

Mother Teresa

Agnes Bojaxhius was born in 1910 in Macedonia (part of the former Yugoslavia) in Europe. Her family was middle class and also deeply religious. Her father died when she was eight years old, but her mother continued to practice **charity** (kindness) to all who needed help. Almost every meal in the Bojaxhius home included strangers that young Agnes did not know.

At the age of 18, Agnes entered a **convent** (a group of buildings where nuns live) in Ireland in order to become a **nun** (a woman who chooses not to marry in order to spend her life serving God). She took the name Mary Teresa and was sent to Calcutta, India to teach in a school for some of the city's poorest children. She taught at a school and eventually became known as "Mother Teresa."

Early in her work, Mother Teresa believed that she heard Christ speak to her about working with the poorest of the poor in the slums of Calcutta. She eventually received permission to work on the streets of Calcutta where she taught, nursed, and cared for dying people the rest of her life. As time went on, many of her former students and teachers from the school joined her work.

In addition to her work in the slums of Calcutta, Mother Teresa traveled to Beirut to work with both Christians and Muslims. She also began a center for HIV/AIDS patients in New York City. She was awarded the Noble Peace Prize in 1979. The work of this Albanian woman, raised in Macedonia, educated in Ireland, and living in her adopted country of India, continues today in more than 123 countries.

Question: In today's Bible discussion, we will see Jesus crossing cultural, religious, and ethnic boundaries to show love to a needy woman. What boundaries did Mother Theresa cross?

Jesus talks with a Samaritan Woman

Passage: John 4:1-30, 39-42

Introduction: When you were growing up, were you told not to associate with certain people?

Vocabulary:

Samaritans: People resulting from intermarriage between Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews). Jews and Samaritans worshipped God differently and did not get along.

Samaria: The country where the Samaritans lived. It was located between Judea in the south and Galilee in the north. Judea and Galilee were primarily Jewish regions.

Jacob: An ancestor of both the Jews and the Samaritans.

Living water: Without water, we die. With clean water, we can thrive. Jesus is bringing the two into a single word image.

Eternal life: Life that God alone can give. Human life is spoiled by sin and faces death. Eternal life never ends.

Prophet: A person chosen by God to bring God's message to people.

To worship: To praise and honor God; to show love for God

Read John 4:1-15 Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John—² although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples.³ So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

⁴ Now he had to go through Samaria.⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph.⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?"⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.^[a])

¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

¹¹ "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?"¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"

¹³ Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again,¹⁴ 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."

¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

Questions:

1. Where does this story take place? (v 5)

2. Who does Jesus meet and what is she doing? (v 7)
3. For what does Jesus ask? (v 7)
4. Why is the woman surprised? (v 9)
5. What kind of water did Jesus say He would give the woman? (v 10)
6. What is the difference between water from a well and the living water Jesus describes? (v 13-14)
7. How does the woman respond to Jesus' offer of living water? (v 15)

Read John 4:16-30, 39-42

¹⁶ He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." ¹⁷ "I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

¹⁹ "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

²¹ "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

²⁵ The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

²⁶ Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

²⁷ Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

²⁸ Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ²⁹ "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" ³⁰ They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹ And because of his words many more became believers.

⁴²They 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.”

Questions:

1. What did Jesus say to the woman when she told him, “I have no husband”? (v 16-18)
2. Who did the woman think Jesus was? (v 19)
3. What was the difference in the way the Jews worshipped and the way the Samaritans worshipped? (v 20)
4. What did Jesus say about true worshippers? (v 23-24)
5. Who does Jesus claim to be? (v 25-26)
6. What did the woman do? (v 28-29)
7. How did the townspeople respond to the woman’s words? (v 30, 39-42)
8. What did the townspeople believe about Jesus? (v 42)
9. Knowing that the Samaritan woman had five husbands, how do you think the people in town treated her?
10. How do you think the woman’s life changed after meeting Jesus?