

Stories of Belonging

An Unexpected Encounter

John 4:1-42

Small Group Notes

Opening Discussion Question: Do you like to be surprised?
Share some stories of times you were surprised in a good way and in a not so good way?

The story of the Samaritan woman in John four is completely unexpected. We all would expect Jesus to speak to an esteemed religious leader named Nicodemus (John 3), but it is unexpected that He would cross social, cultural, and religious divides to speak to an individual who is isolated in her troubled past.

Main Idea: Jesus welcomes us to belong with Him, trust in Him, and commit to follow Him.

Read: John 4:1-42

Observations from this Story

1. Jesus *had* to go to Samaria because there was someone hurting and lost that needed to be loved and given the hope that only He could give.
2. The Samaritan woman doesn't recognize that the satisfaction, hope, and grace that she has been searching for is right in front of her. This seems like the wrong time, wrong place, and definitely the wrong person (a Jewish male).
3. Jesus won't let her hide, cover, or run from her shame or her problems. He invites her to trust him. Even before He reveals that He knows the real her, He has already invited her to ask and receive living water.
4. Jesus explains that God is looking for people who will trust in Him and worship in Spirit and Truth. It doesn't

matter what place or what background. God intends to dwell in those who trust in Christ.

5. When she finds out that Jesus is the Christ, she trusts in Him fully and goes to tell others. She becomes the first missionary to the Samaritans. Many believe because of her testimony and the words of Jesus.

What does this mean for us?

1. Jesus knows about our hurts and shame. He has not forgotten you.
2. Here is the catch, we often don't recognize Him when He comes to us.
3. Jesus wants to meet us in our darkest places. He fully knows AND fully loves the real you!
4. He longs for us to live in a love relationship with Him. Religion and religious activity can help this or become a barrier to a genuine daily relationship with Christ.
5. Our part is to fully trust and believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord.

Questions

1. Do you really believe that Jesus fully knows the real you AND that He fully loves the real you? Will you meet him beyond the walls we put up?
2. Talk about a time that you experienced Jesus' presence in your life, but you at first didn't recognize Him.
3. Jesus *had* to go to Samaria. Is there any one or any place that God might be calling us to go because there are people there who are hurting, lost, and need to know that God loves them and there is hope in Jesus Christ?
4. Who are you more like - Nicodemus or the Samaritan woman? Who do you want to become?