

The Woman at the Well Isn't Who You Thought

Written by Bill Perkins

"Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of the woman's testimony."

- John 4:39

Before we talk about the woman Jesus met at Jacob's well, we need to talk about the well itself.

Jacob's well sat beside a public road outside the village where travelers passed throughout the day. It was a landmark tied to Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph. It wasn't a hidden place to avoid people.

And yet I was taught she came here to hide- to avoid the other women, to escape their scorn.

John doesn't tell us. It seems just as likely she went to pray where her ancestors had sought God. Perhaps she was wondering about the Messiah. We don't know what she was thinking. We don't know why she went to the well.

But we do know how Jesus treated her- like a future disciple.

At that ancient well, Jesus begins a conversation with her.

He asks for a drink. She's surprised-a Jewish man speaking to a Samaritan woman- and asks why He would talk to her. Jesus offers "living water," something greater than the well can give.

Then He says, "Go, call your husband."

She answers, "I have no husband."

Jesus replies,

"You have said well, 'I have no husband,'
for you have had five husbands,
and the man you now have is not your husband."

She then asks a worship question:

where does true worship happen?

Jesus teaches her that true worship is in Spirit and truth.

Then she says,

"I know Messiah is coming?"

And Jesus reveals who He is:

"I who speak to you am He."

- John 4:26

You may not know this about Jesus-

the woman at the well was

the first person He told He was the Messiah (John 4:26).

There's a sequence here.

And once you see it,

the story changes.

She isn't hiding.

She isn't shunned.

She isn't the scandal of Sychar.

What the text shows

is a woman who recognizes revelation,

asks real questions,

speaks truthfully,

and responds like the earliest disciples.

Because she isn't the exception.

She is the continuation.

Andrew to Peter.

Philip to Nathanael.

A woman to the village.

She becomes the first evangelist outside Israel,

the first cross-cultural witness,

the first to bring a community to Jesus.

And she does it with the same invitation:

"Come and see."