

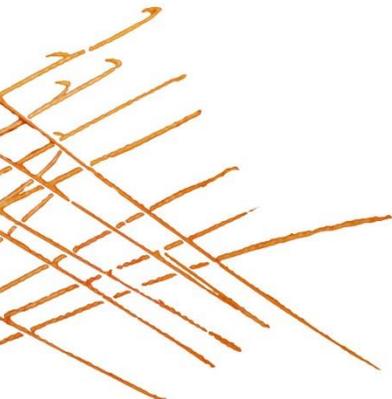
ARISE

women restored by Jesus

Daily Devotions

Part 2

Weeks 3 - 5



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Week 3

The Samaritan Woman at the Well

MONDAY - Restrictions

This week we will be reflecting on the encounter between Jesus and a Samaritan woman at a well just outside the town of Sychar in Samaria. You can read the whole story in John 4:3-26.

The story begins with these simple words from Jesus.



John 4:7 (NIV) *When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?”*

It was just a drink of water, but it symbolised so much more. The woman was an “unclean” Samaritan. She was probably perceived by her community to be of low moral character. But Jesus, the Son of God, the promised Messiah, needed something from her! He had no bucket to draw water from the well. She did. She had something offer.

According to the “rules of the day,” Jewish people were not allowed to drink from the same dishes which Samaritans used because they were considered unclean. The system restricted her ability to contribute.

- How many women in our world, country and homes are prevented from living a life of purpose?
- How many are kept from life in all its fullness?

Reflect on your own life and the life of women in your family, work or social circles. How is our societal system limiting the potential of these women to contribute and add value in the world?



Prayer: Lord Jesus, help me to be conscious of the rules or cultural norms which limit those around me from living a life of value and purpose.

TUESDAY - Abundance



John 4:10 (NIV) *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."*

The woman was well versed in the restrictions placed on her by society. She reminded Jesus of these. Jesus counters with an offer that far exceeds the small request he had made. Jesus offers her living water!

Her life was full of condemnation and limitation. Jesus is offering her grace and abundance! He is inviting her to life in all its fullness! She might be ranked lowly in her community, but Jesus offers her the most!

If Jesus were in our world today, he would not only fight for women to be treated better. He would not only argue for equal opportunity and pay for women in the workplace. He would break down any and every restricting rule and social norm that limits the ability for women to live lives of abundance!

Yesterday you reflected on specific rules or cultural norms that restrict women from living a life of value and purpose. Perhaps these affect you personally or the women you encounter in your daily life. What action can you take to change your story or the story of other women?



Prayer: Help me to know your abundance and to make it more accessible to those around me.

WEDNESDAY - A rigged system



John 4:13-14 (NIV) Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks 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.”

Where were the men that day?
Where were the “respectable” woman? She would have come to the well in the middle of the day to avoid others. She knew her place in society. The beautiful irony is that her isolation was the very thing that led to her encounter with Jesus.

For millennia, oppressed women have found solace through faith. Despite the odds being against them and the system being rigged in favour of men, many have experienced the life-giving water that brings them daily hope.

This by no means justifies the gender imbalance in society. But is it not interesting how the spiritual system is rigged in favour of those for whom the world's system is

rigged against! It is often those who are most oppressed who find the deepest experience of the divine.

This is no excuse for those who enrich themselves at the expense of others. But it is a source of hope to know that, no matter what the system keeps from you, it can never keep you from the kingdom of God.



Prayer: Lord, help me understand my role in making the system of this world align more to the system of your Kingdom.

THURSDAY - He knows



John 4:17-18 (NIV) *“I have no husband,” she replied. Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. 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.”*

The woman did not need to tell Jesus about her brokenness. He knew. And yet still he asked her for a drink. Still he offers her living water. Why?

What else did Jesus know? That the woman felt powerless to refuse these men? That the woman was treated as a possession by these men? That the woman needed these men to provide for her basic needs and of any children she had?

