

GOSPEL OF JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

“Go Therefore from the Well”

John 4:27-42

Open your Bibles to John Chapter 4. We are going to take our third and final look at the encounter Jesus had with a Samaritan woman at Jacob’s Well. Let’s read our text and then, as we always do, look at line upon line. Beginning at verse 27, our good friend the Apostle John writes:

²⁷And 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?”

²⁸The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, ²⁹“Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” ³⁰Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

³¹In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.”

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

³³Therefore the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought Him *anything* to eat?”

³⁴Jesus said to them, **“My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. ³⁵Do 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! ³⁶And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. ³⁷For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ ³⁸I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.”**

³⁹And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all that I *ever* did.”

⁴⁰So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. ⁴¹And many more believed because of His own word.

GOSPEL OF JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

⁴²Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

Back in the day when Julia and I began serving the Lord together, we called our ministry *Ripa Harvest*. Our ministry verse came from Galatians 6:9. Listen to what Paul says about being involved in the harvest:

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

Our desire from day one has been to have a *pilgrim's heart* (from Psalm 84:5). We have always believed that our greatest calling in this walk we have with Jesus is to make disciples (Matthew 28). And the Lord has blessed us with the opportunity to do this in a number of places. You may have heard me say this before, but it bears repeating. I believe that being a missionary is not an occupation; it is a state of the heart.

Considering all that Jesus has done for us, how could we not want to share Him with others?

So our mission field can be here, there and everywhere. That attitude, that state of the heart, is what happened to the woman at the well.

For her whole life, she had been looking for love from a slew of men. She had been married five times, and was now living with a man in sin. Now, even that well had run dry for her. But all of that searching and striving was about to end.

She met Someone who, for the first time in her life, offered her what she truly needed—**Living Water**. She would no longer trust in men, not even her so-called spiritual “fathers.” Their bad theology had left her high and dry, thirsting for more. But not Jesus.

When she was at the place where she had nowhere else to go, He said something incredibly simple to her. He said, **“I AM.”** I think this freaked her out.

She was looking for a Messianic figure like Moses, who would save the Samaritans from the oppression they lived under. But Jesus claims to be much more than that. He claims to be the One who met Moses at the burning bush. Remember what Moses wrote about that encounter (Exodus 3:14):

And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’ ”

GOSPEL OF JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

Jesus is not a man like Moses. He is the very God who sent him to rescue Israel. It wasn't another man that this woman encountered. It was God come in the flesh. And He wants to be the Great I AM for her — and for you as well (pun intended).

So what does she do?

Does she draw some water and head back to her old life?

No.

She heads back to the people she was hiding from and can't wait to tell them about Jesus. (But before we hear about that, a group of men return to the well.)

His disciples come back up the hill bringing some food — and a wrong attitude. Look at verse 27:

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?”

It is amazing to me how the people who were walking with Jesus every day did not discern more than they did. Quite often it took a while for the disciples to “get it.” Here they are still so caught up in the limits of cultural propriety that they don't see what is really important.

To Jesus, the woman at the well is not just some harlot from an obscure village in Samaria. She is a lost and hurting soul who needs a Savior.

I usually don't like to use more than one personal illustration in any of the lessons I present. But this so reminds me of a situation we had at our church in Williamsport.

God gave us a wonderful opportunity to minister to a group of people who were living in an assisted living home. We would go there every Sunday morning and pick them up and bring them to church. One elderly lady named Connie had some issues with incontinence, so she wore an adult diaper. Because of this, sometimes she smelled a little bit. Also, there was a guy named Mike who had some mental issues. Because of this, he constantly tapped his fingers on the chair. And this bothered some people. In fact, we had a meeting with them; and they asked why we had to bring “those people” to church. They were “marveling” that we would minister to them just like the disciples were with Jesus and the woman. In a very real sense they, like the disciples, were caught up in bigotry. That is not a good place to be when you are looking to witness to people about Jesus.

GOSPEL OF JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

So these people who are walking with the Lord every day have a ways to go. As we shall see in a moment, Jesus is going to take them there. But in contrast, look what the woman does (verses 27-28):

²⁸The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, ²⁹“Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?”

This is fascinating to me. The reason this woman came to the well in the heat of the day was because she didn't want to be exposed to the townspeople. But here she drops everything and heads right into the belly of the beast.

Why did she leave her water pot?

Because she doesn't need it any more. She has tasted and seen that the Lord is good.

Apparently, her shame no longer bothers her. She has drunk **Living Water** from the well that Jesus offered her; and now, like He said, it was becoming a fountain welling up inside of her. Now she is the one who “**must needs**” to head somewhere.

