

Jesus and the Woman at the Well

John 4:4-42

“For it is certain that the Christ, such as the Gospels describe Him, could not have been brought into contact with spiritual ignorance and want, any more than with physical distress, without offering it relief.” A Edersheim

You must Understand: There are a few details one must consider before gaining the greatest understanding and blessing from the passage about Jesus and the Woman at the Well.

❖ **Jesus’ Love - Transcends race, religion, and rank to reach one hurting soul.**

1. Ethnic Gulf – Samaritans and Jews had no dealings with one another. (v. 9) Looking at the different translations of the word used here as “dealings” we have: “dealings” – 19x; “not associate with” – 12x; “use things together”/“share” – 11x even “use same cup or bowls” was found; “nothing to do with” – 9x. There was much animosity between the Samaritans and Jews. During the Assyrian captivity (722 BC - 2 Kings 17:24-41) the area was populated by foreigners brought in by the Assyrians. Over the decades, intermarriage broke down the Jewish population. The Samaritans were in part Jews. Though over the centuries they had desired to be accepted by the Jews, they were not, driving the wedge deeper. At the time of Christ, the Samaritans were counted unclean by pious Jews.

2. Religious Gulf – Only kept first five books of Moses not the prophets. One of the biggest differences was the fact that they only held to the first five books Old Testament. This set up many religious differences. All their beliefs and practices came only from the law of Moses. In about 400 BC they built their place of worship on Mt. Gerizim, where Abraham built his first alter to God. They kept many of the Jewish laws, traditions, feasts, and counted themselves Jewish (v.12) but with a twist. They were a mixed people with a mixed religion.

3. Moral Gulf – Jesus, the Son of God, reveals God’s love and forgiveness to her. This unnamed Samaritan woman was morally bankrupt and needed the knowledge that God loved her and forgiveness was available! She had a thirsty soul and Jesus had living water to give her!

God is no respecter of persons! This is a Bible principle! Deut. 10:17-19; 2 Chron. 19:7; Acts 10:34-35; Rom. 2:10-11; Eph 6:9; James 2:9 God is no respecter of persons and we sin if we do!

❖ **The Samaritan Woman’s Life – A broken soul in need of God.**

1. A rejected woman – This woman had had five husbands. We are not given the circumstances of each relationship, but it is highly unlikely all of them had died or even that she had left all of them. Within those marriages, we can know she was rejected multiple times. Even the other relationships of her life would have been strained by this track record of marriages. She was a rejected woman! Her choices and past would have put a relational strain with every single person she came in contact with!

2. A guilt-ridden woman – There must have been much guilt and remorse in the heart of this woman. Hasty, thoughtless decisions; lustful, foolish actions had to have produced almost more

pain than she could bare. When the Samaritan woman met Jesus, a man she had never seen before, it must have been a relief to interact with someone who didn't know her past. Then when He asks her to call her husband, she quickly replied she had none. She was not willing to tell Jesus all her sad, complicated, miserable past! Instead, she desired to hide it!

3. A rude and cynical woman – We will see the hardness and skepticism of her soul will come through with her conversation with Jesus. She did not trust Jesus' offer of the gift of God. She questioned and belittled the gift and the Giver! She was definitely chatty but had a sense of skeptical mistrust! I am so thankful, she was not so hardened and rebellious to God, that truth couldn't penetrate her heart. It took time, but God loves the unlovely!
 4. A dissatisfied woman – It didn't take much convincing for the woman to want the water Jesus was offering, even though she had no idea what He was talking about! (v. 13-15) She jumped at the chance to make her life better! But it seems she always had!
 5. A sorrowful woman – Anyone with that many broken relationships would see themselves as a failure and be very sad. We can take for granted that at least one husband had died also. No children are mentioned but we can imagine she did have children. All of this upheaval for herself and possible children would be such a burden to her broken heart.
 6. A lonely woman – She came to the well alone that day. Almost every scholar I read felt this was odd for a woman. It was safer to be in groups and also time at the well was as social as it was a necessary chore! Jacob's well was not the main well for Sychar. There was one just outside the city. She actually walked the opposite direction and farther than she needed to get water. Again, just knowing human nature, she was not popular or accepted by most woman of her community. Who wanted to be friends with a woman that married, man, after man, after man, after man...and then just skipped the ceremony with another? Not too many "normal" women! Let's mention here that she was probably poor. No servants to do this task, also, no daughter. Her coming to the well speaks of her financial and lonely status.
 7. A religious woman – The Samaritan woman had a religious foundation. She asked Jesus religious questions which were knowledgeable. Please realize, one with a current messy, sinful life; doesn't mean they didn't have a religious past. This woman demonstrates with her conversation she understood the differences between the Jews and the Samaritan belief system.
- ❖ **The Samaritan Woman's View of Christ – It changes through the conversation. It is revealed in the names she calls Him. Skepticism grows into conviction.**
1. Jew – v. 9 This is a generic, ethnic reference to Jesus' race.
 2. Sir – v. 11, 15, 19 Her tone has turned more respectful. Three times the Samaritan woman will refer to Jesus as "Sir." She seems to have become curious and sincere in her conversation.

