

The Encounter at the Well: John 4:1-9

In the early pages of John's Gospel we find Jesus deeply immersed in His own Jewish culture on mission to His own people, ministering in His own language, culture and religious heritage.

For example, in John 2 John the Baptist strides the desert regions of the Jordan as a wild prophet clothed in camel's skin in the tradition of the Old Testament Nazarite (John 1:19-34). We then have Jesus calling His disciples. Surprisingly, He bypasses the Temple and Rabbinical schools of Judea and heads for the shores lake Galilee to assemble His ministry team. Though they are a surprising lot in many ways, they are all Jews, from among Jesus' own people. After attending a very Jewish wedding (John 2:1-12), Jesus then cleanses the temple in Jerusalem, the core symbol of Jewish identity. (2:13-25). It does not get any more Jewish than this. To complete the picture of the deep engagement in the Jewish context, in chapter 3 Jesus then sits down with a Pharisee, one of Israel's teachers to talk about deep matters of faith. Jesus is a Jew, working among his own people, challenging them for sure, but nonetheless focused on his own culture, in His own language to His own people and religious traditions.

In John chapter 4 Jesus' direction changes dramatically. We find Jesus on the move as he travels from the Jewish heartland to the marginal region of Samaria. The transition between the chapters 3 and 4 is not only geographical. Jesus crosses barriers of culture, ethnicity, gender and social convention, to the amazement of all.

The dramatic change of direction is highlighted in the stark difference between the two individual people we meet in chapters 3 and 4. The Nicodemus we meet in 3 was a Pharisee, learned, powerful, respected, orthodox and theologically trained. The unnamed Samaritan woman Jesus would meet in chapter 4 was unschooled, without influence, despised, alone, and capable only of folk religion. He was a man, a Jew, a ruler; she was a woman, a Samaritan, and moral outcast. The only thing they had deeply in common was they both needed Jesus.

But how did Jesus get from one chapter to the next, one person to the other? How did such a radical step of mission take place?

In John 4 verses 1-3 begins the story. *'Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptising more disciples than John – although in fact it was not Jesus who baptised, but his disciples. So he left Judea and went back to Galilee.'*

Jesus' influence was growing, even surpassing that of John the Baptist. John had attracted large crowds to hear his evocative preaching and many had been baptised in the Jordan River in response to his message. The Pharisees had heard and were deeply concerned. These are the one and same people who Jesus was in conflict with in chapter 2 and in conversation with in chapter 3. They fear the attractive power of the Galilean Rabbi. The time for direct confrontation with the religious elite will come later on in the Gospel. Jesus' hour had not yet come so He headed north.

'Now he had to go to through Samaria.'

When John uses the language of *"he had to go through Samaria"* some suggest that the Gospel writer is using the language of divine appointment. Often it has been said that Jews did all they could to avoid the route through Samaria because of the history of conflict and shared antipathy toward one another. After all, Jewish pilgrims did encounter the open hostility of fruit and stone throwing and all kinds of pestering when on pilgrimage from the north to the south and back again. So it is believed that Jews commonly took a longer route around Samaria.

But the Jewish historian Josephus puts pay to this theory. In his work in *Antiquities of the Jews* it is clear that Jews and Samaritans did not much like each other; but Jews still commonly preferred the shorter three day journey through Samaria. A short cut is a short cut after all. Perhaps short cuts and divine appointments are not always mutually exclusive.

'So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his Son, Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.'

So the journey had now begun in earnest and Jesus was said to be tired. In the verses above we see a beautiful glimpse of the reality of the incarnation. Earlier in the Gospel, John described Jesus in transcendent and glorious terms. Jesus is the *Word who was with God, and the Word that was God* (John 1:1), and *the Word who became flesh and tabernacled among us* (1:14). In verse 4-5 this glorious Word sits tired and thirsty cooked by a journey in the hot Sun. This is the God who Matthew called *Emmanuel 'God with us,'* or who Paul described in Philippians 2 as *"being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage, rather he made himself nothing by taking the nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.'* Here in Jesus, God joins people tired and thirsty from the journey. He sits by a well that is still in existence today, tired and dusty, baking in the heat of day, waiting for a drink, ready to encounter whoever comes His way.

