

cell outlines
MAY 2018

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A CALL FOR EVERYONE

Introduction

The message of Jesus Christ is for the 'whosoever'. That is slightly older language for saying that no matter who you are, what you have done or where you have come from, Jesus calls you to know him, love him and follow him. This month we will be exploring how Jesus calls everyone into a relationship with him and how that affects the way we should interact with people and live our day-to-day lives.

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

WELCOME

Ask the group to suggest the rival opponents to those in the list below:

- * Manchester United (Manchester City/Liverpool)
- * McDonalds (KFC)
- * Theresa May (Jeremy Corbyn)
- * Costa (Starbucks)
- * Nike (Adidas)
- * Marvel (DC)
- * Coke (Pepsi)
- * Batman (Joker – or more controversially Superman?)

Question: Imagine you are living at the time when Jesus was in the middle of his earthly ministry. Who would have been the rival opponents for the people of Israel back then?

Explain to the group that the passage of Scripture being explored today revolves around Jesus meeting a woman from Samaria. The Jewish people and the Samaritans did not get on because of political and religious disagreements that went back hundreds of years. Remember the story of the Good Samaritan; what made that story so amazing is that it was a Samaritan, a traditional enemy of the Jewish people, who was the one to help the Jewish man almost beaten to death.

Say to the group that we will be looking at how Jesus interacted with a rival of the Jewish people and we will be seeing what that teaches us about who Jesus is.

WORD

 **Read:** John 4:1-29 (NIV)

¹ Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptising more disciples than John – ² although in fact it was not Jesus who baptised, but his disciples. ³ So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

⁴ Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Will you give me a drink?' ⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, 'You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?' (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

¹⁰ Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.'

¹¹ 'Sir,' the woman said, 'you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?' ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?

¹³ Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks

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the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'

¹⁵ The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.'

¹⁶ He told her, 'Go, call your husband and come back.'

¹⁷ 'I have no husband,' she replied.

Jesus said to her, 'You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.'

¹⁹ 'Sir,' the woman said, 'I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.'

²¹ 'Woman,' Jesus replied, 'believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.'







²⁵ The woman said, 'I know that Messiah' (called Christ) 'is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.'

²⁶ Then Jesus declared, 'I, the one speaking to you – I am he.'

²⁷ Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, 'What do you want?' or 'Why are you talking with her?'

²⁸ Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ²⁹ 'Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?'

Discuss

-  Read verses 5–6 again. It is very specific about where and when Jesus rested at the well ('Sychar... at the well... at the sixth hour' (which means noon)). Do you think Jesus knew this encounter was going to happen?
-  Verse 9: the woman knew that there was something different about Jesus. He asked her for a drink even when he knew she was a Samaritan. What does this tell us about who God is?
-  Jesus was ready to share the message of God's love for the world to a woman drawing water at a well. God uses some of the most ordinary circumstances to make something extraordinary happen. Has this ever happened to you?
-  Jesus knew that the woman was living a life of sin. How do you think Jesus feels when we sin?
-  The way Jesus interacted with the woman changed who she was. What can we do in our day-to-day lives and conversations that can help change people?
-  What would be a modern-day retelling of this story? Who would be the hated woman at the well? Does it change the way you think of how Jesus treated the woman?

Say: Jesus chooses to reveal himself to a Samaritan woman who is well known for having had five husbands. The Jewish people would have not expected the Messiah even to speak to her, let alone choose to show her who he really is. But Jesus was completely counter-cultural. He loved the sinner and identified himself with the outcast and the marginalised. He was a God for all people, even those who would have been considered his enemies.

WORSHIP

▶ **Play this video:** www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q49BbfgJbto

Say: Jesus knew exactly what the woman at the well was. But he looked past the sin and saw her for who she truly is.

Activity: Create some poetry, song or rap lyrics that tell of how Jesus is for all people. Maybe use the example of the video and use the story to write the lyrics. Praise God for who he is – a God who loves all people regardless of their past and present situations. Leave some time for sharing the lyrics with the group afterwards.

