

# Encounters: The Outsider and the Insider

John 4:7-18; 3:1-6

3/12/23

## Discussion Questions

### Preparation

Of the two people Jesus encountered who do you relate to the most? Whose internal stirring/yearnings matched yours? How were they resolved?

### The Outsider

*When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" <sup>8</sup> (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)*

*<sup>9</sup> 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.)*

*<sup>10</sup> 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."*

*<sup>11</sup> "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? <sup>12</sup> 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?"*

*<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> 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."*

*<sup>15</sup> 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."*

*<sup>16</sup> He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."*

*<sup>17</sup> "I have no husband," she replied.*

*Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. <sup>18</sup> 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."*

1. Have you met or known a person who was just like the woman at the well – looking for happiness and personal fulfillment through the love of a person? It doesn't have to be a romantic interest, it could be the love of a parent, friend, a coach, co-worker, boss, etc.

What were their lives like? Characterize the relationship. Did they ever find satisfaction? What affect did it have on those around them? Did they find the love of Christ or are they still unable to find a love that truly satisfies?

2. What do think about the ancient practice of men not talking to women while alone? Is it a good rule? Brainstorm a few rules that would guard people from temptation (And it doesn't have to be sexual temptation. It can be any temptation).
3. What people groups do we have a hard time having a conversation with and why?

# Encounters: The Outsider and the Insider

John 4:7-18; 3:1-6

3/12/23

4. Who do we tend to see as outcasts? Do you think we have become more tolerant and gracious towards outcasts or are we just as harsh towards outcasts today?
5. How can we "hate the sin and love the sinner?" Is that even possible today in light of the fact that today people use their sin as an identifier?
6. How can we have sympathy for and show sympathy towards people like the woman at the well?
7. Read the statement by David Foster Wallace and interact with it.

*"Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship. And the compelling reason for choosing some sort of god to worship is that pretty much anything else will eat you alive. If you worship money and things, then you will never have enough, never feel you have enough. Worship your body, beauty or your sexual allure, and you will always feel ugly. And when time and age start showing, you will die a million deaths before you are planted in the ground. Worship power, and you will end up feeling weak and afraid, and you will need even more power to numb you to your own fears. Worship your intellect, being seen as smart, and you will always feel stupid, a fraud, always on the verge of being found out. What is insidious about these things is not that they are evil or sinful; it is that they are unconscious. They are the default settings of our lives."*

8. Write your own question:

## II. The Insider.

*Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. <sup>2</sup> He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him."*

*<sup>3</sup> Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."*

*<sup>4</sup> "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"*

*<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. John 3:1-6*

1. Do you know someone like Nicodemus, who on the outside looks like they got it all together – they are good, moral, successful, smart, and an upstanding citizen but inwardly he/she is unhappy and fearful?
2. Nicodemus is not the kind of guy you'd think needs to be "born again!" Who do we think needs a radical spiritual conversion? Why is that?

# Encounters: The Outsider and the Insider

**John 4:7-18; 3:1-6**

3/12/23

3. Who is harder to reach with the gospel: A. Those who have lived far from God. B. Those who believe they are good and think they deserve to go to heaven? Is Jesus is right, the religious and the good are the ones who need a radical conversion experience?
4. What does it mean to be "born again" according to scripture? How has the experience been communicated to you in the past and did it fit with what the Bible says about it?
5. Read Romans 3:20-25 from another translation. Then read the version below. Which one is more understandable?

*"And it's clear enough, isn't it, that we're sinners, every one of us, in the same sinking boat with everybody else?"*

*But in our time something new has been added. What Moses and the prophets witnessed to all those years has happened. The God-setting-things-right that we read about has become Jesus-setting-things-right for us. And not only for us, but for everyone who believes in him. For there is no difference between us and them in this. Since we've compiled this long and sorry record as sinners and proved that we are utterly incapable of living the glorious lives God wills for us, God did it for us. Out of sheer generosity he put us in right standing with himself. A pure gift. He got us out of the mess we're in and restored us to where he always wanted us to be. And he did it by means of Jesus Christ.*

*God sacrificed Jesus on the altar of the world to clear that world of sin. Having faith in him sets us in the clear. God decided on this course of action in full view of the public—to set the world in the clear with himself through the sacrifice of Jesus. (The Message)*

6. What is the "tyranny of good works" and have you ever experienced it?
7. Respond to this person who believes they don't need to accept Christ in their lives: *"I'm a morally good person just not religious. There may be a God, I don't know for sure. But either way I'm a good person and that's all that should matter. Isn't it?"*
8. What was your favorite saying, quote or thought from this past week?
9. Write your own question:

End in prayer or praise. Perhaps play a song that exalts Jesus and what he has done to quench our thirst and take away our spiritual emptiness and fears.