

An Unlikely Harvest
John 4:27-42
Reading: Acts 17:22-31

Bethany Baptist Church
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...pray...

They had an *appointment* to keep, though only **one** of them knew it.

Jesus *must needs* go through Samaria. It's the language of *divine decree*.

So He *sat* and *waited* at Jacobs' well, just outside Sychar. He was *alone*...

Then she came, carrying her *empty waterpot* in the noon-day heat. She was *alone*.

Jesus *spoke* to her – it took her *off guard*. He was a *man*, she a *woman*. He was a *Jew*, she a *Samaritan*.

He asked her for a *drink*, then offered *her* water. **Living water!**

God's gift of eternal life.

He *called* for her husband. She *cautiously* replied, "*I have **no** husband.*"

He then *summarized* her sad life! **No** husband *now* – but **five** husbands in her past, and a **live-in** now.

This Jewish rabbi must be a *prophet* – *how else* could He know...?

But *soon* she would know that He is **much more** than a *prophet* –

Jesus is the **Christ** – the *Savior of the World!*

Join me in John 4: 27-42 as we *unpack* the **results** of Jesus' *conversation* with the *woman at the well*. **Read**

The outcome is a *harvest of souls* in an *unlikely village*.

I'll *outline* our story like this...

Jesus' harvest metaphor of His mission *comes to life* in a *woman* and her *village*.

- 1. A *woman* comes to life (27-30). A woman's witness confirms her conversion.**
- 2. A *mission* comes to life (31-38). The Master's metaphor pictures His saving mission.**
- 3. A *village* comes to life (37-42). A village revival proves Jesus' harvest picture.**

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1. One of the *themes* of this story is how God *providentially appointed its timing*.
 - a. Most importantly, that Jesus **“must”** (4) pass through *Samaria*, and specifically stop at *Jacob’s well*.
 - i. Because at the *well*, the Messiah would wait for *unlikely appointment: a conversation w/ an outcast Samaritan woman*.
 - b. But now we find another example of *divine timing*.
 - i. Jesus’ disciples return from *Sychar* with *Samaritan carry-out*.
 1. It was probably **not kosher...**
 - ii. They arrive (27) *“at this point”* – as if to *point out* that again, God’s *timing* is everything in appreciating what’s going on.
 1. They arrive *just in time* to hear the end of Jesus’ long conversation w/ the woman, spec. **25&26 (read)**.
 2. Again, this is the *first record* of Jesus declaring Himself the Messiah. So for these men too, that was *amazing!*
 - c. But something else was *amazing* - that their *Rabbi* was talking to a *woman*, and an *unknown Samaritan woman* at that!
 - i. We’ve talked about what a huge *cultural divide* that was!
 - ii. The *rabbinic attitude* of their day could be *summed up* like this: *for a rabbi to speak much to a woman was a waste of time, time that could be better spent studying the Torah!*
 - d. So they had *questions* bouncing around in their brains: *“Rabbi, what are You seeking?”*, *“Rabbi, Why do you speak to her?”* ... but they **didn’t** ask.
 - i. (OBTW, I think it’s *fascinating* to consider that our *author John* was one of those *troubled disciples!*)

- e. They **didn't** ask their questions, but their *flustered arrival* was enough to cause the woman to *leave*, and to *leave* behind her *waterpot*.
 - i. Maybe she *left it* because she was *rattled*...
 - ii. Or maybe she *left it* for Jesus – to give Him that *drink of water* that *jumpstarted* their life-changing conversation!
2. The woman made a *beeline* to the village, and now we see another *cultural barrier* being tested (28): she goes to the *village men*.
- a. This is the immoral, outcast *woman* who *walks* to Jacob's *well* under the mid-day *sun* – ***alone***.
 - b. But **now** she *walks right up* to the *village men*, who are probably its *elders*. ... Just consider *that* bold move!
 - c. And she *speaks* to them! **Read v.29**. And you can be certain she told them *everything* we read in vv.7-26. Esp. ...
 - i. The **promise** of *God's gift* – *living water* ... *eternal life*!
 - ii. The Jewish rabbi's **insight** into her *immoral life*.
 - iii. His **teaching** on *true worship* – not *brick & mortar*, but *spirit & truth*.
 - iv. His **claim** to be the *Messiah* – the *Christ*.
 - v. And His **declaration** – ... "*I who speak to you am*" ... "***I Am!***"
 - d. Bible teachers have a **question** about her **question** (29)? "... *this is not the Christ, is it?*"
 - i. In the Gr. text she *could* be asking her question as if *expecting* the answer is **no**. As in, He says He's the *Messiah*, **but, really?**
 - ii. Yet it's **more likely (context)** she is simply speaking *very* carefully about a *very* important claim out of *very* great respect for her *village leaders*.

And she got the men's attention!