Alternatively; if your young people do not feel particularly creative today, make space for them to reflect about Jesus and the story of the woman at the well. Play some reflective music and write out the question: 'God wants a relationship with all people. Who does that include?' Give the young people Post-it Notes to respond to the question, or space to discuss with a youth leader / member of the youth group.

WITNESS/ACTION

Say: Jesus wants a relationship with everyone and calls us all to love our neighbour. That may mean the people you struggle to be around. This week the challenge is to make an effort with your 'rival'. There are three different options for the challenge this week. You choose to take up the challenge that you feel is most appropriate or most comfortable for you:

Challenge 1: Smile at the person you know you sometimes find it difficult to get on with.

Challenge 2: Pray for that person this week and ask God to bless their life. Pray that your relationship with that person will improve and develop. Ask God to help you see that person the way he sees them.

Challenge 3: Go out of your way to have a conversation with that person. It could be as simple as saying hello and asking how they are, or it could be a conversation that will begin to rebuild that relationship with the person you have in mind.

Explain to the group that they may want to do one challenge, none of them or all of them. Next time the group meets ask them how they got on with their challenge. Begin to reflect with the group about what went well and what they could do better next time.

GIDEON

WELCOME

Play the game 'Who am I'? Write names on Post-it Notes (famous or known among the young people) and stick them on the group's foreheads. Each person has to guess the name by only asking 'yes or no' questions.

Alternatively, download the app 'Heads Up' from App Store / Google Play Store. This is a fun game to play with the youth group as a welcome activity. (Warning: the app costs £0.99 to download.)

Discuss

Ask the group how they got on last week with the challenge to make a conscious effort with someone they find it hard to get along with. Allow the group to share their experiences.

WORD

Ask the group whether they know of the background to the book of Judges.

Explain: The book of Judges revolves around the people of Israel and their lack of faithfulness to God. One moment they are worshipping God, the next they forget what God has done for them and start worshipping other gods. Throughout the book of Judges, God calls individuals to deliver the people of Israel from the situation they find themselves in. A man called Gideon is one of the 'judges' that we will be focusing on this week.

Read: Judges 6:1-16 (NIV)

6 The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. **2** Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds. **3** Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country. **4** They camped on the land and ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys. **5** They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count them or their camels; they invaded the land to ravage it. **6** Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the Lord for help.

7 When the Israelites cried out to the Lord because of Midian, **8** he sent them a prophet, who said, 'This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. **9** I rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians. And I delivered you from the hand of all your oppressors; I drove them out before you and gave you their land. **10** I said to you, "I am the Lord your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live." But you have not listened to me.'

11 The angel of the Lord came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. **12** When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, 'The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.'

13 'Pardon me, my lord,' Gideon replied, 'but if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, "Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?"' But now the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian.'

14 The Lord turned to him and said, 'Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?' **15** 'Pardon me, my lord,' Gideon replied, 'but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.' **16** The Lord answered, 'I

will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive.'

Discussion

Read through the passage of Scripture again. As a group or individually, list all the things that we know about Gideon from the Bible passage.

- * Have you ever been given a task that you feel completely inadequate for?
- * We read that Gideon was threshing wheat. He was doing no more than a farm hand's job. But God gave Gideon this great task to do; what makes you think he felt inadequate?
- * Does it surprise you that God called Gideon to take up this great task?
- * Is there anywhere else in the Bible where we know God called people to do jobs they might not be 'qualified' for?
- * Why do you think God does this?
- * Does God have a calling for everyone?
- * What happens if you say no to what God is asking you to do?

Say: God remained faithful to Gideon and Israel was delivered from the people who wanted Israel to suffer.

God has a purpose for each one of our lives. No one is exempt. It doesn't matter how inadequate we may think we are, God calls us and then gives us all we need to fulfil his calling on our lives.

WORSHIP

Play some reflective music.

