

John 4:31–35

<sup>31</sup> In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.”

<sup>32</sup> But He said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.”

<sup>33</sup> Therefore the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?”

<sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.

<sup>35</sup> Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!

## **“Lessons About the Harvest”** **John 4:27-42**

INTRO:

We must ask ourselves, “*What was John’s purpose in including this record in his Gospel?*” It seems to me he had three purposes. First, he wanted us to see the transformation in the woman. Second, John wanted us to learn the lesson that Jesus was trying to teach His disciples about obedience. Finally, he wanted us to learn a lesson about the process of sowing and reaping. This then is our outline.

***I. The Woman’s Testimony (v. 27-30)***

***II. The Importance of Obedience (v. 31-34)***

***III. The Principle of Sowing and Reaping (v. 35-42)***

***I. The Woman’s Testimony (v. 27-30)***

A. We pick up the account in **verse 27-30**.

***“And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, ‘What do you seek?’ or, ‘Why are You talking with her?’ The woman then left her water pot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, ‘Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?’ Then they went out of the city and came to Him.”***

1. When the disciples came back from town with food, they were shocked at what they found the Lord doing. He was actually carrying on a conversation with the

Samaritan woman. Here John, who was an eyewitness, carefully showed us how little the disciples understood about the Lord's methods.

2. I am sure all of this came back to them when they heard Him say at a later time, ***“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all peoples, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you”*** Matthew 28:18-20.

B. The woman did not dally but immediately left her water pot and headed into the city. Learning who the Lord Jesus was made an impact in her life. It changed her completely. She who came to the well in the heat of the day to avoid people, suddenly sought those very people whom she avoided to tell them about this Messiah she had met.

1. While it is vitally important that we use the Bible when witnessing to someone, it is also critical we recognize we are not teaching a set of doctrines. We are seeking to point them to Jesus. This woman did not have the Romans road down, but she did know where to bring the folks with whom she talked.

2. ***“Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?”*** Then they went out of the city and came to Him.” (vs.29-30)

This is instructive. She did not lead them all to salvation, but she did point them to Christ. Remember **Acts 1:8**.

## ***II. The Importance of Obedience (v. 31-34)***

A. Meanwhile back at the well, the Lord Jesus was using this opportunity with His disciples as a teaching moment in their lives. We read in **verses 31-34**, ***“In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, eat.’ But He said to them, ‘I have food to eat of which you do not know.’ Therefore, the disciples said to one another, ‘Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?’ Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.’”***

B. Why didn't Jesus eat the food the disciples brought?

1. Perhaps He just wasn't hungry. That is unlikely given that we are told that He was weary from His journey and that those who were with Him were hungry (**verses 6-8**).

2. I think Jesus gave up food for the moment to make an important point with His disciples. Some things are more important than food. He took this opportunity to show them in a vivid way what the priority of life should be.

C. The material world is so real to us that we forget the ultimate reality is spiritual reality. Paul commands us in **Colossians 3:1-3**,

***“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For, you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”***

1. In our text, our Lord Jesus is indeed trying to focus the disciples’ minds on things that are above. He wants them to move beyond the **“felt needs”** that can dominate their lives to the **“real needs”** which were all around them and in them.

2. Do we know David’s experience in **Psalm 63**?

***“O God, You are my God. Early will I seek You. My soul thirsts for You. My flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory.”***

Is God so real to us that when we skip our time with Him, we miss our fellowship with Him? Are we really aware that those who do not know Him are really lost? Do we also understand how we please Him when we share the Gospel with the lost, even if they do not respond?

### ***III. The Principle of Sowing and Reaping (v. 35-42)***

A. The object lesson did not conclude our Lord’s teaching moment. He went on to teach them the lessons of the harvest.

***“Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest?’ Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.”*** (vs.35-38)

B. There are several lessons about the harvest here. Let me just list them to save time.

1. First, the biggest problem we have with the harvest is we do not see the mission field.

***“Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!” (v.35)***

The mission field is not on the other side of the world, it is right where we are. The disciples had just been in Sychar buying food. All they saw were dirty Samaritans. The woman went to the same place and saw people who needed to meet the Savior she had met.

2. Second, the fruit that is gathered is eternal fruit.

***“And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life.” (v.36a)***

This is far more important work than feeding our stomachs. The fruit that is gained remains for all eternity.

3. Third, reaping is not all that there is.

***“And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’” (v.36)***

We sometimes so glorify the soul winner that we forget the fact no one is saved by the efforts of one person. We must never forget this. Our job is to sow the seed. When we sow the seed, God gives the increase. Sometimes we also get to reap.

4. Fourth, we frequently reap because someone else has sown.

***“I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.” (v.38)***

In all of this we must not forget Paul’s little lesson in 1 Corinthians 3:5-7,  
***“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.”***

So, do we understand that the Gospel is for everyone, even the ones society dislikes?

Do we live in awareness of spiritual realities? Are they more real to us than the “felt needs” that can dominate our lives?

Do we recognize that our primary job is to sow the seed, and when we have the opportunity to reap it is because God gives the increase and He deserves all of the glory?

**Hymn# 452 *Make Me a Blessing***