3. And she got the *men's* attention! The woman's *boldness* and her *earnestness* and her *testimony* were absolutely **compelling**.
 - a. And so the city leaders *left* abruptly and headed *out* of town and *across* the fields, straight *towards* Jacob's well.
 - b. They wanted to **get there** *before* the **Messiah** *moved on*!

4. But what does this *tell us* about the *woman*? And about *eternal life*.
 - a. The Samaritan woman has come to *saving faith*!
 - b. She has *confessed* her *sins* to Christ.
 - c. She has *understood* His offer of *eternal life*.
 - d. She has *believed* His claim to be the *promised Messiah*.
 - e. And now **this** is *true* of the *woman at well*; **follow as I read v.14!**
 - f. And *immediately* she shows **evidence** of *new life* – she *bears fruit* for the Kingdom (29) as she boldly *testifies* of her Messiah.

The woman at the well has within her soul the well of living water, and her testimony confirms her conversion.

As the woman *speaks* to her village, Jesus' *shares a harvest metaphor* that brings His *mission to life* (read vv. 31-34).

1. It started with a *food fight!* Well, **not** exactly a *food fight*, but a *confused conversation...*
 - a. "*Rabbi, eat!*" All of them kept *pressing* Him to *eat!*
 - b. After all, it was the disciples' *responsibility* to **feed** their rabbi when he was *hungry*, **nurse** him to health when he was *sick*, and **bury** him when he was *dead*. "*Rabbi, eat!*"
 - c. But Jesus' *heart & mind* (32) were still *engaged* with His *conversation w/ the woman*. *Spiritual realities* crowded out *physical hunger*.
 - i. "*I have **food to eat** that you do not know about.*"
 - ii. And *once again*, Jesus turned the conversation from *material* to *eternal*.
 - d. But His friends **couldn't keep up!** Again, they **wouldn't question** Jesus, but they kept asking one another: "*No one brought Him anything to eat, **did he?***"
 - e. Jesus then makes His *point* clear: "**My food** is to do the **will** of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His **work**."
 - i. **Food**it's what keeps us **alive**, keeps us **going**, and keeps us **happy!**
 - ii. When Jesus explained, "**My food** is to do His **will...and work**," He could have just as easily have said, "**My delight** is to do His **will**."
 - iii. **Psa 40:8** previews Messiah saying, "*Behold, I **delight** to do Your will, O God; Your law is within My heart.*"
 - iv. And Jesus had just *pushed back* the devil weeks earlier with these words: "*Man does **not** live by **bread** alone, but by every **word** that proceeds from the **mouth of God**.*"

Let's *sum up* the importance of Jesus' terms (34):

- f. Let's *sum up* the importance of Jesus' terms (34): ***will + work + sent + accomplish***. They *add up* to ***mission***. God's *mission* for His Son.
- i. About **35X** in the **NT**, Jesus says the God *sent* Him; Jesus lived with a powerful sense of *mission*.
 - ii. Jesus came on a *specific* mission. Not a *good will tour* or a *fact finding mission*, but a ***rescue operation***.
 - iii. Jesus came to ***rescue the perishing***; **Lk 19:10** (Jesus) – "*The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.*"
 - iv. That mission was finally ***accomplished*** on the Cross, where our Savior cried: "*It is finished!*" Only *then*, did He surrender His life.
2. And then Jesus *illustrated* His mission with *metaphor* about the spiritual *harvest*.
- a. **Read vv.35-38**. There can be **no doubt** that this *harvest* is the souls of *lost* men & women, as in **v.36** the *fruit* of the harvest is *eternal life*.
 - i. **VV.35 & 36 & 37** provide **3** general soul-winning principles:
Re: *time, reward, tasks*
 - b. Jesus says (35) the harvest is ready ***now!*** (**Constant**)
 - i. His initial expression "*Yet four months*" might sound like an **ANE proverb**, but was probably just a *statement of fact*. (Which would put this Samaritan story in *December* or early *January*.)
 - ii. His point is, **don't** be *deceived*, **don't** *delay*, *reap* and *sow now!*
 - iii. To make this point very literal, several commentators point out that as Jesus directs them to *lift up their eyes*, the men of Sychar (30) are probably *approaching* Jacob's well, and could be seen from *across* the fields!

c. Jesus says (36) in the Great Commission harvest, everything happens **together** – *sowing, reaping & reward!*

i. In the *material world*, the farmer *sows, waits, prays, then reaps*. In **1st cent.** Palestine, it took **6mo** between *sowing & reaping*.

ii. But in the Kingdom harvest, it all happens *together!*

1. *Sowing* the gospel. *reaping* souls. ... Side by side!

2. Their *reward* is **joy!** And the *sower* is as **ecstatic** as the *reaper*.

3. **Beloved**, don't **you** get *excited* when **you** get to *witness* to someone!?! To tell them that Jesus *died* for their sins! Why **don't** we do it more *often* – *the fields are white!*

d. Jesus says (37) there is a **division of labor**. Well, not of the *laborers*, but of the **two** essential *evangelism tasks*.

i. *One sows* – Like the farmer in Jesus' *Parable of the Four Soils*, we sow the *gospel* in the hearts of our neighbors.

