

Gospel of John Study Session 10

In the last session we looked at the intersection of the ministries of Jesus and John the Baptist. In that session we saw the incredible humility of John the Baptist as he lovingly pointed his own followers to Jesus over himself. He noted that he needed to decrease while Jesus needed to increase. The heart of John the Baptist's calling was to point people to the Messiah and prepare their hearts for His arrival, which had happened. Last week's session also reinforced the truths that Jesus revealed to Nicodemus earlier in chapter 3 about the road to salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Messiah.

In this session we are going to witness another lengthy conversation between Jesus and a person. We will see many points of connections between these two accounts. The conversation of this chapter will be between Jesus and an unknown woman who encounters Him at a well in the middle of the day. The last conversation was between Jesus and a Pharisee named Nicodemus. While Nicodemus was the epitome of righteousness based upon the law and a true moral paragon by the standards of the Jewish leaders, this woman was anything but righteous by anyone's standards. In fact, she wasn't even Jewish. Yet, in this encounter we are going to see the love and grace of God at work in a mighty way.

I. The setting and background

[John 4:1-6]

Q: According to vv. 1-3, what reason might Jesus have for wanting to leave Judea and head north to Galilee? *(Since John the Baptist's disciples failed to see the importance of Jesus' ministry (but John had not) it was very likely that the Pharisees failed to see the importance of what was happening right in front of their eyes, too. As Jesus' ministry was attracting greater attention and followers, He did not want the Pharisees to polarize His ministry against John's as both were part of God's plan. Jesus understood that He could minimize the impact of the Pharisees' criticism of both ministries by leaving the area.)*

The three day journey from Judea to Galilee passed through Samaria. There was an alternative route whereby one could cross the Jordan by Jericho and travel up north through largely Gentile territory and then cross back into Jewish territory near the west bank of Lake Galilee. This was however a considerably longer journey than the straight shot north through Samaria.

Why were there two routes to Galilee when one was significantly shorter and easier than the other? It deals with the Jews relationship to the Samaritans. In Jesus' day, the Samaritans had no independent political existence. They along with Judea were both united under the same Roman procurator. Despite living under the same Roman ruler, the two groups had a long history of mutual hatred and distrust. It all began when Jeroboam son of Nebat and ten of the tribes of Israel broke away from Solomon's son, Rehoboam. These ten tribes became known as the northern kingdom or Israel while the other two tribes became known as the southern kingdom or Judah. In **I Kings 16:24**, King Omri of the northern kingdom named his new capitol "Samaria". This name was given to the district around the capitol and occasionally used to

denote the entire northern kingdom. After the Assyrians conquered Samaria in 722/721 B.C., the Assyrians deported all the natives of substance and settled the area with foreigners who intermarried with the remnants of the Israelites who were left behind. The problem was not one of race but of these mixed marriages was religion. The people began to revert back to the ancient religions God had Israel destroy centuries earlier during the conquest of the Promised Land.

The Southern Kingdom was conquered and exiled by the Babylonians in 587 B.C. When they were allowed to return to Jerusalem and Judea, they viewed the Samaritans as not only children of political rebellion against the Lord (as they had intermarried, while the Judeans had largely not engaged in intermarriage) and also the Samaritans were racial half-breeds whose religion was defiled by numerous unacceptable elements.

Around 400 B.C. the Samaritans erected a rival temple on Mount Gerizim. In the second century B.C. this temple was destroyed by John Hyrcanus who was the ruler of Judea at the time. These factors all led to political, religious and ethnic hostilities between the two groups. By the first century B.C. the Samaritans had developed their own religious heritage based on the Pentateuch, as they didn't accept the rest of the Old Testament, and they continued to have as the central site of worship, not at Jerusalem but rather Mount Gerizim. This simmering hatred continued into the days of Jesus.

So in v.4 the language of the text makes it seem that Jesus was being compelled to travel this road through Samaria to get to Galilee. Going this shorter route had two advantages. The first was that it was direct. Jesus and His disciples didn't need to double back south through Jerusalem again to then cross the Jordan and head north. It got them where they needed to be faster. The second was that it allowed Jesus to keep a divine appointment that was the woman He was going to meet at Jacob's well in a few days.