3. Prophet – v. 19 When Jesus reveals His knowledge of her past, she calls Him a “prophet” – supernaturally inspiration; messenger from God; one with God’s message. Though she does not understand who He truly was, she is admitting her guilt! “How do you know my past, you must be a prophet!”
4. Messiah/Christ – v. 25, 29 Suddenly she realized she was face to face with the Messiah! She believed!

You are now ready to move on to the Scriptures and watch this wonderful transformation from darkness to light; thirst to satisfied; hopelessness to a wonderful eternal hope!

“⁴And he must needs go through Samaria. ⁵ Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. ⁶ Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. ⁷ There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. ⁸(For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) ⁹Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.” John 4:4-9

I. Jesus in Route – “must needs” Jesus had an appointment in Samaria. He understood God’s will for Him. v. 34

1. There were three routes Christ could have taken to Galilee. There were three routes from Judea to Galilee: the coastal route, through Samaria, and the eastside of the Jordan River. For many the road one took depended on where they were coming from in Judea or going in Galilee. There were certainly a large number of pious Jews who would only take the Jordan River route because of their distaste for the Samaritans. These Jews hated the Samaritans; the name “Samaritan” was a derogatory name! (John 8: 48) We know Jesus took both routes more than one time, remember He was no respecter of persons. This time Jesus and his band of disciples went through Samaria. The strength of the Greek tends scholars to think this “needs go through” was more than convenience of distance or location, Jesus had a divinely appointed meeting with the Samaritan woman. Jesus was following His Father’s will!

2. “Jacob’s Well” – Jacob’s digging of this well is not mentioned in the Old Testament. Why he would have gone through the effort, expense, and time to dig it is not known. There are several springs in the area. It is believed that the other water sources were claimed by neighboring tribes and Jacob sought to keep peace and opted to build a well for his family and herds. In Jesus’ day the well was already approximately 1500 years old, about 150 ft deep, and was located along a Roman Road. Today you can visit the 3500-year-old Jacob’s well. It is located in the basement of a Greek Orthodox church and it still has fresh water!
3. “sixth hour” – There is not a consensus on the time of the “sixth hour.” Tradition has it as noon for when the Samaritan woman came to the well, but a good number of scholars felt it was likely 6 pm. John seemed to have written using Roman time, not Jewish. This would make sense because of when he wrote his Gospel (after the destruction of Jerusalem – 70 AD) and who were his readers. Jewish time (obsolete) – noon; Roman time – 6 pm

Whatever the time she came, every book and scholar I studied all mentioned her coming by herself was noteworthy! Whatever the time of day, her coming by herself speaks volumes concerning her life.

4. “Jesus therefore, being weary with his journey,” –The route from Jerusalem to Jacob’s well was about 30 miles over very rough terrain. It would be a grueling 2-day trip for men! Here Jesus, 30-year-old man in His prime, had to sit and rest. John the writer loved to show Christ’s humanity as well as His divine nature. (John 1:14) Jesus had physical limitations.