From then on, in the New Testament, we find the people of Jesus launching out under the propulsion of the Holy Spirit across cultures, language groups, and ethnicities to announce the Good News of Jesus. Whether it is the book of Acts' ever expanding narrative of the Gospel moving from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, to the ends of the earth. Or it is Paul proclaiming in 1 Corinthians 9: 22 *'I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the Gospel that I might share in its blessings.'*

What can we learn from Jesus words, actions and disposition as he offers *living water* to a parched stranger so many years ago?

What are the implications for you, your church and its members in the way you live life, do ministry and make disciples?

As churches we are called to be on mission where we are uniquely placed in our communities and cultures to share with people just like us in our local setting.

But at the same time, don't be surprised if you feel the wind of the Spirit filling your sails and propelling you "across the tracks" to your Samarias or beyond; to cross barriers and borders, get passports, buy plane tickets and learn language and culture, build relationships and share the Good News of the barrier crossing God.

The Barrier Crossing God

Point One

State: Incarnation: Our God crosses the barrier of heaven and earth to reach us

Text: John 4: 1-6

'Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptising more disciples than John - although in fact it was not Jesus who baptised, but his disciples. So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.'

Explain: In these verses we see a beautiful image of the reality of the incarnation.

In verses 1-6 Jesus was in the midst of a journey from Jerusalem to Galilee on a path that took him through Samaria. It was harvest time in the middle of a baking hot summer. Jesus came to the well that was hand-bored by Jacob, the revered patriarch of Israel. For generations this well had satiated the thirst of people and watered the flocks of Israel. This is a well that still exists and can be visited today. Just as human beings had come to this well tired, hot and thirsty through generations past and present, Jesus came to this well tired, hot and thirsty. He sat in the dust ready to encounter a lone woman.

This is astounding. Particularly when we reflect on the assertions made about Jesus earlier in John's gospel. In chapter 1 Jesus is depicted in transcendent and glorious terms. Jesus is revealed as the 'Word who was with God, and the Word that was God' (John 1:1), it was said of him, 'He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made.' Yet John goes on to tell us that Jesus is, 'the Word who became flesh and tabernacled among us' (1:14). In Jesus, God was literally pitching his tent among us, making his presence available to us so that we could meet with him, know him and find light and life. The context for all that will follow in this encounter is set up with this simple but theologically loaded sentence, 'Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.'

Illustrate: Jesus is God moving into our neighbourhood and here we have a poignant image of that. We rejoice that in Christ God has come to us, entered the human experience and made him known to us in a unique way. Yet here too we see glimpses of a pattern for mission. One that seeks people where they are, sits in the dirt and points to the giver of light and life.

This is a story about incarnational ministry.

Apply: To follow Jesus is to follow the one who comes to us. In Christ we have a God who has gone to the remarkable measures to make Himself known to us, who shares in the basic human experiences of heat, hunger, and thirst so he can meet with us and satiate our thirst and hungers. To follow Him in mission means to go to people where they are, to share life with them. Though Jesus' incarnation is unique as he is the unique Son of God – his pattern of engagement encounter of going to people is what we are called to if we are to faithfully represent Him as His ambassadors in the world.

Identify the 'wells' (meeting spaces/hubs) in your community - Who is there? Is there someone or a ministry working in these areas who can share? Spend time looking at your community - what are the points of connection? Are these spaces mono or multi-cultural?

Point Two

State: Context: Our God crosses of barriers of culture, racial animosity and religion to find us

Text: John 4: 7-9

'When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans).'

