



# ENCOUNTERING JESUS

Today we are in part 3 of our ***Encountering Jesus Sermon Series***... where we have been working through the Gospel of John, focusing on select Encounters between Jesus and individuals He came to save.

And so this morning we are going to continue on in the Gospel of John to examine Jesus' "***chance encounter***" with this Woman at the Well in Samaria in chapter 4...and I say "***chance encounter***" because *(as we are going to see a bit later)* Jesus wasn't actually supposed to even be in Samaria to encounter this woman.



Illus:

**BUT SPEAKING OF CHANCE ENCOUNTERS...** I don't know if you've ever had a chance encounter that you didn't expect and didn't quite go how you envisioned....but I have!

On my very first week here at Brandywine, after the worship service I went to the restroom (right out here in the lobby). When I went in I noticed something strange.....I noticed that there were no urinals in the men's room. And I thought that was weird for a **men's room**, but I paid it no mind (figuring that parts of the building were older), and went about my business.



*Now, as I am about to exit the restroom a women (who shall NOT be named) enters in....and she just stares at me...shocked. And in that moment I realized my enormous error....I WAS IN THE WOMANS RESTROOM!*

*She was shocked! I was shocked!*

*She was embarrassed! I was embarrassed!*

*She was speechless! I was speechless!*

*I didn't know what to say to her to get out of the bathroom and out of the situation, so I just said **Hi, I'm the new Pastor!***



Awkward encounters don't feel very good....but I have to say that I did learn something. I learned to look very closely at the sign before walking into the restroom. And I am proud to say I haven't visited the ladies room since.

In John chapter 4 Jesus has an AWKWARD ENCOUNTER....not so much (**awkward**) for Him but most certainly for THE SAMARITAN WOMAN AT THE WELL.

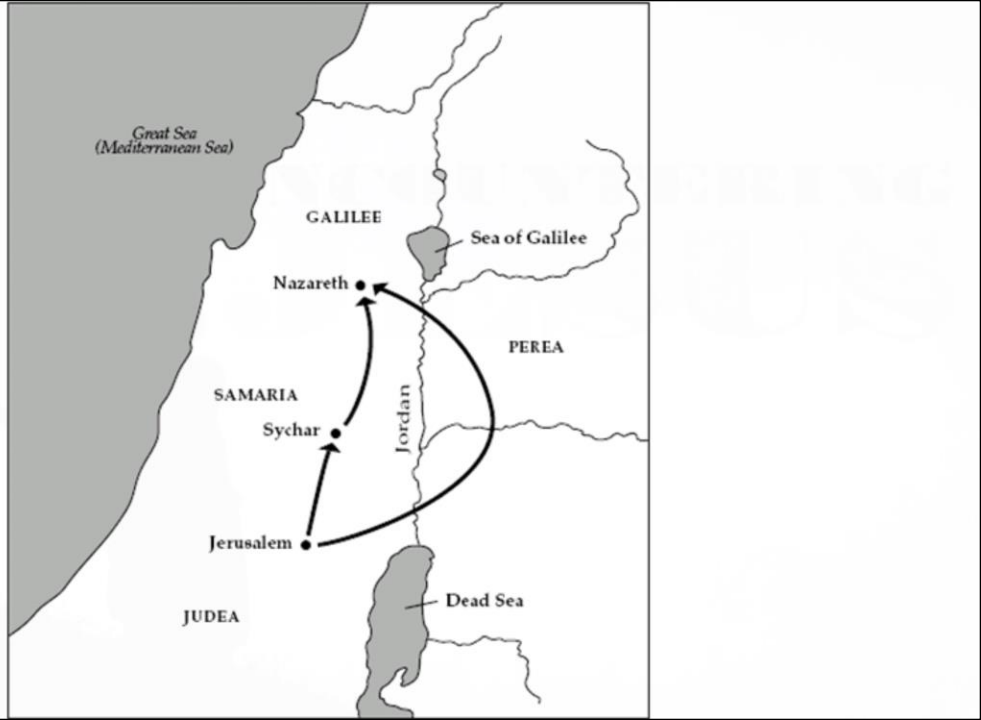
And apart of what made this encounter so AWKWARD was that JEWS and SAMARITANS did not mix.



