



# Near and Now

*Called – The Samaritan Woman At The Well*  
by Rev. Dr. Charlene Rachuy Cox

## Warm-up Question

*When have you had to leave something behind in order to embrace something new?*

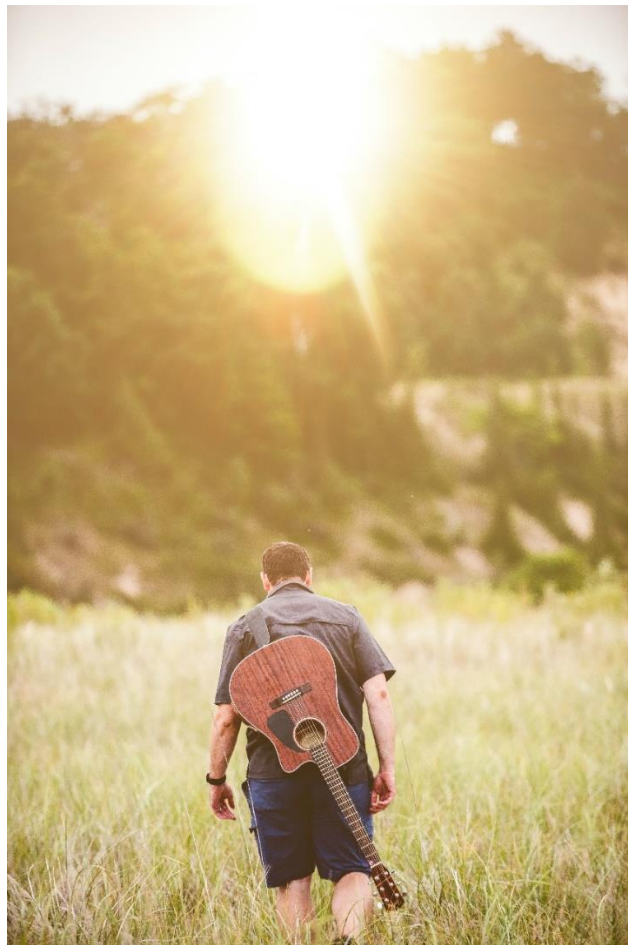


Photo by Ben White on [Unsplash](#)

## Discussion Questions

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?

## The Woman Left Her Water Jar

Read [John 4](#)

### Bible Story Reflection

Oftentimes in our lives when we begin something new, it means leaving behind something old. Sometimes this is because one thing has come to its logical conclusion and another thing is beginning. At other times, however, we leave things behind because there is no room for them in what lies ahead, or they would impede our journey forward, or we no longer need them, or we have been freed from their weight and their burden by whatever it is that is beckoning us forward.

In the story of the Samaritan woman at the well with Jesus, we are drawn into the longest conversation that Jesus has with anyone in the Scriptures. As this conversation draws to a close and the woman returns to her village to tell her townspeople all about her encounter with this mysterious man at the well, the story tells us that [she left her water jar](#) at the well when she returned to the city. While this could simply be a narrative notation that adds color or depth to the story, it is much more likely a metaphor or symbol laden with meaning.

The woman came to the well with a story of sorrow. The fact that she had been married five times and is currently making a home with someone to whom she is not married was most likely the result of either multiple divorces or tragic deaths of her spouses. Because as a woman, she had no ability to initiate a divorce, if she was multiple-times divorced, she was divorced by her husbands. While there could be various reasons for divorce, one of the most common was the lack of an heir. It is most probable that the Samaritan woman was unable to bear children, and therefore, her husbands left her behind.

Now, after her conversation with Jesus, she leaves behind her emptiness. She returns to her village, and many in the village believe in Jesus because of her witness. She who was unable to be a mother became the faith mother of countless. She who was emptied, is filled. Her mourning is turned to dancing. Her emptiness is replaced with a new life of meaning, purpose, and fulfillment.

### Discussion Questions

1. What are your empty water jugs?
2. What does Jesus call you to leave behind?
3. How easy or difficult is it to leave behind those things that leave us empty?
4. How might the Samaritan woman tell this story?
5. How might the townspeople tell this story?
6. The Samaritan woman left her empty water jug at the well with Jesus. Where and how can you leave things with Jesus?
7. It is through Jesus that the Samaritan woman is filled up. How does Jesus fill you up?
8. Jesus gives the Samaritan woman a new identity and a new purpose. Through Holy Baptism, Jesus does the same for you. What does this mean for you?
9. How can you help others know and understand that Jesus takes away their emptiness?
10. How is this story calling you to live into the called life today?

## Activity Suggestions

Take a jar (a large peanut butter jar will do). Each week for one month, think of something that God is calling you to leave behind. Write it on a piece of paper, and give it to Jesus by putting it in the jar.

In a small group, practice the laying on of hands and prayer. Invite each person to think of something that God is calling them to leave behind. These are not spoken aloud; rather, each person, in turn, is surrounded by the rest of the group, laying hands upon them while one person prays aloud this prayer: *Good and gracious God, you have promised to take our burdens upon you. Take from (name) all that leaves them empty and fill them up with meaning and purpose through your call to (name) as your beloved child. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.*

Take old magazines, cut out pictures or words, and make a collage of things that God calls you to leave behind with Jesus.

## Prayer Concerns

Those struggling with broken relationships, those whose hearts are empty, those being called to new things.

## Closing Prayer

Prayer: Give me courage, O God, to leave behind everything that gets in the way of following you. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

