

## **John 4:5–42 — Bible Study Handout**

### **The Woman at the Well: Grace That Crosses Barriers**

#### **Big Idea**

Jesus meets people in ordinary places, crosses social and spiritual barriers, and offers living water that satisfies the deepest human thirst. Grace moves toward us before we move toward God.

#### **Context**

- Takes place in **Samaria**, a region Jews often avoided due to centuries of religious and ethnic tension.
- Occurs after Jesus' conversation with **Nicodemus (John 3)**, creating contrast between a respected religious leader and a socially marginalized woman.
- Wells in Scripture often symbolize **meeting places and covenant moments** (Genesis 24, Exodus 2).
- The woman coming alone at noon suggests **social isolation or shame** within her community (Keener).

#### **Key Themes**

- Living water, spiritual satisfaction through Christ
- Grace crossing cultural, moral, and social barriers
- Worship in spirit and truth
- Personal encounter leading to testimony
- God working before people recognize it

#### **Passage Overview**

##### **Verses 5–9 — Barriers Crossed**

- Jesus initiates conversation with a Samaritan woman.
- Breaks gender, ethnic, and religious norms.
- Grace begins with relationship, not accusation.

##### **Verses 10–15 — Living Water Offered**

- Jesus introduces spiritual thirst and eternal life.
- The woman misunderstands, thinking physically.
- Spiritual understanding often grows gradually.

##### **Verses 16–26 — Truth with Compassion**

- Jesus reveals knowledge of her life without condemnation.
- Discussion shifts from location of worship to relationship with God.
- Jesus clearly reveals Himself as Messiah.

##### **Verses 27–30 — Witness Begins**

- The woman leaves her water jar behind, symbolizing changed priorities.
- She invites others to meet Jesus.
- Encounter leads naturally to testimony.

##### **Verses 31–38 — The Harvest**

- Jesus teaches disciples that spiritual work is already underway.
- God prepares hearts before we see results.

##### **Verses 39–42 — Community Transformation**

- Many Samaritans believe because of her testimony.
- Faith deepens through personal encounter with Christ.
- Jesus is recognized as Savior of the world.

#### **Important Observations**

- Jesus speaks **truth and grace together**, not one without the other.
- The woman moves from **skepticism** → **curiosity** → **belief** → **witness**.
- Outsiders often recognize Jesus faster than insiders in John's Gospel (Carson).
- God uses imperfect people to reach others.

### **Wesleyan Insights**

- **Prevenient Grace:** Jesus seeks the woman before she seeks Him (Collins).
- **Transforming Grace:** Her identity shifts from shame to witness.
- **Universal Grace:** Salvation extends beyond ethnic and religious boundaries.
- **Holiness:** Transformation flows from relationship, not pressure.

### **Life Application**

- Jesus meets us in ordinary routines, not just spiritual moments.
- Our past doesn't disqualify us from God's work.
- Honest conversations with Jesus lead to healing.
- Sharing faith often begins with simply telling our story.
- God may already be working in people around us.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. Where do you see spiritual thirst in your own life right now?
2. What barriers might keep you from fully receiving God's grace?
3. How does Jesus' approach to the woman challenge the way we treat others?
4. What "water jar" might you need to leave behind?
5. Who in your life might be ready to hear about Jesus through your story?

### **Key Verse**

"Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst." — John 4:14

### **Cross References**

- Isaiah 55:1
- Jeremiah 2:13
- John 7:37–39
- Acts 8:4–8
- Revelation 22:17

### **Takeaway**

Jesus doesn't wait for people to get their lives together before meeting them. He meets them where they are, speaks truth with compassion, and offers life that truly satisfies.