The site mentioned in the text is an important site for Jews and Samaritans and is fairly easy to grasp its location, even in current times. Jacob's well is on a parcel of land that Jacob gave to Joseph on his deathbed. (Genesis 48:22). When the Israelites took over the Promised Land, they brought out of Egypt with them the bones of Joseph with instructions to bury him in this parcel of land. This well lies about one mile from the ancient town of Shechem and Joseph's tomb is just a few hundred yards north west of the Jacob's well. The word "well" in v.6 denotes a running spring. However, in vv. 11-12 the standard word for well is used meaning a dug-out cistern. Both are accurate as Jacob's well is a dug out cistern but is fed by an underground spring that is still reliable as a water source even today.

Jesus arrived at the well around the sixth hour which is noon. This being the case, the heat of the day and length of travel Jesus and His disciples have had so far, explains their thirst and hunger and tiredness.

Q: What does this reference in v.6 to Jesus' weariness tell us about Jesus? (*That He was fully human. He shared in every aspect of our humanity.*)

[John 1:14]

II. Jesus' request for a drink of water

[John 4:7-9]

It appears that the woman came to the well alone in the heat of the day. Women usually came to a well earlier in the day in groups to fetch water as the heat of the sun was not so intense.

Q: Why do you think that this woman came alone to the well at noon to draw water? *(More than likely, she was a social outcast and came at this time to avoid the other women of Sychar who knew her and judged her as unrighteous.)*

Q: Why do you think the woman was surprised at Jesus' question? (v.9 - *He was a Jew and she was a Samaritan.*)

There is an important historical note here. It dealt with a longstanding popular sentiment among Jewish leaders concerning Samaritan women. All "daughters of Samaritans" were considered and thought to be in a perpetual state of menstruation from the cradle. Therefore they were in a perpetual state of ceremonial uncleanness and anyone having any contact with them would also suffer the fate of becoming unclean and impure. This reveals another reason why the woman was surprised by Jesus' question for a drink of water. *"Didn't He know that this would bring defilement upon Himself, at least in Jewish thinking? Didn't He know the rules of the culture?"*

The truth is that there was more than just a racial barrier between Jesus and this woman. There was also the social barrier common the middle east which was that men did not speak to women in public. Men were one social group and women were another and the two did not mingle in public. Another barrier Jesus had to overcome was the religious barrier. Being a Samaritan, her faith was in an unknown god instead of the true God. Yet, Jesus overcame all of these hurdles to ask this woman for a drink of water and carry on a conversation with her.

Q: If anyone noticed Jesus talking to a Samaritan woman in broad daylight, it would be scandalous or at least raise eyebrows. Why do you think that Jesus risked His reputation to overcome these obstacles and talk to this woman? *(Because He knew she needed salvation just like everyone else. His love for her and desire to see her come to saving faith was greater than any need to protect any reputation that He might be developing. Jesus didn't submit to cultural rituals and norms that prevented Him for sharing God's grace and mercy to those His Father put in His path.)*

From the woman's perspective, she is attempting to dismiss Jesus as a mere Jew as the Jews have dismissed her people for a thousand years. At this point in the conversation she is not about to be "won" over by Jesus in any way. She cannot fathom why He'd ask her for a drink at all. Yet she doesn't know who Jesus is or what He does. Unlike the religious leaders of the Jews who are defiled by what they touch, Jesus sanctifies what He touches. He take the worst defilements and makes them pure and clean before God.

[Matthew 8:1-3]

III. Jesus offers the woman a drink of living water

[John 4:10-15]

This is where the narrative takes a hard turn towards grace. Jesus is going to use His thirst for water to reveal to her the thirst of all people for something only He can offer - living water. The issue is that the woman is still thinking of literal water. She's asking Jesus how He proposes to draw this living water to the surface, as if He knows of a secret way to draw special water from Jacob's well. In reality, this living water is a metaphor Jesus is using to describe the Holy Spirit who comes from Him and gives eternal life. Jesus uses the illustration of water because everyone gets thirsty from time to time. Thirst is a universal need for all people. She's thinking literal water but He's speaking about completely satisfying the deepest needs a person could have.

