



B REVEALING WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

Loving the outcast



Why use this Bible study?

This Bible study can help us to explore how Jesus interacted with those who were outcast because they were seen as unclean, immoral or unworthy. It can help our response to restoring relationships with those who are rejected, particularly those who have experienced sexual violence, worked in prostitution, people who are living with HIV or who have resisted the traditional practice of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C).



John 4:1-30

In this study, we see Jesus interacting with a Samaritan woman who is broken, full of guilt and rejected by her own people. The woman is shocked that a Jewish man is not only talking to her but also asking for her help, at a time where Jews despised Samaritans. In this simple act of asking for water, Jesus challenges many of the social customs of his day. Jesus shows that he regards the woman as someone created and loved by God – not as a social outcast. He doesn't condemn her as others do, but meets her in her need and gives her worth and value.



Key points

- Jesus considers all people as equal. Like Jesus, we must not judge others, but rather change our own attitudes, and share his love that overcomes social, cultural and religious barriers.
- Our attitudes as individuals may prevent our church from being the safe and welcoming community that God intended it to be.
- Like Jesus, we have a responsibility to challenge oppressive social practices.



Questions for discussion

- How do you think this woman feels about herself at the beginning of the story? Do you know anyone in your community who might also be feeling like this?
- How does Jesus act towards her? How do you think she felt as he spoke with her?
- How does the woman respond? What does she do after speaking with Jesus? Why does she do this?
- How does the church respond to people who feel isolated and afraid? How does the church respond to people who have left their home as a result of being sexually abused or having resisted FGM/C? Do we respond as the Jews did towards the Samaritans – having nothing to do with them – or do we respond with love and understanding?

Awareness-raising

Children & youth

Climate & environment

Conflict & peace-building

Corruption & governance

Disaster risk management

Discrimination & inclusion

Food & livelihoods

Gender & sexual violence

Health & HIV

Influencing decision-makers

Migration & trafficking

Water, sanitation & hygiene



Reflection

Give thanks that Jesus came into the world to save it, not to condemn it. Many women and girls who have experienced sexual violence or have not undergone FGM/C face a sense of exclusion within their communities. Pray for our attitudes to be changed and for the church to be a safe place for these women and girls.

Related tools

- A1 – Revealing violence against women and girls: information for facilitators [*A1: Gender & sexual violence-1*]
- A2 – Understanding vulnerability and disability [*A2: Discrimination & inclusion-1*]
- B – Caring for widows and orphans (Bible study) [*B: Discrimination & inclusion-3*]
- B – Attitudes towards disease and difference (Bible study) [*B: Discrimination & inclusion-1*]
- B – HIV and AIDS and the glory of God (Bible study) [*B: Health & HIV-1*]

Awareness-raising
Children & youth
Climate & environment
Conflict & peace-building
Corruption & governance
Disaster risk management
Discrimination & inclusion
Food & livelihoods
Gender & sexual violence
Health & HIV
Influencing decision-makers
Migration & trafficking
Water, sanitation & hygiene