



## First Baptist Church Selmer

A JOURNEY THROUGH JOHN • "THE POWER OF ONE" • JOHN 4:27-42 • 1/16/2022

### MAIN POINT

Knowing Jesus as the Savior of the world and the only source of eternal life should compel us to joyfully and urgently share the gospel.

### INTRODUCTION

**What did you want to be when you grew up?**

**If you are doing that today, what kept you focused on the task? If you are doing something different, what made you change your mind along the way?**

**What is the most significant opportunity you ever took advantage of? What is the most significant opportunity that you passed up or missed? What lessons have you learned from both?**

Life presents us with countless opportunities—some that we embrace, and some that we reject. In today's lesson, we will continue to look at Jesus' encounter with a Samaritan woman, and specifically, the way she responded to the truth of who Christ is, seizing the opportunity to tell everyone about the all-satisfying life she found in Jesus.

### UNDERSTANDING

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 4:27-30.

**What gives us a clue that the woman left with urgency? What can we learn about her urgency?**

**How did the living water she found spur her to tell others about Jesus out of joy and compassion, rather than obligation?**

**How would you describe the disciples' attitude toward Jesus when they came back to Him? Why do you think they responded in that way?**

The disciples seemed confused as to Jesus' purpose. They were speechless as to what Jesus was doing in speaking to a Samaritan woman. The woman responded to Jesus by going and telling everyone. She left immediately and went into the town to share this good news. It was evident in the life of the Samaritan woman that she had had an encounter with Jesus.

**Do you remember how excited you were when you were saved?**

**Who was the first person you told? Why them?**

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 4:31-34.

**Why did the disciples urge Jesus to eat? What does Jesus' statement about food in verses 32 and 34 reveal about what truly satisfies, particularly in light of the previous discussion on living water?**

**What were the disciples focused on in this passage? How might their focus have been different if their dependency on and gratitude for Jesus had been more like the Samaritan woman's?**

Because Jesus' disciples were focused exclusively on the earthly task of satisfying their hunger and thirst, they were oblivious to the spiritual realities taking place around them in the lives of the Samaritans. Ultimately, even more than food and water, the people needed Jesus—as do we. Because of that, all believers are equipped to share with others the way to meet their needs through Christ by telling of His grace, love, and salvation. Jesus taught them to prioritize God's mission of expanding the kingdom above all earthly purposes.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 4:35-42.

**Jews in Jesus' day predominantly looked upon Samaritans with disdain, yet Jesus chose to reveal His identity to a Samaritan—and an adulterous woman at that.**

**What person or group of people are often looked down upon in our community? How would Jesus interact with this group?**

**In what ways could you use your relationship with them to exemplify Jesus' grace and goodness?**

## **How could it draw you both into a deeper relationship with Him?**

The primary point Jesus made to His disciples was that they must be spiritually minded in order to be of true earthly good. The potential for kingdom advancement is immediate and vast. The world's need for the gospel and the high potential for saving faith compel Jesus' followers to be joyfully, willingly on mission to all people at all times, even when earthly needs seem more compelling.

## **Why did the Samaritans come to faith? How might God have used the example of the woman—the repentance, freedom, and redemption she had found—to draw them to Himself?**

Ultimately, the Samaritans came to faith, not by any human efforts, but by the grace of God as He called them into relationship with Himself. But in His good purposes, God worked through the woman's bold witness to do so. The Samaritans became closer in relationship to Jesus by becoming closer in relationship to her, as she showed them firsthand how good Jesus' mercy, grace, and life really are—just as we can do in our relationships.

## **APPLICATION**

**What are you relying on as the “food” (v. 34) to sustain you this week? If this is anything other than Jesus, what will be the result? If it is Jesus, how will this affect your relationships with others?**

**What excuses do you typically make when confronted with the opportunity to guide someone to discover life in Jesus? How does Jesus' teaching in this passage speak to those excuses?**

**What specific opportunities do you need to take to “reap the harvest” in your life right now?**

## **PRAYER**

God, empower us by the Holy Spirit to proclaim Your saving grace and spur others toward a closer relationship with Jesus. God, we pray you will be glorified as You carry out Your plan to restore all things to Yourself.

## **COMMENTARY**

| JOHN 4:27-42

4:27-30. The disciples had been in town buying groceries during Jesus' conversation with the woman, but now they returned. Since it was midday, they urged Jesus to have some lunch. The conversion of the woman described in verses 27–30 and the personal concern for Jesus' nourishment expressed by the disciples was followed by personal control that Jesus asserted over the disciples' confusion regarding their mission that day. We've already noted why the disciples would naturally be surprised to find him talking with a woman. But spiritual sensitivity and a sense of courtesy overcome their natural Jewish revulsion at this predicament. We can only imagine what Judas thought on this occasion.

