



Sermon Outline

COME TO THE WELL

John 4:1-30

COME
And **SEE**
FOUNDATION

The
CHOSEN®



Come to the Well

This resource helps you tell the story of John 4:1-42. It includes a clip from Season One, Episode 8, to show to the congregation, a suggested script for setting the scene before you show the clip, and a short sermon outline with main teaching points and pastoral prompts.

Sermon Title: Come to the Well

Text: John 4:1-30

Dominant Thought: For all who thirst – and for whatever reason – there’s “living water” to be had.

[Download the Episode Clip](#)

Setting the Scene (suggested script)

One of the most talked-about scenes from Season One of *The Chosen* is quite literally the last scene of Season One, which depicts one of the most talked-about stories from the Gospel of John. I want us to watch it together, but let me offer a bit of context before we do: Jesus and his followers are on the road again, making their way to their next ministry stop, when they realize they’ve run out of food. Jesus encourages the group to head into a town just a mile away to grab supplies, and when one of his followers expresses concern at leaving Jesus by himself, Jesus replies, “I’ll be all right.” He then gestures to a well that stands in the distance. “Meet me at that well when you come back.” And this is what happens next...

***If you've never introduced your congregation to *The Chosen*, here is an alternative opening to the script above:** *The Chosen* is a television series that allows folks to get to know the authentic Jesus through the eyes of the women and men who followed him. One of the most talked-about scenes from Season One of *The Chosen* is quite literally the last scene of Season One, which depicts one of the most talked-about stories from the Gospel of John. I want us to watch it together, but let me offer a bit of context...

Sermon Outline

Introduction

*Show the clip from *The Chosen*, using the suggested script above to set the scene.

*After showing the clip, consider reading the text on which it's based – John 4:1-30. You could transition from the showing of the clip to the reading of the text by saying something like: "You can see why it's one of the show's most talked-about scenes, can't you? And again, it's based on one of the most talked-about stories in the Gospel of John. I know we just *watched* John 4:1-30; let's listen to it, too." And to transition from the reading of the text to the start of the sermon body, you could say the following: "You can see it in the scene from *The Chosen*, and hear it in the text that the scene is based upon: the woman Jesus encounters at that well is suffering from deep spiritual thirst, stirred by so many rounds of rejection."

Sermon Body

I. There's "living water" for those left thirsty from religious rejection.

Main Teaching Point: "Will you give me a drink?" Jesus asks the woman at the well. You can hear an incredulous gasp in her reply: "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" Her words spring up from a deep well of years of religious rejection, stirred by an ongoing theological war. Jews simply did not consider Samaritans true Jews. Samaritans had embraced their own places and practices of worship, and many of them had even married Gentiles. They were scornfully turned away as second-class "half-bloods." It wasn't uncommon to overhear a Jew offering a sneering prayer of thanksgiving that they weren't born a Samaritan. But here's Jesus, by way of a compassionate meet-up at a well during the noon hour, crossing the hard lines drawn up between the two religious camps.

He startlingly speaks of a future worship that transcends where either Jew or Samaritan has landed: “A time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ... 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. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.” These words had to have spoken to a deep thirst within the woman – one stirred by religious rejection. You can see it in the scene from *The Chosen*. You can see her joy at the end of the scene from *The Chosen*. Jesus was the one who asked for a drink of water – but knowing full well that she was the one who needed one.

Pastoral Prompt: While the religious divides we face in denominational differences or faith traditions might not be as deep and severe as that which separated Jew from Gentile, the divides are painful and we have all experienced religious rejection. How have you experienced this kind of rejection? How has Jesus brought healing to these wounds?