5. “disciples were gone away...to buy meat.” – Let’s first cover the number of disciples that may have been with Jesus on this journey. We cannot know, but please don’t visualize twelve! It will be sometime yet before Christ singles out the twelve apostles. (8-12 months before selecting the twelve disciples) He may have only had five with him this day, but I would guess at least that or a few more. Yes, going into a Samaritan city to buy food would have been questionable among some Jews in Jesus’ day. Very pious, conservative Jews would not have done this or even traveled in Samaria. We know God is not a respecter of persons, and it is probable, on Jesus’ request, the disciples did as they were told. Remember there were several incidences in Jesus’ ministry that the Religious Leaders questioned Christ on His lack of following their traditions fully. (Luke 6:1-2)

6. “Give me to drink.” – Please realize, getting a drink of water from Jacob’s Well was not an easy task. You need a vessel to draw with, a long rope, and a cup. The woman had all those items and Jesus nothing! It was natural for a traveler to ask a local for a drink. We have several Old Testament stories with this scenario. But a Rabbi speaking these words to a Samaritan woman broke all social customs. Asking her for a favor was almost impossible to fathom! And notice, as far as we know, she never did give Jesus a drink. With a hint of cold jesting, she only spoke about Him asking; we never read that she drew Him a drink from the well! (v. 11) But Jesus had more than His thirst to address. This woman needed the living water He had to offer!

I love this quote concerning the Samaritan woman from Carson, “she cannot fathom what would possess a Jew to ask her for a drink. She does not know that, far from being defiled by what is unclean, Jesus sanctifies what he touches. Others who touch lepers become unclean; Jesus touches a leper and brings healing. A religious, male, Jewish aristocrat like Nicodemus, or an untrained, female Samaritan peasant who had made a mess of her life – Jesus converses frankly with both, and happily breaks social and religious taboos to do so.” p. 218

II. Jesus’ Witness

“¹⁰Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. ¹¹The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? ¹²Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? ¹³Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: ¹⁴But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” John 4:10-14

- A. “Living Water” = salvation This “living water” could quench one’s thirst for God, something earthly things cannot do! This truth runs through the Scripture! Ps. 36:9; 42:1; Is. 12:1-3; 44:3, 55:1; Jer. 2:13; 17:13; Zech. 13:1; 14:8; Rev. 22:17

“a gift of God” – As Jesus rebuked Nicodemus for his lack of understanding, He gently does the same with the Samaritan woman. She didn’t understand two things – the “gift of God” and who was speaking to her! But she soon would! Jesus was offering a spiritual gift, a gift from God. The Father was willing to give both the learned Nicodemus and the despised Samaritan woman the gift of everlasting life! Just as we read John 3:16 and

see the gracious giving of God in His Son, here the idea of God giving a gift is used, this time called – living water – salvation. Paul uses this same thought with his Roman readers in Rom. 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom. 5:15; 2 Cor. 9:15; Eph. 2:8)

“Art thou greater than our father Jacob...?” – In the Greek, this is a strong question and is formed with an understood answer. More like, “Of course, you are not greater than our father Jacob!” But we know Jesus was greater than Jacob and He answers her question though asked in a tongue in cheek fashion. Jacob gave the gift of this well to quench the thirst of man and beast alike for thousands of years to come. Jesus, through the living water of His death on the cross, gave the gift of everlasting life for all the world! In her answer we see she was more concerned with the how Jesus would get “living water” instead of simply asking for it! v. 11

“the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.” – The phrase, “spring up” has the idea of an ever bubbling artesian well. One with wonderful, satisfying water, flowing day and night, with great force. This woman understood the need for water. At the time of Christ, much time and effort went in to getting, storing, and making sure water was provided for oneself and household. But Jesus was offering something much greater than water from a well! He had living water – salvation. A full, abundant flow of life now and to come, a flow that produced everlasting life!

“¹⁵ The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. ¹⁶ Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. ¹⁷ The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: ¹⁸ For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. ¹⁹ The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.” John 4:15-19

B. Supernatural knowledge – “Jesus thus revealed that the One who had offered supernatural water and supernatural life was Himself supernatural.”

“give me this water” – Like Nicodemus before her, she is thinking only earthly not spiritually. She just wanted out of this mundane, time-consuming task of getting water. The Samaritan woman needed something to shake her out of this earthly mindedness and cause her think spiritual. Of course, Jesus knew this and had just the right statement to cause her to stop and face herself on a spiritual level.

“Go, call thy husband,”/“I have no husband;” – What a gentle Savior we have, gentle, meek, and lowly in heart! Did you catch that up to this point of Jesus’ interview with the Samaritan woman, she was quite the chatty girl? (*go back and overview her part of the conversation v. 9, 11-12, 15*) Never short, but always had a long couple sentences to answer Christ or ask her next question. But now, ----only four words. No long explanation or viewpoint. Just four true and painful words.

