

Reconciliation Begins With Knowing People

John 4:1-26

February 8, 2026

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Scripture is filled with second chances. But one that stands out for me is the woman at the well. It's in John chapter four. This passage is a dynamic dialogue between two people. One of them is a sinner, the other person is Jesus.

There are several things we need to let sinners know. They need to know that they can have a new life. That new life is a second chance.

John 4:7 (NLT) Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink."

Every sinner needs to know Jesus is the Lord of second chances. So what if you could change your life, what would you do different? This woman might say no men in her life: five husbands and living with man number six. That is either lots of grief, lots of bad relationships, or both.

She was left to walk to the well at the hottest part of the day. She appears to be abandoned by everyone. She seems like a well-informed individual, who has been kind of, sort of religious. She is friendly, bold, and even outspoken. She knows her sin, but doesn't like being reminded of it. She would probably like to change these relationships. If each husband has died, she would want that changed. If each husband divorced her, she would want that changed.

Everyone has something in their life that they would like to do different. For me it's spending more time with my family. It could also be fixing that gutter over the back porch. Maybe the thing you would like to change in your life is something simple. Or it could be something deeper, even something spiritual.

I'm not one to encourage you to look at your past with regret. Your past is always with you. But, your past doesn't need to be looked upon with regret. Actually, that's a tool of the devil. He would love nothing better than for people to wallow in their past experiences.

Most people do have regrets. Those regrets deal with something deep in their lives, something spiritual. The woman at the well is an example of nearly every person who is thirsty.

Jesus begins the conversation doing what might be expected. Hardly anyone would have expected Him to be in Samaria, a place that corrupted the Jewish faith. Hardly anyone would have expected Him to be talking to a woman, that was not culturally acceptable. But, Jesus does the natural thing and asks the woman for a drink of water. It's hot, it's noontime, He's thirsty, she's got whatever is used to get water from the well.

Are people surprised when you start a conversation? Some folks might be annoyed. But, most people don't anticipate talking to strangers. Most people try to avoid those conversations. Too many people just want to get their water and go home.

Jesus started a conversation with a stranger. The stranger was caught off guard. When we start a conversation with a stranger, that person might be uncertain about your intentions. The world we live in is so busy, so private, and so suspicious that people don't want to get into a conversation. Start the conversation, Jesus may have placed that person in your path. The conversation can be about the simplest things.

John 4:13-14 (NLT) Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life."

We can take the common thing and demonstrate the spiritual connection. Jesus talks to this woman about the most common thing, water. Think of a spring of water bubbling up out of the ground. Think of a small stream running over the rocks. Think of a waterfall flowing over the hill. That's what Jesus wants her to visual. He wants this woman to see a spring of water coming from within her. He wants her to be a stream of water running from her life to others. He wants this woman to be a waterfall endlessly pouring from her life.

Jesus will pour the endless flow of water into her and she will never be thirsty again. As a matter of fact the water Jesus gives her will flow into the lives of the people she sees everyday in her village. The water Jesus will give to her meets her deepest needs. His water touches her spirit, her soul and gives her a new life. The water Jesus gives cleanses her thoughts, refreshes her spirit, and makes her soul pure.

When you gave your life to Jesus, confessing your sins, repenting and turning your life over to Him, you were drinking this water. Don't carry the comparison of water to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit too far. Just think about something within you that quenches your thirst. Your thirst to be renewed, your thirst for satisfaction, your thirst for a cleansing are all met in the water that Jesus provides.

Jesus is that water that enters your life, your body, your mind, your spirit, your soul. Jesus gives hope. Jesus brings peace. Jesus inspires. Jesus motivates. This is the promise Jesus made to the woman at the well. This is the promise Jesus makes to every person. All that we need to do is drink in the water.

Everyone is dealing with a spiritual issue. I can think of several issues for this woman. She had a need for a man. She knew she couldn't survive without a man. She had a need to be liked and to be loved. She wanted to be in meaningful relationships. She had a need for knowledge, for truth. She was thinking and believing misinformation and lies. She had a need to be redeemed from her past. She's sensitive about having five husbands and living with the sixth man. She had a need to be delivered to a new life. What she had been doing was no longer working. She needed something new.

You've got some spiritual issues. Jesus gave you His living water and now your thirst is quenched. You want as much of His water as you can get, so you can give His spiritual water to others. Your family members have spiritual issues, they need Jesus' water. Your neighbors have spiritual issues, they need Jesus' water. Your co-workers have spiritual issues, they need Jesus' water.

John 4:16 (NLT) "Go and get your husband," Jesus told her.