The two cultures/people were like oil and water...like Eagles and Cowboys fans...like a Pastor in the ladies room...Jews and Samaritans did not mix.

So much so that when traveling in the region Jews would go far out of their way just so they didn't not ENCOUNTER any SAMARITANS.

And so set some context for where we are in Jesus' ministry as we approach Chapter 4.....up to this point in the Gospel of John, Jesus has called his disciples, he has ministered in the countryside of Judea, and he is just beginning to become noticed as a threat by the religious leaders (Pharisees and Sadducees).



And because it was not yet time to reveal himself as the Son of God Jesus decided to leave Judea to avoid the religious leaders.

And so he decides to go the heavily Gentile area of Galilee.

And as you look at this map if you were traveling from Jerusalem to Galilee the most obvious route would be through Samaria. However this was not the route most Jews would have taken.

The region of Samaria was so despised by the Jewish people that they often took a very roundabout route through Perea to get north into Galilee.



## ENCOUNTERING JESUS

You see Samaritans and Jews *were neighbors*....but they were not *neighborly*....in fact they couldn't stand each other, there were ethnic, racial, and religious issues that made Jews feel contempt for Samaritans...and here Jesus transcends all that....He doesn't just speak to this woman...but he asks to drink *from her cup*.....he invites her in.

She came to draw from the well at noon at the hottest part of the day in order to avoid seeing anyone.....her life was so spiritual bankrupt that she did dare arrive at the well in the morning during "social time" she didn't want to hear the critiques on her lifestyle.....and so she arrives at noon to avoid anyone seeing her. Her plan didn't work, because Jesus didn't just see her, he saw right through her.



# ENCOUNTERING JESUS

And what we see Jesus do here in John chapter 4 is.....REACH OUT TO SOMEONE WHO IS VERY MUCH UNLIKE HIM, WHO DOESN'T NEARLY BELIEVE THE SAME THINGS AS HIM, SOMEONE WHO ISN'T EVEN TRYING TO LIVE A PROPER LIFESTYLE.

And here in this encounter we see Jesus **live out** the *[Gospel Ethic]* to..... *“love one’s neighbor as themselves.”*

Church we are going to examine this encounter as a means to help **us** further understand our biblical mandate to **REACH THE LOST.**





# ENCOUNTERING JESUS

And by the lost I'm not just talking about those who are like us, who have similar backgrounds/and experiences to us. No, *(in Luke 19:10)* when Jesus said *(that he came to seek and save the LOST)...and by that he meant EVERYONE* irrespective of race, social class, regardless of the # of our sins, how righteous or unrighteous we appear, Jesus' REACH is extends to EVERYONE.

Now at first glance this might seem obvious to us RIGHT...*[that Jesus came for everyone]*...but I don't think its that obvious at all....because if we are all honest VERY FEW OF US EXTEND THE SAME AMOUNT OF COMPASSIONATE GRACE BROADLY ACROSS THE BOARD.


# John 4:13-15 (ESV)

13 Jesus said to her, *“Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.*

And so please open your bibles to John chapter 4....we will be jumpin in at verse 13.

***Read:***

The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” 15 The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”



## ***Continue Reading:***

Here Jesus speaks directly to how temporary the satisfactions of ***this world*** truly are.

His premise is this.....*yes if you drink from this well you will be satisfied.....but it will be short lived, you will have to come back again, and again, always needing more and more.*

And if you think about it.....this is so true.



# ENCOUNTERING JESUS

All this world [*in and of itself*] has to offer are temporary glimpses of satisfaction.

We eat a great meal....but it lasts for mere minutes.  
We take a great vacation....but then we have to come back home.

We purchase the “thing” we really wanted, only for a newer/sleeker version of the “thing” to come out a short time later.

And you see it’s not that good meals, vacations or purchases are bad things...but the problem is that we often use those things to HIGHTEN OUR SENSE OF WELL-BEING.....to SATISFY A CRAVING WE ALL HAVE DOWN DEEP INSIDE.