“Thou hast well said,”/“in that saidst thou truly.” – Jesus displays His omniscience – His all-knowing power by telling her she had five husbands...but Jesus commends her truthfulness. I had never seen this before—twice Jesus will acknowledge that she had given an honest reply. She had no husband – that was true, but Jesus went on to reveal the 6th man she was living with! And her heart began to change. See you can’t come to Christ until you first face your sin! You can’t enjoy everlasting life, until you know your need of Jesus!

“I perceive that thou art a prophet.” – With one sweeping statement from Christ, she knew she stood before a man with supernatural knowledge. His knowledge and her need were both revealed with one

declaration! “he whom thou now hast is not thy husband” She wasn’t to the point of knowing Jesus as Messiah, but here don’t miss, this woman with the morally messy past, admitted guilt by acknowledging Jesus as a prophet! “You are right! How can you know this except you be a prophet?” Realize, no conversation about salvation can happen without conviction of one’s sin, and no conviction can happen without the knowledge of sin! And in a gentle way, Jesus brought the Samaritan woman to admit guilt and start thinking spiritually!

“²⁰Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. ²¹Jesus saith unto her, Woman (Lit. – Madam), believe me (“I tee you the truth”), the hour cometh (“time is coming at Jesus’ resurrection”), when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²²Ye (Samaritans) worship ye know not what: we (the Jews) know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. ²³But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. ²⁴God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” John 4:20-24

- C. Proper Worship Concerning this section of the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, I read much about how she was covering her guilt and sin by trying to look religious and asking questions to get Jesus off the focus of her sin. I guess I am not so cynical. We don’t find Jesus scolding her or bring her back to a different subject but instead openly answering her questions with wonderful truth!

“where men ought to worship” – Beyond the mixed race issue, here is the great point of contention between Jew and Samaritan – worship location! Before her was obviously a prophet from God, someone with amazing, supernatural power of understanding, could this man answer this burning, divisive question? This was a very important subject to her, for it was the first thing out of her mouth after her acknowledgement of Jesus being a prophet! 150 years before the Samaritan temple had been destroyed and never rebuilt. The ruins sat visible from Jacob’s well up on Mt. Gerizim, it was a constant reminder of their differences. Why was this her burning questions? I have to agree with Wycliffe Bible Commentary which suggested she simply and desperately wanted to know the way to God. (p.1081) Was it a location? How could she worship God? Jesus honors her honest question with an answer and wonderful doctrine.

“worship the Father” – Concerning her question, here is the main issue to the Lord. It has never been the where of worship, but the who of worship. It is to be centered on God! Matter of fact, the phrase “worship the father” or “worship him” is used 5 times in verses 21-24!

- “the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father.” – Jesus started with a very shocking statement to the woman at the well, “the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father.” For hundreds of years, a central place of worship, was so important to the Jewish and Samaritan people. At the time of Christ, the Temple with its traditions, feasts, sacrifices, grandeur, and beauty, was held as a treasure. Now, Jesus said it will not be the place of worship! In a short time both places will be obsolete!
- “for salvation is of the Jews.” – Salvation was coming of the Jews, not Samaritans. The line of the Messiah, who brings salvation, was coming through the Jews. The Samaritans worship did not have this basis. Rom. 3:1-2; 9:4-5

- “spirit and truth” – The nature and emphasis of worship would shortly move from a place and ritual to “spirit and truth” in other words, worship would come from within the sincere heart of man. This man shows love, loyalty, reverence, submission, and dependence to God!

All this discussion and controversy over the place of worship was soon going to be obsolete!

“God is a spirit” – Here we have the nature of God. He is a spirit. Jesus defines a spirit in Luke 24:39, “for a spirit hath not flesh and bones.” More than half of the English translations say, “God is spirit.” God is an invisible spirit and is everywhere. God is not limited by space; we can worship Him anywhere and anytime! Remember, Jesus came to reveal the Father. We can only know the Father through Christ and the Word of God! Col. 1:14-15; Heb. 11:27; I Tim. 1:17

“worship him in spirit and in truth” – John MacArthur said, “True worshippers are all those everywhere who worship God through the Son, from the heart.” Worship must be done in truth, consistent with revealed Scripture and centered on Christ. John 14:6; Phil. 3:3

Here is a summary to Jesus’ discourse on worship:

1. Worship is not confined to a place.
2. True worship is an action of the heart.
3. Worship must be in keeping with the truth of God’s Word.

