



# He Gets Us.

## JESUS WAS MISUNDERSTOOD TOO

2023-01-22

### Leader Notes

#### **OVERVIEW:**

Welcome back to our series, “He Gets Us”! Jesus gets our lives because he was human too. In this series we are exploring how Jesus knows what we’re going through. He cares and he is able to help you as you trust in him. Our topic this week is, “Jesus was misunderstood too.” Jesus was perceived by many in his day as a rebel and a revolutionary, particularly by the religious leaders and the Roman Empire. His invitation to all people to repent and believe the Good News of the Kingdom of God was radical in its inclusion of everyone. Jesus’ radical inclusion is good news for us today. Jesus gets us when we feel rejected. Regardless of how you’ve been misunderstood by others, Jesus loves you and invites you into relationship with Him. Bringing this Good News to our world today means serving and loving others with the same kind of radical inclusion that Jesus did in His day.

#### **ICEBREAKER:** I Was Part of the Club!

When I was about 8 years old my mom and dad got me involved in a group call the “Cub Scouts”. This program was a place for younger boys to experience what it would be like to be part of the Boy Scouts. I remember my Cubs shirt with the badges sewn on that I had earned. This, along with my neckerchief and leather slide with a wolf’s head inscribed on it really made me feel like I was part of the club! What team or club have you been involved in as a kid or teen? How did that experience make you feel included, or perhaps excluded? Share your story with the group!

## STUDY:

Jesus knows what it's like to be misunderstood and rejected. He gets us when we experience these things. He reaches out to our world with radical, inclusive love. Jesus reaches out the marginalized. He sees the outcast. He identifies with the forgotten. He calls the sinner to service. For today's study, we'll see how Jesus' radical inclusion gets lived out in a conversation He has with a woman by a well.

**READ** John 4:1-29 Jesus Talks With a Samaritan Woman

1. **READ** vs. 1 - 6 again.

- What do you notice here about how Jesus goes out of his way to talk with this woman?

**LEADER NOTE:** After the northern kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrians, many of the Jews were deported to Assyria and replaced by people from other nations who were brought in to inhabit the land (see 2 Kings 17). The remaining Jews intermarried with the people from other nations, resulting in a mixed race (the Samaritans) who were seen as impure by the Jews in the southern kingdom. The Jews from the southern kingdom did everything they could to avoid the Samaritans, even traveling longer distances rather than going through Samaria. In John 4:4 we read that Jesus "had" to through Samaria. Jesus was willing to be misunderstood, even by his disciples, to reach out to people who needed God's love.

2. **READ** vs. 7-9 again.

- What do you see here about the rejection this Samaritan woman would have experienced?

**LEADER NOTE:** In verse 9 we read the Samaritan woman's response to Jesus' request for a drink. "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" There were several reasons for her feeling of rejection. 1) As a Samaritan, she was a member of a hated mixed race. 2) Coming to the well in the heat of the day implied she did not want to be seen by others. 3) In this public place, she knew that no respectable Jewish man would typically speak to a woman. This woman had experienced rejection for her nationality, by her own people and by respectable men in general.

- How do you relate to/identify with the Samaritan woman?

**LEADER NOTE:** Your group members may relate to the Samaritan woman in a number of areas. All of us have experienced rejection or being misunderstood by others on some level. This rejection may be based on where we are from, what others say about us, or even our gender. All of us know what it's like to be misunderstood. Jesus does too. He gets us.

3. **READ** vs. 10-15 again.

- What do you notice about how Jesus describes living water?

**LEADER NOTE:** Jesus calls the living water a “gift”. (vs. 10) The Greek word for “gift” here emphasizes God’s grace that He offers us through Jesus. The life that Jesus offers us is a gift. It is free for the asking. Jesus says that anyone who drinks this living water won’t ever be thirsty again. (vs. 14). This water is like a spring, welling up to eternal life. (see John 10:10).

- How does the Samaritan woman misunderstand Jesus’ offer?

