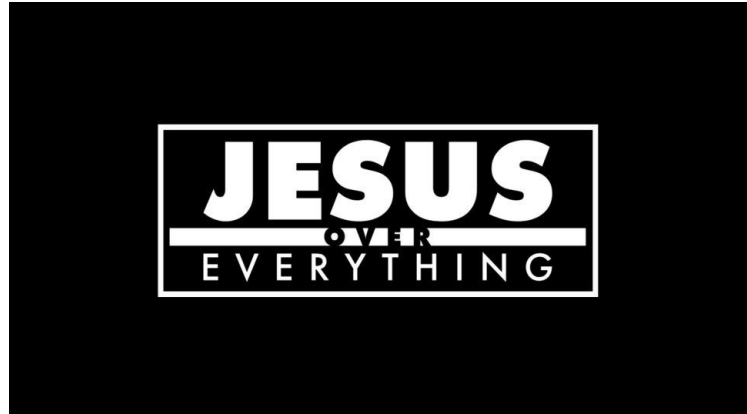


“Jesus Over My Searching”

(The Woman at the Well)



Icebreaker: How do you feel about being alone?

Objective: To recognize how Jesus satisfies our needs and desires.

Read: John 4:1-8

Observe: Explain the passage in your own words. What conflicts, questions, or goals show up in the passage? Are there any connections to other parts of Scripture?

Leader Notes: Encourage the group to observe the text by looking for patterns, points of emphasis (repetition is a big one, key words), tension (between people or concepts), perspectives, and connections (to life, to other parts of Scripture, etc.). You don't need to walk through this every time you observe the text, but it's good to bring it up often so it becomes familiar.

Discuss:

Jesus left Israel and traveled through Samaria. He met the woman at the well in a foreign (and potentially unwelcoming) land. She met Jesus at the well where she gets her daily water. To her, this location might have been completely mundane, or even uncomfortable. It's possible it had shame associated with it (that would explain why she's getting water alone, at noon, instead of in the morning with the other women).

- In the past, how has God met you in the mundane (the normal, the routine, etc.)?

Read: John 4:9-15

Observe: What objections does the woman raise when Jesus offers her living water?

Discuss:

When the woman finally asks Jesus for living water she says, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

- How is this mentality reflected in the way we usually approach Jesus?
- What misconceptions have you had to work through in your own life regarding what you thought Jesus was going to give you vs what he actually gave you?

Read: John 4:16-20

Observe: How does the conversation shift in this section? Do you think the woman is changing the topic as a diversion from her sinful lifestyle, or do you think she’s asking genuine questions?

Discuss:

One commentary notes a parallel between the water and the woman’s husbands. Just as her daily water can’t permanently satisfy her thirst, neither has she been satisfied in her pursuit of relationships.

- What are some ways you find yourself seeking satisfaction in the things of the world?
- It’s often noted that the woman is getting water in the middle of the day, alone, instead of in the morning when the other women would typically get their water. This is possibly because of her own shame or because of a poor reputation as a result of her many relationships.
- Has isolation (self-inflicted or otherwise) played a role in your faith journey? If so, how?

Read: John 4:21-26

Observe: As the discussion has turned from physical needs to spiritual realities, how has Jesus guided the woman on a path of discovery?

Discuss:

- When you stepped over the line of faith (if you have), did you have many questions you wanted answered before doing so? If yes, what were they? How were they answered?
- If you haven't stepped over the line of faith, what unanswered questions are holding you back?

Read: John 27-30

Discuss:

Most of us have “safe” sins that we’re okay talking about (pride, gossip, anxiety, etc.) and “shameful” sins that we try to hide, or hide from, (addiction, moral failures, destructive habits, etc.).

- If the whole world suddenly knew about your “shameful” sins, how do you think they would treat you? Base your answer on how the world actually is, not how you’d like it to be.
- When’s the last time you confessed your “shameful” sins to someone? How did you feel after?

Read: John 4:31-38

Observe: Explore the connections in this passage between drinking and eating, in particular the tension between the meeting of physical vs spiritual needs.

Read: John 4:39-42

The woman's story results in her town's revival. It likely wasn't comfortable, as the town knew her history, but her story had incredible power.

- What would it take for you to share your story with the people most likely to judge you for it?

Application Suggestions:

Leader notes: Some leaders pick one application to suggest and some leaders read through each selection and encourage everyone to pick one on their own. You can make the call on that based on how much time you have left and the general vibe of the room.

Keep Exploring this Study. There is great value in studying the Word with fellow believers. There is also great value in studying the Word by yourself. Read through the story of the Woman at the Well (John 4:1-42) this week. There's more to see and understand than what we could fit in this discussion. Now that you're familiar with the passage, go back to it and see what else God has for you there.

Take Stock of your Flesh. Take time this week to reflect on where you're "going back to the well" to satisfy the desires of the flesh. Once you've identified it, go to Jesus in prayer, meditate on a passage of Scripture that addresses that sin, or share your struggle with an accountability partner.

Write Out Your Story. If you have never done it before, there is value in doing this. If you've done it multiple times before, there's still great value in doing this. The woman's testimony changed the lives of her whole town as they came to know Jesus as the Savior of the world. Your testimony has power, just like hers did.