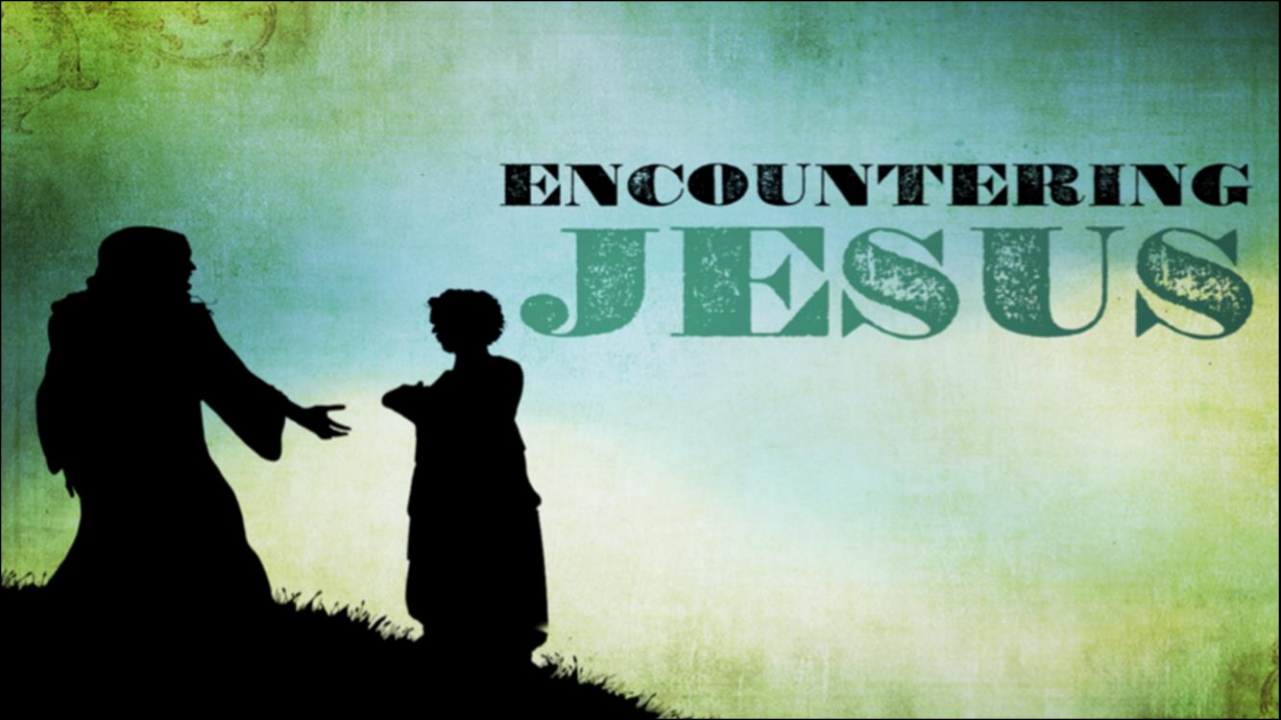


# ENCOUNTERING JESUS

Not even the greatest meal, the longest...most extravagant vacation, nor the purchase of a life time, can quench the thirst that all humanity shares.

But even so, we often hop around trying to satisfy ourselves in many different ways...*when only one thing will do. And culturally, we are trained to do this.*

Marketers trying to sell us everything from a **Happy Meals** to **Razor blades**...encourage the notion that all we need to do is take this, or buy that and happiness/contentment is just around the corner.



## ENCOUNTERING JESUS

But even still.....contentment stays just outside of our grasp.....because we trick ourselves into believing that our THIRST CAN BE SOLVED IN A PHYSICAL SENSE.....WHEN IN REALITY WE ARE SPIRITUALLY THIRSTY.

In verse 15 the Samaritan Woman answers Jesus and says that she.....recognizes her thirst....and so she wants this *LIVING WATER HE IS TALKING ABOUT.*

You see she is tired of coming to the well again and again in a endless cycle of needing more.....this woman recognizes that there is something within her that needs to be quenched.



# ENCOUNTERING JESUS

But while she's only thinking about her physical need.....Jesus has a deeper, more pressing need in mind.

All she can see is her physical thirst... ..and all Jesus cares about is showing her, her spiritual thirst.