**LEADER NOTE:** The Samaritan woman misunderstood Jesus’ offer to mean she would no longer have to come to the well to draw water each day. She was focused on her physical need, but Jesus was focused on what she needed most, new life in Him.

4. **READ** vs. 16-18 again.

- Why do you think Jesus broached the subject of her husband?

**LEADER NOTE:** When Jesus asked the Samaritan woman about her husband, he was turning the conversation from her focus on the inconvenience of drawing water each day to her much deeper need for forgiveness and acceptance. The fact that the Samaritan woman had 5 husbands meant she would have been misunderstood and rejected not only by these men but by many others in society. When Jesus reveals to her that He knows about her situation, He shows her that He is a prophet, someone she should listen to. He offers her something she could never find in her relationships with men – love and acceptance that lasts forever.

5. **READ** vs. 19-26 again.

- How does the Samaritan woman respond to Jesus’ request about her husband?

**LEADER NOTE:** When Jesus brings up the topic of her husband, the Samaritan woman quickly changes the topic to focus on the proper place of worship. It is natural, when we are confronted about our sin, to want to avoid the subject. We try to hide our sin because we fear the rejection that we will receive from others. God longs for us to see that He knows all about us and does not reject us. He offers us His acceptance and forgiveness for our sin.

6. **READ** vs. 21-24 again.

- In these verses, Jesus says that true worshipers must worship God “in spirit and in truth”. What does He mean by this?

**LEADER NOTE:** In their conversation, the Samaritan woman tries to focus on the question of the right location to worship God. Jesus steers the conversation to a much more needed point. Where we worship is not nearly as important as our attitude in worship. God is Spirit. This means we can worship Him from anywhere at and any time - at home, in our car, in a hospital bed. It is not where we worship that counts, but how we worship. Is my worship genuine - from the heart? Am I relying on God’s power to help me worship Him well? Am I worshipping God for who He has shown himself to be? This is what it means to worship God in spirit and in truth.

7. **READ** vs. 25-26 again.

- Why do you think Jesus chose this moment to reveal who He is?

**LEADER NOTE:** What an amazing moment this must have been, when Jesus, in answer to the Samaritan woman’s statement that the Messiah (the Christ) is coming, says, “I am He”! When Jesus revealed his identity to the Samaritan woman, He showed her radical inclusion. This woman who had been rejected and misunderstood now is being received and accepted by the One who matters most. This moment is the only one recorded in the Gospels before Jesus’ trial where He specifically says that He is the Messiah.

8. **READ** vs. 27

- Why would the disciples have reacted as they did?

**LEADER NOTE:** The disciples were Jews who were accustomed to rejecting Samaritans. They had been taught that men who are Jews do not talk with women who are not their wives, particularly in a public place like this well. This is why they are surprised to see Jesus and the woman talking together when they arrive.

- How do you relate to the disciples reaction? What radical inclusion might surprise you?

**LEADER NOTE:** Just like the disciples, there may be certain people that your group members have a stigma about. This may be from a cultural or even religious influence. Like the disciples, we can allow God go expand our hearts to the radical inclusion He shows.



## 9. BEING RADICALLY INCLUSIVE LIKE JESUS

In our world that is becoming increasingly divided and moving away from God, we need to show God's radical love. Today we can show God's love by being radically inclusive like Jesus is. Here are some questions to get you thinking about what that might look like.

- i) Do you think your faith is radical? Why or why not?
- ii) Do you think Christians are misunderstood? Can you give an example?
- iii) Are you willing to be misunderstood in order to display grace and mercy to someone else? What would that look like?

10. Watch this 7 minute scene of Jesus and the woman at the well:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ordhsDeAt60>

- How did this clip help you see Jesus' radical, inclusive love?

### **PRAY:**

"God, thank You for your radical, inclusive love. Thank You that, even though you know all about my shortcomings and my sin, You fully love me and accept me. Dear Father, please help me to love others in the same way You love me. In our world where so many feel rejected and misunderstood, help me to show your unconditional grace. Thank You for our LifeGroup where we can learn together to be more like your Son. Please bless each one today. We ask these things in the Name of your Son, Jesus. AMEN."

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