

## Discuss:

Talking to strangers may not be part of our everyday routine, but sometimes we gain surprising insights from unexpected conversations. Share with the group a memorable or meaningful encounter you've had with a stranger.

## Well, Well, Well:

In John's Gospel Jesus comes to fulfill Israel's story. Frequently, he does so by "re-telling" it! So, when the text gives us specific details or images, it never hurts to ask... "Have we seen this somewhere *before*?"

As the start of chapter four begins, Jesus is tired from his journey and sits down by a well for a drink. Soon he's joined by a woman who comes to draw water. Sound familiar?

Genesis 24:11-14 "And Abraham's servant made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time when women go out to draw water. And he said, "O Lord... Behold, I am standing by the spring of water.... Let the young woman to whom I shall say, 'Please let down your jar that I may drink,' and who shall say, 'Drink, and I will water your camels'—let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac."

Genesis 29:1-2,10-12 "Then Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the east. As he looked, he saw a well in the field... Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban...and he came near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. Then Jacob kissed Rachel and wept aloud. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman, and that he was Rebekah's son, and she ran and told her father."

Exodus 2:15-21 "Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well. Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. The shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and saved them, and watered their flock. When they came home to their father Reuel, he said... "Why have you left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread." And Moses was content to dwell with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah."

Three wells, three brides! Isaac married Rebekah, Jacob married Rachel, and Moses married Zipporah. There seems to be a pattern here!

## A Closer Look:

- 1) Read John 4:4-26. While we don't know her name, we are given lots of information about the Samaritan woman. Underline details in these verses you feel are significant for understanding who she is and how she relates to Jesus. Use these to come up with **three adjectives of your own** to describe her.
- 2) Verses 7-15 speak in both literal and metaphorical ways about thirst, water, and life itself. Who is thirsty? Who has water to give? How do you suppose can water be "living"?
- 3) Consider the "well" passages in the box above. Look too at the testimony of John the Baptist from 3:27-29. Taken together, how might these add to our understanding of this passage? Why does Jesus make time to speak with a controversial Samaritan woman?

## Making it Personal:

- 1) Jesus claims to provide his disciples with water that “will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” That verb “welling” is present tense.... the living water Jesus offers is not reserved for an age to come, but begins its work in the present moment. Take a moment to reflect on where you may be “thirsty”? What do you suppose it means for water to be “living”?
- 2) Streams of life and living water flow into our lives as we worship the One who is himself LIFE! Jesus says that this kind of worship must be done in “the Spirit and in truth” (v. 23,24). How is the Spirit part of your worship of God? What do you suppose is required for our worship to be found “true”? Try to be specific.

### *The Passage: John 4:4-26*

4 Now Jesus had to go through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” 8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) 8 The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

10 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.” 11 “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?”

13 Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” 15 The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

16 He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.” 17 “I have no husband,” she replied. Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. 18 The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

19 “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. 20 Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.” 21 “Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

25 The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” 26 Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”