



Lesson 13: The God Who Breaks Down Barriers

Have you ever felt rejected, or been fearful that if people knew the real you they'd turn the other way?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

This was the reality lived by the woman at the well, found in Episode 13 of *Story Encounters: The Chosen* and John chapter 4 in the Bible.

The woman Jesus encountered at the well was no stranger to rejection. As a Samaritan, she lived her life hearing about the supposed superiority of the Jews and how, as a Samaritan, she and her people were inferior. With deep-seated prejudice and hostility between Jews and Samaritans, both groups made every effort to avoid each other.

But even among her fellow Samaritans, she was also rejected. As a divorcee who had remarried multiple times in a society where only the man was allowed to divorce a woman, she had been rejected by at least several marriage partners. Beyond all of those divorces, she was now living with a boyfriend, and this too was looked down upon by her society as a whole.

Lastly, and perhaps most significantly, all these factors combined likely made her feel rejected by God as well.

It was with all of these burdens that this woman came to the well in the heat of the day, not the normal time for collecting water. She went at a time where she should have been so desperately trying to avoid anyone. Gathering to collect water was a social gathering and the rejection she felt day after day likely took its toll.

Little did she know that she had a divine appointment that day waiting for her: Jesus would transform her life and that of her whole community in a series of 5 steps.

STEP 1: CAN YOU HELP ME?

“*A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give Me a drink.” For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?” For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.*”

JOHN 4:7-8, NKJV.

Scan the code on the right to watch a video.



Why do you think Jesus started out the conversation asking for a favor?

Answer:

Samaritans knew that Jews perceived themselves as superior. By asking for a favor, Jesus intentionally made Himself dependent upon her kindness, putting Himself in a vulnerable, powerless position.

“*The hatred between Jews and Samaritans prevented the woman from offering a kindness to Jesus; but the Saviour was seeking to find the key to this heart, and with the tact born of divine love, He asked, not offered, a favor. The offer of a kindness might have been rejected; but trust awakens trust. The King of heaven came to this outcast soul, asking a service at her hands.*”

- ELLEN WHITE, DESIRE OF AGES, P.184

As Jesus talked kindly with the woman at the well, interacting in a way that was totally unexpected for a Jewish man to interact with a Samaritan woman, Jesus showed that He paid no attention to the historical prejudice or social bias that the Jews had against the Samaritans.

When God created the world, He made all humans in His image—He didn't make a superior race and an inferior race. Unfortunately, as sin entered the world, so did negative views of others. We live in a world where discrimination and prejudice have become barriers to us experiencing the abundant life God designed all of us to have (John 10:10). He left an example for us that, in Him, we are all one.

“*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*”

GALATIANS 3:28, NIV.

STEP 2: I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU

Jesus knew that the woman at the well wasn't just thirsting for water to drink on a hot day. What else do you think she was thirsting for?

Answer:

Having gone from one man to the next, she was desperate to find something that would truly fill her soul. She was undoubtedly broken emotionally, likely physically and definitely spiritually.

“*Jesus... said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.” The woman said to Him, “Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?” Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.”*”

JOHN 4:10-15, NKJV.

Scan the code on the right to watch a video.



“*The woman is thirsty. She thinks she’s thirsty for the water she’s come to get water in the middle of the day, but she’s thirsty for something else. And what she’s thirsty for is the healing and the hope that only God can bring, that only [the] Messiah can bring. She thinks she’s coming for the water but she has found the Water of Life.*”

- DAVID ASSCHERICK, “AT JACOB’S WELL” (DA WITH DA VIDEO SERIES).
[HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/OU PPOEE87NS](https://youtu.be/ouPPOEE87Ns)

As she realized her need of water for her physical needs, she also recognized that Jesus spoke of something more. Her interest was peaked and she now had a desire for the gift He spoke of. Before He could give it to her though, one more step was in order.

STEP 3: I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU

“*Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.”*

JOHN 4:16-18, NKJV.

Scan the code on the right to watch a video.



Why do you think Jesus brought up her relationship history that she was likely ashamed about? (choose all that apply).

- ☐ He wanted to judge and condemn her for her sin.
- ☐ He wanted to make it clear that He knew everything about her and still accepted her. I want to follow in Jesus’ footsteps and “see” others as He does.
- ☐ He wanted her to fully recognize her need for a Savior from sin.

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Jesus now abruptly turned the conversation. Before this soul could receive the gift He longed to bestow, she must be brought to recognize her sin and her Saviour. He “saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.” She answered, “I have no husband.” Thus she hoped to prevent all questioning in that direction. But the Saviour continued, “Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.” The listener trembled. A mysterious hand was turning the pages of her life history, bringing to view that which she had hoped to keep forever hidden. Who was He that could read the secrets of her life? There came to her thoughts of eternity, of the future Judgment, when all that is now hidden shall be revealed. In its light, conscience was awakened.”

