

Another Shechem Moment: The Woman at the Well

Scripture Focus: John 4:1-39

We move from the Old Testament to the gospel according to John and the story of the woman at the well, and not just any well but Jacob's well! The location is Sychar which is the same place as Shechem (Genesis 33:18) the place where Dinah was raped and her brothers carried out their revenge. Let's closely examine what makes the encounter Jesus has with the woman at the well so full of grace and inclusion.

- Jesus speaks with a woman who is also a Samaritan. He asks for a drink and then the conversation expands! (John 4:7) Samaritans and Jews typically had nothing to do with one another. Both groups thought they were the true Israelites, the covenant people.
- Even though the questions this woman asks of Jesus are very pointed, he answers them without taking any offense at all, particularly when she asks, "Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well...? (v. 12) She is obviously challenging Jesus at this point.
- Jesus asks the woman to bring her husband and come back. This presents an opening for Jesus to tell her what he knows about her personal life, which astounds her. Notice the revelation does not seem to embarrass or shame this woman, nor does Jesus tell her she ought to seek forgiveness for anything. (vv. 16-18) She has more questions!
- Jesus, a man and rabbi, speaks to a woman in broad daylight and seriously considers her religious questions. (v. 19) This was very counter to cultural tradition. She is obviously very interested and Jesus is willing to answer her questions AND reveal to her that he is the promised Messiah! "I am he..." (v. 26) As a result, she becomes the first evangelist of scripture. A woman, a Samaritan, whose identity was not tied to a man, and who was also VERY interested in learning more about God and how to worship! She believed Jesus and proclaimed the good news! And what a tremendous impact her testimony had on the community. (See verses 39-42.)