Explain: In the early verses John clued us in on how God in Christ traversed boundaries of heaven and earth to be at a well in the noonday sun. Now we see Jesus spanning other barriers. In this story Jesus crosses the serious obstacles of racial tension (v9), gender norms (v9), ritual cleanliness (v9), sin (16-18) and religious difference. But these barriers are not mere abstractions. They are barriers in the way of a soul-thirsty woman finding living water. Jesus will wade through them all to find her.

As the text tells us a Samaritan woman came alone, in the heat of the day to fetch water. Both of these factors strike the reader as unusual. Women customarily went to fetch water in groups for safety, for shared labour and community. They also routinely went to bucket water in the early morning or evening when the temperature was cooler and carrying the load was not so difficult. But she was alone at noon. In an honour-shame culture, women who travelled alone and in the noon day to fetch water usually did so because of moral failure, disability, uncleanness, or social ostracism. (v16-18). Jesus will bring to light the reasons for her isolation later on in the story but for now we have some narrative cues hinting to us that all is not well.

As the Samaritan arrives at the well Jesus as a Jew, as a Rabbi, and as a man, requested a drink. The woman's startled response in verse 9 suggests that this is a non-traditional request. She was taken aback that he, as a Jewish man, would address her as a Samaritan woman. There had been trouble between the two groups ever since the Jewish exiles returned from Babylon and found a gravely compromised mixed remnant of Northern and Southern Kingdom descendants in the land there who came to be known as the Samaritans. Having merged Judaism with other local religions and having formed their own traditions, and founded an alternative centre of worship to Jerusalem, there had been friction. Their conflict had lurched from small-scale argument, to skirmish, to all-out war at times. In short Samaritans and Jews did not get on.

Moreover, added to the ethnic and religious barrier was the gender barrier. It was highly unusual for a Rabbi to associate with any woman in public, let alone a Samaritan woman who many Jews believed to be perpetually unclean. Yet Jesus does not just speak with her, he wants to share her cup. Jesus "fords the river", wading through torrents of history, alienation, separation and prejudice to reach out to this woman. Jesus is the Messiah who crosses barriers.

Illustrate: Global Interaction sends cross-cultural workers to people where the message of Jesus is not known. It means crossing barriers and learning the culture and language so as to build relationships with those on the other side. Global Interaction is committed to entering their world to empower people to develop their own distinctive way of following Jesus. Have a Global Interaction speaker come to your church or show a Global Interaction video clip.

Apply: To follow Jesus is to follow the one who takes the initiative to cross cultural, religious barriers.

Do you have an example of doing something outside your comfort zone for others to imitate? Could you give your congregation something tangible to empower them to sit and talk to someone new?

Do we move towards people or away? What prayer exercise could move our hearts/church to being missional?

What influences inform your opinions of others? What happens when instead of looking, judging and categorising from a distance, you make eye contact with the desire to see the other person as someone made in the image of God waiting to encounter Jesus? Practice.

A 'ford' in a river or stream is usually the shallowest place that one can find good footing to cross. Jesus had a torrent of barriers to cross yet he found the crossing by engaging with the woman to find a 'shallow place with good footing'. Jesus used the shared experience of 'thirst' with which to engage the woman. In your own community where are the 'fords' that open the possibility of crossing seemingly impenetrable barriers so as to point people to the living water?

The Gift for all Cultures - Jesus

Talking

Point: God's greatest gift to people of all cultures is a relationship with Jesus

Text: John 4:10-15

'Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water. "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?" Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.'"

Explain: This story begins with two people in the common place of physical thirst. We can assume that because we find them both at a well they are seeking one of life's most basic and essential sustaining ingredients - water. Jesus uses this common longing for water as a bridge to move the conversation exploring life's other deepest needs.

'Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.'"

