

Adult Lesson

Focal Passage John 4:13-14

Jesus answered . . . 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.

Teaching Tip Introduce the lesson by sharing the following story with the group.

Introduction

Over the last several years, John Meador has been leading a movement to transform the evangelistic outreach of Cross City Church in Euless. Hundreds of members have been trained to share their faith in Jesus Christ through Meador's Can We Talk? witnessing model. John Briere, a member at Cross City, says that Meador's program has revolutionized his life by equipping him to confidently engage lost people—both strangers and those he know well—with the truth of the gospel. Cross City members Jenna Milleson and Morgan Wilson led a woman to Christ in the parking lot of the church, something Meador had done just two weeks prior. Evangelism is a top priority and a pervading culture at this metroplex church.

Those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ through the witness of members at Cross City Church were among the nearly 19 million unsaved people in Texas. Texas has become a desired destination for many around the country who are seeking jobs and a better life in a state with boundless opportunity. However, an increasing population brings with it a greater need for "harvest workers" who are consistently looking for the one who needs salvation through Jesus Christ.

The 2019 Reach Texas theme, 19 Million Reasons—Who's Your One? contains a question that all followers of Jesus, especially all Southern Baptists, should be asking with regularity. Are we looking for the "one"? Are we reaching out to the "one"? Are we sharing the gospel with the "one"? Reducing the lost population of Texas will only occur as we pray for harvest workers and step up our own efforts to make disciples in Texas.

In John 4, we find the story of Jesus stepping out of his zone of comfort and reaching out to one woman who needed to drink from his cup of "living water." Within this encounter between Jesus and the woman at the well, we find a model for personal evangelism that every follower of Christ can use to identify and engage with your "one" as the Spirit leads you into a consistent lifestyle of winning people to Christ—one by one.

Teaching Tip Choose a volunteer to read aloud John 4:4-9.

Identifying the One John 4:4-9

He had to travel through Samaria, so He came to a town of Samaria called Sychar near the property that Jacob had given his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, worn out from His journey, sat down at the well. It was about six in the evening.

A woman of Samaria came to draw water. "Give Me a drink," Jesus said to her, for His disciples had gone into town to buy food.

"How is it that You, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" she asked Him. For Jews do not associate with Samaritans

Back in Jesus' day, the journey from Judea to Galilee took the better part of a week -- a trek of over 60 miles. Most Jews made the trip a longer because they chose not to take the most direct route, straight north through Samaria. Instead, "faithful" Jews would leave Jerusalem, cross the Jordan River, and walk along the east side of the river, through Perea, until they reached Decapolis, where they would cross back over the Jordan into Galilee. Why take this convoluted path that added more miles to an already long trip? Because they risked being contaminated in Samaria.

Jews hated Samaritans and avoided them at all costs. In the eyes of pious Jews, Samaritans were mongrels and half-breeds, worse than dogs. Back when Assyria overran and destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel (722 BC), a remnant of poor Jews were left behind and intermarried with foreigners who had been exiled there by the Assyrians. Not only did these Jews mix their bloodline with pagans (which was strictly prohibited), but they also incorporated their religious beliefs and practices with those of other nations.

When Jesus and his disciples left Jerusalem for Galilee, instead of heading east towards the Jordan, the Lord took the direct route straight into Samaria. In the text, John uses the Greek word meaning "necessary" to describe Jesus' motivation for heading towards Samaria, "He HAD to travel through Samaria." By using this phrase, John reveals that Jesus was on assignment. He had a divine appointment in Samaria; and Jesus always followed the will of his Father (John 5:19).

The Father quickly revealed his will when Jesus and his company stopped for supplies in the city of Sychar. Jesus stayed at Jacob's Well outside the city gates, and the disciples went into town to purchase some food. The well, dug by the patriarch Jacob, was a spiritually significant place for both Jews and Samaritans. As Jesus rested from the long journey, a woman arrived alone at the well. Customarily, no words were exchanged in public between a Jewish man and a woman who was not his wife; but this moment was the reason Jesus "had to travel through Samaria."

Jesus opened the encounter by asking the woman for a cup of water. Surprised and shocked, the woman expressed her amazement that a Jewish man would even acknowledge her, a woman and a Samaritan. Yet, this unnamed woman was the very reason Jesus was at the well in Samaria on that day.

Teaching Tip Ask the following questions to apply the truth in this passage:

Why is it so important for us to pray for God to reveal opportunities for us to find the "one" who needs to hear the gospel?

What are some ways we can tell when lost people are interested in hearing more about the gospel? If you already know someone who God is leading you to share the gospel with, and you are resisting God's urging, how can you overcome your hesitance?