Jesus knew the full story. Sure, Jesus could have made her kneel and ask for forgiveness. But that was not what she needed. She needed to be released from the shackles that an unjust, judgemental society and rigged system had placed on her.

Perhaps you feel misunderstood by the world. Perhaps you long for relationships with people who understand you. Or maybe you have brokenness you are unable to express. Maybe you have been hurt so badly that no one can ever understand.

Jesus knows.



Prayer: Lord, if you do indeed know me so deeply... *[finish with your own words]*

Or you may also want to use the words of [Psalm 139](#) as your prayer today

FRIDAY - A voice



John 4:39 (NIV) *Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did."*

The woman took the good news Jesus had shared with her to her community. Despite her history, they listened! Suddenly, her voice mattered. She had a purpose beyond serving the interests of the men in her life.

Earlier in the week, we reflected on the deep faith that many women experience despite the harsh realities of the world around them. The promise of this story is that women are not limited to simply have a deep, private spirituality. They are meant to be active players in establishing God's kingdom here on earth!

Irrespective of your own gender, what can you do to give a voice to women in your home, in your workplace, in your community? If you think these women already have a voice, what can you do to amplify it?



Prayer: Lord God, I recognise that women have not had the same opportunities as men. Very often they have been victims of unimaginable abuse. Help us as your church to stand against anything that holds women back from life in all its fullness. Help us to ensure women are not just given a seat at the table, but a voice. And help us to work to change the systemic realities which prevent this from being possible

Week 4

The Woman healed of bleeding

MONDAY – A desperate life



Mark: 3:25 *A woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding. She had suffered a great deal from many doctors, and over the years she had spent everything she had to pay them, but she had gotten no better. In fact, she had gotten worse.*

In the time frame this incident happened the Israelites were observing the rules given to them by Moses and a woman who had her menstrual period was ceremonially unclean for seven days. Anyone who touched her during that time would also be unclean for the rest of that day. (Lev 15:19-23).

This poor woman bled for 12 years!! That meant that she remained unclean for the entire period and became a social outcast. Untouched, deprived of a social life and desperately seeking to be healed from this horrific curse. No wonder she tried every doctor she could find and spent all her money just to be healed.

One would imagine that many women under the same circumstances would show the same desperation to get rid of this disease. For any woman on earth would want her dignity to be restored and to live a healthy normal life free from bondage. A life she did not choose and one

she did not deserve.



All human beings desire a life where they can reach their full potential. Unfortunately, our modern world makes it difficult for women, children and vulnerable men to live a life free of the danger of being

exploited, raped, attacked and abused in many other horrific ways. This is done by people who abuse the power they may have over someone – be it physical strength, political power, dependency, tradition, material wealth, or gender advantages, to name a few.

Every person who has the privilege of having power over someone needs to examine his/her conduct towards others and avoid any abusive behaviour – therefore **LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR!!**

Do you have any power over anyone? Is it perhaps possible that you may be abusing it in any way and causing someone to feel threatened?



Prayer: Dear Jesus, prevent me from displaying any abusive behaviour! Help me to love my neighbour. Amen.

TUESDAY – Life changing moments



Mark 5:27 *She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him and touched his robe.*

The five words, “she had heard about Jesus,” are certainly some of the most powerful words in this entire story in Mark 15: 25-34. She had tried everything. All the doctors she could afford did not help. All the traditional medicines, advice from family, friends and concerned neighbours did not help. Nothing she tried worked and her desperation deepened.

Then she had heard about Jesus! Someone must have told her about Jesus. For many that “somebody” who told them about Jesus changed their lives forever. The same manner in which he changed this woman’s life on this earth and beyond. It was a powerful event when she became aware of Jesus and that is why Mark, Matthew and Luke all described this event.

Jesus asks us all to do just that – to tell all and sundry about him! Just before he ascended into heaven he said: “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone” (Mark 16:14).

Can you imagine how nice it will be to know that you were the one who told someone about Jesus? That you had a part in changing that person’s life for ever and ever and in the process honour God!!

