

OPEN YOUR EYES AND LOOK AT THE FIELDS!

John 4:27-42

Key Verse: 4:35

“Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.”

Last week, we learned how Jesus helped a Samaritan woman to come to know the Messiah through his patient Bible study with her. Jesus led her to a spring of water welling up to eternal life (15). Finally, Jesus declared to her that he was the Messiah she had been waiting for (26). Today’s passage tells us about the fruit of Jesus’ labor of love for the woman. Soon after meeting Jesus personally, the woman became an evangelist for her people. In this passage, Jesus also teaches us how we can have a world mission vision.

I. “COME, SEE A MAN WHO TOLD ME EVERYTHING” (27-30)

Look at verse 27. *Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”* Let me recap the first part of this chapter. We learned how Jesus broke down the human barriers between Jews and Samaritans in order to reach out to one sinful woman. First, he went through Samaria even though Jews avoided the region at any cost (4). Then he initiated a conversation with a lonely woman by humbly asking her the question, “Will you give me a drink?” This woman was shunned by her own people because of her immoral life. But Jesus talked to her gently. This could have caused a scandal in the Jewish community, because Jews did not associate with Samaritans, let alone female Samaritan.

The disciples of Jesus had followed him to Samaria. But they had an uneasy feeling as they passed through the Samaritan villages. This is evident when we read other gospels. One time, Jesus and his disciples were passing through Samaria. Noticing that the Samaritans did not welcome them, John asked Jesus, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven and destroy them?” (Lk 9:54) No doubt Jesus’ disciples had a strong anti-Samaritan sentiment.

After a long journey, they came to Sychar, Samaria, and it was noon. They had no food with them. Their stomachs began to growl. They hated the idea of going into the village to buy food from Samaritans. But they had no choice. Reluctantly they went into the town and bought some food without an incidence. And they came back to Jesus with joy. They were happy thinking about sharing the food with him. But when they returned, they found something shocking. Jesus was talking with a Samaritan woman. They were flabbergasted by the picture. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?” (27) They were too surprised to ask him a question.

Look at verses 28-30. *Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could*

this be the Christ?” They came out of the town and made their way toward him. The disciples were even more surprised at what they witnessed next. The Samaritan woman suddenly left her water jar and ran back to the town. She hurried to the town to tell people about Jesus. She said, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” (29) Jesus had given her living water welling up to eternal life, and it changed everything. First of all, the living water did not leave bitter aftertaste like her ex-husbands did. Jesus gave her a new life so that she could put her past behind and start anew. All her sins were forgiven and she was free from her sin and guilt. She could not keep her joy to herself. She ran to her village people to talk about Jesus. These were the same people whom she used to try to avoid. They had pointed their judgmental fingers at her for her immoral life. But now, she went to them to talk about Jesus with excitement in her voice. She was truly free. The living water of Jesus brought a fundamental change in her life. Let us think about this change.

First, she left her water jar behind. The water jar was a symbol of her thirsty life. It was also a means of quenching her physical thirst. But she left the water jar behind and ran to her people. This shows that she was no longer thirsty in her soul. She drank the living water welling up to eternal life and she was finally satisfied. She now had a purpose and a meaning in her life. This reminds me of a couple of young people who made similar decisions. One young man used to go to bar to drink and pick up woman. It was his Jacob’s well. But when he tasted the living water of Jesus through his Bible study, he said goodbye to his sinful past. A friend of my younger daughter had enjoyed country music very much. It was her Jacob’s well. After meeting Jesus personally, however, she discarded all of her CDs and decided to devote her life to Jesus.



Second, the living water from Jesus changed her from a sinful woman to a blessed woman of God. In the past, her life was a series of painful moments. She was hurt by her ex-husbands who left big holes in her heart. She was judged and shunned by her own people. She could not associate with the fellow Samaritan women in her village. But everything changed from the moment Jesus came into her life. The Messiah was there for her. He loved her despite her sinful past. He forgave her sins. She was full of joy in her heart. She was full of hope. Her relationship with God changed. And her relationship with people changed. She was now full of spirit to go back to her townspeople. She was no longer lonely. She wanted to share the joy of knowing Jesus with her people.