Finding "your one" begins by listening to the voice of the Spirit of God as he directs your path. This communication starts in our moments of prayer, as we ask the Father to lead us to those who desperately need him. Jesus' intimate relationship with his Father, nurtured by constant communication, gave him an innate sense of mission. He knew where he needed to be, and he knew when he needed to talk with someone. There were certainly far fewer than 19 million people in Israel at the time—probably less than one million—but out of all the people who needed a word from Jesus, this woman was the one he chose and the one who listened.

Teaching Tip Illustrate the truth of John 4:4-9 with the story below. More information about the Who's Your One? campaign can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/y2ebseos>

At the North American Mission Board's presentation at the 2019 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting, Johnny Hunt said that "if 10 percent of church attenders in the Southern Baptist Convention decided to pray for and see one person come to Christ over the next year, Southern Baptists would record the highest number of baptisms in the history of the SBC." Hunt, NAMB vice president of evangelism and leadership, challenged the messengers to "get our focus back on the 'ones.'"

In the same meeting, convention president J.D. Greear highlighted the Who's Your One evangelism initiative as a response to this important need. Greear related that Who's Your One has transformed the culture of his church. "More people are praying for their 'ones' and seeing people come to faith," Greear said.

(Baptist Press, "NAMB reports on 'Who's Your One?', church planting," June 13, 2019)

Teaching Tip Call on a volunteer to read aloud John 4:10-18

Engaging One to One John 4:10-18

Jesus answered, "If you knew the gift of God, and who is saying to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would ask Him, and He would give you living water."

"Sir," said the woman, "You don't even have a bucket, and the well is deep. So where do You get this 'living water'? You aren't greater than our father Jacob, are You? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and livestock."

Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks from this water will get thirsty again. But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty again—ever! In fact, the water I will give him will become a well of water springing up within him for eternal life."

"Sir," the woman said to Him, "give me this water so I won't get thirsty and come here to draw water."

"Go call your husband," He told her, "and come back here."

"I don't have a husband," she answered.

"You have correctly said, 'I don't have a husband,'" Jesus said. "For you've had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true."

Jesus dispensed with small talk and got right to the heart of the matter. Straightaway, he told the woman who he was and why he was there. He crafted his evangelistic approach according to her present need, water. Although Jesus did not introduce himself formally, he used the term "gift of God" to describe his true identity and align himself with the God she thought she knew and worshipped.

Why did Jesus call himself the "gift of God"? We find the answer to this in his late-night conversation with Nicodemus (John 3:1-21), when he said, "For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Although eternal life is the result of faith, or belief, in Jesus Christ, the true gift is Jesus himself.

Jesus described the gift in a way she could understand, but with an unusual twist, living water. Water was rare in this arid region of the world; Jacob's well was a source of life for the people in Sychar. Without the modern convenience of a water system and indoor plumbing, women hiked out to the well daily carrying heavy wood buckets to draw water for cooking, cleaning, and drinking. When Jesus

offered the woman unending water that would quench her thirst not just today, but forever, she was astounded. Yet, at the same time, the woman still did not understand who Jesus was or what kind of water he was offering her. She was intrigued, however, and wanted to hear more about this amazing gift.

Jesus, in essence, asked the woman the “who’s your one?” question when he told her to go get her husband. There was one man in her life with whom she could share this incredible gift of living water. Jesus’ request, however, had a deeper purpose. He wanted to expose her greatest need and reveal his boundless grace. The woman’s deepest present need was not water, but love: something she had tried to find with five husbands as well as the man with whom she was now living. Jesus revealed his divine nature through his knowledge of her sinful past, and he demonstrated his unbounded grace by offering her freedom from her bondage.

Teaching Tip Ask the following questions to apply the truth of this passage:
Why are many Christians intimidated to share the gospel with someone?

Why is it important that people know that we care for them personally when we share the gospel?

What are some ways you can demonstrate your compassion and concern for the “ones” with whom you share the gospel?

How can you tell when the Holy Spirit is present in a witnessing encounter?