The book of Ecclesiastes describes King Solomon's quest for meaning in life. He tried everything this world has to offer in his search. The following passage tells us his results.

[Ecclesiastes 2:10-11]

Q: What is Solomon describing in these two verses in Ecclesiastes? *(That nothing in this world satisfies the thirst for something eternal, something that is lasting and fully satisfying.)*

There are many ways we can attempt to quench this thirst in our lives, this God-shaped hole in our hearts. But until we come to the realization that the need is a spiritual need that only Jesus can satisfy, we will remain empty.

[John 7:37-39]

Q: What is the living water that Jesus offers humanity? *(The Holy Spirit)*

Q: How does one obtain the Holy Spirit as mentioned in John 7? *(By believing in Jesus Christ)*

Back to the woman. She is still thinking of literal water, fresh water that comes from a different spring that feeds the well. Now after Jesus' statement about living water, the woman must again draw a conclusion about Jesus' identity. Either He was greater than Jacob, the patriarch, or he was a cheap con-man. By her response, we know that she was still considering Jesus a con-man at this point. Her conditional response in v.12 is expecting a negative answer. No, this guy isn't greater than Jacob. This makes the woman double wrong - at least at this point in the conversation. She doesn't realize yet that Jesus is indeed greater than Jacob and she has wrongly concluded that this living water Jesus talks about comes from an ordinary well.

Q: How does Jesus respond to this woman's ignorance and spiritual blindness? *(v.13-14 - He tells her about the nature of the living water He has to offer. He offers it to her again.)*

Q: What does this tell us about Jesus? *(He is loving of all people, even those who are not like Him or don't understand Him right away. Jesus is patient and kind wanting all to come to salvation in Him. His focus was on the woman and not on Himself as evidenced by His continued offer of giving her living water instead of making sure she knew He was greater than Jacob. When we share the gospel, we need to be like Jesus in that the other person and their*

needs for Jesus is what is important, not ourselves or our pride.)

Q: Why do you think Jesus is focusing on the gift of this living water to this woman? (*vv. 10 & 14 - The water of life is the Holy Spirit which is the guarantee and sign of possessing eternal life. It's the most important decision a person can make.*)

Again, the water the woman sought was just to quench her physical thirst and she'd get thirsty again. Yet the living water Jesus offered her was not natural water but the Holy Spirit from the very presence of God who will flood out of a person's heart like a river. This is the key to where the conversation begins to turn to something unusual. Like the "twist" that comes at the heart of every one of Jesus' parables, this is the twist in the discussion that clues the woman into the fact that this isn't literal water - but something spiritual. When Jesus gives this living water to a person it becomes a spring of living water that inside of them that springs up to eternal life.

[Revelation 7:14-17]

What Jesus is talking about to this woman is of the utmost importance. He's speaking about inner satisfaction and peace which comes from the transformation of the heart. This comes from exchanging the failed formalities of ritualist religion for a heart that knows God personally and thirsts to do His will. It is important to stress that everything that Jesus is doing was predicted by the Old Testament. He wasn't inventing something new with this living water reference but rather He was using it to explain what had been taught about in the past about Him.

[Jeremiah 31:31-34]

[Isaiah 55:1-7]

Q: Who is able to receive the water spoken of by the prophet Isaiah? (*Anyone who thirsts - who is everyone.*)

Q: What are the wicked and unrighteous to do according to this passage in Isaiah? (*forsake their wicked ways and their wicked thoughts - repent. This is going to be important in a moment in our story back in John.*)

Remember the Samaritans only used the Pentateuch for the basis of their faith. They didn't have the prophets. They did hold that a figure called the "Taheb" (which was the Samaritan equivalent to the Messiah) would appear to reveal God's truth and bring people to God. Here is one verse the Samaritans commonly used to base their belief that the Taheb would appear upon.

[Numbers 24:7]

This verse was a prophet being paid to curse Israel but instead God kept speaking a blessing through the prophet. The Samaritans used this verse to describe the blessings that would come from the Taheb. Notice how Jesus uses the Samaritan woman's own belief in this verse to

talk to her about water that will be abundant like water being poured from a bucket. Jesus is linking a Scripture that she knows to the conversation about water and their version of the Messiah and Himself. In v.15 though it is evident that the woman is still speaking of physical water.

