

**The Word Became Flesh**  
**Week 10**  
**John 4:27-42**  
**“Priorities”**

**Introduction**

**One who watches the wind will not sow, and the one who looks at the clouds will not reap.** **Ecclesiastes 11:4**

As I studied this passage in preparation for the message this week, I became increasingly aware of just how many incredible truths that I had previously missed in this story. I mean, we all know about the sinful Samaritan woman and her encounter with Jesus at Jacob's well. We all know how she returned to her village of Sychar and spread the news that Messiah had come to their town. But there are so many other valuable lessons here, for each and every believer, “hidden in plain sight” that we should see.

Truth is like that sometimes. Most of us have heard this old saying many times over: Don't miss the forest for the trees. But in reality, it is often so very easy to do. In **Ecclesiastes 11:14** (referenced above), Solomon reminds us to keep our eyes focused upon the task at hand. When we allow distractions to take away our focus on what truly matters, then we often leave the most important things undone. That being said, look at how the disciples of Jesus were so focused on buying provisions, that they forgot why they were in Samaria in the first place! They weren't there just to buy enough bread from the Samaritans in order to survive. They were there to introduce the Samaritans to the Bread of Life! Remember what Jesus said to Satan in the wilderness, when he tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread in order to satisfy His hunger? Quoting a verse from *Deuteronomy*, Jesus replied, **“Man does not live by bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of The LORD.”** We have all heard this before. But have you ever read that verse from **Deuteronomy 8:3** in its entire context? These words were originally spoken by Moses, who was explaining God's reasoning for leading his people into the wilderness. And he said:

**Carefully follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase, and may enter and take possession of the land The LORD swore to your ancestors. Remember that The LORD your God led you on the entire journey these forty years in the wilderness, so that He might humble you and test you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep His commands. He humbled you by letting you go hungry; then He gave you manna to eat, which you and your ancestors had not known, so that you might learn that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of The LORD.**

**Deuteronomy 8:1-3**

The lesson of this passage should be obvious. God has a purpose in everything that He does, in every place that He leads. And if we are not careful, we can miss out on the purpose by focusing only on the physical and not the spiritual. This was a problem for Nicodemus, who had trouble getting his mind off physical birth and seeing spiritual birth. It was a distraction for the Samaritan woman who struggled to distinguish between the water in Jacob's well and the living water that Jesus offered. And as we look closer at the rest of the story here today, we see Jesus' very own disciples having a tough time distinguishing between their physical hunger and the spiritual hunger of those all around them.

It is a good thing that we have The Word of God to help us to refocus, when our eyes are distracted from the things that truly matter. This is why it is SO important for God's people to spend time hearing the Word of The LORD. He always reminds us of the task at hand. As we study this passage and look closely at all of the things in this story that we have previously missed, it would be wise for us to reassess our own priorities. Look to this story and ask yourself this question this morning: What is the most important thing in my life? And then, make sure that your priorities are properly aligned with the priorities of our heavenly Father. Purposefully reread the conclusion of this Samaritan woman's journey of faith, and see: *The Surprise of The Disciples, The Sowers and The Reapers, and The Savior of The World.*

**The Surprise of The Disciples (vs. 27)**

**Just then His disciples arrived, and they were amazed that He was talking with a woman. Yet no one said, "What do you want?" Or "Why are you talking with her?"**

**John 4:27**

As I have said many times before, God will always take you out of your comfort zone when you begin to follow him! When the disciples returned from buying provisions, to the well where they had left Jesus, they were shocked to see Him speaking to a woman. And a Samaritan woman at that! I love what John says about it. They were all surprised, but not a one of them said a word about it out loud. Not a single inquiry was offered up. I suppose they were afraid of what Jesus would say to them. So, they remained silent. The thing is, you don't have to speak out loud for Jesus to hear you! He saw their judgmental glances and knew exactly what they were thinking.

We often look at others and think that they are beyond all hope of redemption. But when we do this, we are actually elevating ourselves to a level that we are unqualified to attain. Only God knows what is in a person's heart. And just as Jesus knew the thoughts of His followers, He also knew the heart of this Samaritan woman. And when He looked at her, as well as them, He saw something worth saving. He knew the disciples weren't perfect when He chose them, and He also knew that this Samaritan woman was sinful to her very core. **But it is those who are lost, that He came to save.** I think some of us mistakenly believe that we were not "as lost" as other people seem to be, but this is just our own sinful pride deceiving us into thinking that we are somehow "special". *The Bible* is clear on this. We are NOT.

**...There is no one righteous, not even one. There is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. ALL have turned away; all alike have become WORTHLESS. There is no one who does what is good, not even one. Their throat is an open grave; they deceive with their tongues. Viper's venom is under their lips. Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and wretchedness are in their paths, and the path of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.** **Romans 3:10b-18** (emphasis added)

The disciples may have thought that they were somehow more desirable than this poor Samaritan woman, but in truth they were altogether just like her. They were all sinners in need of a Savior. Jesus sent them into town to buy food, so that He could be left alone at Jacob's well to offer living water to yet another lost soul. She was no more or less deserving of salvation than any other who places their faith in Jesus. We would all do well to remember our place, all the while being filled with gratitude for the undeserved grace that we have received in Christ Jesus! Amen.