Allow the young people space to consider God's calling on their lives. Give them the opportunity to reflect; place pieces of paper with pens in front of them so they can write down their thoughts, or some pieces of paper with art materials so they can create something as their response.

Finish the time of reflection with this prayer:

Prayer

Father, you call us all to live a life that will glorify you. In my weakness, make me strong. May I live my life in your strength. Help me not to hold back anything that gets in the way of your will for my life.

Amen.

WITNESS/ACTION

Action: Choose another story in the Bible of where God calls someone to do a task. Read through the story this week and ask the group to think about God's call on their life. Maybe they could journal their thoughts and feelings, or with a friend create a time during the week where they can talk about the story they have chosen.

Some ideas for passages of Scripture to read through this week:

- * Abraham and Sarah (Genesis chs 12-21)
- * Moses (Exodus chs 1-14)
- * Joshua (Joshua chs 1-6)
- * Deborah (Judges ch 4)
- * David (1 Samuel chs 16-17)
- * Isaiah (Isaiah 6: 1-8)
- * Bethlehem shepherds (Luke 2:8-20)
- * The first disciples (Mark 1:16-20)
- * Matthew the tax collector (Matthew 9:9-13)
- * Paul (Saul) (Acts 9: 1-31)

LOVING THOSE WHO ARE EXCLUDED

WELCOME

Welcome the group to the session and ask them how their week has been. Give opportunity for the group to share something about their reading of Scripture throughout the week about biblical characters who experienced God's call on their lives.

Discuss

- 🗨️ If you could change one thing about your life, what would it be?
- 🗨️ If you could change one thing about the world, what would it be?
- 🗨️ If you could change one thing about your community, what would it be?

WORD

Ask the group (as a group or individually) to draw a rough outline of a map of the community they live in.

Say: In previous sessions we have thought about how God wants a relationship with everyone. No matter your age, your background, your ethnicity, your past – nothing can stop him loving you.

Discussion

- 🗨️ What does that mean for those who do not feel loved?
- 🗨️ Who do you think would be feeling unloved?
- 🗨️ Do you think they could believe in a loving God?
- 🗨️ What do you think that means for Christians and the way we treat the 'unloved' and excluded?

📖 **Read:** Isaiah 61

¹ **The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,
because the Lord has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners,
² to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn,
³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion –
to bestow on them a crown of beauty
instead of ashes,
the oil of joy
instead of mourning,
and a garment of praise
instead of a spirit of despair.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
a planting of the Lord
for the display of his splendour.**

⁴ **They will rebuild the ancient ruins
and restore the places long devastated;**

they will renew the ruined cities
that have been devastated for generations.

⁵ Strangers will shepherd your flocks;
foreigners will work your fields and vineyards.

⁶ And you will be called priests of the Lord,
you will be named ministers of our God.
You will feed on the wealth of nations,
and in their riches you will boast.

⁷ Instead of your shame
you will receive a double portion,
and instead of disgrace
you will rejoice in your inheritance.
And so you will inherit a double portion in your land,
and everlasting joy will be yours.

⁸ 'For I, the Lord, love justice;
I hate robbery and wrongdoing.
In my faithfulness I will reward my people
and make an everlasting covenant with them.

⁹ Their descendants will be known among the nations
and their offspring among the peoples.
All who see them will acknowledge
that they are a people the Lord has blessed.'

¹⁰ I delight greatly in the Lord;
my soul rejoices in my God.
For he has clothed me with garments of salvation
and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness,
as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹ For as the soil makes the young plant come up
and a garden causes seeds to grow,
so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness
and praise spring up before all nations.

Discussion

- 🗨️ What verse(s) stood out most for you? Why?
- 🗨️ What do we learn about who God is through this passage of Scripture?
- 🗨️ What do we learn about what God is doing or what God is going to do?
- 🗨️ What do we learn about us? What part have we got to play in God's work?
- 🗨️ What can we do to 'proclaim good news to the poor... bind up the broken-hearted... proclaim freedom for the captives... release from darkness for the prisoners'?