It is a wonderful thing that happens in the life of the believer when they experience the forgiveness Jesus has for them. They become the new creations Paul taught us about. Remember this verse in 2 Corinthians 5:17:

Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

The woman at the well is not the same person who came up the hill, and she wants the people in her town to know it. She wants them to meet the Man who knows everything about her.

Do you think this made some of the “men” in town a little nervous?

Maybe six of them.

But it didn't seem to matter much.

Her witness must have really been strong. Look what happens (verse 30):

Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

This could have just been curiosity, but I think it was much more.

In dark times people are looking for answers. Judging by the fact that a woman who was probably not going to church (or whatever the Samaritans called it) was looking for Messiah...

How much more would others be looking for the same thing?

GOSPEL OF JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

Does that strike a chord with us in these darkest of times?

People can sense that something is not right in our world.

We have the answers to the questions the people in our world have.

Normal is not coming back; Jesus is!

I believe the Bible speaks more about our time than any since the Lord sat there at the well. We must always be ready to give people an answer for the hope we have. Think about it.

This woman was probably the least likely prospect for becoming an evangelist.

But God...

He is going to use her to win almost an entire village to Christ, a Samaritan village at that!

We never want to overlook the possibility that the person in front of us is a God incidence. Maybe we won't get the chance to witness to them. But we can share the love of Christ in some way. We don't want to get lethargic in our Christianity.

I believe that is what happened with Peter and the others. They had become comfortable in their relationship with Jesus.

If there is one thing I am getting from this lesson is that I need to ask the Lord to give me some **Living Water**. I need a refill because, in many ways, I have become like the disciples of Jesus.

Look how they react to all of this that is happening around them (verse 31):

In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."

I don't want to get too down on Peter and the gang. They were doing what they had probably done many times before, serving the Lord. And at least they didn't question Jesus about the woman. They kept their opinions to themselves.

But I wonder exactly how thrilled they were to go to Samaria?

Do you really think they wanted to go to *that* village to get food?

It is so hard to get past the hatred and bigotry the enemy has deceived many with. It is much easier to sit back in our little bubble than it is to get our hands dirty by ministering to the lost. We love our little potlucks and Bible studies and reaching inward to serve each other. But it is hard to step out of that comfort zone and witness to people who, for the most part, don't want to hear what we have to say. Yet that is exactly what Jesus

GOSPEL OF JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

calls us to do. What we must do is come to the well and ask Him to fill us. Look what Jesus says to His friends (verses 32-33):

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

³³**Therefore the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought Him *anything* to eat?”**

So here Jesus points out that, like Nicodemus and the woman at the well, the disciples' thinking is earthbound. I got a chuckle when I read what Sandy Adams, who lives in Georgia, had to say about this verse. He said:

Normally when I think of soul food I envision turnip greens, black-eyed peas, collards, gizzards, pigs feet...But real soul food is to hear and do God's will.

That is the “**food**” Jesus is talking about here. And it is much better than the chicken nuggets the disciples brought back from the village. Look at verse 34:

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

Jesus was not saying that food and drink aren't important. After all, He did sit down to rest while the guys went to get the food. He also asked the woman for a drink of water. I am sure on a hot day that would have been refreshing.

What He was trying to get across to them was that there are things in life that are more important than that. Later He will tell them that man does not live by bread alone. We must at times feast on the Word of God (Matthew 4:4). And there is nothing in life better than when you are doing what God has called you to do.

Jesus came to be about the Father's business. And He has chosen to leave us here to continue this work.

The strength of Jesus was that He always did what the Father called Him to do. He was always filled with, and led by, the Holy Spirit.

Our weakness is that, quite often, we do what we want to do instead. And we do that because it is so much easier. But the truth of the matter is that it should not be burdensome to do God's will. It should be refreshing. It certainly was for Jesus. I'll tell you what is interesting to me about this account.

The Samaritan woman was now doing the Father's will and finding excitement and enrichment in it.

GOSPEL OF JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

The disciples are looking past an obvious mission field and focusing on the material world. But Jesus is not going to get upset with His disciples. He is going to use this as a teaching moment, which is good for us.

Remember, the whole point in John writing His Gospel is so that we might believe. He wants us to get to know Jesus first, and then to get to know Him better.

Lord, give us ears to hear what the Spirit says to the church.

Look what Jesus says next (verse 35):

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!