Q: What do you think is the woman's motivation for asking Jesus for the living water in v.15? *(She doesn't want to have to do the hard and time-consuming work of drawing water any longer from this well, which is 100 feet deep. It also would keep her from having to show up in the middle of the day in the heat due to her social stigma. Her life would be free from dealing with the consequences of her lifestyle and past choices. Whether it is hope or skepticism at this point, we don't know, but this blessing certainly would enable her to abandon those trips to this well.)*

IV. Jesus deals with sin and doctrinal errors

[John 4:16-26]

Q: When the woman finally asked Jesus for the living water, what did He ask her to do? (v.16 - *go and call your husband to come to the well*)

Jesus does this to clear up a misconception that this woman is having about the living water. This question and subsequent discussion is to get her to realize that this water is not physical water but spiritual in nature. By doing this, Jesus is also clearing up another misconception that this woman had (by her own admission) and that is the nature of her deepest need. She thought her "thirst" was purely physical and so any satisfaction she found for her "thirst" would be from a physical solution. The truth was that her need was spiritual in nature and the living water that quenches that thirst is also spiritual in nature.

The fact that she had five husbands previously and now was living with a man who was not her husband showed that she wanted to be loved. She sought a deep connection but could not find the satisfaction in this world. Of course, we see Jesus' omniscience at this point by telling the woman of her own morally messy past. She is now confronted with a man who is different than she first thought. He is from God or has a connection to God in some manner. Yet, he's not showing her this side of Himself to judge her but rather explain to her the nature of the gift He's offering her. This should not be surprising the Jesus deals with people this way because as John the Baptist pointed out, He was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. We then must expect Jesus, at some point in His meeting of people's needs, to address the greatest need of them all - dealing with their sin in anyone who expresses interest in knowing and following Him. Another thing this part of the conversation lets us know is that inner thirst comes from sin and so sin must be dealt with in order to find true and lasting satisfaction - not remedies of this world.

Q: How did the woman answer Jesus' request to call her husband to come to the well? (v.17 - *She told Jesus that she didn't have a husband.*)

Q: Knowing what you know from v.18, why do you think that the woman framed her answer to Jesus in this manner? *(This was obviously a sensitive area for this woman and it was probably the very reason why she had to arrange her day around avoiding the other women of the*

community. She was hoping that this answer, while technically correct, would ward off any further questioning that would lead to further guilt and hurt.)

Notice how Jesus deals with this woman's answer. He responds to her with the mildest possible rebuke. Twice, once at the beginning of His response and once at the end, Jesus commends this woman for her truthfulness. At the same time He is calling her out for sleeping with a man who is not her husband yet in a non-judgmental, gentle manner. This is Jesus' call for repentance as noted back in **Isaiah 55: 6-7** we read earlier. It is important when pointing out sin in others that we deal lovingly with others as Jesus did. He dealt with the woman's sinful behavior but did not judge her personhood or make her out to be less than human.

Q: What is the woman's response to Jesus after He told her she had five previous husbands and was sleeping with a man who wasn't her husband? *(She believed Him to be a prophet.)*

We need to go back to Samaritan theology for a second here. Remember, the Samaritans believed in only the first five books of the Old Testament. They believed that there was only one prophet and that was Moses. There would someday be one more prophet to arise but that would be the Taheb/Messiah. There were none between them. So when the woman said that she saw that Jesus was a prophet, she was actually entertaining that He could be the Taheb/Messiah. What she is piecing together in her mind at that moment will come to fruition in a few verses.

Q: Do you believe that every person needs Jesus for salvation? If yes, in what ways does your life reflect this belief?

Q: How is the fact that Jesus was speaking to this woman good news for us and all mankind? *(Jesus loves us and wants us to come to have the living water within us despite how sinful our lives may be.)*

Here's the deal, now that the woman is recognizing Jesus as a Jewish prophet or more, this prompts her to raise a point of theological contention between the Jews and Samaritans. This point of disagreement from the woman is a challenge or test for Jesus. Both Jews and Samaritans both realized and believed that God had commanded and specified a certain location for worship of Him to take place. There was one place where God was going to put His name and dwell among men. But the two groups drew different conclusions from this command.

