

Brought to Life – Introduction Devotional

In the last five years, a single TV series has quietly swept across the world. *The Chosen* has been translated into over 600 languages and streamed more than 600 million times. No other dramatization of the Bible—outside of the Bible itself—has reached this many people. And that raises the question: *why?*

Why has *this* show struck such a chord?

Here's what I think: it's hard to see ourselves in Jesus. But it's easy—achingly easy—to see ourselves in the people who surrounded Him.

- Mary: a woman tormented by her past, unsure if she even belongs in the presence of God.
- Peter: a man driven by success and the need to provide, always teetering between passion and impulse.
- Matthew: a tax collector on the outside of every circle, cut off from family, surviving by compromise.

Their stories echo our own—flawed, fragile, and deeply human.

And watching them come to life on screen—watching them laugh, argue, doubt, relapse, and still stay near Jesus—somehow awakens a flicker of hope. Maybe, just maybe, Jesus could love us like that too.

It's one thing to sing "Jesus loves me" in a Sunday school room. It's another thing entirely to believe it as an adult who knows their own shortcomings—who's disappointed themselves, failed others, and maybe even walked away from faith altogether. But as we watch these people encounter the real Jesus—feel His eyes on them, hear His voice speak truth and tenderness—we remember: this is a Jesus who draws near. Who sees us. Who isn't afraid of our mess.

This is the Jesus who became flesh and dwelled among us (John 1:14)—not to affirm religion, but to offer relationship. A relationship that doesn't sanitize you before it welcomes you- and one that sanctifies you simply by proximity.

As you move through this study, you'll meet the people Jesus chose, the ones He paused for, confronted, redeemed, and called by name. But more than that—you'll be invited to see how *your* story fits in His.

These aren't just stories to learn.

They're stories that might bring *you* to life. He's waiting for you.

Week 1 | Brought To Life – The Woman at the Well

Episode: *The Chosen*, Season 1, Episode 8 – “I Am He”

Scripture: John 4:1–42

Day 1: Religion Puts You In Hiding

READ: John 4:4–8

DEVOTIONAL:

Let's be honest - there are parts of our stories we don't want to be seen. Wounds that haven't healed the right way. Memories that carry the kind of weight that doesn't go away with time. We bury those things with busy schedules, polished images, or silence. Sure, maybe, we share a bit of what is socially acceptable. Because the weight of our story sometimes carries with it an air of humiliation. We convince ourselves that God may be able to use this part, but not that part and that if anyone truly knew the depth of our testimony - we too, would be shunned.

We've seen it happen. We've even seen the way religion responds.

It's what makes her story so human. The woman comes to the well at noon—not a detail the Gospel writer includes by accident. Most women came at dawn or dusk when the sun was low and the crowd was friendly. But she walks into the heat of the day - avoiding being seen.

The shame isn't just about her past—it's about what religion has told her about her place in the world. She's a Samaritan. She's a woman. She's been with multiple men. She's everything the religious system says should be excluded.

And yet: Jesus doesn't just pass through Samaria by accident. The text says, “*He had to go through Samaria.*” There's divine intention in this detour. He's not avoiding conflict—He's pursuing a specific person - her.

And when He finds her? He doesn't demand that she clean herself up. **He doesn't wait until she repents** or recites her theology. He sits. He asks for water. He opens a conversation. Jesus meets her *exactly* where she was trying not to be found.

RELIGION HIDES. JESUS SEEKS.

Religion trains us to conceal what's broken. Jesus walks into the middle of it and says, “Let's talk.”

JOURNAL:

Where do you still hide your story?

Imagine Jesus sitting and waiting for you right now - in the place of your shame, hiding, or humiliation. What does He want to say to you today?

Day 2: Religion Leaves You Weak

READ: John 4:9–15

DEVOTIONAL:

The woman at the well - she had spiritual vocabulary, but no spiritual vitality. That's not uncommon.

You can hear it in the way she speaks. She knows Jacob's well. She knows where her ancestors worshiped. She has the language of faith, but not yet it's transformational strength. And maybe that's what religion does when it's all structure and no presence—it gives you just enough knowledge to feel guilty when it doesn't work.

This woman is tired. Not just from the walk to the well, but from the rhythm of a life that never seems to satisfy. One relationship ends, another begins. Each promises something different and yet none deliver or placate what she's looking for inside. She's worn down not just by failure but by effort.

So when Jesus offers her "living water," she thinks practically. *"But You don't even have a bucket."* She's still talking about wells. Jesus is talking about **worship**—about an entirely different source of strength.

And that's the shift, isn't it? Religion tells you to keep coming back and doing more. Relationship with Jesus says, *"What if I filled you, instead?"* Living water doesn't ask you to draw—it moves toward you -producing vegetation in a desert that has ran dry.

She didn't need more rules that she knew she was too weak to succeed in - she needed rest. And Jesus didn't ask her to prove her worthiness before He offered her Himself.

RELIGION DRAINS. JESUS FILLS YOU WITH WHAT YOU SEEK

JOURNAL:

Take stock of your life: Are you trying to live for God without being filled by Him? Are you trying to "do" all the right things - while missing the BEST thing.

What would it look like for you to live your life from an overflow of Jesus' bucket? (That sounds like a word of Christianese - but visualize the bucket. Your worn out from trying, tired, exhausted). What does it look like to "do" the things you are doing from a place of joy...what would that take? What is Jesus inviting you into and what is He inviting you out of?

Day 3: Religion Makes You an Impostor; Relationship Makes You an Ambassador

READ: John 4:25–30, 39–42

DEVOTIONAL:

There's a holy irony in what happens next. The woman who once timed her life to avoid people is now running *toward* them.

Just a few verses earlier, she tried to keep Jesus at a distance. Now she's telling her whole village about Him. "*Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did.*" Someone who once walked with shame, hiding under the cover of noon heat - is now broadcasting a simple story. **He knew me. And he didn't walk away.**

To understand this further, the outrageousness of her testimony - you have to understand that women then, weren't seen as reliable witnesses. Their voices weren't trusted and their stories didn't count. And yet, she becomes the first evangelist in Samaria. **She preaches a one-line sermon and brings a town to Jesus.**

Religion would've kept her quiet. Religion says: "Fix your life. Get it together. Who do you think you are? You have to prove your worthiness.."

The relationship says: Come and see. Come and be. And then... go tell.

When Jesus redeems a story, He doesn't just restore the person—He redeems the world around them. It's why you can't keep quiet. It's through your transformation story that Jesus will heal, redeem, and restore.

Religion disqualifies your voice. Jesus commissions it.

JOURNAL:

Where do you find yourself pulling back, or keeping quiet out? Maybe out of fear of what people would think? Or maybe out of fear of not being "enough"?

What would it look like for you to live like your story has power?

Who needs to hear what Jesus has done in you?