



This morning we come to perhaps the least obscure of the 'Unnamed but Unforgotten', the Woman at the Well, or the Woman of Samaria. Everyone is searching for a happiness that will last forever. We all try to find this happiness in lots of different ways: being popular in school, good exam results, earning more money so we can buy a better car or move into a nicer house. Maybe we are trying to find happiness through retirement without the worries of work, while babysitting the

grandkids one day a week. The Bible doesn't tell us that these things are bad, but if we make them the most important thing in our lives, they will either disappoint us in the end or we will find that we always want more. That's what the Woman at the well found out in her own life. She had been married five times. (v 18) We aren't told her back story but it's clear that she was never able to find happiness.

At the well that Jesus begins to talk to her. That in itself is shocking because Jews and Samaritans did not get on, much like the English and Welsh or rival football fans. In reality, they can. It's not weird for me to talk to an English person, and I even have very close friends who support my rival football team. However, Jews and Samaritans did not like each other at all. The amazing thing about Jesus is that he knows this, but he doesn't care! So, Jesus starts the conversation, 'Can I have some water?' I think Jesus is thirsty. But also, he's trying to do something else. He knows she's been looking for happiness in all the wrong places. The big idea that Jesus wants her to see is in verses 13-14, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal Life."

Experts tell us that water is the best drink. Water helps our bodies with a lot of things and is essential for life. We can only survive a few days without it. We need about 8 cups a day if we're an adult, and 4-8 if we're a child, depending on how old we are. Nothing living can survive without water. But even the best water only satisfies for a short time. Eventually we become thirsty again. Jesus uses that everyday experience to teach us something much deeper. Jesus meets the deepest thirst of our lives. Jesus doesn't mean physically thirsty. When Jesus says, the water I give lasts forever, he's not saying, 'I give real water, H₂O for you to drink, but that he quenches our spiritual thirst. Jesus is saying that whenever we look for happiness in other things we will be thirsty again. But when we realise that Jesus is our friend and we come to him, we will be satisfied. That's because we have been made by God to know God, and it's only by coming to Jesus and trusting in him that we can know God. Only when we know God can we be satisfied. Like this woman have you discovered that Jesus is the only one who can truly satisfy us forever? We might be here this morning, blessed with lots of good things, friends, money, house, family, a good career, but these things are only for this world, we can't take them with us when we die, and they might even be taken away from us in this life; 'the Lord gives and takes away', as Job said, but Jesus is the best because not only does he satisfy our deepest longings, but he will also never be taken away from us. He lasts forever!

Just imagine being in this woman's shoes, or sandals as it probably was and you discover that the man you've been talking to is the long-awaited Messiah. She was so amazed that in her excitement she left her water jar (metaphorically leaving all behind) and ran back to the town. "Come, see a man who told me everything I've ever done. Could this be the Messiah?" If we know Jesus, then we have the answer to the longings of

everyone! She wastes no time in going off to tell everyone. We usually want other people to share in our happiness and excitement. It makes us even happier. Although it's not a very nice feeling when someone doesn't share in our excitement when we share our good news.

We should have the same desire when it comes to Jesus. Knowing Jesus should make us so happy that we want to share him with everyone. But it's a bit harder, isn't it? At least I find it hard. Maybe we've lost that first joy we had. Maybe we've tried in the past and no one's listened. People might not share in our excitement about Jesus. They might laugh at us. They might ask us questions we don't know the answer to. This woman wasn't a very popular. She was going to get water during the hottest part of the day, to avoid everyone. But this woman doesn't let any of that bother her. She is simply so overjoyed about meeting Jesus that she runs back with a very simple message, an invitation. 'Come and see' is all she says. No big speech. No answers to any big questions. 'Come and see for yourselves.' That's all that's required of us. God wants us to tell others about Jesus, but he doesn't expect us to know everything. We can just invite people to 'come.' Come to coffee morning with me on Tuesday. Come to Jucos, Covies. Come to church with me, or Messy church.' 'Come to Christianity Explored, or 321.' We can invite people to our homegroup social and meet our friends. Amazingly all the people came at her invitation.

Many of the Samaritans from the town believed in him because of the woman's testimony. (v39) Isn't that amazing! If you're a Christian, you have a testimony a story that is special to you about how you became a friend of Jesus. Whenever we baptise someone here, they share their testimony, and we get to hear about the amazing things Jesus has done in their lives. How he saved them from their sins and about how they now trust in him. Maybe even after the service, why not ask someone you know is a Christian, about their testimony. Here, they listened to what she had to say. They listened to what Jesus meant to her and what he had done for her. And they are amazed. Maybe they saw the change in her life. One moment she was sad, ashamed, and embarrassed, and now she's joyful with happiness exploding out of her. Jesus really does change lives, even today. After that they all came to see Jesus for themselves and even more Samaritans believed in Jesus. (v41-42) as the Saviour of the world.

This really is an amazing story, about a woman whose name we do not know. She wasn't one of the great Old Testament Prophets. She wasn't one of the apostles who travelled far and wide. In fact, she wasn't thought of as very important at all by anyone; maybe even hated and rejected by them. But she met Jesus. Jesus took the time to talk to her. Jesus changed her life, and she, filled with joy, went off and told everyone she knew and many of them came to know Jesus because of her story. In that way, she's a lot like me and you, because it shows us that God uses the foolish and weak things of this world for his glory. Not many of us here, including myself, will be famous or well known, rich or powerful, not many of us here will be an Egghead or Mastermind champion, but God has chosen to reveal Jesus to us. And although not many know our name, we know the name of Jesus and can invite people to come to him and drink, and who knows the impact that will have on the lives of others. AMEN