Because the Jews had the rest of the Old Testament, they drew their belief from David and his desire to build the temple in Jerusalem. God solemnly authorized Solomon, David's son to build this temple. When the exiles returned, Zerubbabel rebuilt it in Jerusalem and later it was embellished by Herod.

The Samaritans recognized none of this. They took **Deuteronomy 12:5** to look for the place to build the temple within the Pentateuch. They noted that Shechem was the first place that Abraham offered a sacrifice to the Lord and it overlooked Mt. Gerizim, so they built their temple there. Also, Mt. Gerizim was where the blessings were shouted in **Deuteronomy 27:2-7**.

Q: What was Jesus response to this woman in v.21? *(There is a time coming when people won't be limited to worshiping in Jerusalem or Gerizim. True worship will be done in spirit and*

truth.)

There are three parts to Jesus response.

- 1) Jesus announces that there is an impending obsolescence of both Jerusalem and Gerizim as definitive sites to worship God.
- 2) Salvation does come from the Jews, not the Samaritans.
- 3) Jesus explains the nature of genuine worship to this woman. By doing this the Lord renders useless FOREVER any claim of worship being tied to any physical location. (This is similar to how Jesus declared all food clean to eat when He spoke about this in **Mark 7:19.**)

Jesus' phrase in v. 21 that says, "Woman, believe Me..." is not an invitation to put her trust in Him at that moment. It's just a simple phrase meant to get her to pay attention to what He's telling her. The word "woman" here is the same use as Jesus used of Mary at the wedding in Cana - "Ma'am".

Q: Test from previous weeks teaching: What does the phrase "an hour is coming" always denote in the Gospel of John? *(It refers to the cross and resurrection and exaltation of Jesus.)*

Notice Jesus calls God, the Father. This is His usual way of describing God since it means that a Father has a Son and it sets Him up to show that He is that Son of God. Jesus also instructed His followers to address God in the same way - as they are children of God.

In v.22 Jesus remarks are not attacking the Samaritans' sincerity in believing in God, just that they don't know the object of their worship. They stand outside the stream of God's revelation so what they worship cannot possibly be characterized as truth and knowledge. Jesus points out that the Jews (people group, not leadership) on the other hand, no matter what their faults may be, at least they know the object of their worship. They stand within the saving stream of God revelation despite the leaders twisting the truth. This is why salvation is from the Jews. The Jews are the vehicle for God's salvation. Jesus, the Messiah/Taheb will come from the Jewish race. If a person wishes to know the truth about God, they will look to the Jewish understanding of Him as revealed in their Scriptures as it reveals true knowledge of Him. No one can know the truth of God apart from the Scriptures being interpreted by the Holy Spirit.

Yet, as quickly as Jesus asserts that the Jews were appointed by God to spread His salvation to the world, He is now asserting that their privileged position is in the process of dissolving as a new age (the hour mentioned earlier) is upon the world. Under the Law and in that period of time, it was entirely correct to say that salvation came from the Jews but under the new age to come, true worshipers will seek God in spirit and in truth. This time is actually upon them as the One who brings in this new age is the One talking to the woman at that moment. The death, resurrection and exaltation of Jesus, the Son of God, is what constitutes the turning point in God's economy of salvation. The "true" worshipers Jesus refers to in v.23 are those who appeal to the new covenant, the one that is upon them at that moment. All other factors have been rendered moot. True worshipers cannot be identified by where they worship or any other external attribute but rather that they do so "in spirit and truth".

In v.24 the phrase of "God is spirit" is invisible and divine opposed to human. It should not be a surprise that this living water is a spiritual in nature and not material, like humans are.

