christian era'. About 8 books, several I have read, you may have. As a teacher he was very challenging and he just kept turning up as my lecturer.

Mike preaches and teaches through story and was quite inspiring when I did several of my preaching subjects with him.

One story was quite life changing for him and really impacted me. Mike was working as an evangelist and was invited to accompany someone he met at a conference to come and see what he was doing to minister in a bikers pub in a place called Elizabeth, a tough area near Adelaide – The Rose and Crown Hotel. It didn't seem too cutting edge at first. A bad gospel song accompanied by some ripe jeering from the audience, followed by a talk which Mike was asked to give, also accompanied by jeering. Then Mike asked if anyone wanted him to pray for anyone. This huge heavily tattooed biker called Max asked him to pray for the lads (soldiers) in East Timor. Then Mike and the man who had asked him along sat at the bar. The man then asked everyone at the bar what question they would ask God if they had the chance to ask just one.

When it came to Max's turn, he said he would ask God: 'Who am I?'

We know that Church is the 'the last place max would go' but it doesn't mean Max isn't on a profound spiritual quest. But it is evident that in most churches, Max the biker is missing!

Mike is all about teaching on meeting people where they are at and spreading the gospel. Being sent is fundamental to the nature of God. God sends us.

Here is a great story about Jesus doing just that. Sit back, relax while I bring to you a familiar story where Jesus is doing just that.

### **Follow through in John 4 – skimming through some of the verses**

#### **John 4:5 'So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar'....**

What on earth was a Jew like you Jesus, doing in a place like this? Maybe God had planned a divine appointment, but Samaritans were unclean, although Jews and Samaritans had one thing in common..... they all developed a powerful thirst.

**John 4:6 'Jacob's well was there'**. A welcome source of water in a parched parcel of land that Jacob bequeathed to his son Joseph and it was the women of the land who spent most time at the wells.

Anticipation hung over the scene like the desert heat. By all that was considered right and holy, Jesus shouldn't have been there. But he was.

**John 4:6 'and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour'**. By Jewish time it was twelve noon, the heat of the day, Jesus had been travelling all morning and finding a watering hole, he probably dropped there in an exhausted heap. Though he is fully God, Jesus human nature is evident here.

So.....will someone please get this man a drink?

**Verse 7 'When a Samaritan woman came to draw water'**

This woman had two strikes against her – 1. She was a Samaritan, not a Jew and 2. She was a woman of all things. John did not even include her name. A woman, and not a Jew, who cares..... Jesus cared.

**'Will you give me a drink'** He spoke directly to a person who was really a social reject. He didn't command her, he asked her, polite and forthright, the start of a lengthy conversation with a Samaritan, a woman and that kind of woman. Her nationality and gender are foundation to this story, they drive home the universal truth of God's fountain of grace. His refreshing waters are meant for every human being willing to hold out an empty cup.

This woman was certainly not expecting him but clearly Jesus was expecting her. Interesting, his disciples had gone into the town to buy food, why had he not gone with them?

No he was meeting her face to face, the way he meets us, the best way to deal with spiritual matters.

**Verse 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?'**

**Verse 10 Jesus answers ' if you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink'.**

There is a shift here from human thirst to eternal satisfaction. **'You would have asked him and he would have given you living water.'** Water from a well was dead water – rainwater mostly. Far from pure or refreshing, it was more suited to sheep than people. Water from the well was everyday stuff, but living water? Now there's what a concept!

**Verse 11 'Sir, the woman said, you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?'**

The woman was polite and gutsy. Jesus didn't have a bucket or bowl, they both knew that, she was a bit of a pushy broad, maybe that's why I like her so much.

**Verse 13 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again' Repeat**

We are such a pathetic ice water family, a fridge makes ice and icy cold water on tap. Far, far away from retrieving water from a well. When you are thirsty you can down a huge glass of icy water in one gulp and then go back for more.

**Verse 14** *'But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'*

The water Jesus spoke of was an endless supply of holy, cleansing water awaiting our Samaritan woman.

