

Week 1: Healing

John 4:1-30 Samaritan woman and Jesus

Creative Entry

- What is the thirstiest you have ever been? Compare stories.
- What is your favorite drink?
- If you could dive into a pool of any liquid, what would you dive into?
- Bring a special drink to share as a group, i.e. root beer floats, mango lassies, jamaica, horchata, etc.

Today we are looking at the story of a woman who is coming to a well at the hottest part of the day, noon, to draw water. This is unusual because most women would draw water earlier when it is cooler, but this woman has an interesting story and has her own reasons for avoiding the rest of the town. Let's pray and take a look at how Jesus engages her in conversation.

Questions

Describe this woman. What do we know about her?

How does Jesus interact with this woman? Compare and contrast that with how the disciples interact with the woman V27.

What barriers does Jesus cross as he interacts with this woman? Make a list.

What do you think Jesus means by "living water"? V10

Why does Jesus bring up the fact that she's had multiple husbands? V16

What does it mean to worship "in spirit and truth"?

Why do you think the woman leaves her water jug? V28

Main Points

- This woman is ostracised from her community for her lifestyle, but Jesus chooses to engage her in conversation anyway. He breaks racial norms, gender norms, and holiness norms by interacting with her. Jesus sees her value and chooses to reach out to her, which shocks even his disciples because this is the first time in the book of John that we see Jesus interacting with a Samaritan woman this way.
- Jesus wants this woman to know that she can have forgiveness from God and live forever in his presence, no matter what she may feel like would disqualify her. He brings up her past with men not to shame her, but to help her understand that he knows her and accepts her anyway, faults and all.
- Jesus talks about true worshippers worshipping "in spirit and truth" because he wants the woman to understand that relationship with God is built upon honesty and our awareness of our need for him, as opposed to rituals or rules. He wants her to know that all are welcome to worship God, not just special people such as the Jewish nation.
- In leaving her water jug, the woman is symbolically leaving her old past behind. She returns to her town not as a fallen woman, but as a messenger, telling her community that she has found Jesus. Her interactions with Jesus have transformed her from an outcast to a community builder, and she is now empowered as a Samaritan woman to help others find God.

Application

In what ways do you feel like an outsider because of who you are or the things that you have done?

Have you ever felt disqualified from being accepted or loved by God? Take a moment to journal about the things that you feel like are separating you from him. Turn in pairs and share with one another and pray for forgiveness for one another.

What “wells” do you find yourself returning to day after day to try to find satisfaction, worth, meaning, or fulfillment? What would it look like for you to leave your “water jug” behind and instead turn to Jesus to satisfy your thirst?

Call to Faith

Sometimes the things we have done make us feel unable to be in relationship with God. Whether it's our own guilt, or it's the judgement of other people, sometimes we feel unworthy of coming to him and admitting we need healing. For this woman, her history with men left her feeling ashamed, but Jesus wanted to talk with her about it so that he could show her he loves and accepts her and wants a better life for her. Is there anyone here today who feels like you want acceptance and forgiveness from Jesus? I'd love to pray with you to invite him into your life so you can experience what he means by having living water that will never run dry.

Week 2: Community

John 4:27-42 Samaritan woman and town

Creative Entry

- What is the best community you've ever been in? It could be a team, a group, a class, a family gathering, a neighborhood, a circle of friends, etc. What made that community so special?

Today we will be talking about community and what it looks like to explore faith together. We will pick up where we left off last week, with the Samaritan woman who left her water jug at the well and returned to her town to tell people about Jesus. It is important to remember that this woman was once an outcast from these very people, but something has shifted inside of her now, and we will pick up with her choosing to return with a message.

Questions

How does the woman engage her community? What would this have felt like for her? How does the town respond to her invitation? What would it have felt like to be a townspeople, hearing the testimony of this “fallen” woman? How do the Samaritans respond to Jesus? How does their response evolve with time? What does Jesus mean by “the fields are white with harvest?” V35 Why does the woman go back to the town first? Why doesn't Jesus go back with her right away?

Main Points

Last week we saw how the woman underwent a radical change in how she engages her town. She used to avoid the other women at the well, but now she is returning to this same community to tell others about Jesus. Jesus cares about our relationships. He wants to restore us to our community.

Sharing Jesus with our friends actually deepens that sense of community. Grain turns white when it is ripe and ready for harvest. We never know who around us is "ripe" and waiting to talk about God and find answers to their spiritual questions. Jesus is saying that there are always people ready around us, so it is important to pay attention and invite our friends to "come and see" and experience Jesus for themselves.

When a community interacts with Jesus together, each individual experiences God more fully, and the community also grows closer together. Spiritual growth often happens first in community, but as people engage with Jesus more personally their understanding of him grows.

Application

Who are people in your community that do not yet know about Jesus? Make a list of 3-5 people.

Practice writing out a 30 second or 2 minute testimony about how Jesus has affected your life. Share with a neighbor.

What would it look like for you to go and share with your friends what Jesus has done for you? Process in pairs, then make a plan to share Jesus with at least one friend this week. Give out accountability partners.

Call to Faith

Perhaps you are sitting here and you do not yet feel that you are ready to share Jesus with your friends because you are realizing that you have not yet had a moment where you have invited Jesus into your life. The truth is that Jesus sees you and wants a personal relationship with you too. Just like the townspeople in this story, you are here because someone invited you to come and hear about Jesus. Are you ready to give your life to Jesus today? The story ends with the people saying "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."-- Do you believe this? I'd love to pray with you!