That the power of just saying a few words such as, “Have you heard about Jesus?” can change and save someone’s life or desperate situation for ever. That is all our Saviour asks of us, so let us just get out there and do it!



To do what Jesus asks of us takes a willingness and courage to do so? Do you feel you have what it takes?



Prayer: Father, please give me the wisdom and courage to tell others about you. Amen

WEDNESDAY – Faith in action



Mark 5:27-29 *She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him and touched his robe. For she thought to herself, "If I can just touch his robe, I will be healed." Immediately the bleeding stopped, and she could feel in her body that she had been healed of her terrible condition*

The woman was scared. Because of her condition she was unclean according to the Jewish Law. If she touched someone, she would cause them to become unclean as well! What could she do to realize her wish of getting to Jesus whilst he was surrounded by others in the crowd? Desperation and tenacity forced her to act because she heard he healed people. So, she faithfully acted on her belief that he was her last resort to heal her. Nobody she approached before could heal her, but this was her chance!



All who are in a desperate situation can learn from this lady. She had the courage to seek help. She tried everything and, in the end, she sought help from Jesus. She overcame her fears of rejection and ridicule, plucked up courage and turned to Jesus.

Whatever situation we may find ourselves in, even if we feel rejected, abused and hurt, we should seek help. Whatever the situation, call for help and have faith that the Lord will find a way to heal your situation.

Only touching his robe would be good enough and she would therefore not make him unclean. If all she had heard about his miracles were true, the touch of his robe was surely enough. And it was. The moment she touched his robe, she was healed, and she realized it immediately.

Do you need help at this moment? Have you approached anyone for help or are you too scared to ask?



Prayer: Dear Lord, please help those who are too scared to ask for help find the courage and faith to do so. Amen

THURSDAY – When Jesus turns around



Mark 5:30 *Jesus realized at once that healing power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my robe?”*

Jesus did not need to ask who touched him. He surely knew who it was. But this was the ideal situation to teach the world what his Kingdom was all about. We read that the night before he and his disciples crossed over the Sea of Galilee by boat and arrived that morning in Gerasene after calming the storm.

He then helped a demon possessed man. He returned the same day to Galilee, and was called by Jairus to come and help because his daughter had died. On his way there, this woman touched his robe.

He was very busy and surrounded by crowds of people. Yet he turned around to spend time to acknowledge the desperate woman. She had been healed but she needed to know that it was not his robe that healed her through some kind of magic, but that Jesus had restored her health. He also had



to leave her equipped to face her new future.

Whenever we seek Jesus's attention through prayer or any other cry for help he will turn around and give the matter his full attention. Sometimes the outcome is not what is expected. She came and knelt in front of him and

told her whole situation so that others could also learn from her story and also be saved.

In one day Jesus restored the well-being and lives of two women,

the woman who was bleeding and Jairus' daughter. He demonstrates the value of women and that all men **should care for women in a** responsible and respectful manner. This was a lesson to the male orientated society of the day that all people are precious to God.

How many times has the Lord heard your cry for help by turning his attention to your specific situation?



Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for the many times you have turned around to me and restored my situation. Help me to share the story to glorify you. Amen.

FRIDAY – When Jesus restores your life



Mark 5:34 *And he (Jesus) said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over.”*

The woman who suffered from bleeding tried for 12 years to be healed from this terrible ordeal. When she heard of Jesus, she acted upon it. She could have heard of how he healed others and ignored the possibility to ever meet up with him. But she didn't.

She acted in faith and the touching his garment she

She thought that it would be enough, but it was not. He turned around and calling out to her. By kneeling before him and everyone present could know that a miracle had taken place right under their noses. But there was more to come. The Son of God had to restore her to her full potential. He therefore calls her his

daughter. Through her faith she was now a member of his family, his Kingdom. She is assured that she has entered a new life. A life free of suffering. A life free of abuse, ridicule and rejection. A woman who could now live a life Jesus wants everyone to live.