Jesus hints that there is a life-nourishing gift that can only come from God and it comes through Him. It is living water. In the Middle East the expression living water was a description of water that was not stagnant from the likes of a cistern, a pool, or pond or a well. Living water had a replenishing source like a river, or spring or stream. It was moving, refreshing – it was living and life giving. God had and has water like this on offer and it comes through Jesus and it is the gift of His Spirit.

At first the Samaritan woman is sceptical of both Jesus' ability to provide living water without any receptacles (verse 11) and secondly his credentials to make such an offer. She is incredulous at the possibility that Jesus could provide better water than the revered Patriarch of the faith – the great Jacob. She had her own drawing bucket and her own great teacher, who had dug a perfectly good well, thank you very much! How could Jesus surpass both the quality of the water from Jacob's well and the distinction of Jacob's credentials as the well builder?

Nonetheless Jesus would not be put off. In verse 13 he makes the astounding claim that the living water he can give could banish thirst forever and well up inside into eternal life.

John's reference to water here is not a one off. There are several water allusions which flow through John's narrative, which swell up together to suggest water is a major stream of thought in his Gospel. Each water allusion seems to point to the surpassing greatness of Jesus to any alternate sources of replenishment, life and meaning. For instance, in John 1, John the Baptist points out that he baptises with water but there is one coming whose shoes John is not worthy to untie and whose baptism will be superior. In John 2, Jesus takes water set aside for ritual and religious purification and turns into a wonderful wine that sustains and enriches the celebration of a wedding feast. In John 3, Jesus enjoins the Pharisee Nicodemus that no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless they are born of the water of the Spirit. In John 5 John recounts the story of a man who has sat for 38 years beside the healing waters of the pool of Bethesda. For thirty-eight years he had lost the race to be the first into the pool after its surface was stirred which was thought to stimulate healing. With the simple command, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk", Jesus trumps Bethesda as the true healing waters of Israel.

In John 7 Jesus is speaking to a crowd on the last day of the feast of Tabernacle. It was usual for a procession of priests to gather water from the pool of Siloam and in procession move to the temple. When they arrived at the Capstone of the temple they would pour the water they were carrying onto the stone. As they did this Ezekiel 47 would be proclaimed inciting Israel to hope in the Messiah return. On his return it was believed the capstone would split open and water would come forth that would flow from the temple giving life, growth and health to everything it touched and nourished and ultimately the healing of the nations. It is in this context Jesus cries out that *"let anyone who is thirsty come and drink."* In John 9 Jesus heals a man with a combination of his own spittle and mud, and water from the very same pool of Siloam. In John chapter 13 Jesus washes the disciple's feet and points out He can wash them totally clean. In John 19 the water then climaxes when the crucified Jesus is hanging on a cross and a spear is thrust into his side *'bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.'* Jesus' death on a cross enabled the gift of living water to flow; to wash, to purify, to cleanse, to satiate thirst and well up into eternal life.

The living water that Jesus gives fulfils so many of the hopes and dreams of the Old Testament. (Isaiah 1:16-18, 12:3, 44:3, 49:10, 55:1-3, Jeremiah 2:13; Ezekiel 36:25-27, 47:1-9). It truly quenches the soul's deepest thirsts. It brings rebirth, renewal, hope, healing, washing, celebration and forgiveness. This water can quench the thirst of this lone Samaritan woman but it is also a key to the healing of the nations. (Psalm 87:7, Rev 22:1-5).

The Samaritan woman desperately wants this water so she says in verse 15, *"Sir give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."* Jesus is the source of living water for Jews and Samaritans, and the eventual healing of the nations.

Illustrate: Watch a testimony video e.g. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YUghAxyKoB4> or read a story about someone from a Global Interaction context meeting Jesus and him satisfying their thirsts. www.globalinteraction.org.au/Resources/Vision

Apply: In Jesus we have the most precious gift we can share with anyone, the One who gives life bringing water, satiating soul thirst, washing away sin, cleansing, purifying, replenishing and nourishing.

