

Greetings to you from Samaria. I bring to you the gift of evangelism. It is a gift that came upon me suddenly without any plans of my own.

I met him. I met Jesus face to face. It was absolutely the most important moment of my life. Up until that point, my life had left a lot to be desired. I won't go into all the details, but I found myself caught in a system that kept me from being able to move forward. I believe this system to be evil, but no one seemed to know a way out.

Have you ever had anyone speak to you and look into your eyes in such a way that you are crying before you know it and you really don't know why? He did that. He knew me. I mean he really KNEW me. He saw all the pain of all the years, of all the men who had taken advantage of my situation. He saw into that pain and he showed me a way out. This Jewish rabbi who should not have even spoken to me was the one person in my life who showed me that I could get out of that evil system.

I don't know if he bestowed upon me at that moment this gift for evangelism or if I had it all along. Perhaps I did and he just helped me to see that it was there. Perhaps it was there and he provided me with just enough courage to use it for the first time. But, it felt as if suddenly I had been given this gift. I have no idea how I was able to do the things I did.

I felt this zeal for his message like nothing I had ever experienced before. I would have told a camel had I come upon one! I ran. I ran and I told. I told about him, all he had taught me, all he had seen in me, all he had given to me, and all the ways in which he loved me. I told it all.

I don't pretend that it is easy. It requires opening myself up in ways that was once terrifying to me. Before he looked deep inside my spirit and still loved me, I would never have shared the things I now share with others. But, somehow through his love, I am able to tell others my story. That is what people want to hear. They want to hear about Jesus, but they want to know about my meeting him. They want to know MY story and where it intersects with HIS story. Sounds simple, but believe me, I know how difficult that can be.

All I can offer you is this assurance. You are not alone. Christ bestows this gift of evangelism, and Christ leads us in using it. Where has your story intersected with the story of Jesus? I've told you my story. Now, you go and tell yours.

Discussion Suggestions - Samaritan Woman

One can only imagine the Samaritan Woman's surprise when Jesus first asked her for a drink of water. In that time, it was uncommon practice for a Jew to even talk to a Samaritan, much less a male Jew to a female Samaritan! But, as always, it was a purpose-filled encounter on Jesus' part. He knew with whom he was dealing from the start.

The Samaritan Woman that encounters Jesus at Jacob's well was not a woman of prominence, nor was she special in any way. In fact, the Samaritan Woman had a personal history that could cause people to blush and led most to shun her from society. But she was chosen as the one who would spread the Good News to her people about this Messiah that she has just met.

This encounter between the Samaritan Woman and Jesus gives us hope and confirms to us that God will meet us where we are. God will seek us out as lost sheep and will restore us to the fold with no hint of condemnation. No matter what our personal histories may be, God comes to us with love, grace and redemption and gives us the overflowing living water. What is our response to be?

The Bible commands us to be witnesses of our faith. Discuss the following questions in your group:

- ✦ Do you find it difficult to share your faith with others? Why or why not?
- ✦ What encourages you to share your faith with those whom need to hear it?
- ✦ What are the obstacles you have faced in sharing the Gospel with others? How have you overcome those obstacles?
- ✦ When you hear the word *Evangelism* what comes to your mind? What emotion does it stir within you? Does it bring to mind an image of blindly knocking on doors with a prepared speech, or an image of teaching, guiding, and directing in a loving manner others in the way of Christ?

PRAYER:

In your closing prayer, thank God for giving each of us the gift of evangelism, in whatever manner it may be. Ask God to give us guidance so that we may effectively tell others about Christ's saving grace so that they may truly understand how much God loves them. Remember in your prayer our missionaries both at home and abroad and the work that God has set before them.