Third, she was compelled to evangelize her townspeople. Look at verse 29. *“Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?”* Her soul rejoiced in God her Savior. So she ran to the townspeople. She told them, *“I’ve met this person who truly understands me. He knows everything about me and yet does not condemn me. Instead, he saved me from all my sins through his living water. Who else could be the Messiah but this Jesus!”* She shared her life testimony before them with tears of joy in her eyes. She was free to talk about her life now. John 8:32 says, *“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”* The living water welling up to eternal life

set her free from her bondage to sins. We usually don't want to talk about our sins before others. Even in today's environment where everyone seems to write autobiography to sell, people talk more about their parents' or husbands' sins rather than their own sins before God. But this woman talked freely about everything she ever did. She could do that because she was forgiven by Jesus. In fact, she loved to talk about her sins, because they reminded her of the saving grace of the Messiah. Her sins had become the evidence of God's love for her.

David was a great warrior and a well-respected musician. He was the king of the united kingdom of Israel. He had everything. But he testified that the happiest person is the one who knows that his sins are forgiven by God (Ro 4:6-8). St. Paul was great, not just because of his great achievements, but because he knew God's grace of forgiveness. He confessed in 1 Timothy 1:15: "Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst." Paul knew the grace of God's forgiveness from his heart. He said, "But by the grace of God I am what I am...." (1Co 15:10)

II. "OPEN YOUR EYES AND LOOK AT THE FIELDS!" (31-38)

Look at verses 31-33. *Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?"* When the disciples saw Jesus wasn't interested in the food they brought, they wondered if someone had already served him some food. What did Jesus tell them? Look at verse 34. *"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."* When Jesus saw the Samaritan woman starting a new life in God, he was so happy that he didn't feel hungry anymore. His heart was full of joy when he saw the change in the thirsty woman. She was so pretty and happy, and Jesus was happy. To Jesus, to do the will of God by helping a thirsty woman with the word of God was more satisfying than eating food. Praise Jesus the true shepherd!

The beautiful change in the Samaritan woman reminded Jesus many others men and women who were still suffering under the bondage of their sins. Look at verse 35. Jesus and his disciples were looking at grain fields nearby. The harvest season was still four months away. But Jesus said to them, *"Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest."* This verse shows the heart of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus had compassion for sinful men and women of the world. Jesus saw how the Samaritan woman drank the living water welling up to eternal life and began a new life. Then his heart went out for all the Samaritan men and women of the world. Jesus wanted to harvest all sinners of the world and bring them to God.

Who are the Samaritan men and women in our society? Many young people are thirsty for human love and pleasures. They come to draw water in the wee hours of the morning. They go to parties hoping to quench their thirst and to fill their emptiness. But no alcoholic beverages, no boyfriend or girlfriend, no human being for that matter, can truly satisfy them. Many times they suffer from bitter aftertaste. Only the living water

from Jesus can satisfy them. Only Jesus the Savior can give them eternal life. Jesus wants us to see each and everyone of these thirsty souls with the eyes of compassion, because they are like crops ripe for harvest.

Look at verse 35 again. *Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.* Jesus had a world mission vision. He was very happy when one woman accepted the Messiah and ran to her townspeople to talk about what Jesus had done for her. This sinful woman accepted Jesus as her personal Savior through her Bible study with Jesus and became a missionary to her townspeople. What did Jesus see through this event? He saw a vision of reaching out many sinful men and women of the world through personal Bible study like the one he had with the Samaritan woman.

Jesus also wants us to have a world mission vision. He gave us the world mission command, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mk 16:15). There are seven billion people in the world. How can we ever reach out to all these people? We learn from Jesus that we can begin our world mission by studying the word of God with one person. World mission begins with one person.



