

19-3-17

Optional Icebreaker: Share something that has given you encouragement since you last met together.

The Samaritan Woman at the Well

READING: John 4: 5-30

- This story is intended to go with the story of Nicodemus in chapter 3 to provide a contrast.
- Jesus' encounter with the woman would have been shocking a) because she was a **woman**, b) she was a **Samaritan** and c) by fetching water in the noonday heat she probably had reason to avoid people.
- Jesus comes and meets us whoever we are or whatever we have done. Very few stories in the Bible show Jesus meeting someone who is completely sorted and happy with life.
- Background. The Kingdom of Israel split about 900BC. The southern part became Judah, continued with the line of kings that stretched back to David and kept its capital in Jerusalem. The northern half had a new king, a capital in the city of Samaria and set up shrines. Later, invaded by the Assyrians, they gradually mingled with pagan people.
- V.9. The woman was well aware the Jews think she is not on their level. She was probably trying to keep herself to herself.
- Jesus carries on, v10, and she is drawn into the conversation, although she is still thinking about actual water.
- V16. Jesus shows the woman that he knows all about her. This convinces her that He is a prophet.
- Jesus tells her that the Samaritans are wrong and salvation will come from the Jews but the time will come when it won't matter where they worship.

- True worship is in **spirit** and in **truth**. The *how* and the *whom* of worship. Real worship comes from the spirit within and is based on true views of God. Worship must engage your emotions and must engage your thought.
- V25. The woman knows the prophecies about the Messiah. She rushes to tell people to come and see Jesus.
- V4. "Jesus **had to go** to Samaria." The Samaritans had set out on the wrong path so Jesus went TO them. We are charged to GO and tell the Good News, not to just put a welcome notice on the door and wait for people to come to us.
- As Bishop Peter said last week, spreading the Good News is **our** job. Who else will do it?

QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think Jesus risked His reputation by asking a favour of this woman?
2. What is significant about this story taking place in Samaria?
3. Can you think of examples of Jesus meeting you/someone else when life has been difficult? Try to find an example of something that would be good to share with someone who isn't a Christian.
4. Why does Jesus change the topic of conversation so abruptly to the woman's personal life (v 16-18)? What strikes you about the way he responds to her claim not to have a husband?
5. Is there anything we can learn from Jesus' conversation with the woman which might help us in talking to people about Him?