The impact of every follower of Jesus Christ leading one lost person to faith in him would be incredible. Our churches would explode—literally and figuratively. The gates of hell would fall in ruin! Most Christians are intimidated, however, by the thought of engaging others in one-on-one conversations about Jesus. Jesus’ example with the woman at the well provides us with some ideas about starting these witnessing encounters:

- **Don’t be hesitant.** Jesus took the initiative and spoke to the woman. Engage people in conversation rather than waiting for the other person.
- **Use common points of interest to move towards the gospel conversation.** Jesus used water because the woman’s immediate interest was drawing water from the well. Notice how Jesus pivoted quickly to the type of water she really needed. Framing the conversation in terms of the interests and concerns of the other can open a door for deeper communication.
- **Be honest about your intentions.** When Jesus introduced himself, he moved quickly to his purpose. He told her who he was and why he was engaging her in conversation. Later in their conversation, he was even more honest when he confronted her about her marriages. But Jesus earned the right to be honest by demonstrating his concern for her.

Teaching Tip Illustrate the truth of John 4:10-18 using the story below.

Current SBTC president, Juan Sanchez, challenged Southern Baptists in Texas to find “at least one non-Christian whom we can pray for, plan to share the gospel with, and call for a response to Christ.”

The pastor of High Pointe Baptist Church in Austin offered three ideas for believers to keep in mind as they reach out to lost people in a state with lost people from diverse backgrounds:

1. In a religiously pluralistic culture, no matter the response, keep sharing the gospel (Acts 17:16-17).
2. But realize that when you share the gospel in a religiously pluralistic culture, it will sound strange (Acts 17:18-21).
3. To make the gospel understandable in a religiously pluralistic culture, we must do the hard work of both tearing down and building up (Acts 17:22-29).

(TEXANONLINE.net, May 21, 2019)

Teaching Tip Briefly present a summary of John 4:19-38, then choose a volunteer to read aloud John 4:39-42.

Turning One into Many John 4:39-42

Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

The woman did not immediately proclaim Jesus as Messiah and run into town to tell the people of Sychar about him. Instead, she tried to divert Jesus' attention away from her sin by getting him into a theological debate about worship styles (John 4:19-26). When she referred to the Messiah who would "explain everything to us," Jesus drew back the curtain and announced "I am He . . . "the One speaking to you" (v. 26).

With this full revelation, the Spirit of God touched the woman's heart and she believed. We see the work of the Spirit in her life by her immediate response; she left her water jar behind and ran back in the Sychar to tell others about Jesus.

Because of her reputation, the people she likely told about her experience were those who would listen to her: the downcast, the fringe of society, and the unloved. Some scholars point out that in verse 28, John uses "the men" to identify those she told about the One who "told me everything I ever did." If this is the case, there may have been some of her former husbands or lovers among the crowd.

The woman's testimony had a transformational effect on the community. She led the townspeople back to the well to hear Jesus' words of truth. Sychar was filled with people who were ready to hear the good news; the presence of the Spirit among in this village is evident because they "urged Him to stay with them . . . two days" and "many more believed because of what he said."

The example of the woman at the well illustrates the power of one transformed life. Jesus made an impact on an entire village when he reached out to one woman. We never hear her name or the rest of her story, but her influence brought "many more" out of the darkness and into the light. Luke records that during the early days of the church (Acts 8), the Holy Spirit led Philip, one of the original "deacons," into Samaria, where he reaped a harvest of souls throughout the region. Although the

woman at the well is never mentioned again in Scripture, her influence in Sychar may have been a catalyst for the later progress of the gospel in Samaria.

Teaching Tip Ask the following questions to apply the truth of this passage:
Describe a time when someone you led to Christ was instrumental in soon leading someone else to Christ.

How can you influence other believers to find “their one” with whom to share the gospel?

What has God directed you to do because of this lesson and what are you going to do about it?

Our influence on one person can have an eternal impact. Instead of focusing on the crowds and feeling overwhelmed at the mission ahead of us, we need to look at our circle of influence and pinpoint those we know who need the Lord. Several decades ago, the late Oscar Thompson published a book titled Concentric Circles of Concern. Thompson challenged his readers to consider evangelism through their network of relationships, including the immediate family and relatives, good friends, neighbors and associates, acquaintances, and other people we encounter on a daily basis. Thinking through these “circles of concern” in life can help us identify those who could be our “one.” Millions in Texas need to know and follow Jesus. Who is the “one in a million” you can reach today? Pray that God will help you find those who need him most and empower you to share the life-giving gospel of Jesus Christ with them.

Teaching Tip Lead the group in a time of prayer. Direct group members to pray specifically for one person they know God is leading them to share the gospel with, or praying for God to lead them soon to one who needs salvation through Jesus Christ.

Teaching Tip Ask: What are some of the opportunities you and your church are currently using to proclaim the name of Jesus and reach people for Christ? What are some potential opportunities not currently being used?

Ask: What would be the impact if your church took advantage of more opportunities to reach people for Christ? What would be the impact if they did not?

