

## A Story based on John 4:4-42

Its good being an angel. You see lots of things God is doing.

I'm one of the unseen 'guardian angels'<sup>1</sup> with a special job to look after individual people. It's a sign that God cares for each person in his amazing creation. My job is to watch over a Samaritan lady.

I was watching her the other day. It was hot as usual and she had come to collect water from the well. This woman didn't seem to be liked by the other villagers – that would explain why she came in the midday sun. She could avoid the other women's disdain. It can be very hard when you don't have friends and people hate you. She felt like an outcast and was treated like one by the villagers.

I watched her arrive. She was nervous because she found that a man was there, alone. Normally a lone woman wouldn't speak to a lone man.

She could tell that he was a Jew and knew that a Jew wouldn't normally speak to a Samaritan. Jews normally avoided Samaria – it was mainly because of racial prejudice.

But she needed the water and approached the well. The man surprised her and asked for a drink of water.

She didn't know he was Jesus, but *she* was significant to *him*. She questioned him: "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?"

At first this might seem like a silly question – surely, he was thirsty and wanted a drink because it was hot and he didn't have a rope or bucket.

He could have simply said that he was thirsty – that would be the end of conversation. But Jesus had a way of turning questions around and giving them real meaning.

He had a point to make and wanted to show how significant the lady was to him. He told her that if she knew the gift God had for her and who he was, she would ask him and have living water.

She obviously didn't have any idea what he was talking about.

- Where's your bucket?
- What was meant by living water?
- Did it have living creatures in it?

Jesus was very patient as he always was with people, unless they were out to trick him or criticise him like the high-up priests and teachers of the law.

He accepted her and answered her questions in an indirect way. He told her that the water he had was an ever-flowing spring and would give eternal life.

This was good news – the lady wanted some of both. It would save her all the trips to the well and eternal life sounded good.

She wasn't sure what this really meant but did know that everything else was short-lived and did not satisfy.

Then, instead of giving her the water straight away, Jesus shocked her by telling her to fetch her husband. Jesus knows everything about people, but this was shock for the lady. She didn't have a husband – but she was living with a man she wasn't married to.

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 4:10-11, Psalm 91:11

Worse than that, she had already had 5 husbands. How could this man know about this? Had he been talking to the villagers? No, he was a stranger, and yet he accepted her just as she was.

She was feeling very uncomfortable. She tried to sidestep the issue asked why the Jews and Samaritans worship differently. The man responded by telling her that she could be secure in knowing that the Samaritans and the Jews could all worship God. It didn't matter where or how, as long as worship was sincere. She knew the future of the Jews was secure, but he said that she, a Samaritan, could be secure too.

She, together with many others, was waiting for the Messiah to come. I could tell that she was asking herself – “is this the Messiah”?

Then the man told her who he was: “I am the Messiah”.

This was one of the moments I love – when someone realises that they are valued by Jesus. They realise how much they matter, that Jesus accepts them just as they are and they can be secure in his love.

- The moment when this dejected, lonely woman's eyes brightened.
- The moment when her frown turned to a smile
- The moment she realised that she had met Jesus and that he loved her more than anyone ever had.
- The moment that she was able to draw on that life-giving water and receive eternal life.

So, what did she do? She put down her empty water jar and ran back to the village and told everyone she met. They could see the difference Jesus had made to her and they took notice. They didn't despise her, but they came to find Jesus for themselves. It wasn't long before the Samaritans flocked to Jesus.

Everyone matters to Jesus. He will accept all who come to him, even in their sinful life. In him they will be secure and have a place in heaven when they die.

### Summary

Are you like the Samaritan woman - waiting for things to get better? Those who turn to Jesus receive eternal life.

- You are significant to God
- You will be accepted by him
- You can be secure through all eternity

Are you a Christian, but one who isn't sure of their value to God? Be assured that to him you are:

- Significant because He died for you
- Accepted by Him, warts and all
- Secure in His love

And if you are a Christian, try to do what the Samaritan woman did: tell others of Jesus' love and that they will be accepted by Him, are significant to and can be secure in Him.

Contributed by David Priddy – based on a true story!