As readers, we need to keep in mind that Jesus, while He did take on human flesh and

was one of us, is also revealed as God's Son. God's Son was His self-expression which God uttered as His Word. This Word became flesh so that we, humans, could behold Him and come to know Him. It is Jesus, the Word, who baptizes us with the Holy Spirit and unless we are born from above through the power of the Spirit, we cannot possibly worship God, much less know Him. After Jesus' glorification after the cross, The Spirit is called the Spirit of truth. The phrase "spirit and truth" grammatically is governed by the preposition so that they must be taken together. Thus Jesus is saying that worship is made possible by the Holy Spirit and in personal knowledge of the truth that He brings to our minds and it centers around the One who is the faithful Word, or self-expression, of God Himself. The worshipers God seeks are those who seek Him due to a fulness of the supernatural life they enjoy. In short, in spirit and truth means that worship only happens in the Spirit of God and in the truth of Jesus Christ's revelation, because He is God's full self-disclosure. We know that this is true from the passage in **Revelation 21:22** that says that there will be no temple in heaven. There is no need for one in eternity just as there is no need for a temple right now because of Jesus' work on the cross. All that is needed to worship God is the Holy Spirit revealing truth about Jesus to our hearts and us reacting to that movement of the Spirit within us. As with everything else we've seen in John thus far, this worship is an act of belief in Jesus Christ as opposed to possessing the correct knowledge. Belief in Jesus will lead to true knowledge of God but you cannot obtain true knowledge apart from genuine belief in Jesus. This worship will be soul-expanding, heart-enlarging, world-shaking in nature as we are worshipping a God who reigns over all. It won't be anything that leaves us the same as when we started.

In v.25 the woman uses the word "Messiah" instead of her cultural word "Taheb" which probably indicates that she understood Jesus' message that salvation comes from the Jews. By v.26, what she is suspecting about Jesus, Jesus comes right out and tells her that He is the Messiah.

Q: Why do you think that Jesus declared Himself to be the Messiah to a Samaritan woman but He never declared Himself the Messiah to His own Jewish countrymen? *(The term "Messiah" had too much political baggage with it to the Jews - and much of that baggage was wrongly timed. He would not be fulfilling the expected role as warrior-king on this visit to earth. Rather He would be fulfilling the role of the suffering servant and sacrificial lamb. He had to be more subtle in the lands of the Jews as to not incite a political revolution.)*

Notice her response to this revelation. She accepts it at once. The miracle of Jesus knowing her past and revealing Himself as the Messiah leads her to accept that Jesus is the Messiah. We see this internal change through her behavior. She immediately left her water jug behind and ran off to tell those in her town that she has found the Messiah. The reason she had for coming to the well became secondary to the importance of what has just happened in her life. One of the surest ways the Holy Spirit manifests Himself in a person after salvation is the burning desire to tell others of this life change Jesus brought.

For Jesus, it is important to keep in mind that this is was Jesus' mission on earth; it was the very reason He showed up - to seek and save those who were lost.

[Luke 19:10]

In the story of Zaccheus, we see another social outcast that Jesus sought out for salvation. Talking to the woman about her need for salvation was Jesus' purpose. Keep that in mind as the story shifts now.

V. The disciples return and the woman leaves

[John 4:27-38]

The disciples were shocked to see Jesus speaking with this woman yet they remained silent. Here's the Jewish teaching for a rabbi in Jesus' day concerning speaking to a woman. For a rabbi to speak with a woman, even his wife, was at best a waste of time and at worst a diversion from studying the Torah, and therefore potentially lead to great evil leading to hell. So you can see that Jesus' disciples stand amazed that He is speaking to a Samaritan woman yet they know enough to not say anything to Him or attempt to rebuke Him. He was showing them that He was not hostage to the customs and ritual and teachings of His day which were against God's love being spread. They had probably learned by this point to trust Jesus' reasons for what He did. However, they don't always exercise such faith and restraint.

Q: What did the woman say to the people of her town after she left Jesus? (*v. 29 - Come see a man who told me everything I've done...*)

Q: Why do you think she phrased her proclamation this way? (*Because she wouldn't be in a social position to get people to think she knew anything about religion or righteousness. Yet they might come if she baited them with the hope of getting to hear details of this woman's salacious past. It pointed to the miracle Jesus had done but it also appealed to the baser motives of the people in her community who considered her a reprobate.*)

Unlike Nicodemus who was confronted with this truth of Jesus and was hesitant to believe it, this woman hears the truth straight from Jesus' mouth and believes it. He had all the best education of the Scriptures possible and she came from a different culture who based their faith upon the first five books of the Bible and she took what little she knew and ran with it to salvation and then went out inviting others to come and meet Jesus. Nicodemus complicated the gospel message with his religion. This is a modern problem, too. People in our world often complicate the simple message of the gospel with their religious baggage. In this way, the woman actually had an easier time coming to faith in Jesus than Nicodemus.

