

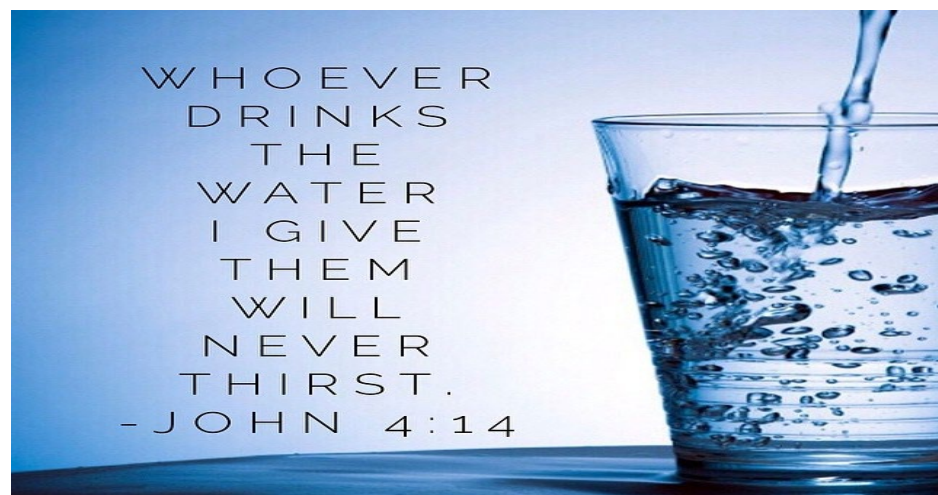
Jesus Takes the Road Less Traveled

John 4.1-14

In John 4 the narrative of Jesus' life takes a surprising turn: He travels to Samaria to speak with a woman. You know the story, but what it reveals about Jesus and how we can be like Him is what we need to discover...

Why John's Gospel, and Jesus' example, are so important

- Jesus reached across social barriers (3-6)
Don't limit your 'mission field'!
- Jesus initiated contact (7, 9)
Look for an opening to share.
- Jesus used physical need to expose spiritual truth (10)
Meet needs...remembering the deepest need.
- Jesus' offer of eternal life is simple: Drink! (13-14)
Don't complicate the gospel!



1. The introduction to the story of Jesus' encounter with the woman of Samaria is recorded in John 4.1-6. Why did Jesus want to leave Judea and return to Galilee? Did Jesus and His disciples "have to" go through Samaria to get to Galilee? Why do you think Jesus chose to stop at Sychar? As the Son of God, He could know who He would encounter at the well. Assuming that Jesus is being "intentional" in this meeting, what does it reflect about His heart?
2. Reaching across ethnic, cultural, or social barriers can be hard. We like being with people who share our values and lifestyle. As a Jew, why would it have been unexpected for Jesus to dialogue with the Samaritan woman? How did Jesus overcome the 'cultural divide'?
3. Today in America, people from different countries live in close proximity. What different cultural groups have you encountered? Knowing that God loves the world, and that He wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth (1 Tim. 2.4), how can we *intentionally* share Christ with them?
4. Reflect on Jesus' words in John 4.10. Notice how He subtly uses the setting – a well from which people got water – to change the focus from physical needs to spiritual needs, and to make His identity the issue! What two central factors in the gospel are exhibited here?
5. In the vernacular of the day, "living water" could refer to "flowing water," like that which supplied Jacob's well. This is what the woman took Jesus' words to mean (John 4.11-12). Jesus informs her that the "living water" He offers quenches a 'spiritual thirst,' giving "eternal life." The conversation is natural and unforced. What 'felt needs' today could be used to expose spiritual needs, and the answer to those needs in Jesus Christ?
6. In John 4.14, Jesus makes receiving eternal life as simple as taking a drink! What other ways is believing in Jesus illustrated in John 1-3 (see 1.12; 2.23; 3.3, 14-15, 33)? Is it complicated or difficult? Why do you think some people tend to make it that way today?