Reflect on what it feels like to be thirsty. What feelings, distractions and thoughts might be present? How might you then relate that to being spiritually dry for those who are yet to experience living water?

Where are the places in your community where those who are thirsty are seeking to be quenched? Are they stagnant sources? How might we offer them life-changing living water?

How do you and your congregation attend to the wellspring of living water communally and personally? How equipped are the members of your congregation to share living water with those who are thirsty?

The Transformational Encounter

State: God's gift of Jesus is life-transforming for people of all cultures

Text: John 4: 16-26

'He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

"Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am He."

Explain: Having made the offer of the gift of living water Jesus gently unveiled his knowledge of the Samaritan woman's past. In verses 16-18 Jesus reveals the extent of his knowledge of her story. He is already cognisant that she has had five husbands and the man she is now living with is not her husband. This is quite incredible.

The text does not tell us the story of each broken relationship though it is likely that in each case it was the men in her life that had broken off the marriages, as women had no cultural right to initiate divorce proceedings. What is clear though, that although the men in her life had chosen to repeatedly reject her she had ended up with another husband.

It is easy to read our own cultural context into the text and suggest she simply wanted to be loved by men, that she wanted a relationship with a person that could meet her deepest needs. Whilst this could be an aspect of her being married again and again, we also know a woman in her culture had no ability to work or make an income on her own. A husband not only represented the possibility of love, he would also represent the opportunity for an income, provision, a home, security and a place in society. Perhaps she married again and again in the thirst for all these things. But again and again she was left unsatisfied.

She most likely had suffered deep wounds as a result of sin – the sins of many men and her own. Her string of broken marriages, whether through divorce, abandonment, promiscuity or because her husbands had died, would have left a woman who was longing for her deepest soul-thirsts to be met with anything and anyone but God. As Jeremiah so aptly put it; *'she needed to stop digging her own broken cisterns that couldn't hold water and turn to the spring of living water.'* (Jeremiah 2:13) She needed to turn from them to Him.

With each divorce her position became more vulnerable and her social status increasingly diminished. Living within the context of an honour-shame culture it seems she had spent all her social capital on these relationships to the point she was willing to live with the shame of being in a de-facto relationship in a culture where this simply did not happen. Thus we find the reason for being at the well alone, in the midday sun. She was socially ostracised.

Jesus knows this about her. Jesus wants her to know, that He knows. Number one, it reveals something about His status as a prophet that the woman herself will acknowledge in verse in verse 19 – a fact that she will try and use to leverage the conversation onto the more comfortable topic of religious meeting sites. Graciously He will condescend to go with her on her side-track. But even on the side-track Jesus reveals that he is the deepest fulfilment of both Jewish and Samaritan expectations of a Messiah. As verse 25 tells us, *'The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."²⁶ Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am He."*

But number two; in doing this Jesus reveals to her that even though her life is a mess, that she is covered in shame, He still offers her living water. She is not too far-gone for God. Though she may have given up on herself, God in Christ has not given up her. He loves her still. Jesus hints that to drink from Him, to receive this water that wells up to eternal life she will need to lay down some of her old water sources. It is very hard to drink from two cups at the same time. She will need to give up the search for her deepest needs in men that will disappoint her, and turn to Jesus who will not disappoint her. She will need to stop building her own cisterns and water tanks and turn to him.

Illustrate: Watch a Global Interaction team update video www.globalinteraction.org.au/TeamUpdates or Medson's Story <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XMfGbcC4GOk> or read a story about transformation.

Can someone who has moved from destructive behaviours toward life in Christ in your congregation share their story?

Apply: Jesus transforms people. He transformed this Samaritan woman; He transformed the person in this story. He wants to transform your life. He already knows the issues in your life. The ways in which we chase things that will never satiate our thirst. He wants us to lay those things down – and drink from his living water. To have our thirst quenched, to transform our lives.

