

17. If someone used this incident to say that is acceptable to stretch a point or even be dishonest in giving a testimony about Jesus how would you respond?

18. Remembering John's purpose in writing his gospel (Jn 20.31) what is the significance of what the people of Sychar say in v42? Does it suggest that some might be interested in faith without actually believing for themselves?

19. From their initial encounter with Jesus who would you say made the most progress in faith, the immoral woman of Samaria or the upright teacher of Israel (Nicodemus)? Are there lessons we can learn from this?

Read James 2.1-5 & Lk 5.32

Pray

Pray that as a church we would be able to reach out to all with the gospel and without partiality.

Give thanks for your Church building (if you have one), pray that it might be able to use it well, but that people would remember that what matters is not where we worship but that we worship in spirit and in truth.

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Meeting Jesus

Week 2

Samaria lay between Judah and Galilee. Its people claimed to be descended from the northern tribes of Israel but they seem to have had a very mixed heritage. Jews and Samaritans did not get on well together.

Read John chapter 4 verses 1-42

To get a feel for the dialogue have one person read v1-8, two people to read the dialogue between Jesus and the woman (v9-26) and someone else to read the remaining verses.

The well woman clinic

1. Like Nicodemus we don't know much about the woman Jesus met at the well. But from what little we do know, including verse 18, how would you describe her?

2. How are she and Nicodemus alike/different?

3. Nicodemus sought out Jesus, albeit at night. In what way was this woman seeking faith?

4. If someone like Nicodemus, and someone like the woman of Sychar turned up your church one Sunday do you think they would get the same welcome?

Jesus' tactics

Look back to what we saw last week about how Jesus responded to Nicodemus in order to direct Him to what really mattered.

5. How does Jesus use the woman's words and circumstances to get her interest?

6. Can you think of circumstances where we might be able to use a similar approach?

7. As the conversation develops (v17-18) how do we see that Jesus had a definite advantage over us in such circumstances?

8. When the woman says that Jesus is a prophet ((v17-18) do you think this reflects genuine interest or is she trying to deflect the conversation away from her own background?

Jesus' teaching

9. What do you think Jesus means in verse 14?

10. The Samaritans had their own religion and their own modified version of the first five books of the Bible. To outsiders they probably seemed quite similar to Jews. What does Jesus say about their religion and about salvation? (v22)

11. How does the coming of Jesus change things not just for the Jews but for the Samaritans (and everyone else)? Can there be salvation by any other means?

12. How do we see this being worked out in what happened at Sychar?

13. What does it mean to worship God in spirit and in truth?

14. How much does, or should, the place of worship matter to us?

15. What does this tell us about the purpose of a church building?

(The word "church" derives from the Greek kyriakon which means "the Lord's House" and is not found in the Bible. The Biblical word we often confusingly translate as church is ecclesia which actually means assembly, literally something like "those called out".)

Faith and testimony

16. In her enthusiasm was the woman guilty of stretching the facts in what she said to her fellow townsfolk (v39)?