- ELLEN WHITE, DESIRE OF AGES, P.187.

Though Jesus came to break down barriers and make us one in Him, sometimes we might feel ashamed of who we truly are and that He could never love the “real” us.

All of us have negative aspects of our life we’d rather not broadcast to the world. We often try to hide who we really are to make ourselves more likable.

But God knows the real you and He chooses to love you anyway.

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God knows you. He knows you thoroughly, intimately, completely and exhaustively. And He loves you. This is the great truth of the Gospel. To be completely known and still completely loved is the longing desire of the human heart. Because most of us think that if people really knew who we were, they wouldn’t like us. This is why we often don’t want to let everybody in, we pretend and present so that people

*love a fiction of us. But God doesn't love a fiction of you.
God loves YOU."*

- ADAPTED FROM DAVID ASSCHERICK, "AT JACOB'S WELL" (DA WITH DA VIDEO SERIES). [HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/OU PPOEE87NS](https://youtu.be/ouPPOEE87NS)

Jesus sought to draw her attention to her deepest need—a Savior.

None of us are exempt from sin (Romans 3:23) and Isaiah 59:2 reminds us that our sins separate us from our Holy God. But by taking our punishment, Jesus made a way for us to be reunited and reconciled with God.

When we realize that Jesus is the only One who can save us from our sin and bring true healing to our soul, it is then that we can cry out to Him for help. He is more than willing to cleanse us from all sin, transform us, and restore our relationship with our Heavenly Father.

“*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*”

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21, NIV.

Jesus came to break down barriers, not just between people, but most importantly between us and Him.

STEP 4: GOD SEEKS TRUE WORSHIPPERS

“*The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”*

JOHN 4:19-24, NKJV.

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In addition to barriers of ethnic or cultural prejudices, another common barrier that people erect between each other are barriers of religion.

What kind of worship does God desire?

- ☐ Worship in truth.
- ☐ Worship in the right spirit.
- ☐ Worship in spirit and truth.

Like many religious people today, the Samaritans may not have had all the truth, but many of them had the right spirit. While Jesus acknowledges the importance of worshiping in the right spirit, He also expresses His deep desire and longing for the time when authentic worshipers of God will worship both in spirit and truth.

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Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life...”

JOHN 14:6 NIV.

STEP 5: I’VE CHOSEN YOU

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The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am He.”... The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, “Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” Then they went out of the city and came to Him... And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all that I ever did.”

JOHN 4:25-26,28-30,39, NKJV.

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It's amazing that God chose this despised outcast of a woman to become His first evangelist! And she proved to be an effective one at that.

She had tasted first hand of the living water of unconditional love, mercy, grace and truth that God alone provides, and she couldn't wait to share it with others.

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As soon as she had found the Saviour the Samaritan woman brought others to Him. She proved herself a more effective missionary than His own disciples. The disciples saw nothing in Samaria to indicate that it was an encouraging field... But through the woman whom they despised, a whole cityful were brought to hear the Saviour. She carried the light at once to her countrymen.

This woman represents the working of a practical faith in Christ. Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary. He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life. The receiver becomes a giver. The grace of Christ in the soul is like a spring in the desert, welling up to refresh all, and making those who are ready to perish eager to drink of the water of life.”

- ELLEN WHITE, DESIRE OF AGES, P. 195.

As we drink of the Living Water of Christ, we too will become fountains of life, seeking to break down barriers and bless others in the same way—no matter who they are or what they've done.

And as we see the thirst of others quenched, we too will be filled and satisfied, just like Jesus was (John 4:31-34)!

How would you like to respond?

- ☐ I accept that God knows every intimate detail about me and still chooses to love me, no matter who I am or what I've done.
- ☐ I desire to be like Jesus, breaking down barriers of prejudice and pride in my heart, and loving others unconditionally as God loves me.
- ☐ I want to worship God in spirit and truth.
- ☐ I want to become a fountain of life that blesses others with the Christ, the Living Water.

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But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility... Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household.”

EPHESIANS 2:13-14,19, NIV.

CONGRATULATIONS! You've finished our *Story Encounters: The Chosen* course, and I trust it's been a fulfilling experience. This Bible study series may be over, but your journey could be just beginning! For some complementary study of the Gospels, we encourage you to read a book that has been a great source of inspiration on the life of Jesus, *The Desire of Ages*. You can access this e-book for free by visiting HopeTV.org/thechosen.

God bless you as you continue to seek Him!