***Illus.***

*In preparation for this sermon....I tried to think about the times in my life when I have been thirsty.*

*And I thought back to when I was a boy....playing outside all day long in the summer.....we didn't take water bottles with us....there were no water fountains in the woods we used to play in.*





## ENCOUNTERING JESUS

*As a young boy we were so busy having a good time [playing] that we were not even aware of our thirst.....until we came home.*

*I actually remember that as soon as I entered my home the RUSH OF MY THIRST BECAME APPARENT TO ME.....I can recall many times [after playing outside all day] standing at my kitchen sink drinking glass of water after glass of water trying to rehydrate my depleted body.*

*And you see, BEING DISTRACTED MADE ME UNAWARE OF MY THIRST.....and church spiritually speaking this happens ALL THE TIME.*



# ENCOUNTERING JESUS

We live in a world full of thirsty people, who [*unfortunetely*] are looking for contentment in temporary things.....things **DESIGNED TO DISTRACT US**.....to mask our spiritual thirst.

We seek to quench our thirst through.....**SOCIAL STATUS....THROUGH OUR LOOKS/APPEARANCE....**we seek to end our thirst by **Self-Medicating ourselves with Drugs/Alcohol/Sex....one of the most popular coping mechanisims is distracting ourselves with another person....**and yet **NONE OF THESE THINGS ULTIMATELY SATISFY.**

And as we move on in our text Jesus is going to reveal for **THE SAMARITAN WOMAN HER OWN SPIRITUAL THIRST.**

# John 4:16-18 (ESV)

16 Jesus said to her, **“Go, call your husband, and come here.”** 17 The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.”

## Reading on in verse 16:

Jesus speaks these words to awaken her conscience.....He brings up her husband(*s*) [*plural*] because clearly this was an area of brokenness in her life.

She had been married numerous times (*and we don't know what ended those marriages*) but what we do know that she is **currently** living with a man who isn't her husband.

Jesus has identified this area of her life to expose her **SPIRITUAL THIRST.....HER NEED FOR LIVING WATER, THAT SHE MIGHT NEVER THIRST AGAIN.**

# John 4:16-18 (ESV)

16 Jesus said to her, ***“Go, call your husband, and come here.”*** 17 The woman answered him, **“I have no husband.”** Jesus said to her, **“You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’;** 18 **for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.”**

The implications of Jesus’ message here is that just like she needed to come back again and again to Jacob’s Well to draw water for her physical need... ..that likewise she was *using multiple relationships as a band-aid for her spiritual need.*

You might have heard it said that humanity has a God-Shaped hole in our collective hearts.....this is but one aspect of our fallen nature.

You see, just as a square peg cannot fill a round hole, neither can the “God-shaped hole” inside each of us be filled by ***anyone or anything*** other than God.

And this is the lesson Jesus hopes to teach the Samaritan Woman.

# John 4:16-18 (ESV)

16 Jesus said to her, **“Go, call your husband, and come here.”** 17 The woman answered him, **“I have no husband.”** Jesus said to her, **“You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’;** 18 **for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.”**

He hopes to teach her that ***only through*** a personal relationship with the God of the Universe can the “God-shaped hole” be filled and our desire for contentment be satisfied.

## ***Illus:***

*A few years ago Loyola Marymount University ran a study on contentment in relation to ones salary. And what they found was interesting. Invariably no matter ones income, whether it be \$30,000; \$100,000 or even \$1,000,000... the respondents of the survey said that they would be content if the had just 10% more income.*

# John 4:16-18 (ESV)

16 Jesus said to her, **“Go, call your husband, and come here.”** 17 The woman answered him, **“I have no husband.”** Jesus said to her, **“You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’;** 18 **for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.”**

*Now, the study also showed that when they reached out to those individuals again after they were making the 10% more.....and asked them if they were finally content.....the majority of respondents said yet again, “I’ll be content after another 10%.”*



# ENCOUNTERING JESUS

You see we often times view contentment the wrong way.....we often think that our contentment will be found in ***what we have***.....when in truth ***it is WHO WE HAVE*** THAT MATTERS MOST.

Jesus is trying to ***REACH*** the SAMARITAN WOMAN with an understanding OF WHAT CONTENMENT TRULY IS.