Jesus created humans to manage his creation here on earth. Men and women to live in harmony whilst working together to fulfil the same goal, namely honouring God. Each one received exclusive privileges, but no room was given to think that one sex is superior to the other.



result was that by merely touching his garment she

be enough, but it was not. He turned around and calling out to her. By kneeling before him and everyone present could know that a miracle had taken place right under their noses. But there was more to come. The Son of God had to restore her to her full potential. He therefore calls her his

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you that we have you as an example of how to conduct ourselves when others are vulnerable. Grant us the wisdom to honour you when dealing with all our relationships. Amen

Jesus came to reassure all of us that nothing has changed in our purpose since our creation. We are all equal and that only faith in him restores you to the perfect life that God the Father intended us to live.

Do you treat the women and children in your life with respect?

Week 5

Mary and Martha

MONDAY - The Story of Two Sisters



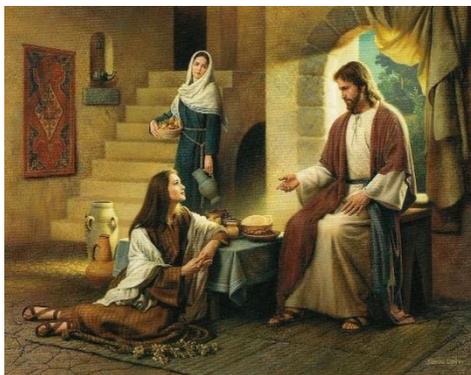
Luke 10: 38 (NIV) - ³⁸ As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him.

This is the story of two sisters.

Mary and Martha were both close friends with, and followers of Jesus. Together with their brother Lazarus, they hosted Jesus in their home on more than one occasion. Yet, on one such visit from Jesus, they chose two very different ways of honouring Him, and as we will see as the week progresses, the way that Jesus reacted to their choices is a very valuable lesson for us today.

When Jesus and the disciples arrived in the village, Martha did the very admirable and worshipful thing, she invited Jesus into her home. She wanted to bless Him and minister to His need for rest and refreshment. While starting off with all good intentions (like most people do), the obligation quickly became an overwhelming focus of her time and energy. It's in these moments of busyness, and very often the frustration that goes with them, that you can start to get upset with those around you for not pitching in and helping you fulfil your obligations.

While it's possible that a good friend will help you, whether they do or not doesn't make them responsible for the commitments you personally have made. Martha became upset that Mary sat at Jesus feet while she had work to do, but it wasn't Mary's house and Mary didn't do the planning or inviting. If you find



yourself in a place of obligation and busyness, while others seem to be just coasting along, you need to remember that the commitments you made yesterday are your obligations

today. Just because Mary chose to worship in a different way, doesn't mean that she was lazy or wrong.

Thought for the Day: We all need to take the time to think and seek His wisdom before we commit to something that could possibly leave us in a place of over busyness and frustration.



Prayer: I feel so busy lately. I pray you'll help me remember what matters most in the midst of all I have to do. Give me eyes that see the needs of those around me. Give me ears that hear the meaning behind the words. Give me hands that reach out to make a difference. Give me a heart that beats in tune with Yours rather than with the clock on the wall. Remind me often that time is intended to be given not spent. And even in the midst of all my *busyness*, may I truly be about Your *business*. Amen.

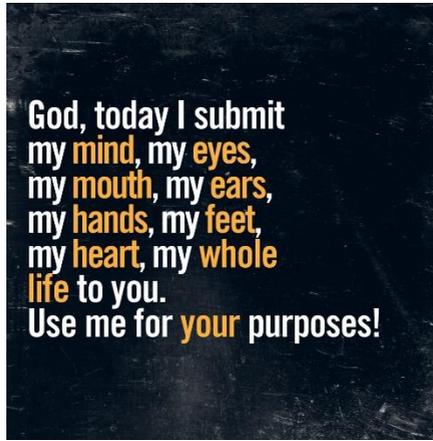
TUESDAY – Submitting to Jesus



Luke 10: 39 (NIV) - ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.

