

Women of the Bible: Woman at the Well

Pilgrim Lutheran Church Mary/Martha Society Gathering – 2026 July 19

Rev. Dr. Jayson S. Galler, Pastor

- Invocation and Prayer
- Last time, June 14, 2026, we considered Salome (pronounced either sal-**o**-may or sə-lō'-mī), who usually is held to be the wife of Zebedee and the mother of his sons, James and John, and who perhaps may be also the sister of the Virgin Mary and so the aunt of Jesus. While Salome may have known Jesus in-person for a good portion of His whole life, the Woman at the Well, whom we consider today, met the grown-up Jesus in-person for two days. (See the page on Pilgrim's website with the working chronological list of all the women whom we both have studied and will study, linking our handouts when available: www.pilgrimlc.org/bible-studies/women-of-the-bible.)
- Jesus's encounter with the Woman at the Well as a whole is narrated in John 4:1-45, though the Woman herself is more-prominent in vv.7-30, 39-43. Of the other verses, vv.1-6 describe the baptismal context going back to Jesus and Nicodemus in ch.3 and how Jesus came to Jacob's well outside of Sychar (wells were frequently places where future spouses met). Verses 31-38 report Jesus's conversation with His disciples while the Woman was in town. And, vv.44-45 tell of Jesus's returning to Galilee. We read the whole account but concentrate our consideration on the Woman in relationship to Jesus. (*Lutheran Service Book's* Three-Year Lectionary Series appoints for Lent 3 A John 4:5-26, with the option of including vv.27-30 and vv.39-42, essentially the woman's reaching out to her community.)
- Woman ostracized from her community by her immoral life encounters Jesus from Whom she is culturally separated. As Jesus indicates a willingness to break cultural norms, their conversation moves from literal to spiritual water (confer John 7:38-39; 19:34). Continuing a theme of marriage in John's Gospel account, Jesus reveals His Divine omniscience in relation to her life, or perhaps critiques the Samaritans' false worship as a kind of adultery. (The translation of vv.16-18 is often problematic, rendering Greek words differently and inserting words that are not in the text.) The woman goes from thinking that Jesus is a prophet to wondering if He is the Christ, as Jesus confessed to her to be. (Note that vv.23-24 could be a reference to worshipping the Trinity: Father, Truth, and Spirit.) The Holy Spirit works faith in the people of Sychar through the woman's words that lead them to Jesus's words and the realization that He is the Savior of the world (objectively, even if some refuse to repent and believe and so be saved subjectively).
- The Woman at the Well does not seem to be mentioned elsewhere in Holy Scripture.
- The hymn stanza that we will sing focuses both on our yearning for Christ's Word and on our lips burning to witness to the Lord. About what else does our consideration of the Woman at the Well raise questions or prompt discussion?
- Concluding Prayer, *LSB* 855 (stanzas 1, 10, 3, and 4), and Benediction.
- Next time (August 16?) on The Widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17).