

A Harvest of Souls
John 4:28-42
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INTRODUCTION

1. Please take your Bibles and turn with me to John chapter 4.
2. We are looking again at the account in chapter 4 of Jesus and the Samaritan woman or the woman at the well.
3. For the past two weeks we have examined Jesus' encounter with a Samaritan woman.
4. This morning we are going to continue the story where it begins in verse 31 but so that we have the entire context, I want to begin at verse 28.
5. Read John 4:28-42.
6. In our last time together, we saw that Jesus revealed Himself as the Messiah to the Samaritan woman.
7. There was only one other time when He revealed His Messiahship and that was before Caiaphas in Matthew 26:63-64.
8. This morning we are going to learn several things as we look at the concluding verses in this story of the Samaritan woman.
9. We will look at:
 - a) The testimony of the woman (vv.28-29)
 - b) The coming of the crowd (v.30)
 - c) The misunderstanding of the disciples (vv.31-33)

- d) The work of Jesus (v.34)
- e) The commission of the disciples (vv.35-38)
- f) The believing of the Samaritans (vv.39-42)

10. Let's begin in verse 28 with *the testimony of the woman*.

I. The Testimony of the Woman (vv.28-29)

John says after the disciples came back from Sychar with food, “the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city, and said to the men, 29 ‘Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?’”

There are a couple principles that we can learn from the testimony of the woman.

First,

A. She Had to Embrace the Messiah Before She was Willing to Tell Others About Him (v.28)

“So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city.”

1. Her encounter with Jesus at the well was life-changing.

When He offered her living water by revealing her sin and His identity, she believed.

2. Before we can testify of Christ we have to believe in Him.

When we do that will produce within us the desire to testify about Him.

- a) When Andrew heard John the Baptist say in 1:36, “Behold, the Lamb of God!”, he began following Him.
- b) After spending the evening with Him, verses 41-42 says that “He found first his own brother Simon, and said to him, ‘We have found the

Messiah' (which translated means Christ). He brought him to Jesus.”

- c) After Jesus “found Philip” (v.43), He called him to “follow” Him and verse 45 says that “Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’”

On each occasion, Andrew and Philip testified about Jesus after they believed He was the Messiah. Andrew immediately went and told his brother Simon (Peter) and Philip went and told Nathanael.

- d) When Paul was saved in Acts 9, after he received his sight, verse 20 says he “immediately...began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, ‘He is the Son of God.’”

3. There are two types of callings in the Scriptures; a universal call and an effectual call.

a) A universal call

(1) Isa.1:18 says, “‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ Says the LORD, ‘Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.’”

(2) Isa.55:1 says, “‘Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and

without cost.”

- (3) Mat.11:28 says, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.”
- (4) Rev.22:17 says, “And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.”

b) An effectual call

- (1) Eph.1:4 says, “Just as He *chose* us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.”
- (2) Jesus said to the disciples in John 15:16, “You did not choose Me, but I *chose* you.”
- (3) The Lord said to Ananias concerning Paul in Acts 9:15 that “he is a *chosen* instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel.”
- (4) Paul told the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 1:30 that “*by His doing* you are in Christ Jesus.”
- (5) He told the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 1:4 that about he saw their “work of faith and labor of love and

steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ...[he knew] His *choice* of you.”

The call of the gospel goes out to everyone but only those whom God has chosen believe.

When Jesus “had to pass through Samaria” (4:4), it was because He had a divine encounter with a Samaritan woman that He chose for Himself before the foundation of the world.

The same is true regarding those He chose to be His disciples. He said in His prayer to the Father in John 17:6-7, “I have manifested Your name to the men *whom You gave Me* out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. 7 ‘Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You.’ 8 for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me.”

B. She Had to Be Convinced Herself that Jesus was the Messiah Before She Could Convince Others (v.29)

“‘Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?’”

Jesus had just stated to her in verse 26, “I who speak to you am *He*.” That statement, along with His knowledge of her personal life, caused her to ask the men of the city, “This is not the Christ [Messiah], is it?”

1. This is not a question of doubt but of certainty.

Jesus said in John 10:37-38, “If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; 38 but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.”

She saw His work of revealing her sin and heard His words that He was the Messiah!

2. Her testimony concerning Jesus was convincing enough to cause the people in the city to react.

Is your testimony about Jesus also convincing?

In John 9, after Jesus healed a blind man, verses 8-12 says, “The neighbors therefore, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, ‘Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?’ 9 Others were saying, ‘This is he,’ still others were saying, ‘No, but he is like him.’ He kept saying, ‘I am the one.’ 10 Therefore they were saying to him, ‘How then were your eyes opened?’ 11 He answered, ‘The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam, and wash’; so I went away and washed, and I received sight.’ 12 And they said to him, ‘Where is He?’ He said, ‘I do not know.’

