



# Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

## Community Group Material:

*Bible Reading: John 4:4-26, 28-29*

**Bible Reading:** John 4:4-26 [Suggestion: Choose 3 people to read (with expression) the 3 parts—2 characters plus Narrator]

**NARRATOR:** [Jesus] had to travel through Samaria; so he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar near the property that Jacob had given his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, worn out from his journey, sat down at the well. It was about noon. A woman of Samaria came to draw water.

**JESUS:** "Give me a drink"

**NARRATOR:** his disciples had gone into town to buy food.

**SAMARITAN:** "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" **NARRATOR:** Jews do not associate with Samaritans.

**JESUS:** "If you knew the gift of God, and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would ask him and he would give you living water."

**SAMARITAN:** "Sir, you don't even have a bucket, and the well is deep. So where do you get this 'living water'? You aren't greater than our father Jacob, are you? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and livestock."

**JESUS:** "Everyone who drinks from this water will get thirsty again. But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty again. In fact, the water I will give him will become a well of water springing up in him for eternal life." **SAMARITAN:** "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and come here to draw water."

JESUS: "Go call your husband, and come back here."

SAMARITAN: "I have no husband."

JESUS: "Right you are when you said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the man you are living with now is not your husband. This you said truthfully!"

SAMARITAN: "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you people say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem."

JESUS: "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in

Jerusalem. You people worship what you do not know. We worship what we know, because salvation is from the Jews. But a time is coming—and now is here—when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such people to be his worshipers. God is spirit, and the people who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

SAMARITAN: "I know that Messiah is coming" (the one called Christ); "whenever he comes, he will tell us everything." JESUS: "I, the one speaking to you, am he."

NARRATOR: Then the woman left her water jar, went off into the town and told the people...

SAMARITAN: "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Surely he can't be the Messiah, can he?"

### SUMMARY:

We read John 4 as a 'one-off, stand-alone meeting' between a man (Jesus) & a woman (a Samaritan) at the village well. The first readers read it differently, as the latest in a series of such encounters stretching back to Israel's Patriarchs. Lacking this perspective, we miss insights that were obvious to them. Let's become better Bible-readers by adopting their view. John 4 is ostensibly a 'betrothal type-scene,' where major Bible-characters meet their future spouse. We compare and contrast Jesus' well-encounter with those of Isaac/Rebekah, Jacob/Rachel, and Moses/Zipporah. 'Connecting the dots' raises new issues: Is Jesus the Samaritan woman's '7th man,' her perfect husband? Is she Jesus' 'spiritual &/or symbolic spouse'? We reject such allegorizing. The key issue is: Why does the 4th Gospel subvert this literary device—the OT 'Wedding-at-the-Well' scene?

### QUESTIONS:

1. Usually we read John 4 (Jesus & the Samaritan) as a 'one-off, stand-alone' episode. What does reading John 4 as a 'betrothal-at-the-well' type-scene (like Genesis 24, 29) add to our understanding?
2. Compare & contrast the 2 OT "betrothal-at-the-well" episodes—Jacob/Rachel (Gen. 29) & Moses/Zipporah (Ex. 2:15-21)
  - a. What are the similarities? How do they fit the "typical pattern" of "Betrothal-at-the-well"?
  - b. What are the differences? What insight do these differences suggest about the two sets of characters?
3. "The *'betrothal scene'* does not lead to a beautiful, consummate marriage [of] Jesus & the Samaritan woman." So, if there's no betrothal, no marriage, why does the author present this as a "betrothal-at-the-well" type-scene? Discuss.
4. Consider the two statements below:

- Jesus' encounter results in "a 'betrothal'...*not in marriage but in worship & in mission.*"—Clifton Black
- "Jesus does not come...for a woman to be his [wife], but for a witness who will...invite...people to himself."—Gail O'Day
- Do you agree (or disagree) with these statements? Why, or why not?