**Verse 15** *'Sir, give me this water so that I won't go thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.'*

She would clearly like to never have to visit that well again, sorry about that dear woman but we can't live without it. A week without water and we are dead. Jesus knew she was parched with thirst in both body and spirit. The first easily solved by drawing water from the well but the other thirst needed to be bought into the open before it could be dealt with.

**Verse 16** *'Go, call your husband and come back'* Women of that day did not speak to men in public so by asking her husband to join them, Jesus was honouring her and being culturally relevant. *'I have no husband'* she replied. *'you are right when you say you have no husband, the fact is, you have had five husbands and the man you now have is not your husband.'*

Eek, exposed....he knows.....five husbands, Five weddings, imagine all those toasters and coffee machines.

**Verse 19** *'Sir,'* the woman said, *'I can see you are a prophet'* Here she is not denying or affirming His prophetic word about the six men with whom she'd been intimate. Instead, she cleverly shifts their conversation in a completely different direction.

**Verse 20** *'Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem'.* A complete change in direction. Its easy to steer a conversation from spiritual towards religion, less personal, more debatable, it's easier to talk about church and religion than to talk about Christ and spiritual matters. Jesus was ready for her diversion....

**Verse 22** *'You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for Salvation is from the Jews.'* Yes he sneaked the Salvation word in.

**Verse 25** *'I know that Messiah is coming'* So... the first mention of the Messiah, and she said it. *'When he comes he will explain everything to us'*. She was keen to dismiss this stranger who knew way too much. But Jesus doesn't let her off the hook and it's here he reveals himself in Verse 26.

**Verse 26** *'I who speak to you am he'.* (Repeat) At this crucial point in the story (enter stage left) the disciples return and are surprised to find him talking with a woman

**Verse 27.** *'They were surprised but quiet'.*

Our woman believed, she believed and she abandoned the search for plain water from the well.

**Verse 28 'Then leaving her water jar'**. Did she leave it on purpose or simply forget it in the excitement of the moment? It doesn't matter she discovered something better, which enabled her to leave her sinful life behind, forgotten in the dust and move on. Filled with living water, she went to find other thirsty souls, eager to offer them a drink too.

**Verses 28-29 'The woman went back to the town and said to the people, "come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"** Oh yes it could woman! **"Come see"**.

**Two things happen** when we meet Christ and see him for who he really is:

1. **We confess our sins openly.**
2. **We share the good news of forgiveness. The shame of the past is gone because our sins have been forgiven and forgotten.**

The people of the city listened to her, a woman with a shady lifestyle....she had seen Christ and now the people of Sychar saw Christ in her.

**A changed life will get peoples attention every time!**

**Verse 39 'Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the womans testimony , "He told me everthing I ever did'**. This woman's faith started to flow through every crack and crevice of her being. All that knew her were convinced she had encountered the Messiah. Now they wanted to hear from the man himself. The harvest was amazing.

**Verse 40 'So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers.'**

How exciting for our girl at the well, no longer treated as an outcast, she was part of the community, no longer a foolish female, she was a wise woman, first to meet the Messiah.

**Verse 42 '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'**.

The camera crew departed with Jesus for Galilee, so we are left wondering what happened next. My guess is, this woman won the heart of her man for the Lord and married him.

Whatever the story line, of this we can be sure: **The woman with no name left behind not only her discarded water pot, but her shame as well never to embrace it again.**

Important things:

1. **Jesus had this planned**, it wasn't a mistake that he passed through this way. It was possible to go to Galilee in a roundabout way which some Jews did because Samaritans were unclean. But he had an appointment.
2. **Jesus is purposeful**
3. **He is relational** – it is all about his relationship with this woman.
4. **He sends his disciples off to buy food**, maybe so he could be alone. He sat on the well to be fully conspicuous and unavoidable.
5. **He pursues her** – he wants her to know she is graciously pursued, he is interested in a relationship with her and with you and me.
6. **He is graciously superior**. I have the water of life and you have a thirst, and you need what I have to live. If you will drink – if you will believe in me as your satisfying treasure – you will live forever.

**Jesus will not give up, you could wait till next week to taste and see, to believe and receive him. But, you may not have till next week so come drink these waters.**