While he was before the Pharisees, verse 17 says they asked Him, “What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?” And he said, ‘He is a prophet.’ 18 The Jews therefore did not believe it of him, that he had been blind, and had received sight, until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight.”

Verse 24 says they “a second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, ‘Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner.’ 25 He therefore answered, ‘Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.’”

His life had been radically changed by Jesus and he stood there confidently before the religious leaders testifying about what Jesus did in his life.

II. The Coming of the Crowd (v.30)

John continues in verse 30 to say “They went out of the city, and were coming to Him.”

D.A. Carson says, “Perhaps the townspeople were so impressed by her excitement and candor as by her argument. At any rate, they decided to see for themselves, and began the walk to Jacob’s well while Jesus was still conversing with His disciples” (The Gospel According to John, 228).

Before John says more about the Samaritans, he returns to Jesus’ discussion with His disciples in verse 31. They had just returned from Sychar with food and was urging Him to eat.

Note:

III. The Misunderstanding of the Disciples (vv.31-33)

John says beginning in verse 31, “In the meanwhile the disciples were requesting Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, eat.’ 32 But He said to them, ‘I have food to eat that you do not know about.’ 33 The disciples therefore were saying to one another, ‘No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?’”

The disciples were responding just like the Samaritan woman had previously while Jesus was speaking with her. Her mind was on the physical and so were His disciples.

So Jesus responds by saying, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.”

They were perplexed. Where did He get food they thought. But He was speaking not about physical food but spiritual.

Jesus uses this teachable moment to show them,

IV. The Work of Jesus (v.34)

When He states in verse 32, “I have food to eat that you do not know about,” He is echoing Deuteronomy 8:3 where Moses addresses Israel and seeks to explain God’s way to them. He says, “And He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.”

Jesus quoted this same verse to Satan in Matthew 4:4 when He was tempted not to trust God.

A. Jesus Came to Do the Father’s Will

1. He said in John 5:36, “the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.”
2. In John 6:38-39 He said, “***For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*** 39 ‘And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose

nothing, but raise it up on the last day.”

3. In John 8:29 He said, “I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.”

B. Jesus’ Works were the Works of God

1. He stated that before healing a blind man in John 9

John 9:1-5 says, “And as He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?’ 3 Jesus answered, ‘It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 ***‘We must work the works of Him who sent Me,*** as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work. 5 ‘While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.’

2. In John 10, “at the time of the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; 23 it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon. 24 The Jews therefore gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, ‘How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.’ 25 Jesus answered them, ‘I told you, and you do not believe; ***the works that I do in My Father’s name, these bear witness of Me.***”
3. In verse 32, after He stated, “I and the Father are one” (v.30). Verse 31 says, “The Jews took up stones against Him. 32 Jesus answered them, ‘I showed you ***many good works from the Father,*** for which of them are you stoning Me?’”

4. In verses 37-38 He said, “If I do not do ***the works of My Father***, do not believe Me; 38 but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.”
5. In John 14:8-10, “Philip said to Him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.’ 9 Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10 ‘Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.’”
6. In John 17:4, He prays to the Father and says, “I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished ***the work which You have given Me to do.***”
7. When John sent two of his disciples to Jesus, they asked Him, “Are you the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?” (Luke 7:18). Verses 21-22 says, “At that very time He cured many people of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits; and He granted sight to many who were blind. 22 And He answered and said to them, ‘Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.’”

What is the work of God that Jesus came to do?
Heal the sick, raise the dead, preach the gospel to

the poor.

- a) Jesus said in Luke 19:10, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
- b) His work was the work of redemption. Prior to His death on the cross, He said in John 19:10, “It is finished.”
- c) Hebrews 1:1-3 says, “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, *He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.*”

So when the disciples brought Him physical food, He gave them instruction with spiritual food and commissions them in verses 35-38 to do the same.

V. The Commission of the Disciples (vv.35-38)

A. An Illustration (v.35a)

Jesus continues speaking with His disciples in verse 35 with an illustration by saying, ““Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest’?”

“Some commentators view the opening statement of this section as a first-century proverb. More likely, however,

it indicates that the incident at the well took place in December, four months before the spring harvest in April.

No such proverb has been recorded anywhere else, and the normal time between planting and harvest was closer to six months.

The adverb *eti* (yet) also seems out of place in a proverbial saying, which would more likely have read, “There are four months and then comes the harvest” (William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: The Gospel of John*, 173, John MacArthur, *John 1-11*, 158).

Jesus now gives them...

B. An Exhortation (v.35b)

He says, “Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest.”

