

Jesus had avoided a confrontation with the Pharisees by going back to Galilee via Samaria. He stopped by a well at noon to rest while His disciples went to buy food. A Samaritan woman came to draw water and Jesus asked her for a drink. This shocked the Samaritan woman because Jews see Samaritans as unclean half-breeds with a corrupted version of the Torah. The typical Jew thought that the woman was unclean and feared saliva from the rim of her jar might bring evil into their body.

Jesus showed that He was not the typical Jew. He peaked her interest by speaking of living water that He could give. She showed she had knowledge of spiritual things, but Jesus cut through all the small talk by telling her that He knew she was living an immoral life. She asked about the Messiah, and Jesus responded with that powerful declaration, "I Am speaks with you!" That is where our passage today begins.

*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?" They were as surprised as she was that Jesus would be talking to her. This may have been their first big test as disciples. This was so counter-cultural that it was sure to be looked down on. Were they thinking of the words of one rabbi who wrote, "A man shall not be alone with a woman in an inn, not even with his sister or his daughter, on account of what men may think. A man shall not talk with a woman in the street, not even with his own wife, and especially not with another woman, on account of what men may say." (Leon Morris translation of Sbk. II, p.438) Jesus concern was not man's approval but His Father's approval. (John 8:29)*

If the disciples were in this for what it might do for their reputation or position in society, this was a move in the wrong direction. It was a moment for them to count the cost. (Luke 14:28) Did they really believe His motives were pure? Was He right to speak to her and their whole religious society wrong about this?

It is beginning to be like that in our own culture. "What? You aren't for a woman's right to choose? You don't believe all roads lead to God? You're probably think the Bible is God's word to man. How hateful! How intolerant!" And as you reach out to those that religious people shun, then you get it from the other side. "Why are you making friends with those gays? Don't you know what that person does for a living?" Like the disciples, you have to decide if you want to look good in the eyes of the world, religious or humanist world, or if you are going to walk in the Spirit and follow where Jesus leads. (Galatians 1:10)

Jesus saw the image of God in this woman. He knew it was marred and suffering, but He saw her sin as a desperate effort to fill the emptiness in her heart. He didn't care what people thought. He knew she desperately needed the water of

**Commented [notes1]:** 29 The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him."  
John 8:29 (NIV)

**Commented [notes2]:** 28 "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?  
Luke 14:28 (NIV)

**Commented [notes3]:** 10 Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.  
Gal 1:10 (NIV)

life. (Revelation 22:17) The disciples were shocked but they respected Jesus enough not to say out loud what they were thinking in their hearts.

<sup>28</sup> Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, <sup>29</sup> "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" Why do you suppose John included that little detail about leaving her water jar? I think she was so thrilled, so excited about what she had just heard, that she forgot all about hauling water. She had come at noon to avoid others, but now she was running to speak to the people. She left the natural water in search of the living water. It is symbolic of her move from trying to fill her heart with the physical to now looking for spiritual fulfillment. You have to leave some pursuits behind to really go after the spiritual. (Luke 14:33) The physical things you have tried to fill your heart with must be abandoned and left in the past.

Jesus witness to her was simple but so rich. He had her acknowledge sin in her own life. He offered the answer to her emptiness. He told where to find it. Now she is already out witnessing. (Mark 5:19) She is telling others her testimony of how Jesus broke through her hardness by telling her what she had done. Then she challenged the town to consider if He was the Messiah or not.

These are still the most common witnessing patterns today. Some follow Jesus' pattern by helping others to recognize that they have broken God's laws. That helps them see the need of a Savior. Then they present the solution to our indebtedness to God and by letting them know Jesus paid it all!