Jewish worship always centered on location! It still is! Our worship must be on God’s terms...it must be based on His truth from the heart of man.

“²⁵The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ (John’s inserted Jewish translation): when he is come, he will tell us all things. ²⁶Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.” John 4:25-26

D. Jesus’ True Identity The wonderful climax to the story!

“I know that Messiah cometh...he will tell us all things.” – Do you notice here this subtle truth concerning the Samaritans. They were looking for the Messiah too! (Deut. 18:15-22) She seemed to understand that when the Messiah came these sorts of difficult questions would be resolved. She had religious knowledge that included an expectation of the Messiah!

“I that speak unto thee am he.” – During Jesus’ ministry on earth, there are not many people He openly and so clearly revealed Himself! But to this Samaritan woman He plainly said, “I...am he.” Face to face with the Messiah! How did she react!? She left all her belongings and ran back to town to tell others! When studying this I was challenged with the thought, “How did that meeting affect you!?”

III. Samaritan Woman’s Response

“²⁷And upon this (lit. – “At this point”) came his disciples, and marveled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? ²⁸The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, ²⁹Come, see a man, which told me

all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? ³⁰ Then (Gk - "immediately") they went out of the city, and came unto him." John 4:27-30

Disciples Return – The disciples return from Sychar interrupted Jesus and the woman's conversation! She was unable to ask any more questions or give any verbal response at all! The word translated "marveled" is weak in comparison to the Greek! They were extremely surprised to see Jesus talking with this woman and here we have John revealing what the disciples were thinking at this point – it was based in prejudices; prejudices against Samaritans and women in general – and it might have been obvious this woman was morally lost. BUT – by this time, they were used to Jesus doing and saying things they did not understand, and they kept quiet though they had their questions ready!

"left her waterpot" – John, the writer, makes a point of this detail. In my study there were many reasons given to why she left her water pot, but I think it is really quite obvious! Her excitement and the reason she came to the well wasn't so important in comparison to what she wanted to do now! I think we can be safe to say, leaving the water pot behind was the first sign she had living water, she was born again, she had everlasting life – she believed Jesus was the Messiah!

"Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" – She was eager to leave and return to the city of her pain and those who knew her best and tell them who she had met! Her belief was based on Jesus' knowledge of her life, her excitement and honest statements is a testament of her conversion! She invited the men to come and make their own decision! She gave a simple invitation, with simple information, and finished with a simple question!

"Then they went out of the city, and came unto him." – On the witness and testimony of the woman it states in verse 30 that they immediately left the city and went out to meet Jesus! They didn't ask Jesus to come to them and meet with the leaders to have a conference, debate, or hold a Q and A! No they went out to Him! John MacArthur said of this, "Her witness and candor regarding her own life so impressed them that they came to see Jesus for themselves." p. 98

IV. Jesus' Lesson on Evangelism Don't miss the fact that within this event of Jesus and the woman at the well, is found Jesus' short but powerful discourse (teaching) on evangelism!

"³¹In the mean while his disciples prayed him (Gk verb – repeatedly asked 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? ³⁴ Jesus saith unto them, My meat (food) is to do the will of him that sent me (today's will was meeting this woman!), and to finish his work. ³⁵ Say not ye, (giving of a simply fact) 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. (most believe Jesus was pointing out the flow of people coming out of Sychar to meet Him. He knew they were ready for harvest!) 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 (Jewish clique), 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." John 4:31-38

Several Bible scholars pointed out a time-table hint within this passage. Verse 35 speaks of "four months." Harvest in Palestine is mid-April. So, this would have been spoken in December or January. Making this about 8 months after Passover. From these calculations, many believed Jesus' Judean ministry lasted those 8 months.

Disciples Misunderstanding – Here again we see the human heart of man not understanding the divine heart of God. Nicodemus could not see the need of a spiritual rebirth, the Samaritan woman didn't see the need of living water, and now the disciples misunderstood the wonderful spiritual satisfaction that comes from doing the will of God. Was Jesus still weary and hungry? Certainly, but His heart was satisfied in doing the Father's will and watching the spiritual transformation of the woman of Sychar. Remember, Jesus' greatest joy on earth and heaven is the salvation of a soul! Warren Wiersbe said this, "Jesus didn't see His Father's will as a heavy burden or distasteful task, but nourishment to His soul." p. 241