1. We do that by speaking the *Good News* to them.

2. **1 Cor 15** – *For I delivered unto you as of first importance that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures ,and that He ...*

ii. *Another reaps* – Like **Paul & Silas** w/ the **Philippian jailor**, we *summons* sinners to *repent*, then *rejoice* as they turn to Christ.

1. "*What must I do to be saved?*" ... "**Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household**"

iii. And *again* (36) we often *sow and reap and rejoice together!*

Jesus' disciples will soon be called His apostles – the sent-out ones....

3. Jesus' *disciples* will soon be called His *apostles* – *the sent-out ones*. Their mission will be the *Great Commission* – “Go and **make disciples** of all the nations...”
 - a. For now, the disciples were about to experience Jesus' Kingdom Harvest principles in the village of Sychar.
 - b. **Moses** had *sown* there by his *writings*. **Jesus** had *sown* there through the *testimony of the woman*. The **Samaritan woman** had just *sown* there despite *towering cultural obstacles*.
 - c. And now the **disciples** would **reap** there, and *share* in the *labor of the sowers*.

God sent Jesus to *harvest* the souls of men. His *harvest picture* makes His rescue mission *come to life!*

Then an unlikely village *proved* Jesus' point (read vv.39-42).

1. I'd guess the village elders *arrived* at the well about the time Jesus' harvest lesson was *winding down*. **The *harvest* had come to the *reapers*!**
 - a. Many already *believed* in Jesus (39) because of the *testimony* of the woman.
 - i. Notice it **wasn't** just what Jesus said to her about Himself (*I am Messiah*).
 - ii. It was what He said about the woman's *sin* and her *spiritual needs* (39): "*He told me **all the things that I have done.***"
 1. And they knew her *history* was *messy...immoral....*
 - iii. But as they listened to her, I wonder what those *village leaders* felt **God** *was seeing* in their lives...
 1. ...things *just as sinful*, but perhaps **better hidden**, than the outcast woman's trail of sad relationships...
 - b. Her testimony (used by Holy Spirit) had *awakened* their conscience, and *created a hunger* and *thirst* for righteousness...
 - i. Now the **Samaritan men** repeatedly asked the **Jewish Man** to *stay* in their village – clearly they wanted Him to come *teach*.
 - ii. Another *astonishing breakthrough* in the *hostilities* between Samaritans & Jews.
 - iii. One that is about the *preview* the spread of the Gospel to Samaria in **Acts 8** & beyond.
2. Jesus and His disciples *stayed* and *sowed* and *reaped* in Sychar for **two** days!
 - a. Jesus' **opened** the *minds* and *hearts* of Samaritan villagers and **poured in** God's truth...!
 - b. **Revival!** **V.41** – "*Many more believed because of His word.*"

3. As those amazing **two days** *unfolded*, the transformed Samaritan woman remained in the *eye of the revival*.
 - a. Yet her *compelling testimony* was *surpassed* by the words of Christ.
 - b. “*It is no longer because of what **you** said that we believe...*” and that was **no** *complaint* or *insult*.
 - c. But Christ Himself had *entered* their village, *taught* in their gates, and *dined* in their homes.
 - d. “*...we have **heard for ourselves** and **know** that this One is indeed the **Savior of the world.**”*

Savior of the World.

Jesus must have taught them that...

Savior of the World. Jesus must have taught them that...

4. A Savior *from* the Jews (22), but not *for* the Jews, **alone**.
 - a. Yet “*of the world*” does **not** teach that every man and woman is *automatically saved* simply because Jesus *lived & died & was raised*.
 - b. “*Savior of the world*” stresses that in every *generation & location* of human history; God has sent only **one** Savior, His Son Jesus.
 - c. There is **no other option** – **no other game in town!**

5. But if *eternal life* is **not automatic**, then there must be a **condition**; God must require a *response* to His Son. Consider again the story of the Samaritan woman & her neighbors.
 - a. You must *hear* and *understand* the gospel of Jesus. That He *died* to pay for your sins and was *raised* to prove that God is satisfied.
 - i. The *grammar* of v.32 speaks of a settled, abiding *understanding* of Jesus’ words.
 - b. You must *want* eternal life. This woman *wanted* to know God!
 - c. You must see the *offense* of your *sins*. The woman was brought to *repentance* for her immorality.
 - d. You must **believe** in Jesus Christ. That He alone is the *crucified & resurrected* Savior of the world.
 - e. You will *bear fruit* of your new life in Christ. *Salvation* always brings *transformation*.

Who would have *imagined* – revival in Sychar!

Sower or *reaper* or ... **sinner**. May God do His *work* in each of us today.

...*pray*...