Others of us are more like the woman. We share our testimony of how Jesus got our attention. Then we challenge them to come and see Him for themselves in prayer. We are inviting them to have their own encounter. (Matthew 11:28-30)

As they were coming out to meet Jesus for themselves, the disciples offered Jesus some of the food they had purchased. <sup>32</sup> But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." Do you realize that we all could say the same thing? If you are in Christ, His will for you is so fulfilling that when you step into that call on your life, everything else is insignificant. Even our necessary daily issues take a back seat to the wonder of walking in God's will for our lives. (Job 23:12)

I don't know what your food is, and you really don't know what mine is. It's between us and God. Others try to tell us what it is, but you know in your heart what is or what isn't His will. You know because of that fullness that is yours when you walk in God's will. (Isaiah 55:2)

Just as we saw with Nicodemus and this woman, Jesus is speaking of spiritual analogies and those who hear Him are thinking in the natural. <sup>33</sup> Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?" Jesus has used birth, water, and now food to speak of spiritual things. That is because

**Commented [notes4]:** 17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life. Rev 22:17 (NIV)

**Commented [notes5]:** 33 In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple. Luke 14:33 (NIV)

**Commented [notes6]:** 19 Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." Mark 5:19 (NIV)

**Commented [notes7]:** 28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matt 11:28-30 (NIV)

**Commented [notes8]:** 12 I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread. Job 23:12 (NIV)

**Commented [notes9]:** 2 Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Isaiah 55:2 (NIV)

Jesus created the physical to illustrate the spiritual. (Romans 1:20) Jesus doesn't overdo the analogies; we are shortsighted in not seeing that the invisible things of God are clearly seen by what is made.

**Commented [notes10]:** 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.  
Romans 1:20 (NIV)

Jesus explained, <sup>34</sup> *"My food...is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."* In other words, "My real necessity is to walk in God's will and finish the task assigned to me." He was challenging the disciples to get a passion for doing the will of God above our daily necessities. It doesn't mean we get so wrapped up in spiritual things that we completely forget the practical, but that we are so engrossed in service to our King, in the prospects of how God can use our witness, and the joy of sharing Christ, that all other things are just not as important. (Psalm 40:8)

**Commented [notes11]:** 8 I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."  
Psalms 40:8 (NIV)

Our real food is doing God's will and finishing our assigned task. That should be the transcendent thing in every believer's life. If you don't know God's will for your life and the task He has given you, you will always look to the physical to meet your needs. As Jesus quoted to the Devil, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Deuteronomy 8:3) There are souls that need intercession, people that need to hear the Gospel, work to be a part of the Sunday service and its ministry to our guests. There are saints that are battling and need your encouraging words. Those things shouldn't be a chore, but a thrill that surpasses anything else we might turn to. It only becomes drudgery when we are working outside of God's call on our life.

**Commented [notes12]:** 3 He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.  
Deut 8:3 (NIV)

As the crowd from Sychar approached, Jesus said to the disciples, <sup>35</sup> *"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."* Normally it takes four months from seed planting to harvest. The Kingdom had arrived and that means supernatural abundance. The reaper follows on the heels of the sower.

The Samaritan Passover is a month after the Jewish Passover. (John 2:13) Even to this day, Samaritans wear white turbans during their Passover. The Greek text does not say "ripe" but "white". (This indicates the amount of time they were baptizing after Passover Feast was about one month.) As the crowd moved toward the well where Jesus was resting, they appeared as a white grain field ready for harvest. Add one more creation analogy to Jesus' reportage.

**Commented [notes13]:** 13 When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.  
John 2:13 (NIV)

We tend to think people aren't quite ready yet to hear the Gospel. We look at the obstacles, but Jesus looks at the hungry heart. We see why it isn't time, and He sees why it is. So He tells us, "Do you not say, 'Four months more and then...'" But then He tells us to look. See what He sees. See the hungry hearts around you. They are ready to harvest now. You may think it should take four months, but the Kingdom is here now. (Luke 10:2) Pray and see how quickly God moves hearts.

**Commented [notes14]:** 2 He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."  
Luke 10:2 (NIV)

<sup>36</sup> *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.* Jesus has sown and the disciples are reaping. Their wages are joy and the sense of accomplishing the God given task, not to mention eternal rewards. The crop is for eternal life. The sower is Jesus and then the woman who went to tell everyone what Jesus had done for her.

<sup>37</sup> *Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true.* <sup>38</sup> *I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.*" Jesus planted the seeds for a greater harvest when Philip, Peter, and John will go to Samaria after the ascension. (Acts 8:5-8) We often find the same is true for us. The average person that comes to Christ has had six or seven people that have sown and watered into their lives. If you are the fortunate last person to come along and be there right when the ripe fruit drops, remember the efforts of those who have gone before you and done the hard work. The Apostle Paul reminds us that even though we sow and water, it is God that makes things grow. (1 Corinthians 3:7) We are invited to participate in the work of God, but all the glory goes to Him.