1. Preach the Gospel to all - Early in the book of John, we get to see Christ working with two different individuals at two different spectrums of life. One very religious and self-righteous, one with a morally messy life. In John 4 is the first time we see Jesus being a "friend of sinners." During His ministry He will continually work with those that needed to be reminded that God loved them too. The Gospel was for the sinner, the religious, and soon the whole city of Sychar will realize He was the Savior of the Jew, Samaritans, and Gentiles – the Savior of the world! (v. 42)
2. Great satisfaction and spiritual joy comes to those who share the Gospel – v. 31-33, 36 Sharing the Gospel and doing Gospel ministry brings a satisfying life. Yes, a long week of VBS or much preparation for a church evangelistic outreach may be exhausting, but the joy it brings knowing souls have a chance to hear the truth of God, brings special food to the soul!
3. Giving the Gospel is God's will - (v.34) This will be a consistent message of Jesus. He will instruct the disciples in giving the Gospel, give them opportunities to practice giving the Gospel, and later tell them to go out into all the world! (Mark 16:15) This is the Father's will! In verse 34, Jesus will use the word "meat" or food and describe it as doing the will of His Father. I am afraid, we as Christ-followers, think of spiritual "meat" as only Bible study, prayer, and attending church but Jesus relays it as simply doing the Father's will!
4. Ready souls are many - labors are few – This is the first time of several Jesus will use the illustration of crops being planted and harvested to the work of the ministry! (Matt. 9:37; Luke 10:2) How this principle needs to be a part of the follower of Christ! We must be determined by God's grace, to be a faithful laborer in His harvest field! Realize the ultimate goal is to see "gathereth fruit unto life eternal:" but this is God's part of our labor – we work with Him! (v. 36; I Cor. 3:9) Just a note, the disciples spent time in the city buying food for the Messiah to eat. It is obvious not one of them told the citizens of the city the Messiah was at Jacob's well. They had a lot to learn about giving out the Gospel! Have we learned that lesson! The 20th century evangelist John R Rice said this about evangelism, "The trouble is always to have laborers. Spirit-filled, burdened, earnest laborers, to get out the Gospel, to get people saved." p. 103
5. Sowers and reapers both earn wages – Both those who lay down the seed and the ones who go out and collect the harvest are paid. That is the truth of farmers and farm hands throughout the ages. It takes much time and effort at both ends of a harvest! And it is the same in God's harvest fields. An interesting fact that Jesus takes time to make is found in verse 38. The one who puts down the seed of the Gospel in the life of an unbeliever and the one who sees that one come to Christ later actually these two laboring believers are working together, and both receive the blessing of God. They rejoice together! (v. 36; I Thess. 2:19) Many times, only God knows these laborers, and He will reward both! As harvesters, we must remember success in reaping normally depends on the work of those who have gone before! I Cor. 3:6-9 Someone posed the

question, who prepared the hearts of these Samaritans? How did they know the Messiah would come? Perhaps a genuine scholar and teacher that lived among them; perhaps John the Baptist! That was his message! We do know they were ready to receive Christ the Messiah!

6. Giving the Gospel always involve effort and time - Notice the emphasis on **labor** (reaping, sowing, harvest – over 10xs) in this passage! Having a garden is a sacrifice of effort and time. When neighbors are sipping lemonade on their deck, boating with the family, and tanning in the sun; you are sweating in the heat, preparing soil, planting seed, pulling weeds, and water seedlings. But in the fall, when the neighbors are packing up the boat, shutting down the swimming pool, and raking leaves; you are eating wonderful fresh vegetables, enjoying the fruit of your labor! Giving the Gospel and discipling young believers is much the same. While others may be enjoying the things of this life, you are busy working with others. Some bring forth wonderful fruit unto salvation, others, after much labor and energy, seem to dry up on the vine. But remembering that God gives the increase, we press on in Gospel farming. Of course, the Bible also calls it, fishing for men, Paul used the thought of both construction and raising up children. What wonderful word pictures. All of these illustrate that the work of the Gospel doesn't happen overnight. It is a labor of a lifetime! It's a sacrifice, it's energy! Are you a laborer in God's harvest field!?

Let's finish these thoughts with a couple passages. Psalm 126:5-6; Galatians 6:7-10

V. Response of the City I have been impressed that at the end of any one of these four verses, we could have come away praising God and blessed with the wonderful response of the city of Sychar! But the accumulation of the Samaritans belief and desire for Christ being revealed verse after verse becomes an amazing mound and testimony of the grace of God!

