

MARCH 10, 2024

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TRUTH ABOUT GOD

Jesus calls us to be workers in the harvest.

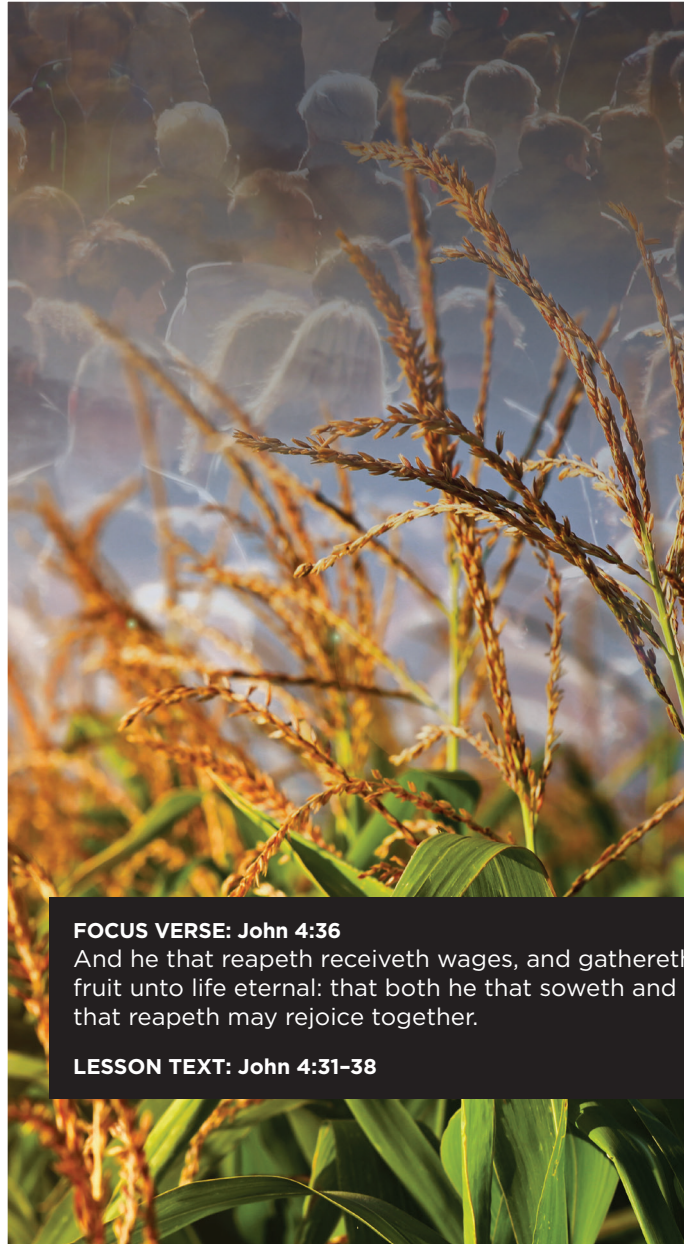
TRUTH FOR MY LIFE

I will be a worker in the harvest.



SERIES 1: JOHN

THE UNSEEN HARVEST



FOCUS VERSE: John 4:36

And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

LESSON TEXT: John 4:31-38

**Lesson Title:** The Unseen Harvest

Icebreaker: What is the most surprising conversation you see Jesus have in the Gospels?

- I. PERCEIVED NEEDS VERSUS REAL NEEDS
 - A. A Unique Scene
 - » *How are meeting temporal physical needs and spiritual needs different? How are they alike?*
 - B. The Need for Physical Food and Spiritual Food
 - » *If you were one of the twelve disciples, how would you have responded to Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman at the well?*
 - C. I Will Pursue Balance for My Physical and Spiritual Needs
 - » *As you reflect on your efforts, which part—physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual—is out of balance for you?*
- II. LOOKING TO THE HARVEST
 - A. The Reality of the Harvest
 - B. The Need for All Workers in the Harvest
 - » *How long after you were born again did you begin to see your value in the body of Christ?*
 - C. I Will Be a Worker in the Harvest
 - » *What do you feel specifically God has sent you to do?*

Prayer Focus

- For us to see people as souls needing to be fed
- For God to use us to feed those hungry souls

BIBLICAL OVERVIEW

Lesson Text: John 4:31-38

In this passage, the disciples had just returned from buying provisions in Sychar, a city in Samaria (John 4:4-5, 8, 27). While they were in the city, Jesus rested at Jacob's well just outside the city and had a long conversation with a woman of Samaria who was an outcast among Samaritan society. In this interaction, Jesus provided one of the greatest revelations of His identity as Messiah to this socially scarred Samaritan woman.