II. There’s “living water” for those left thirsty from social rejection.

Main Teaching Point: Countless scholars have noted just how odd it is that the woman was at the well when she was. High noon was not when women would gather water in the ancient near east. Such a task was completed in the cool of the morning. And that she’s alone – that’s a curious thing, too. Women would often fetch water in community. It was a time to be with friends. But there’s no one with her when Jesus walks up to the well. It seems safe to assume she doesn’t have friends. Why? The rest of the story can lead the reader along to a number of conclusions. Maybe she’s socially on-the-outside-looking-in because of poor relational decisions she’s made. Maybe poor relational decisions have been made for her, and even though it’s no fault of her own, the suspicions of her neighbors (not to mention the gossip mill) have made her a communal outcast. Maybe it’s a combination of both. Maybe it’s something else. What we do know is that she’s socially ostracized. (And the fact that she’s a *woman* only adds to her social rejection. While today there’s a long way to go with regard to gender equality, there have been great strides since the days of the Old and New Testaments, which saw women residing somewhere near the Samaritans on the social spectrum.) But here’s Jesus, by way of a compassionate meet-up at a well during the noon hour, crossing the hard lines drawn up between the socially acceptable and the socially rejectionable – the men and the women. He sees her. He goes to her. He sits with her. He talks to her. He listens to her. It all had to have

spoken to a deep thirst within the woman – one stirred by social rejection. You can see it in the scene from *The Chosen*. You can see her joy at the end of the scene from *The Chosen*. Jesus was the one who asked for a drink of water – but knowing full well that she was the one who needed one.

Pastoral Prompt: The reasons we might socially find ourselves on-the-outside-looking-in are too many to count. The ostracization is rarely justified, and it's *always* painful. You want to be seen and heard. Has something led to your being socially ostracized? How has Jesus brought healing to these wounds?

III. There's "living water" for those left thirsty from relational rejection.

Main Teaching Point: What piercing words from Jesus to the woman: "You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband." Once again, the words of Jesus can lead the reader along to a number of conclusions. Has she been rejected by five men? Has *she* done the rejecting? Perhaps she's been the rejected *and* the rejecter! There's no way to know, and scholars are certainly divided on the matter. What is known is that her life is a life scarred by relational rejection. It makes another theory about why she's alone at the well a tantalizing one: *maybe she's alone by choice*. Why let anyone else in when whoever she's let in before has always left her alone all over again (and lonelier than ever)? There are no wounds like relational wounds, and they come together to inflict another wound: the wound of believing no one wants you in their life. But here's Jesus, by way of a compassionate meet-up at a well during the noon hour, crossing the hard lines drawn up by a rejected soul, meant to protect that soul from more harm. The fact that he even wanted to be with her – it all had to have spoken to a deep thirst within the woman, one stirred by relational rejection. You can see it in the scene from *The Chosen*. You can see her joy at the end of the scene from *The Chosen*. Jesus was the one who asked for a drink of water – but knowing full well that she was the one who needed one.

Pastoral Prompt: Circle back to a painful point already made: There are no wounds like relational wounds, and they come together to inflict another wound – the wound of believing no one wants you in their life. Is this a relational belief you hold in your own life? That no one wants you in their life? Why? How has Jesus brought healing to these wounds?

IV. There's "living water" for those left thirsty from their own rejection of a richer way of life.

Main Teaching Point: Again, there's no way to know what exactly had unfolded in this woman's life – in her relationships. What seems clear, however, is that she had spent years stepping in and out of the way of life God had called her to – a way of life that would have been far richer for her – and it had cost her everything. It's not hard to imagine that she probably believed it had cost her any shot at an invitation to step her way back into the way of life God had called her to. But here's Jesus, by way of a compassionate meet-up at a well during the noon hour, crossing the hard line drawn up by the woman herself – a line she had drawn between her and God. His invitation for her to return to God and the way of God had to have spoken to a deep thirst within the woman, one stirred by her rejection of a richer way of life. You can see it in the scene from *The Chosen*. You can see her joy at the end of the scene from *The Chosen*. Jesus was the one who asked for a drink of water – but knowing full well that she was the one who needed one.

Pastoral Prompt: We all step in and out of the way of life God has called us to – a way of life that would have made for a far richer life. Each time we step outside of the way he's made for us, it costs everything. And like the woman at the well, it's not hard to imagine we've cost ourselves any shot at an invitation to step back into the way of life God has called us to. But where have you seen the patience of God? How have you sensed his invitation back into the way of God? And how has Jesus brought healing to the wounds that came your way when you stepped out of his way?

Conclusion

*The last movement of the sermon certainly lends itself to a more traditional invitation, but it also lends itself to an extended pastoral prayer over the congregation – a prayer that cries out for healing within each member of the congregation for the wounds of rejection they've experienced.