# ENCOUNTERING JESUS

But do we understand our life's contentment **to be JESUS CHRIST?**.....*that which can never be taken away from us.*

And do we hold this truth as an ever present reality before us?..... So much so that it becomes a TRUTH RADIATING FROM OUR LIVES?

Because this is how we can help those whom God has placed on our path to ENCOUNTER JESUS.....as THE WORLD sees our LIVES LIVED IN FAITH.....they will see we have tasted the **LIVING WATER** JESUS HAS OFFERED **EVERYONE** AND THEY WILL DESIRE TO DRINK DEEP THEMSELVES.





## ENCOUNTERING JESUS

As Jesus sought to AWAKEN the CONSCIENCE OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN AS A MEANS TO REACH HER.....**HOW MIGHT WE AWAKEN THOSE AROUND US TO THE FREE GIFT OF LIVING WATER THAT WILL QUENCH THEIR THIRST FOREVER?**

I think one way is by getting to know LOST PEOPLE.....sharing in their lives.....listening to their issues.....LOVING THEM WELL.

But also what we see Jesus do here in John chapter 4 is REACH ACROSS BARRIERS.....Christ reached across a high social barrier.....in order to sit with someone, listen to their story.....therefore creating an opportunity to **AWAKEN THEIR CONSCIENCE.**



# ENCOUNTERING JESUS

Church what barrier might God be calling you to CLIMB OVER IN ORDER TO REACH SOMEONE?

And furthermore what ***relationship*** might God be calling you to develop as a means of AWAKENING ANOTHER PERSON'S CONSCIENCE, THAT THEY MIGHT SEE THEIR SPIRITUAL THIRST AND DESIRE THE LIVING WATER JESUS OFFERS EVERYONE?

Because there is a SEA of People in our very own community with GOD SHAPED HOLES IN THEIR HEARTS.....and they are trying to stuff in everything and anything to fill the void.....when in truth NOTHING WILL FIT/SATISFY BUT JESUS.



On Thursday night a group of us from Brandywine had the opportunity to attend the URBAN PROMISE BANQUET here in Wilmington.

Here (*on the screens*) are some of the kids that URBAN PROMISE reaches in our community...and at this point in the night they were singing a song called GROWING IN CHRIST.

These kids live on the margins of society, they are underinvested in almost every way.....they have ethnic, social, educational issues to overcome that often times will leave them outcasts of society.



And for those of us who aren't in that situation, our tendency could be to do as the Jews did in Samaria.....walk around it, don't look at it, don't get involved because it's messy.

I was so encouraged Thursday night to see how many Christians from various churches (including our own) are getting involved in Urban Promise.....because you see these kids are on the front lines of the battle THE ENEMY is waging on our society.



These kids are having to fight an uphill battle against all the competing influences all vying for them to fill their void with drugs, violence, sex.....and praise God that an Organization made up of believers are standing up and saying NO, NOT ON MY WATCH! They are helping these young souls ENCOUNTER JESUS.

And here they stand testifying in song how they are GROWING IN JESUS. AMEN!



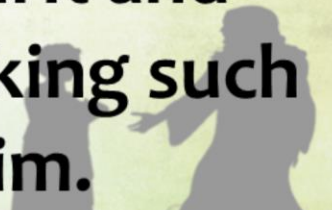
[Back in our text] The Samaritan woman has tried to fill her void with ***the many men in her life***... ..and Jesus calls her out on it.

He doesn't do this to demean her, or to chastize her.....but rather to SHOW HER HER THIRST.

And as we move on in [***our text***] to verse 23 Jesus is going to share with the Samaritan Woman EXACTLY WHAT HE SUPPLIES.....***and church as we read this, personalize what Jesus says here***, because what we are about to read is the call that is upon EVERYONE WHO BEARS THE NAME CHRISTIAN.

# John 4:23-26 (ESV)

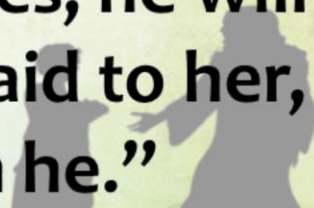
23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.