The geography of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman is important to help understand Jesus' words in verses 34-38; the woman came to the well, almost undoubtedly from Sychar, and then returned into the city to witness about what she had experienced. When she first came to the well from Sychar, the disciples left the well and went to Sychar. When they returned to the well, the woman was returning to the city.

The disciples undoubtedly passed by this woman, broken and alone on her journey to the well. Sadly, these disciples—twelve preachers in training—neglected to notice or speak to this woman. They were so focused on finding a place for lunch that they neglected the spiritual meat of doing God's will. (See John 4:34.) Jesus had been ministering to the hurting and lonely, thereby partaking of spiritual meat, which was far more satisfying than physical meat could ever be. Jesus' admonition in John 4:35 to "lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" served as a subtle rebuke toward the disciples. If their eyes had been open and watching, they would have seen the abundant spiritual crop ready to be harvested in Sychar.

Not only did the disciples miss the Samaritan woman as they walked into Sychar, they neglected to bring anyone back with them when they returned to Jesus. In contrast, the Samaritan woman returned to Jesus with an untold but presumably large number of citizens of Sychar. Many of the Samaritans believed on Jesus and compelled Him to stay and minister to them for two days, receiving for themselves a revelation of Jesus as "the Savior of the world."

WHILE THEY WERE IN THE CITY, JESUS RESTED AT JACOB'S WELL JUST OUTSIDE THE CITY AND HAD A LONG CONVERSATION WITH A WOMAN OF SAMARIA WHO WAS AN OUTCAST AMONG SAMARITAN SOCIETY.

DAY 1

John 4:31-33

³¹ In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

³² But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

³³ Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?

Biblical Insight

The disciples had purchased food for their traveling party, so naturally they offered food to Jesus; that was the entire purpose of their trip. However, Jesus was spiritually satisfied by the previous conversation with the Samaritan woman, and He seized upon the opportunity to expound. The disciples' response to Jesus' words paralleled that of the Samaritan woman. Just like the Samaritan woman initially misunderstood Jesus' words about water, the disciples initially misunderstood Jesus' words about food.

Daily Devotion

Comedic duo Abbott and Costello began what is arguably their most famous skit like this:

Costello: Then tell me the guys' names.

Abbott: I say, Who's on first, What's on second, I Don't Know's on third and then you . . .

Costello: You the manager?

Abbott: Yes.

Costello: You know the guys' names?

Abbott: I'm telling you their names!

Costello: Well who's on first?

Abbott: Yeah.

Costello: Go ahead and tell me.

Abbott: Who.

They continue to talk around and around the names of baseball players on a team, both speaking very plainly but neither one being understood, for the entire duration of the conversation.

Words are not enough; communication must happen. Both the Samaritan woman and the disciples experienced similar confusion, hearing the words of Jesus but not initially grasping His full meaning. We must continually seek not to merely hear His words, but to comprehend His heart.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 2

John 4:34

Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

Biblical Insight

Jesus found sustenance and satisfaction simply in the act of carrying out the mission to which He was called (*Apostolic Study Bible*, commentary on John 4:34). When Jesus' actions with the Samaritan woman are compared to Luke 4:18-19 (sometimes referred to as Jesus' "mission statement"), the reader can clearly see that Jesus was fulfilling His entire mission. In the story of the Samaritan woman, Jesus proclaimed good news (of redemption) to the (spiritually and monetarily) poor, proclaimed and set at liberty one who was held captive and oppressed (by shame and guilt), restored sight to the blind (by opening her eyes to see who He was), and proclaimed God's favor (by lifting up a woman who had been discarded by society).