“Using the grain growing in the surrounding fields as an object lesson (cf. the use of similar illustrations in Matt. 9:37-38; 13:3-8, 24-32; Mark 4:26-32), Jesus impressed on the disciples the urgency of reaching the lost.

There was no need to wait four months; the spiritual fields were already white for harvest. The disciples had only to lift up their eyes and look at the Samaritans coming toward them (v. 30)” (MacArthur, 158).

Jesus stayed on purpose with the mission that God called Him to. He wanted the disciples to do the same.

1. When He sent them out in Matthew 10, “He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them

out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness” (v.1) and then He commanded them not go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans “but rather...to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, **preach**, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand’” (vv.5-6).

2. Prior to His ascension, He told them in Luke 24:46-47, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; 47 and that **repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations**, beginning from Jerusalem.

John also gives them...

C. An Instruction (vv.36-38)

He says, “Already he who reaps is receiving wages, and is gathering fruit for life eternal; that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. 37 ‘For in this case the saying is true, ‘One sows, and another reaps.’ 38 ‘I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.’

1. To join in the harvest

“Already he who reaps” is referring to Jesus and He is “receiving wages, and is gathering fruit for eternal life; that he who sows and he who reaps my rejoice together.”

2. In the agricultural realm the same farmer who sows the seed usually reaps the harvest. But that is often not the case in the spiritual realm.

Paul said in 1 Cor.3:6, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.”

Some *plant* the seed of the gospel, others *water* it but it is always God who causes *the growth*.

“Others had sowed the seed in the Samaritans' hearts (e.g., Moses, John the Baptist, and Jesus Himself). Yet the disciples would have the privilege of sharing in the resulting harvest. Although they had played no part in sowing the seed, Jesus sent them to reap that for which they had not labored; others had labored and they had entered into their labor” (MacArthur, 158).

John tells us the response of the Samaritans to Jesus in verses 39-42 by now showing us...

VI. The Believing of the Samaritans (vv.39-42)

He breaks it up into two sections: In verse 39 he speaks of those who believed after hearing the woman's testimony. Then in verses 40-42 those who believed after hearing Jesus' word.

A. Many Believed from the Woman's Testimony (v.39)

John says, “And from that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, ‘He told me all the things that I have done.’”

1. This is how we testify of Christ today—by personal testimony

Paul's conversion is recorded in Acts 9. He retells of his conversion in Acts 22 and 26.

- a) In Acts 22 it's before the Jews in Jerusalem

At the request of the disciples in Jerusalem he went to the Temple “purifying himself” with four other men.

Jews from Asia saw him in the temple and “began to stir up all the multitude and laid hands on him” (v.27) because they said he “preaches to all men everywhere against our people, and the Law, and this place; and besides he has even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place” (v.28).

The commander of the Roman cohort came with some soldiers after hearing a report of the confusion and took Paul. But while he was being taken away, he asked if he could speak to them.

Read Acts 21:40-22:21

- b) In Acts 26 he is before King Agrippa (vv.1-23)
2. Along with our personal testimony we preach Christ (the gospel)

When Paul came to Thessalonica, Acts 17:2-3 says, “And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, ‘This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.’”

- B. Many More Believed Because of Jesus' Word (vv.40-42)

John tells us that after Jesus stayed with the Samaritans “two days,” “many more believed because of His word; and they were saying to the woman, ‘It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world.’”

They affirm that Jesus is their promised Taheb or Messiah and they call Him “the Savior of the World.”

1. In Luke 2:11 He is called “a Savior” by the angels who were announcing His birth to the shepherds
2. In Acts 5:31, Peter said that “He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior.”
3. Paul said in 1 Timothy 1:15, “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.”

CONCLUSION

1. “It is possible, but by no means certain, that the ‘city of Samaria’ that Philip evangelized a few years later (Acts 8:4-8) was Sychar or perhaps nearby Shechem.
2. D.A. Carson says, “The ready acceptance of Philip’s message mind then find some explanation in the preparatory work accomplished in this visit by Jesus and His disciples. In that case, Philip, too, reaped the benefit of the labour of others” (232).
3. Some *plant* the seed of the gospel, others *water* it but it is

always God who causes *the growth*.

4. Are you planting or watering?
5. Maybe you're here today because someone planted the seed of the gospel in your heart and it's been watered and you're at the verge of a harvest unto eternal life.
6. If that's the case, listen to the testimony of the woman or better listen to the testimony of Christ Himself.
7. He said He was the promised Messiah and the Bible affirms it.
8. There are 425 Messianic prophecies in the OT. Jesus fulfilled 300 at His first coming leaving 125 to be fulfilled at His second.
9. I want to call you to surrender your life to Him today.
10. Let's pray.