Many have envisioned that as Jesus sat there on the hilltop, He pointed down at the road to Sychar. Coming up the hill to the well was a multitude looking for some refreshment. But they were not looking to get it from Jacob’s Well. They wanted/needed something more. These people were most likely dressed in white robes and wearing white turbans. They were the harvest field that Jesus was talking about.

The disciples were looking to feast on some food.

But Jesus is looking for a soul harvest. And He gently points something out to His followers. They knew how to look for the harvest months in advance. But they are missing the important thing. They went into the village to get food for themselves.

But they had afforded nothing to the villagers. They knew that the very Well of Life was sitting on that hill, but they told no one. And they probably kept to themselves because those villagers were just, “those people.”

Here is the big lesson I think Jesus is teaching us here:

Our greatest harvest field is among the Samaritans of our world. The people in our culture who are ignored and forgotten, those whom others pass by — they are ripe for the picking. We should be reaching out to the least, the last, and the lost.

Now I am not saying that we should not share with those whom the world esteems highly. Everyone needs Jesus. But there is wisdom in what Jesus is showing us.

We should be gleaning from a field that is already ripe. Here is how we should do it (verses 36-38):

³⁶And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. ³⁷For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ ³⁸I sent you to

GOSPEL OF JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.”

For some reason, when it comes to witnessing for Christ, it's always the wrong time or place. It takes faith to sow the seed, and we must do it even when the circumstances look discouraging. Think about it this way:

We don't know what seed has been sown in the life of that person God has placed in our path. We have no idea who **“labored”** in the lives of the Samaritans before this. But Jesus implies that someone has. Maybe it was John the Baptist or one of his disciples. We don't know, and that is the point.

We don't make the divine appointment; God does. We just do what the Lord has called us to do — make disciples.

Remember what Paul said to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 3:6-9)?

⁶I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. ⁷So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. ⁸Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

The main point Paul was getting to here is that we only do the planting and watering. God gives the increase.

Our job is not to save anyone. That is the responsibility of the Holy Spirit.

We just either sow the seed or water the seed that has been sown. When we do, this is the result (verse 39):

And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all that I ever did.”

The woman at the well did not know much about the Gospel. But she knew that something supernatural had happened in her life. Something inside of her had changed. Jesus told her everything she did. He didn't condemn her. He didn't look down on her. He forgave her. Because of this, she became brand new.

She didn't have to be ashamed anymore. So she boldly spoke with the people about Jesus. She told them to come and see, because she knew that He wanted to do the same thing for them.

A wise person once said:

GOSPEL OF JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

One witness with enthusiasm is better than ninety-nine persons with knowledge.

Come and see.

That was the witness of this woman.

Look at the fruit it produced (verses 40-41):

⁴So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. ⁴¹And many more believed because of His own word.

I was not there, but what I think happened is that a revival broke out in Samaria that day. Jesus hangs out in the village and straightens out the confused theology of the Samaritans. And many more, not just those who came to the well, come to Him. Some believed because of the testimony of the woman. But many more came to know Jesus because of **“His own word.”**

Faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

And notice this:

It didn't take long for this village to catch fire. Jesus was only there for two days. But during that time His word produced fruit in their lives.

What did they believe?

Look at verse 42:

Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

Did you notice something important in what they said here?

You would have thought that these Samaritans would be narrow in their faith. But they didn't just see Jesus as the Savior of their people. They now believed He was – and is – the Savior of the world. In other words, they had a missionary mindset. Warren Wiersbe, in his commentary on John 4, points out how the movements of Jesus are a perfect parallel to Acts 1:8. Let's read that verse and I'll show you what he means:

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

GOSPEL OF JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

First, Jesus went to Jerusalem where He overturned the tables of the money changers. Then He went to Judea where He and the disciples were baptizing people. Here, in John 4, we see Him in Samaria.

Jesus has set the example. If we follow, He will give us the harvest. He will send us to the ends of the earth. In fact, we know that, after the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7, Philip heads to Samaria and a revival breaks out. So many are getting saved that Peter and John were sent to check things out.

Did what happened at the well have anything to do with this?

Luke doesn't say. But one has to wonder if some seeds had been planted, and Philip came and watered them. And remember this:

After the disciples figured this out, it was said of them that they turned the world “**upside down**” (Acts 17:6). That was 12 guys.

How much more damage could we do here in Bradford County if everyone at OBC became the witness our woman friend was?

We always talk about coming to the well to meet Jesus.

What would happen if we went from the well and told the world about the One who came to save them?

What would happen if we shared some **Living Water** with them?

Let's pray.

SING THE REVELATION SONG