Daily Devotion

Extrinsic motivation is defined as doing something because of factors outside of yourself. Your actions are motivated extrinsically when you desire someone's approval, win an award, receive a reward, and so on.

Intrinsic motivation means a person chooses a behavior simply because of interest or enjoyment. You are motivated intrinsically when the act you are completing is a reward to you. One researcher defined intrinsic motivation in terms of what people are willing to do without external inducement.

Jesus found pleasure and enjoyment simply doing what He was called to do. He did not need measurable results, He did not require a multitude of followers, He desired no reward or adulation. He acted as we ought, doing what He was called to do, knowing that doing so was fulfilling in itself. May God show us and help us to do the same.



Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 3

John 4:35

Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

Biblical Insight

If the disciples had been spiritually aware, they would have noticed that the harvest was ready and waiting to be harvested. Seeds had already been sown and crops had already been cultivated. The Samaritans, whose spiritual heritage was conjoined with the Israelites, were open and ready to receive the promised Messiah. This was evidenced by the many citizens of Sychar who so readily received Jesus (John 4:39–42). If the disciples had their spiritual eyes open as they bought meat in Sychar, they would have seen the harvest all around them, just waiting to be harvested.

Daily Devotion

Potatoes are ready to be harvested when they are roughly the size of a hen's egg. Fruiting vegetables, like peppers and tomatoes, tend to be ready for harvest when they are the same even color across their entire surface. Tree fruits like apples and pears are ready to be harvested when they come away from the branch they are growing on easily, with a mere twist of the hand.

Farmers (and backyard entrepreneurs) must be aware of the signs fruits and vegetables show when ready for harvest, just as disciples of Jesus must be spiritually aware of the signs souls in our fields show when they are ready for spiritual harvest. Learning the signs of spiritual readiness ensures you never miss an opportunity to glean a soul for Jesus Christ.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 4

John 4:36-37

³⁶ And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

³⁷ And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.

Biblical Insight

Both the one who sows and the one who reaps have an opportunity to rejoice when a harvest is collected. By this analogy, the sower might be seen either as God, who is constantly drawing all humanity to Him, or perhaps as previous generations of faithful women and men sowing the seed of God's Word. Humanity participates in reaping along with God, the ultimate harvester. The Lord, the proclaimers of the good news, and even the angels rejoice when the harvest of souls is collected.

Daily Devotion

Wilbur and Orville Wright completed the first successful human flight on December 17, 1903. Although their initial attempt out of Kitty Hawk lasted only twelve seconds and covered a distance of only one-hundred-and-eighty feet, it still changed the course of history when it revealed that air travel was possible.

Research, articles, and history consistently fail to show who did what to prepare for the first flight. No overwhelming account exists that chronicles which screws Orville fastened as opposed to which bolts Wilbur loosened. They worked together for years before changing the course of travel forever. It would be impossible to say who "planted" and who "watered," just that working together created the finished product of flight.

So it is when working for the Lord. Do what you can in service to the Lord, as He adds your efforts with those of your brothers and sisters in Christ. And Jesus, as only Jesus can do, gives the ultimate increase.



Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 5

John 4:37-38

³⁷ And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.

³⁸ I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

Biblical Insight

Jesus' promise to His disciples concerning harvesting that for which they did not labor is reminiscent of how God fulfilled His promises to the children of Israel by bringing them out of Egypt into the Promised Land: "And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat" (Joshua 24:13). Similarly, Christ was calling His disciples to enter into a new "Promised Land," one with an eternally satisfying harvest.

Daily Devotion

According to Wikipedia, planet Earth boasts a birth rate of 259 babies per minute. Long before a baby's arrival, parents read books, decorate nurseries, purchase supplies, and rally the troops. The pantry is stocked, the closet is full, and currently pristine diaper pails are waiting to be sullied, thanks to the family's newest and smallest member.

Babies are born into their new environment and carried into homes they did not purchase or prepare. Everything they own is given to them. They sleep in beds they did not make and eat food they did not earn. Every need is supplied through the simple act of inheritance. When we are born again, we enter a new family and home as a child of God, born of water and Spirit, inheriting all the good gifts God freely gives.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*