Week 3: Mission

John 6:1-14 Feeding the 5k

Creative Entry

- If possible bring a pie or some other special dessert to small group. While you are eating, ask everyone what is their favorite Thanksgiving food. We all have our favorites. Food is important, not just for survival, but also for community. We enjoy eating together with other people. A lot of stories about Jesus center around food. We will

look at one of them, Jesus feeding the 5,000. This is one of my favorite stories because it's about people getting free food.

Questions

What was Jesus' role in the passage? List everything that Jesus did.

What was the role of the disciples? List everything that the disciples did.

What was the role of the crowd? List everything that the crowd did.

Compare and contrast how Philip and Jesus see the crowd.

Why was Jesus testing Philip? v5,6

What does Philip's response show you about his heart? V7

Main Points

- Jesus isn't annoyed by all of the hungry people and doesn't see it as a disruption to his ministry. He sees people in need. We often don't even notice people in need around us and we can often feel annoyed by the disruption in our schedule.
- Philip couldn't wrap his mind around feeding so many people with so little money and resources. His response was... "but how, where will we find food, we don't have enough money..." We do this a lot, and Jesus' invitation is to trust. To simply trust that he has a plan and that he has not just our best interests in mind, but also wants us to care for the interests of others that we might encounter.
- Jesus sees the 5 loaves and 2 fish from the boy and says "I can work with that." Sometimes we don't feel like we have enough to give. Jesus is saying "I can work with your not enough."
- Everyone (much more than 5,000 because of women and children) was satisfied and there was 12 basketfuls left over. Jesus took what the boy was giving and multiplied it exponentially.

Application

- Make 3 lists on the back of your paper: crowds, resources, and heart posture.
 - A. Who are the people God is bringing you in contact with each day?
 - B. What do you have to offer?
 - C. How is your heart responding to their needs?
 - A. Jesus involved the disciples in feeding the people. And it was a miracle. Jesus wants to involve us as well in what he is doing right here on this campus. Ask Jesus to help you to see people that you are in contact with every day, your classmates, your professors, people riding the bus or eating in the cafeteria. Ask him to help you open your eyes to see people, to talk to them about Jesus, to help them if they are in need.
 - B. What are your 5 loaves and 2 fish that you could give to Jesus? Maybe its 30 min. a day to eat lunch with someone you don't know. Maybe it's paying for someone's bus fare. What can you give to Jesus and see what he does with it?
 - C. In what ways do you feel overwhelmed by Philip when you see the need? Pray with the person next to you for compassion for the people on this campus and who meet every day.

Call to Faith

Maybe you are thinking that you don't have anything to give to Jesus and he wouldn't want anything you have to offer. But the truth is that Jesus wants you to join him in this journey. We find meaning and love by giving our lives away. Jesus wants you to join this community of followers, ask for forgiveness for trying to do things your own way, and decide to say yes to him. He doesn't need our help, but he wants us to partner with him. The only way we can do that is by following his leadership in our lives. If you have never done that, would like to say yes to giving your life to Jesus right now?

Week 4: Growth

John 15:1-8 The Vine

Creative Entry

- Print and cut out pictures of grapevines below.

Today we are going to look at a passage where is talking about grape vines. He actually uses it as a metaphor to talk about our spiritual journey. Let's spend some time reading it together.

- Read the passage out loud 2 or 3 times and have each small group member take a picture that represents which grapevine they currently are. Let them reflect on the picture for several minutes.

Questions

Look at the pictures of the vines and think of all of the adjectives you can that would describe Jesus based on this image.

How does Jesus describe the process of tending vines?

How does Jesus describe the process of producing fruit?

What is the spiritual fruit Jesus is referring to? v2-4

What does it mean that Jesus is the true vine? What are the implications of that? v1

What does it mean that God the Father is the gardener? What are the implications of this? v1

What does it mean that we are the branches? What are the implications for us? v5

Main Points

- The vine is the thick sturdy part at the bottom that looks like a gnarled tree trunk. The branches are the thin ones with the leaves and grapes. Jesus is referring to himself as that thick, strong, sturdy vine. He refers to us as the branches that produce fruit, and to the Father as the one who is constantly tending and making sure everything is growing the right way.
- The fruit Jesus is referring to can be many things, it can look like evangelism, leadership, making disciples, spending time with Jesus, grace, joy, etc. Think of the fruit of the spirit. Galatians 5:22-23.
- Pruning allows for greater production of fruit because more energy is put into making fruit than making more leaves. Pruning can be associated with anything in our life that is taking energy away from fruitfulness and keeping fruit from being produced.

Application

What "fruit" would you like to see more of in your life?

What do you need to do to stay connected to the vine? Name 2 things that would help with that this week.

What are things that you need to let God prune out of your life in order to stay connected?

Call to Faith

Maybe you are not yet connected to the vine. Jesus' invitation to you is to be part of this vineyard. (show grapevine picture of grafting onto the vine, the one with the white tape) He wants nothing more than for you to be connected to him, to know him, and for him to know you. Jesus invites you to turn from the way you have been doing things apart from him and to follow his leadership in your life. What is keeping you from connecting to the vine and saying yes to Jesus? Would you like to do that right now?



#CrucialRelationships