***Read:***

**24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”**

**25 The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” 26 Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”**



## **Continue Reading:**

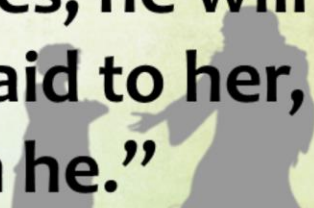
And so here we see a shift in the dialogue.....Jesus goes from directly exposing the Samaritan woman’s spiritual need....to now **HIGHLIGHTING HOW HER NEED CAN BE FILLED.**

And he addresses the fact **TRADITIONAL SAMARITAN WORSHIP WASN’T WHAT GOD DESIRED.....** You see both Samaritans and Jews alike were focused on ritualistic worship whereby God could only be reached at certain times in certain places.....and Jesus highlights that now those who believe in Him can worship God at any time and in any place.....**IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH.**



**24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”**

**25 The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” 26 Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”**




You see to worship in **SPIRIT AND TRUTH** means that a believer enters the presence of God by FAITH. And it is our FAITH that inseparably connects us to THE FATHER THROUGH JESUS.

You see Jesus is trying to transition her thinking from OUTWARD FORMS OF WORSHIP to an INWARD WORSHIP.

The Jews and Samaritans both had reduced worship to outward ceremonies.....and they believed that adhering to outward forms of “**religiosity**” was the best way to WORSHIP GOD.

**24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”**

**25 The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” 26 Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”**




Here Jesus is revealing the TRUEST WAY TO WORSHIP GOD.....and that is an INWARD WORSHIP [*spirit and truth*].....a WORSHIP BY WHICH WE ALLOW GOD INTO OUR HEARTS AND LIVES BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

And the reason why this is a truer form of worship is because we can carry out a rituals while your hearts are distant from THE FATHER....we can practice religion, (*going through the motions*) while at the same time we are *unsundered*.

**24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”**

**25 The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” 26 Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”**



You see God is Spirit...and he wants His people to connect with Him Spiritually/Inwardly...**HE IS AFTER OUR HEARTS.**

And this Church is the beauty of the Gospel.....that the **GOD OF THE UNIVERSE IS AFTER YOUR HEARTS.**

He wants to take up residence in our hearts/lives.

**Church how do you worship God?**

*Are you trying to simply do things for God?*

*Or are you making an effort to give him your heart?*

*Is your worship purely and outward exercise.....or are you working to progressively hand your heart over to Him?*



# ENCOUNTERING JESUS

Perhaps there are some of you here today... **that NEED TO ENCOUNTER JESUS**....perhaps he has been tugging on your heart for some time now.....GIVE HIM YOUR HEART. DRINK IN THE LIVING WATER HE OFFERS AND NEVER THIRST AGAIN.

Perhaps there are some of us here that **God wants to use to ENCOUNTER OTHERS FOR HIM**.....who has God placed on your heart that NEEDS THIS LIVING WATER???, who do you encounter on a regular basis who is THIRSTY???, and how might you show them the only one who can quench their thirst.....JESUS.

Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." **40** So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. **41** And many more believed because of his word. **42** They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."

[Back in John chapter 4]

After the Samaritan woman leaves Jesus....she goes back to tell everyone about the Messiah who persuaded her.... **Verse 39 reads.....**

**39** Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." **40** So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. **41** And many more believed because of his word. **42** They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."



# ENCOUNTERING JESUS

And what we see here is that as soon as The Samaritan woman receives Jesus...she goes and tells those she LOVES ABOUT THE GOOD NEWS/LIVING WATER.

A becuase of her tesimony THESE SPIRITUALY THIRSTY PEOPLE they invite Jesus to stay with them.....and as a result more and more people are REACHED FOR THE GOSPEL.



# ENCOUNTERING JESUS

The woman who came to the well at Noon to avoid contact with her community because of the shame in her life... ..is now running to that same community because of her Encounter with Jesus.

Jesus taking her shame.....and he can do the same for us if we allow Him in.

And so might the ENCOUNTER WE HAVE HAD WITH THE SAVIOR BLEED OVER INTO THE VARIOUS ENCOUNTERS WE HAVE EACH AND EVERY DAY. AND MIGHT WE BE DISCIPLES WHO MAKE DISCIPLES.

***Pray:***