Without judging move the conversation to sin. Jesus knows everything about everyone of us. Meeting the woman at the well was no accident. Jesus made the decision to go through Samaria,

unpopular with Jews, so He could meet this woman. It wasn't by chance but by appointment that she had the opportunity to sit and talk with Jesus. If you could make an appointment to sit face to face with Jesus, you'd take it. She didn't know He was coming just to see her. She didn't know that this would be a life changing event. Had she known that Jesus was going to bring up her sin she may have bypassed going to the well.

Jesus asks about her husband because He has just offered her living water. She would want the man in her life to also receive this water. If this Jesus was giving out living water it would only be natural for her family to benefit from this also.

Jesus brings up her husband because He knows her life. She is not one of the upstanding ladies of her community. Her lifestyle, having five husbands and living with man number six is outside of society's norms, and also not aligned with God's will. There are a few commandments that she's breaking, and she knows it. Jesus knows it too.

By asking about her husband Jesus reveals Himself in a more tangible way that He is somebody special. His claims about living water and never thirsting again could be more fantasy like. But to know her past He was making it clear that He is important. She even calls Him a prophet, someone who can see and understand things that she can't.

Jesus has brought up the issue which keeps most Christians quiet: sin. He opens the door to the word that is the difference between being a Christian and being a disciple maker: sin. He points out the thing that everyone who is born has in common: sin. As those who are forgiven we can start talking about our sin.

Between starting a conversation and talking about sin there needs to be lots and lots of listening. Jesus could be trusted in an instant. Even with this woman who many would say is wicked, Jesus had her trust. He moved from the common thing, water, to it's spiritual connection, then to sin. She was ready for her life to be changed. She was no doubt surprised, and even changed the subject, but at this point she was willing to let Jesus enter her life.

People in general are good at talking about the sin of the person next door, or down the line, or in another's family. What we aren't very good at is talking about our own sin. The reason we have trouble sharing about our sin is because we still can't accept that Jesus forgave us. Get over that. Claim the promises that Jesus has made you right with God, that you are no longer God's enemy, that you will not suffer the wrath of God, that there is therefore no condemnation in Jesus Christ. We are forgiven of our sins and we are being transformed. So we can say that's in the past. What is in our past has not regrets.

Through Jesus our past is forgiven. We have been made new. We have been given a second chance. We can talk about our past and our sin, but we can also talk about how Jesus has changed us. This is why we bring up our sin after listening to a family member, a neighbor, or a co-worker. We've been forgiven, they can also be forgiven.

John 4:26 (NLT) Then Jesus told her, "I Am the Messiah!"

Every believer needs to reveal to sinners that Jesus is their Savior. You have a Savior and sinners can have the same Savior, Jesus Christ. Jesus revealed Himself as the Messiah. He is the One sent by God. He is the only One who can take away our sin. He is the only Way to be right with God and be in Heaven. Jesus is the truth.

Jesus lived on this earth to have conversations with people like this woman. I can't imagine the number of conversations Jesus had that were never written down. While Jesus was on this earth He spoke the truth. He spoke the words given to Him by His Father in heaven. Jesus saw the suffering of people caused by the corrupting power of sin. It's power causes illnesses, death, catastrophes. Jesus healed the sick, cast out demons, raised people from the dead, and told the wind and rain to be still.

Jesus was aware of all of our sins. Through His life without sin, Jesus became our sin, died on the cross and rose from the dead. He is the Savior of the world. He alone can cast our sins away. He alone can give us a new life. He alone is the God of second chances.

Every sinner needs to know Jesus. As a person who has been saved, reveal to family members, neighbors, and co-workers that Jesus is your Savior. Only through faith in Jesus who lived, died and rose again can anyone be saved.

Whatever your sin give it to Jesus. Regardless of how you think about yourself, Jesus loves you. Jesus wants to be with you today and everyday from now through all of eternity. Jesus has shown you your sins. You know what they are. You may not want to look at them. But, Jesus is revealing them to you. He is also calling you to find forgiveness. He wants you to have a new life. He is ready to give you a second chance.

You can simple, honestly, truthfully tell Jesus that you are a sinner. If you want to name all your sins, go ahead, but He already knows them. Ask Jesus to take away your sin, your desire to sin, and to fill you with His power to overcome sin. Receive the peace that comes only from being forgiven and made a child of God. Once you give your sins, your life to Jesus, you are a child of God. You are a new person. You are living a new life. You have received a second chance.

Make the choice now, choose today to invite Jesus to take away your sins.