“³⁹And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought (Gk - tense – repeatedly, on every side) him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. ⁴¹And many more believed because of his own word; ⁴²And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.” John 4:39-42

“many...believed on him for the saying of the woman,” – v. 39 That day the Samaritan woman needed God to quench her desperate thirst! But the fact is all of us do – Isaiah 55:1; John 7:37-38 And then we see that **many** believed on Jesus because of the woman's testimony! On the very fact that Christ knew of her sinful past brought her and these towns people to belief. I love the fact that they invited Jesus to stay in their city. Christ had done no great appealing miracle of physical healing, but He certainly healed the woman spiritually! He was no magical fortune teller with grand stories of their future fortunes, but instead a fault-teller, reminding of sin and telling of pardon! And the city wanted Jesus in their town!

“he abode there two days” – v. 40 Based on their belief of Christ the Messiah, they asked Him to stay with them. Jesus was willing to spend these days, not with the Jews, but with the Samaritans! How the disciples must have whispered!

“many more believed because of his own word;” – v. 41 For those who doubted the woman's words, or were skeptical, they had two days to hear Christ for themselves. The Scriptures tell us “many more” believed after hearing Him.

“this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.” – v. 42 Don’t you love the testimony of these new Samaritan believers, we believe,....and know!” they were certain of their faith! Jesus was the Savior of the world – not just of the Jews but the Samaritans too! John is the only New Testament writer who highlighted this term, “Savior of the world.” (John 1:29; 3:17; 12:47; 1 John 2:2; 4:14)

The New Testament Bible scholar JW Shepard said, “One of the finest evidences of true conversion is a real zeal in the converted one to lead others to the Savior.” We see this unnamed woman had hurried off leaving the burden of a heavy water pot and bore fruit unto eternal life! Jesus had only asked her to call her husband, instead she went to the village and invited all the men! She gave the light of Jesus, and they came, despite her reputation. She was not so ashamed she wouldn’t go! That day they heard her openness, her transparency, her honesty, and saw her excitement! Then more fruit was harvested as the citizens of the city came to know and believe Jesus. Even today, her testimony continues to plant seeds and bring in fruit. So much harvest from her faith journey!

Believer’s Application:

Here we have seen the first “cross-cultural” evangelism of Christ’s ministry. I would like to share with you several comments from a few of my favorite study resources.

- This statement from Life Application Bible is a good reminder, “The Gospel is for ever person, no matter what his or her race, social position, or past sins. We must be prepared to share this Gospel at any time in any place. Jesus crossed all barriers to share the Gospel and we who follow him must do no less.” LAB p. 1805
- Matthew Henry said this about the ministry of Jesus and the woman at the well, “He (Jesus) often preached to multitudes that crowded after Him for instruction, yet here He condescends to teach a single person, a woman, a poor woman, a stranger, a Samaritan, to teach His ministers to do likewise as those that know what a glorious achievement it is to help to save, though but one soul, from death.” p. 1677
- Warren Wiersbe also said, “This woman did not come to faith in Christ immediately. Jesus was patient with her, and in this, He sets a good example for us in our own personal work. Certainly, she was the least likely prospect for salvation, yet God used her to win almost an entire village.” p. 241

Why did Jesus minister to this woman? The same reason He extended salvation to you and me.

1. **She mattered to God.** He loved her and He loves us all! The lovely and the unlovely! Romans 5:8
2. **Heaven and hell are real!** She needed everlasting life! And so do we! We are all born on our way to hell, a real place and He died to give us a home in heaven! Jesus provided this gift of God. Rom 6:23

This is the Gospel story! Don’t forget the Great Commission Jesus gave to His disciples shortly before ascending into heaven! (Acts 1:8) I love the fact that tucked between Judea and the uppermost part of the earth is Samaria! The despised, hated people of Samaria were singled out by Christ as His feet left the ground, and He instructed His disciples to go and be witnesses to Samaria! But really, those men of the city of Sychar already knew, Jesus was the “Savior of the world!”

So, as we go let’s leave the harvest to God, spread the seeds of the Gospel wherever we go, trust Him to bring ripe souls to you and be a willing reaper! Be committed to be a faithful follower and imitator of Christ. Remember His words from this passage, “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. 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.”