

JOHN CHAPTER FOUR

Faith Begins – Faith Grows – Faith seeks others

Take – a - Ways

The Woman at the Well (Vss 1-26)
The Disciples (Vss 27, 31-38)
The Samaritan Villagers (Vss 28-30, 39-42)
The Galileans (Vss 43-45)
The Nobleman (Vss 46-54)

Notice how the woman at the well changed the subject
As Jesus laid out her needs:
I'm a Baptist – you are a Jew – what do you know about worship ?
Mama was a good woman – she took me to church
I give to the church
I work in Vacation Bible School

The disciples were shocked that Jesus spoke in public to a woman
It was against all Jewish customs
But He saw her as a soul in need of a Savior – not just a woman
Can we see past our own prejudices ?

The greatest profession of faith
Is to take Jesus at His word – just as the nobleman did
Faith based on feelings or the flesh is on shaky ground

Did you notice Jesus did not mention what kind of laborers the harvest
needed ?

He did not specify preachers, teachers, missionaries
He just needs those willing to share Jesus with a dying world

The harvest needs both sowers and reapers
It is a partnership for God's glory
Often, someone else will harvest a seed that you have sown
And you may not ever know about it
But God does

The ministry of Billy Graham may have reached more people
Than any other evangelist in church history
But there is still no substitute for one-on-one witnessing

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Things are heating up between Jesus and Jewish leadership
Followers of John the Baptist are torn between him and the self
proclaimed Messiah
Rather than get caught in the middle
Jesus decides to leave Judea and go to Galilee
Jesus went miles out of His way to go thru Samaria
But He had an appointment there (vs 4 – HAD to pass thru)
That God had made before time began
“Samaritan” was a cuss word to the Jews
Pharisees prayed no Samaritans would be in the resurrection with
them

FAITH BEGINS

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

27) And at this point His disciples came, and they were amazed
that He had been speaking with a woman, yet no one said,

“What are You seeking?” or, “Why are You speaking with her?”

God’s timing is always exactly perfect

The woman leaves – the disciples arrive

If the disciples had arrived any earlier

They would have been a distraction to the woman

If they had arrived any later

They would have missed His assertion that

He was Messiah

They were probably thinking

“Did the world go mad while we were gone ?”

“Why was the Master talking to this despised woman ?”

But they remain strangely silent

28) So the woman left her waterpot and went into the city, and
*said to the

29) people, ²⁹ “Come, see a Man who told me all the things that
I have done; this is

30) not the [k]Christ, is He?” ³⁰ They left the city and were coming
to Him.

LEFT HER WATERPOT

Why would John include this obscure fact ?

It was a very valuable item

Probably the only one she had

She had to run off to share the good news with her
friends

“I think I have found the Christ”

But it was a subtle reminder

She would be coming back for something precious

Jesus is coming back for something precious—His
bride—The Church

REMEMBER

This is a woman with a tarnished reputation
She was fetching water at noon
A time of day when no one else was around
To see her – or – gossip about her

BUT

Her witness of this man she had found
Was so profound that the townspeople listened
And wanted to see for themselves

THE DISCIPLES

- 31) Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, saying, “Rabbi,
eat something.”

The disciples are so pleased with themselves
Usually the either forgot to bring food
Or they couldn't find any
But now they have bags full from the Publix at the
Shoppes of Samaria

- 32) But He said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not
know about.”
33) So the disciples were saying to one another, “No one
brought Him *anything* to eat, did he?”

Jesus gently chides them

They are so focused on the physical
They haven't noticed the great spiritual moment that
has just occurred

He quotes to them from Deut 8:3

Now they are more clueless than usual

REMEMEBER

John is writing this many years later about himself

He was just as clueless as the rest of them

- 34) Jesus *said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work.

Doing My Father’s work energizes me

John Bunyon said:

“He had the whole of heaven to Himself

And yet that did not satisfy Him

He had to have us sinners there to share it with

Him”

ACCOMPLISH = FINISH

I came here to finish the work my Father sent Me to do

At age 12 He said “I must be about my Father’s work”

On the Cross He said “It is finished”

He did what God sent Him to do

And now we can reap the benefits of His completed

work

- 35) Do you not say, ‘There are still four months, and *then* comes the harvest’?

- 36) Behold, I tell you, raise your eyes and observe the fields, that they are white for

- 37) harvest. ³⁶ Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit

- 38) for eternal life, so that the one who sows and the one 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 come into their labor.”

The month is probably Nov or Dec

The crops that were planted in the fall

Are now sprouting up
A promise of the harvest yet to come
LIFT UP YOUR EYES
Quit focusing on your own needs and desires
Look at the world around you
There are people in far worse shape than you are
And right on cue
The villagers appear on the horizon
Look at your harvest
You don't even have to go to it
It is coming to you
 John the Baptist and I have sown the seeds
 Now it is time for you to reap the harvest
WHITE FOR HARVEST
One Southern writer said
It was like a field of cotton in October
The white robes of the villagers coming to Jesus

FAITH GROWS

THE SAMARITANS

- 39) Now 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."

Many who had come out of curiosity
Lingered and found salvation
 BELIEVED ON HIM
 Not just IN Him as a good teacher
 Genuine, heartfelt faith

- 40) So when the Samaritans came to [m]Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days.