Look at verses 36-37. *"Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true."* Jesus urges us to participate in the harvesting of the lost souls. Jesus says that we are harvesters. We are not farmers, so what do we harvest? We harvest "the crop for eternal life." The Samaritan woman had been lost. She was under the bondage of sin and eternal death. But Jesus led her to the living water welling up to eternal life through his patient Bible study with her. Likewise, we can participate in the soul harvesting work by sharing the gospel of salvation with young people of our time. Jesus also says that there are sowers and there are reapers. Sometimes, one sows and another reaps the crop. But the sower and reaper are glad together when a soul is harvested for eternal life. God's redemptive work is not done by one person. Jesus encourages us that we should work together as the harvesters of lost souls.

In verses 37-38, Jesus alludes that John the Baptist was his co-harvester. John sowed the seed of the gospel before the coming of Christ through his message of the baptism of repentance. Now Jesus wanted his disciples to work hard as John the Baptist did. Jesus also taught them a sense of history. God spread the seeds for the harvest, beginning with Abraham, and through many prophets, all the way until John the Baptist. Still there are many Samaritan men and women around us today. It is easy for us to see them with the eyes of scorn and disdain for their selfish and immoral life. But we must see their inner agony as Jesus saw the Samaritan woman. We must help them to open their spiritual eyes and meet the Messiah personally through our Bible study with them.

III. SAMARITANS' PERSONAL FAITH IN JESUS (39-42)

Look at verse 39. *“Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony.”* The Samaritan woman used to be the butt of jokes among the people in her town. But something amazing happened in her. She was changed 180 degree. She was a new woman. She had an angelic smile on her face. Her testimony was very moving. She told them how her life was going nowhere when she only craved for human love from men. She talked about how she felt lonely and thirsty. Then she met Jesus. Jesus knew all about her past life, but did not condemn her. She told them she had accepted Jesus as Christ, her personal Savior and she was happy. Many Samaritans believed in Jesus after hearing her testimony. Then they decided to invite Jesus to come and stay with them. They held a two-day Bible conference with Jesus as the main messenger. Jesus stayed with them, teaching them the word of God. Because of Jesus’ words, many more became believers. They wanted to drink the living water welling up to eternal life as the Samaritan woman had done. The woman used to be a source of gossip when she followed her sinful desires. Now she was a spiritual role model for many people. The changed life of the woman was a powerful testimony to the Samaritans. May God help us to be powerful witnesses to many young people of our time through our testimonies and changed lives!

The Samaritan woman was instrumental in bringing the townspeople to Christ. But faith is more than emotional reaction to someone’s moving testimony. Faith is a personal relationship with the Lord through personal experience. Look at verse 42. *They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”* They first came to Jesus because of the woman’s testimony. But that was just a beginning. After spending time with Jesus, studying the Bible with him, they now had personal faith in him. This is very important. Faith is very personal. We all want go to heaven. But each person is saved by his or her own personal faith. A son cannot be saved because of his father’s faith. A wife cannot go to heaven because of her husband’s faith (Jn 1:13).

The Samaritans became the children of God by personally believing in the word of Jesus. Personal faith in the word of God can have a far-reaching influence on others. John Knox (c.1505-1572) was ordained as priest in the Catholic Church in Scotland at the time when John Calvin began the Reformation in Geneva. But after witnessing the corruption of church leaders, he was confused about what to believe. So he studied the Bible diligently and became a spiritual leader of the nation. However, when Mary Queen of Scots began to re-establish Roman Catholicism, Knox was forced to leave the country. He went to Geneva, where he stayed with John Calvin. He became an ancestor of the Puritans. He boldly rebuked Mary for supporting catholic practices. His personal faith became so influential that the Queen was afraid of him. Mary Queen of Scots is reputed to have said: *“I fear the prayers of John Knox more than all the assembled armies of Europe.”* If one has a personal faith, God can use him to bring about a great spiritual awakening.

In today’s passage, we learn Jesus’ vision for the world. *“I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.”* Through one sinful woman’s conversion, Jesus saw a vision to evangelize the whole world. May God grant us this vision of God and help us begin our world mission by studying the word of God with one friend!