A change in the woman is noted by several important elements of verses 28–29. First, she had come to draw water, but she was so excited that she abandoned her water jar. Second, she rushed back into town and exclaimed the revelations of her personal life when, just a short time ago, she had come to the well alone, quite likely as a social outcast. Third, on the basis of Jesus' omniscience, she raised the question of whether the Messiah had come.

Some question has been raised about the translation of people in verse 28 and the corollary pronoun they in verse 30. Anthropos is the common word for man. Perhaps that pushes the woman's past just a bit too far in this story. If it means men only, she may have contacted the elders of the city on what surely was for Samaritans the most touchy theological point of all. More than likely however, anthropos means people in this context, since Greek contains a more specific term for adult males.

4:31-34. John introduced the story of Jesus' disciples' perception in v. 27, and returns to it in v. 31. In the present story, the task of the Gospel writer was to help the reader understand how Jesus brought His disciples to accept the universal nature of His mission sufficiently so that the impact of both the confession and the sense of community as evident in the concluding verses of this pericope (4:39- 42) might be perceived by later readers. The means used to achieve that goal is the discussion over food followed by Jesus' sermonette on the harvest (4:31-38).

The major concern of the disciples in the story was their search for food—undoubtedly kosher food. So their invitation for Jesus to eat is a reflection of their concern. By contrast, the primary focus of Jesus was hardly on food; it was the search for people. Accordingly, Jesus responded to their request that He should eat by indicating that He had a source of food that was unknown to them.

The disciples' questioning among themselves (4:33) introduces another case of Jesus' double-level language resulting in a misunderstanding (cf. the woman at 4:11). Moreover, it confirmed Jesus' statement to them that they did not know (a familiar theme) what He was saying. The follow-up statement that Jesus' food was doing the will of the One who sent Him reasserts the

theme that Jesus was on a mission as an agent of God doing the Father's will. Moreover, Jesus' comparison here of food to the will of God is quite consistent with the message from the first temptation in the Gospel of Matthew (4:3-4). Bread is there contrasted with the word that issues from the mouth of God when Jesus obviously was hungry, having fasted for the long period of forty days in the wilderness (Matt. 4:4).

4:35-38. The sermonette here is built around two pithy statements that are almost proverbial in nature. The first concerns the timing of harvest. Some interpreters have thought that the iambic-like meter suggests a Greek proverb behind v. 35. Others have thought that the four months is a chronological reference indicating the season when Jesus was speaking. Perhaps the most defensible view is that the text represents a general Palestinian proverbial statement concerning the time between sowing and the earliest point of harvest. The value of the last view is that it opens the way to Jesus' subsequent exegetical commentary, which takes issue with the statement by pointing out that it was already harvest time, and the disciples should have been ready for it (4:35). As such, any time can be understood as harvest time.

The second proverbial statement is one sows and another reaps (4:37). It was normally applied in the ancient world to distinguish between the fortunate and unfortunate (e.g., Mic 6:15). The perspective thus was normally depressing in that planters were not reapers (cf. Lev 26:16; Deut 28:30; Job 31:8). The same perspective is present in Jesus' parable when the master condemns the man who was given only one talent (Matt 25:24-26). Jesus, however, turned on its head the negative perspective that might be understood in the background of the maxim. Instead of dividing the planter and the reaper, He united them. His perspective was that both participate in the results of their work.

Accordingly, both here experience joy. But Jesus did not end His statement there because His primary concern was not merely sowing. His basic concern was reaping. The evangelist understood this concern of Jesus, and therefore he highlighted reaping in the mission directive of Jesus to the disciples (4:38).

4:39-41. We already know the woman had a change of heart and mind that indicated new birth. She had gone back to town to announce her meeting with Jesus. John reported that many Samaritans believed that day because of the woman's testimony. But since this is one of John's key words, he wanted to emphasize what actually happened in that town. Preliminary faith that rested on the woman's testimony became solid faith after the Savior had stayed there two days and proclaimed his message.

How did Jesus witness? He was friendly; He asked questions; He showed concern for human need; He faithfully explained the Scriptures; and He emphasized good news for thirsty people.

Witnesses aren't responsible for converting people; their task is to tell the truth about what they know.

4:42. The corporate announcement at the end of the passage is nothing less than dramatic: we know that this man really is the Savior of the world. Remember that world (kosmos) is one of John's key words, appearing 185 times in the New Testament, 105 of those in John's writings. Earlier the discussion centered on two sites of worship, Jerusalem and Mount Gerizim. Then the talk turned to the coming Messiah, surely still a localized expectation related to Samaritan theology. Now, after two days with Jesus, these new converts understood the gospel very well.