

## International Conversation Café

Bible Topic: Jesus Loves People of Every Race, Gender, and Economic Status

Race, gender, and economic status tends to divide people. It seems that in order to get recognition and status there are advantages in being part of a certain race, gender, or economic status. People pay attention to these things, but what about God? Do these differences cause him to treat people differently?

Before we read of a story about how Jesus treated people, we must consider God as the creator of people.

So God created mankind in his own image,  
in the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them. Genesis 1

*Why might this Scripture be important as we consider the differences between people?*

The following discussion will look at Jesus' encounter with a woman who was not of the dominant race or culture, and probably of low economic status. Not only this, it seems the other people in her life avoided her.

<sup>4</sup> Jesus had to go through Samaria. <sup>5</sup> He came to a town in Samaria called Sychar. It was near the piece of land Jacob had given his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Jacob's well was there. Jesus was tired from the journey. So he sat down by the well. It was about noon.

<sup>7</sup> A woman from Samaria came to get some 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. I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" She said this because Jews don't have anything to do with Samaritans.

*Tell the story in your own words.*

*Several things are alarming about this encounter. One is that she was a Samaritan, a race that was hated and avoided by the Jews. Secondly, men did not speak to women in a public place. Yet Jesus went there and dared to speak to a woman. What might we conclude about Jesus so far?*

<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, "You do not know what God's gift is. And you do not know who is asking you for a drink. If you did, you would have asked him. He would have given you living water."

<sup>11</sup> "Sir," the woman said, "you don't have anything to get water with. The well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" <sup>12</sup> Our father Jacob gave us the well. He drank from it himself. So did his sons and his livestock. Are you more important than he is?"

<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. <sup>14</sup> But anyone who drinks the water I give them will never be thirsty. In fact, the water I give them will become a spring of water in them. It will flow up into eternal life."

*It seems that the woman and Jesus are talking about two different things. When the woman talks about water, what do you think she is talking about? When Jesus speaks of water, what is he talking about?*

<sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water. Then I will never be thirsty. And I won’t have to keep coming here to get water.”

<sup>16</sup> He told her, “Go. Get 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 live with now is not your husband. What you have just said is very true.”

*Tell the story in your own words thus far. Why do you think Jesus began talking to the woman about her five husbands?*

The story continues with a discussion of who Jesus was. The woman concludes he is a prophet because he told her things about her, having never met her before. By the end of the encounter, she concludes he must be the Messiah, the promised King of Israel. She persuaded the others in her village to meet Jesus. Here is what the villagers concluded.

<sup>42</sup> They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said. We have now heard for ourselves. We know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”

Forty days after the death and resurrection of Jesus, Jesus went up to heaven. Before he left, he told his followers to go into all the world and make disciples from all nations. The reason behind this is God’s love for all people.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. John 3:16,17.

*How do these verses demonstrate God’s love for every person?*

*How can God’s attitude and Jesus’ example help us as we consider people of different races, gender, and economic status?*



Giovanni Francesco Barbieri Il Guercino. Jesus and the Samaritan Woman at the Well. C. 1640-1641, Oil on canvas, 116 cm x 156 cm. Museo Thyssen Bornemisza, Madrid