

Reflection Questions

The Dancing Word: Woman at the Well

1. The Samaritan woman makes her way to the well with heavy-footed resignation. At the shock of encountering what seems like a suspicious stranger, she resolves to do what she knows best - "hide her mind and harden her heart."

What burdens weigh you down?

What are the moments you find yourself instinctively "shutting down" in relationship with yourself? with others?

How might your fear or prejudices be opportunities to open to grace?

2. As he meets the woman, Jesus is not afraid to admit "I'm thirsty," and to suggest, "thirst makes friends of us all." Later, he even proclaims to her, "God is not on the mountaintop – but in your thirst!"

What are you thirsting for?

Friendship? Acceptance? Community? Forgiveness?

Healing? Boldness? Economic security?

How is your thirst inviting you to open more deeply to God?

3. Jesus laughs uproariously at the Samaritan woman's quick-witted accusations. Instead of reprimanding her for her unfaithful past, he teases her for being "pious."

Can you imagine Jesus teasing you about your own weakness?

What would it be like to laugh with Jesus?

Who are the people in your life who help you lighten up, laugh at your own foibles and not take yourself so seriously?

4. At the outset, the Samaritan woman refuses Jesus' help and says, "I'll do it!" When Jesus instructs the woman to ask him for a drink, she adamantly refuses.

When has pride kept you from receiving love?

In the past, have you been wounded when expressing your vulnerability?

What would it be like to ask for what you need? (from others? from God?)

What would it be like to ask Jesus for a drink?

5. The woman's "I don't ask!" is full of intense emotion as she dances her angry defiance. Jesus stays present with her.

When overcome with emotion, what creative methods of expressing your feelings or frustrations are helpful for you?

What other modalities might God be inviting you to explore?

(Dance? drumming? writing? walking? exercise?)

What emotions do you welcome into your prayer? What emotions do you reject?

What would it be like to bring all of yourself to Jesus?

6. After being received in her outrage, the woman's heart cracks open. She opens to receive life-giving water; she trusts Jesus with her story.

*In what ways are you building a relationship of trust with God?
Imagine Jesus giving you a drink. What does it feel like to receive?*

If you could pour out your soul to Jesus and "tell him everything you ever did" what stories would you give over to him today? Take a few moments now to pour yourself out to him and be received in love. Tears are welcome. What does he say back to you?

7. Jesus reaches out to massage the woman's tender wounds.

*How are you open to Jesus' healing touch? How do you refuse his touch?
Imagine Jesus gently rubbing your shoulders. Breathe into this gift.*

*Now lean back into the divine embrace. Stay there as long as you need to.
When you are ready, thank Jesus for his gift of life and life-giving water.*

8. The woman returns to her village bubbling over with joy.

*What gifts from your prayer do you bring back to your life?
Where are the places in your life, (relationships, activities, practices,
environments) where your joy naturally wells up like a spring of living water?
How can you visit this spring more often?
How might you share the gift of life-giving water with others?*

9. The woman dances in the fountain of life!

*How are you like this woman? How do you differ from her?
If you met this woman, what would you want to say to her?
What action might you take to celebrate overflowing life?*

10. Anything can happen at a well.

*How does Jesus, as written and portrayed in this story, differ from the way
you have imagined him to be?
What's the wisest insight you've gained from exploring this story?*