WORSHIP

- 📺 Play the song 'Soldiers Hymn' recorded by transMission during the time of reflection: www.youtube.com/watch?v=51O4gicla9U

Ask each person in the group to take a Post-it Note and, on the map they have drawn, think about where in their community love is needed. What issues does their community face? Is there a group of people that are being excluded? What groups of people are suffering and whose voices are not being heard?

Ask the group to write the issue on the Post-it Note and stick it to the map, and then to reflect on how Jesus is for all people, even the most excluded and marginalised.

WITNESS/ACTION

Show practical love this week. Using the Post-it Note you have stuck to the map, indicating the issue/people in your community who are excluded, do something about it this week. There are options below for what you could do:

- * Set aside a time every day to pray for that issue or area of your community. Ask God to change the situation and heal the lives of the people who have been affected.
- * Become an expert. Research and learn about the issue you have picked up. Understand why it is an issue in your community. The more you understand your community, the more you begin to develop a passion to see change within it.
- * Write a letter to the local council / Member of Parliament / Churches Together, asking what is being done about the issue. Hold to account the people who have the responsibility to support people.

TELLING OTHER PEOPLE ABOUT IT

WELCOME

Welcome the group to the session. Allow space for any young person who may want to share any action they took on an issue they identified last week.

Game: Haribo faces – you will need a bag (or two!) of Haribo or other sweets. Ask the young people to get into pairs. The aim of the game is to take a sweet, lick it and stick it to your face as many times as you can. The young person that has the most sweets remaining on their face after a minute wins the game. Baby wipes would be helpful!

WORD

Discuss: If you could attempt one thing, knowing that you have 100 per cent chance of success, what would it be?

Say: Nobody likes failing. We don't want that feeling of not being good enough. Sometimes the thought of failing stops us even trying!







Do you think this is the same reason why we find it hard to talk about our faith to people we know? We are not sure how they are going to react or whether we will say the right thing.

 **Read:** Matthew 28: 16-20

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'

Discuss

-  This was the last thing recorded by Matthew that Jesus said to his disciples before he ascended into Heaven. Why do you think this was such an important lesson for him to give the disciples before he left Earth?
-  Verse 17 says that some doubted, but he still gave them this awesome task to make disciples of all nations. How does that make you feel? Jesus believes you can do it even when you sometimes struggle to believe it yourself!
-  Why do we want more people to have a relationship with Jesus? Is it just so we can have more people in our churches? Or is there another reason?
-  Have you ever had the opportunity to tell someone about your faith? How did you feel? What was the outcome?
-  Is there a perfect way of telling people about our faith?
-  It isn't an easy thing to do to tell someone about why we follow Jesus. Do you think this is why Jesus promised in Matthew 28:20 to never leave us?

WORSHIP

Say: God, since the beginning of time, has wanted to have a relationship with mankind. He sent Jesus who lived a life loving and welcoming all types of people, and God wants us to do the same. He wants us to go into our worlds and help people get to know him.

Play some reflective music.

Say: Think of the week ahead. Who are you going to meet? Think of all the people who you encounter on a day-to-day

basis. Pick one person you are going to meet this week and picture their face in your mind.

As the young people are picturing someone in their head, pray this prayer:

Prayer

Awesome and loving God, you know each and every one of us – our dreams, our failures, our doubts. We thank you for loving us. Lord, for the people we will meet this week, help us make a difference to their lives. Help us speak about you to them so they will want to know you more as the God of their lives.

Amen.

WITNESS/ACTION

Challenge: This week go and live Matthew 28. Your challenge is to tell someone about something of your faith. You may want to put it on your Facebook page, or you may want to message the person you were thinking of, telling them about your faith. Or you may want to start small and just slip into conversation what you did over the weekend (if you went to church) or tell them about the youth group / cell group you are a part of. Don't worry if you are nervous about doing it! It's normal to feel a little scared. Say a prayer before you send the message or speak to the person, asking God to help you speak about your faith.