REMEMBER

The Samaritans hated the Jews just as much as the Jews hated them

Truly a miracle of God

That they even listened to this Jewish rabbi

Let alone put their faith and their destiny in His hands

- 41) Many more believed because of His word; ⁴² and they were saying to the

- 42) woman, “*It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One truly is the Savior of the world.*”

AND – they credit their salvation to this despised, lonely, rejected woman

NOTICE the progression of their faith:

This shy woman heard THE WORD and believed

She ran to tell her neighbors

Many of whom probably crossed the street to avoid her

The Good News about the Messiah in their midst

Many came because of her testimony

And lingered because the very WORD OF God spoke to them

MANY MORE

Possibly many who came went back to town and brought others

That is witnessing at its best

One beggar telling another beggar where there is a free
handout

John 15: 1-5

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that BEARS fruit, He [a]prunes it so that it may bear MORE fruit. ³ You are already [b]clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in Me, [c]and I in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit [d]of itself [e]but must remain in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you remain in Me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who remains in Me, and I in him [f]bears MUCH fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

BORE FRUIT

The woman heard the WORD from Jesus and shared it (Vs 39)

MORE FRUIT

Many who came out heard the WORD and believed (Vs 41)

MUCH FRUIT

Today people are still being saved whose hearts are touched by
reading her story in God’s WORD

She is a fine example of a Who-So-Ever-Will

NOTICE ALSO

The progression of Jesus ministry

He began His ministry in Jerusalem (John 2:13)

From there He moved into Judea (John 3:22)

And then He came into Samaria (John 4:4)

Where the people proclaimed him

The Savior of the World (to the ends of the earth)

Where did Jesus tell the disciples to go in Acts 1:8 ?

Jerusalem – Judea – Samaria – ends of the earth

He has already set the example for them
THE GALILEANS

- 43) And after the two days, He departed from there for Galilee. ⁴⁴ For Jesus
- 44) Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. ⁴⁵ So when
- 45) He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, *only because* they had seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they themselves also went to the feast.

Jesus resumes the journey He had begun in vs 3

He left Jerusalem because of the conflict with the religious leadership

He left Judea because of the conflict with the followers of John the Baptist

He left Samaria because His work was done there

Or as the poet Carl Sandburg so eloquently put it

But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep

Much work left to do for the Father

Other Jews looked down on the Galileans

They considered them crude and uneducated

Their language was more rough

They were fishermen, laborers and farmers

But these were the people who accepted Jesus

Some of His most successful ministry was in Galilee

But not everyone accepted Him

Jesus realized that many who professed faith

Were just there out of curiosity

They had seen His signs and miracles in Jerusalem
And they were hoping to see more
So He moves on

46a) Therefore He came again to Cana of Galilee, where He had made the water *into* wine.

Jesus travels about 60 miles back to Cana

In lower Galilee – about 5 miles from His hometown of Nazareth

Perhaps some knew of the miracle He had performed at the wedding

It was the disciple Nathaniel's hometown

More importantly God had made him an appointment there, also

46b) And there was a royal official whose son was sick at Capernaum. ⁴⁷ When he

47) heard that Jesus had come from Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and *began* asking *Him* to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death.

A nobleman from Capernaum – about 20 miles away – hears that Jesus is there

And comes to Him with a specific request

Little is said about this man

He could have been a Jew or a Gentile

He could have been a Jewish official

Or he could have been a Roman in the court of King Herod

Either way

He knew of Jesus
AND believed that He could help His son

- 48) Then Jesus said to him, “Unless you *people* see [n]signs and wonders,
49) you *simply* will not believe.” 49 The royal official *said to Him, “[o]Sir, come down
50) before my child dies.” 50 Jesus *said to him, “Go; your son [p]is alive.” The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went *home*.

YOU PEOPLE

Not a rebuke to the nobleman

REMEMBER wherever Jesus went large crowds followed

Jesus is speaking to the crowd in general

He knows most of them were not sincere

They were just curious

Hoping to see another circus trick

BUT Jesus sees the faith in the nobleman’s heart

He truly believes Jesus can save his son

Urges Him to travel to Capernaum with him

Jesus is so impressed, He performs the miracle from afar

- 51) And as he was now going down, his slaves met him, saying that his [q]son

- 52) was [i]alive. ⁵² So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better.
- 53) Then they said to him, “Yesterday at the [s]seventh hour the fever left him.” ⁵³ So the father knew that *it was* at that hour in which Jesus said to him, “Your son is alive”; and he himself believed, and his entire household.

Night travel in that area was not safe

So the nobleman does not travel home until the next day

His faith is so certain, he sees no need to rush

BUT YOU CAN IMAGINE that Satan planted seeds of doubt

In this new believers heart

Could He really heal your son from 20 miles away ?

What a relief when he meets his servants
Coming with the good news of the healing
WHEN DID IT HAPPEN?

At the moment Jesus spoke the words
of healing

Another example of BELIEVING IS SEEING

He believed Jesus could help

He believed Jesus when He said the boy was healed

As a result, He and his WHOLE household

Are rejoicing in heaven as we read their story

today

- 54) This is again a second [i]sign that Jesus performed when He had come from Judea into Galilee.

Not the second miracle that Jesus performed

But the second one recorded in John’s Gospel

And both took place in Cana of Galilee

One at the request of a mother

One at the request of a father

One was private – seen by only a few

One was public – seen by many

The common denominator ?

The only begotten Son of God

Who came to seek and save everyone who would receive Him

Let's circle back to the woman at the well for a moment

Notice the approach Jesus took with her:

A classic example for us of how to witness

a) He did not let personal prejudices – or – His physical needs
Keep Him from witnessing to her

b) He approached her respectfully

c) Did not pressure her into making a decision

d) He controlled the conversation
Did not let her distract Him

e) He allowed the Word of God to do the work in her heart

f) He dealt with her privately
Away from prying eyes and wagging tongues

g) He opened the conversation with a common item – water
And then turned into a picture of eternal life
(Just as he had used the cool evening breeze with Nicodemus)
A common thing – right there in front of them

h) He did not avoid speaking of her sins
But used it to show her need of a savior