The woman ultimately left her water jar behind to go and tell the people of her village what had happened. What must you lay down in order share and experience Jesus' living-water?

How equipped is your church to walk with someone who is experiencing Jesus' soul-work? "He told me everything I have ever done," she said.

How, as a community, can you make your church a 'well'? How could you prayerfully support someone coming to the well?

The Power of Testimony

Talking Point: Sharing God's greatest Gift of a life-transforming relationship with Jesus with all cultures.

Text: John 4: 27-42

'Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?" Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" They came out of the town and made their way toward him. Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something."

But He said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." Then His disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?" "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labour." Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of His words many more became believers. They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world."

Explain: In verses 27-30 we find a few more surprises in the text. The first one is the disciples' stunned silence in returning from their food gathering exercise and finding Jesus immersed in deep conversation with a Samaritan woman in verse 27. This alone would have been shocking but their consternation must have exploded as they watched the first commissioning for mission in John's gospel and it was of a Samaritan woman. Her encounter with Jesus has been nothing short of metamorphic.

The Samaritan woman has gone from hiding from her village in shame, to sharing with her village with joy. The first missionary commissioned in John's Gospel is a Samaritan woman to a Samaritan village. She's let her water jar behind because she's had a taste of living water and that's what she wants to share with her community. She is on the way. Breath-taking!

The shocked disciples' reaction is to bumble their way through as they try and comprehend what has just happened. So they stick to what they know, or what they think they know - lunch. *'Meanwhile His disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something." But He said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." Then His disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?"'*

The woman has got it but it turns out the disciples don't. They don't even understand what Jesus needs in terms of food and He lets them know it in verses 34 – 38.

Just as the woman needed leading to genuinely thirst quenching water, the disciples needed tutelage into the nature of truly nourishing food. *"My food," said Jesus "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."* Jesus invited His disciples to open to their eyes to the reality that this encounter with a Samaritan woman is not an exception to the rule, a strange aberration of God's favour; but this Samaritan was actually emblematic of the new epoch of mission, which Jesus was demonstrating and ushering in. In saying to his disciples, *"open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest,"* Jesus issued His disciples with invitation to a new way of seeing the world. What once had been enemies and people far away were now a field ripe for harvest and Jesus wanted His disciples to join him in His mission.

This was a mission that would change the lives of individuals, but also through them change whole communities. As we read the final verses of this encounter we see that Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman had changed her life - which in turn saw a whole community transformed. It seems God in Christ is about encountering individuals right where they are in the mess of life and transforming and commissioning them. But His hope was to do this not just for one and two but for whole communities – just as what happened among the Samaritans.

Illustrate: Global Interaction story about a person joining in God's cross cultural mission – in the hope of transforming a whole community. We have candidates in every state – maybe one could share with you or watch their video story www.globalinteraction.org.au/TeamUpdates .

Apply: Our God has crossed from heaven to earth, crossing boundaries of race, gender, culture, sin and conflict to bring his life transforming gift of Jesus. He wants to encounter and transform us. But he wants us to open our eyes and look at the fields! And join us in His mission. The Apostle Peter once wrote: *"Through thick and thin, keep your hearts at attention, in adoration before Christ, your Master. Be ready to speak up and tell anyone who asks why you're living the way you are, and always with the utmost courtesy."* (1 Peter 3:15 MESSAGE)

Who is Jesus to you and what do you say to someone who doesn't know Him? Can you *"tell anyone who asks why you're living the way you are"* using words and actions that are understandable by an ordinary 'unchurched' person?

Could someone from the congregation share their story? Jesus trusts the woman to reach her own – how are you equipping your own people to lead their own families and friends. Could you encourage people to pray for opportunities to share? Why not have a faith-story sharing workshop?

Use Global Interaction's Resources

Sharing your faith articles www.globalinteraction.org.au/ResonateBlog

Ekteino Discipleship App www.globalinteraction.org.au/Ekteino