Q: What were the disciples concerned about when they finally spoke to Jesus? (*v.31 - they wanted him to eat something. They were concerned for his physical well-being.*)

Now Jesus decided to use the conversation with the Samaritan woman to teach His disciples something about His own priorities and mission.

Q: How did Jesus respond to the disciple's request to eat some of the food they just went and bought for Him? (*v.32 - He told them He had food to eat that they didn't know about.*)

Q: What was the nature of the food Jesus was speaking about? *(It was spiritual food, not physical food. It was to do the will of His Father. His mission was to accomplish the work the Father gave Him to do.)*

[Deuteronomy 8:3]

Jesus' works were the very works of His Heavenly Father. Thus, by Jesus doing the will of God, which was speaking the words of life and truth to the Samaritan woman He found greater sustenance and satisfaction in that than in the actual physical food the disciples brought to Him. It shows the value of submission of one's life to the Heavenly Father's will. It's the life that knows satisfaction fully.

Jesus comments to His disciples in v.35 are crucial to anyone who seeks to see people come to know Jesus through saving faith. The phrase "*there are yet four months and then comes the harvest*" was a proverb meaning that they thought that there was a certain time gap between sowing and harvesting the crop. It could be used of any undertaking as there is a gap between when you start the project and when it is completed. Yet Jesus is telling them that He had just sown a seed in that woman's heart and it was already yielding a harvest. The term "white" refers to a crop that is overripe and in danger of being lost. In other words, get out and sow and reap, there may not be a gap between the time of sowing and reaping and there is a harvest of souls who are in danger of being lost through procrastination of those who need to be working in the fields - evangelism. Often someone else has done the sowing that we are unaware of and the soul just needs to be reaped - by anyone who is sensitive to take the time to do it.

Q: Which task does Jesus assign greater worth to in the work of evangelism in vv. 36-7?
(Neither - They are both equal. Both roles are essential to the work being done.)

Q: What is Jesus telling His disciples in v.38? *(That they are to participate in the harvest. Their fruitfulness is a result of those who came before them - Old Testament figures and even John the Baptist preparing hearts of people. The harvest of the end times is upon them and they are called to be a part of it - as we are.)*

Q: Is there anyone or any group that you ignore when it comes to evangelism or ministry?

IV. The salvation of the Samaritans

[John 4:39-42]

The Samaritans reenter the narrative, en masse.

Q: What was it that got many of the Samaritans from Sychar to initially believe in Jesus? *(v.39 - the words of the woman)*

In other words, the witness of a woman whose life was known as shameful and sinful, a social outcast was effective in reaching a good portion of her entire town. So we should never

underestimate the effectiveness of our own witness to others.

Q: What do the population of Sychar ask of Jesus? (*v.40 - to stay with them.*)

This is incredible in that such a short time there is not hint of the usual Jew/Samaritan animosity or hatred. The people believed in Jesus and welcomed Him without any reservations. And as a show of His love, He stayed with them two days. Jesus disciples also stayed with them for two days which was a huge step in their faith to remain with Samaritans. This led to many more coming to believe on Jesus.

Q: What did the people of Sychar call Jesus? (*v.42 - the Savior of the world*)

Jesus doesn't just save Jews but anyone who seeks after Him and puts their trust in Him. This title is used only by John in the New Testament and it's used here and in **I John 4:14**. This was the first cross-cultural evangelism undertaken by Jesus but it won't be His last. And it was the become the pattern for Jesus' disciples.

[Acts 1:8]

Q: Where are Jesus' disciples to be witnesses? (*Everywhere*)

Q: Based on this story, would you consider Christianity inclusive or exclusive? Why?

Q: Do you have any questions, comments, rebukes or rebuttals?