<sup>39</sup> *Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did."* The woman's testimony helped people to have faith that Jesus was the Messiah. You might think that God can't use you because of your sinful life. I thought that, but that implies that we think we have something to do with it. But you see, it's all God. He uses the worst, the Apostle Paul Christian killers, and the people that have messed their lives up with drugs and all kinds of losers. (1 Corinthians 1:26-27) Why? So He can reveal His grace and power. Then the glory goes where it belongs. Their testimony is so effective because there is such a radical change. We would write those type of people off, but Jesus never does. And as Jesus said to the Pharisee, the one who is forgiven much loves much. (Luke 7:47) When you realize to a greater extent the destruction and deception you were saved from, you appreciate salvation all the more.

Would you have picked the Samaritan woman to be an inroad into the town of Sychar? She's probably the last person we would pick. God's ways aren't man's ways. (Isaiah 55:8) Jesus faithfulness to obey the Holy Spirit and see what God sees led not only to her turn around but also to that of a whole town. It starts with one person. You never know what the effect will be from one person with whom you share.

<sup>40</sup> *So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days.* <sup>41</sup> *And because of his words many more became believers.* They had been longing for a Messiah teacher. Now that they had found Him, they wanted Him to stay. As He shared with them, many others believed. Those two days of teaching must have been very profound. This town seems to be the first group to really come to understand Jesus' sacrifice and gift to the world.

**Commented [notes15]:** 5 Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there.  
6 When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said.  
7 With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed.  
8 So there was great joy in that city.  
Acts 8:5-8 (NIV)

**Commented [notes16]:** 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.  
1 Cor 3:7 (NIV)

**Commented [notes17]:** 26 Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.  
27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.  
1 Cor 1:26-27 (NIV)

**Commented [notes18]:** 47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."  
Luke 7:47 (NIV)

**Commented [notes19]:** 8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD.  
Isaiah 55:8 (NIV)

*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."* That is where we must all come to in our spiritual life. You can't believe just because of what I tell you. It may draw you to Jesus, but you must hear from Him yourself. Our faith can take others to Jesus, but it can't make them believe. Each individual must have a personal encounter with Jesus and be able to say with the Samaritans, "I know this man really is the Savior of the world." (John 1:12)

**Commented [notes20]:** 12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- John 1:12 (NIV)

The people of Sychar are the first to understand that Jesus is the Savior of the world. Who would have thought that these despised people would be the first to know Jesus had come for all people. Again, God works in unexpected ways. And doesn't this remind us that we can never be too bad for Jesus, only too good? Jesus goes to the rejects as well as the elites. He loves the world. (John 3:16)

**Commented [notes21]:** 16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16 (NIV)

It's amazing that the disciples were there with Jesus and yet they didn't seem to understand Jesus is the Savior of the world until after the resurrection. Culture and teaching had inoculated them from being able to hear what the Samaritans heard and understood. No wonder Jesus used a Samaritan man in the story explaining who is my neighbor. (Luke 10:33)

**Commented [notes22]:** 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. Luke 10:33 (NIV)

Jesus is doing what He is going to ask the disciples to do. He has gone first to Jerusalem, to the Passover, and revealed His glory in miracles. Then to Judea and offered the baptism of repentance. Now He has gone to the Samaritans. During the last year of His ministry He will reach out to the Gentiles. As He ascended into heaven He told His disciples to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth. (Acts 1:8) That is exactly what He modeled for them and for us! He only asks us to do what He demonstrated for us.

**Commented [notes23]:** 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8 (NIV)

The harvest is white and ready. May God give us eyes to see as He sees and the direction of the Holy Spirit as we speak to the lost!

Are you hungry? There is real food, the richest of fare. It's the kind of food that will make everything else seem insignificant, but you must take up your cross and follow Jesus. He won't force it on you, but it is there for you if you'll come to Him. (Matthew 16:24) Come see a man who knows everything you've ever done.

**Commented [notes24]:** 24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Matt 16:24 (NIV)