I think that it is very true to say that many people follow the Lord but very few actually submit to Him. As we look at the ministry of Jesus in the Gospels, we will notice that He could draw a crowd of thousands, but a far smaller number actually submitted their lives to Him. The Bible mentions the 12, the 72, and the 120, but when you consider the fact that on two separate occasions, He fed well over 10,000, it becomes quite clear that there is a difference between following and submitting.

Everyone has obligations and responsibilities, but far too often people become slaves to those duties at the expense of their time at Jesus' feet. When this happens, life becomes overwhelming, unsatisfying and frustrating. When you intentionally set aside time in the midst of your obligations to receive life from the Lord, He will refresh and inspire you. He will even help you to be able to sort out that crazy schedule that you've become a slave to.



Life is all-consuming. There will always be more to do. You could add ten hours to each day, and in the end, it would only give you more time to be busy. Jesus teaches us that sitting at His feet is important no matter how many demands are placed on us

Thought for the Day: So, do yourself a favour, even if it's only for a few minutes. Stop, sit, listen and submit. Let the Holy Spirit minister to you in His gentle and loving way.



Prayer: Dear Lord and Heavenly Father, I pray that my reliance in you may grow deeper today and that my assurance in you may grow wider. I pray that my faith in you may grow stronger and my zeal for you may grow bigger. I pray that I may continue to seek and rely on your wisdom and that I will no longer rely on my own understanding. Amen.

WEDNESDAY - Are you a self-appointed victim?



Luke 10: 40 (NIV) - ⁴⁰ *But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"*

This is not a surprising statement from Martha, because once distraction fills our lives and we start to feel unappreciated and overwhelmed, discouragement, a demanding spirit and doubt are never far behind. I am sure that almost all of us have felt the loneliness, the frustration, the "being left out" and resentment she experienced in the kitchen that Bethany afternoon - doing all that work for others when no one seems to notice and no one seems to care.

When you find yourself at the point of being overwhelmed with self-pity, the worst thing you can do is play the victim card. Just like Martha, it can engender in you feelings of being unhappy and upset with the Lord. When you take on such a defeatist mindset you start to depend on others rather than on drawing on the grace that is always available to you through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Remember, you don't have to be a victim, you allow yourself be one. Even those who have suffered horrible wrongs and abuses at the

hands of others can find freedom if they seek that "wisdom that passes all understanding". In most cases, however, people are usually victims of their own obligations. Realising that we are victims to our obligations makes the solution much easier as the solution starts and stops with the same person - you.



Thought for the Day: Stop, identify the culprit, that being you. Bring yourself before the Jesus and allow Him to put an end to the cycle of victimization that has been hindering you for so long. You are a victor, not a victim.



Prayer: Lord God, please forgive me for all the times I have been distracted from serving You. Jesus, I want You to be the centre of my life and with Your help serve You faithfully as my Lord and Saviour. I ask you, Holy Spirit, to fill me and empower me to live as a child of God. I ask for your grace to truly help me to live a new life. Thank you for hearing my prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

THURSDAY - Emotions



Luke 10: 41 (NIV) - ⁴¹ “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things,

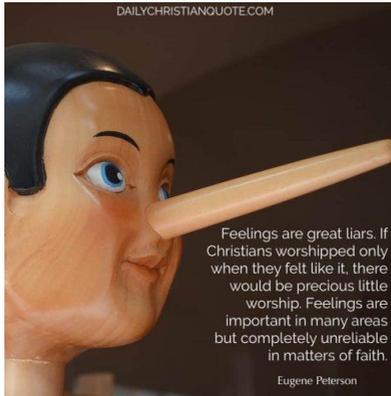
Jesus is indicating here that the issue is not about Martha in the kitchen, it is actually about Martha’s heart that is in the kitchen. She allowed her negative emotions to take over, becoming burdened, worked up and distracted over Mary’s perceived “idleness”. As she worked for the Lord, becoming more and more upset as time went by, her work became more important than the Lord Himself. The issue then became about her emotions and priorities.

