

JESUS ENCOUNTERS

JOURNEY WAYPOINTS

May 4-10, 2025

A stop along the journey to study, share, and support one another while we learn the way of Jesus.

This Week's Big Idea:

The Samaritan woman's encounter at the well reveals that Jesus is the true source of life. Her transformation from isolation and shame to bold proclamation is a demonstration of the power of God's inward renewal that flows outward as a testimony to His power to change lives.

Scripture and Study:

KEY TEXT: John 4:1-42; John 7:37-39 [Click here to access this week's scripture](#)

Photini (the name Church tradition gives to the Samaritan woman at the well) was hot, tired, and frustrated with "everything." Unable to face the scorn and the shame of society, she trudged to the well to get the water she needed long after everyone else in her town had done so. Her life was a chaotic embarrassment - and even she couldn't process all the traumas she had suffered - the wounds inflicted upon her by others, as well those of the self-inflicted variety. She knew she was a mess - five times rejected in marriage and a scorned member of a cultural minority.

What Photini did not expect was to encounter Jesus! Jesus, a recognized Jewish holy man, should not have been traveling through Samaria, let alone sitting to speak with a Samaritan woman of questionable repute. Yet Jesus is never bound by our human ways of thinking and expectations. He came to bring His world into ours. As His conversation with Photini unfolded, Jesus spoke direct, plain truth, yet showed His compassion and offered His life to her. Photini tried to change the subject, yet Jesus, patiently continued to reveal His truth to her. Human tendency is to consider our outside circumstances as the determination of our hope, joy and future. Jesus, God, understands that His life is to flow out of us into the world around us. When Jesus revealed Himself as Messiah, Photini believed. Her shame dissolved as living water flowed from her heart. Leaving her jar—her old life—she proclaimed, "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?". Her testimony was powerful: "Many Samaritans... believed in him because of the woman's testimony". Her story became a place where people encountered Jesus.

Church tradition holds that Photini would become known as an "equal to the apostles", as she testified of her encounter with Jesus. Multitudes would come to know Jesus, miracles would take place as she proclaimed her story of encounter. Photini would eventually become a martyr, giving her life for the sake of the one who gave her His.

Discussion Questions:

- How does Photini's isolation reflect your own struggles with shame or fear? How can John 4:14 inspire you to seek Jesus' living water?
- What outward solutions do you chase for hope? How can Jesus' promise (John 4:14; John 7:38) shift your focus to inner renewal?
- How has sharing or hearing a testimony (John 4:39) drawn you to Jesus? What bold step can you take to share your story?

Apply It:

- Reflect on a moment shame or fear held you back. Pray for Jesus' living water to renew you.
- Journal on Psalm 36:9 ("With you is the fountain of life") or John 7:38, contemplating what it means that rivers will flow out of you.
- Share your Jesus encounter story with a friend or group, seeking one chance to testify to Jesus' love.