

## Weekly Bible Study for Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

Encounters with Jesus: "The Samaritan Woman" John 4: 1-26 by Diana Middleditch, March 2021

If we look at the diorama of the opening of this chapter, verses 1-15 there are several things that are wrong. It is by noticing the wrongs in the picture that we can understand how this image would look to a passerby. Here we see a woman who is on her own, she is a Samaritan, and she is talking with a man who is a Jew. All of this would have been wrong during Jesus' time and culture.

Again and again, we see Jesus conversing with the most unlikely of people and again and again he is misunderstood. Initially the woman at the well thinks Jesus is talking about plain and simple water from the well. She did not understand Jesus' spiritual message. He is in actuality fact talking at a much higher/heavenly level, but the listener is much more earthly bound. It is therefore easy to see how people could miss the point, miss the message.

This woman is the bad woman of the township. She has been married 5 times and is now living with a man who is not her husband. Jesus is aware of her past and is giving her the opportunity to have a new life but for this she has to give up all that is wrong in her life to be able to take up this offer of a new life. She is being offered living water instead of the stale stagnant water of her past.

**Q1)** What misunderstandings arise between the woman and Jesus?

**Q2)** During this dialogue between Jesus and the woman Jesus talks about her past. Why do you think she tries to change the subject?

**Q3)** How does Jesus respond to her excuses?

Another point that is brought out in this passage is the age-old argument about holy places. Is Mount Zion in Jerusalem or Mount Gerizim in Samaria the most holy of mountains? Maybe the woman brought this up to distract Jesus, shift the conversation in another direction?

**Q4)** What excuses today do people give for not seeking God?

Part of Jesus' mission on earth was that from now on holy mountains would not matter that much. If we allow our places of worship to become more important, we are in trouble.

This woman, this Samaritan has been on a very fast spiritual journey. She has gone from seeing Jesus as a Jew, then as a prophet and finally as the Messiah.

Verse 26 Jesus reveals to her, "I who speak to you am He". Using the same words that God used When He revealed Himself to Moses (Ex 3:14) Jesus clearly stated that He is the messiah.

**Q5)** How do you hope to encounter Jesus in this coming week? In a walk, a prayer time, or another way?