Everyone has emotions and everyone experiences life differently because of them. No one is exempt from living with them. Some people are more expressive with their emotions, while others are more prone to hide or cover them up. Emotions are the expression of the effect that outside circumstances have on your life. Pleasant circumstances and environments result in happiness, calmness, and contentment, while unpleasant circumstances and environments bring about anger, sadness, and grief, as it was with Martha.

Emotions, depending upon who you ask, may be considered good or bad. The truth is, however, that life would be extremely bland and dull without them. Even God Himself has emotions and since you are made in His image you have them too. Everyone at one time or another has made rash, detrimental, and life altering decisions based on how they felt at that particular moment. Crimes of passion,

marriages and divorces, bad financial undertakings, just to name a few, have all occurred because conflicting emotions were allowed to be a governing force in our lives.

The light at the end of the tunnel is, however, that the more mature you become as a believer, the less this should be the case for you. You have been given the Holy Spirit to be your leader and guide. With His help, you can learn to enjoy the emotions of life without letting them lead you astray.



Thought for the Day: Submit your feelings and emotions to the Lord and allow His peace and wisdom to be your guide.



Prayer: Holy Spirit, help me to see you more clearly – to recognize your movement in my life. Make me more sensitive to you so I can follow you more closely. I know that I am selfish and rebellious and I need you to help me be obedient when I recognize your leading. I ask you for your help and comfort in my life. You know my pain and anxieties very well. Thank you for always being with me and help me to rest in your comfort today. Amen.

FRIDAY – What are my priorities in life?



Luke 10: 42 (NIV) - ***42 but few things are needed—or indeed only one.^{fa} Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.***

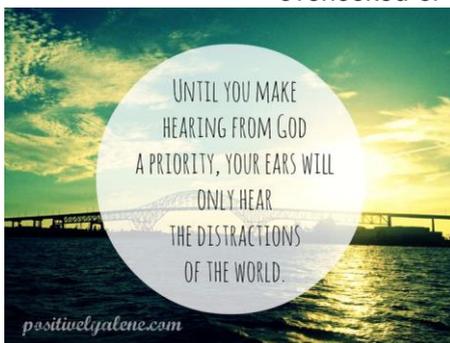
Perhaps what Jesus is saying is that, “Martha, a microwave dinner would be fine. You are struggling over bread that perishes. Mary is feasting on bread that will fill her soul and not be taken away from her.” What is cooking in the kitchen

will be gone in minutes, Martha, but what is being prepared here will go on forever!

We do not know if Martha got it or not. But here when Jesus says, “Mary has chosen the good portion,”

He means she has chosen that which fills her soul. The questions that we need to ask are - what fills my soul? What quenches the thirst in my heart?

In order to answer these questions we need to ask another – are my priorities skewed? Many of the anxieties and issues that people deal with in their hearts and minds are brought on by their interpretation of a situation, more than the by the actual situation itself. Martha is an excellent example of this. She had developed a victim mentality based upon her frustration with what she thought of as people overlooking and neglecting her.



Had she taken time to stop and think about the overall situation and not just her frustrations, she would have developed a better perspective on what was actually happening. She wasn't being overlooked or neglected by others,

she was actually overlooking and neglecting them herself. As Jesus explained to her, she hadn't chosen the 'good' portion as Mary did. She chose to focus on the busy work that her mind was

telling her had to be done immediately. All this lead to her misinterpreting the whole situation and getting angry at the very people she cared about the most.

Thought for the Day: Take a closer look at the areas of your life that you are having issues with. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you the truth of the situation and move on from there.



Prayer: Lord, help me to make sure that I spend the right amount of time on the things that are the most important, and to spend less time on the things that aren't. First of all, help me to always keep You as my top priority, which everything else in my life follows. I don't just want You to be first in my life; I want You to be first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and so on. I want everything in my life to be as a result of my relationship with You. Amen.