**The Sowers and Reapers (vs. 28-38)**

**Then the woman left her water jar, went into town, and told the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" They left the town and made their way to Him.**

**In the meantime the disciples kept urging Him, "Rabbi, eat something." But He said, "I have food to eat that you don't know about." The disciples said to one another, "Could someone have brought Him something to eat?" "My food is to do the will of Him Who sent Me and to finish His work," Jesus told them. "Don't you say, 'There are still four more months, and then comes the harvest'? Listen to what I'm telling you: Open your eyes and look at the fields, because they are ready for harvest. The reaper is already receiving pay and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together. For in this case the saying is true: One sows and another reaps. I sent you to reap what you didn't labor for; others have labored, and you have benefited from their labor."**

**John 4:28-38**

So many theologians have weighed in on why the woman ran off and left her water jar. Some have said that she left it so that Jesus could use it. I sincerely doubt that this woman, upon realizing that she was face to face with the long awaited Messiah, didn't draw water for Him! So that particular theory is of no value. Others have speculated that she left her jar when she saw the disciples returning so that they could drink as well. And while this may be "part" of the reason, I do not believe that it is completely accurate.

Those of us who grew up on a farm and ever had to carry buckets of water to the livestock will tell you why she left her water jar. Because it is nearly impossible to run while carrying a bucket of water! This woman had just had an encounter with the greatest person who ever walked this earth. And she could not wait to run and tell everyone she knew. She wanted to make sure that the people in her town met the Christ, before He moved on to another place. To her, this was far more urgent than any other chores she had to do that day. She ran to town and left behind anything that would hinder her message.

And as we read the text carefully, we see what She and The Savior had in common that day. He refused to eat the food that His disciples brought back from the town, for He too was far more concerned with reaching the lost with His message of grace, than with any physical necessities. Who could eat at a time like this? Souls were being saved! The disciples, who saw themselves as superior to this Samaritan woman, returned with daily bread, while she was running to her village to share The Bread of Life! Now I ask you, in this moment in time, who was more like Christ? She was! She refused to take the time to carry her water back to town, and He refused to shift His focus upon anything other than the most important task at hand. Namely the harvest.

If Jesus words to His disciples are to be taken literally, and it was indeed four months time until the harvest, then this event would have taken place sometime around the middle of December. Some have argued that Jesus was actually quoting a familiar Greek proverb regarding the harvest and the limited time left for the work to be done. Either way, the message remains the same. In the farming community where I grew up, there was a saying that goes, "We need to make hay while the sun is shining." Which simply means that the work needs to get done, before it's too late. This is exactly what Jesus is telling His disciples in this passage. They needed to shift their priorities. They were so worried about being Jews traveling through Samaritan territory, dealing with the Samaritan merchants to buy food, and having enough provisions for their journey, that they had missed the reason they were there in the first place!

As Jesus looked up and saw the large group of Samaritans coming from the village, He must have pointed them out to His disciples and got them to see why they were there. The harvest was coming in right before their very eyes, and they had not even noticed! I just love how He told them that they were about to receive a harvest that they had not even worked for! For you see, The Samaritan woman had already known that the Messiah would one day come. She knew this from reading the words of the prophets such as Moses. In that regard, the "seeds" of Jesus coming had already been planted by those men of God from ages past. And then Jesus came and revealed Himself to her, and she believed!

As a result of her new found faith, she went out and told several others of her encounter with the Messiah. And now, here she was, a sinner saved by grace, helping to bring in the harvest. The disciples had gone to the very same village and brought back food, but she was bringing back lost souls. No doubt the disciples of Jesus would help to minister to these people when they arrived at the well, but up until that moment in time, they had done absolutely nothing. They were about to help with the gathering of a harvest that had been sown by others. In fact, just a few moments earlier they hadn't even known there was a crop to be harvested! But God had planned for this particular harvest for centuries. Our God is an awesome God!

It is important for us to understand that God doesn't need our help to get His work done. The disciples hadn't won a single soul in Samaria that day, but God used someone that none of them would have ever expected He could use! You don't have to be the most talented, or even the most popular person in the world to share the gospel. You just have to believe and be changed by it. You have to be willing to be used, and you have to be willing to drop your "water jar" (set aside the things that are hindering you) and run to reach the lost. The Samaritan woman went from sinful outcast, to soul-winner after just one encounter with Christ. You might say that she had been "reborn". For that is **exactly** what had happened to her.

**The Savior of The World (vs. 39-42)**

**Now many Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of what the woman said when she testified. "He told me everything I ever did." So when the Samaritans came to Him, they asked Him to stay with them, and He stayed there two more days. Many more believed because of what He said. And they told the woman, "We no longer believe because of what you said, since we have heard for ourselves and know that this is really the Savior of the world."** **John 4:39-42**

There is just so much to love about this passage. First of all, I love the way that she shares her story with them. "He told me everything I ever did." She told them. If we read closely we also see that after she told them her story, she followed up with, "Could this be the Messiah?" I think this statement is very telling. The reason being was that we know that she had already believed in Jesus as the Messiah. In fact, we know this because he plainly told her that He was. Remember what He said when she had brought up the Messiah to Him earlier?

**Jesus told her, "I the one speaking to you, AM He."**

**John 4:26**

So we can be sure without a doubt that she believed in Him. So why does she ask the people of the village, "Could this be the Messiah?" I believe that there is a powerful spiritual reason for this. For you see, it doesn't matter what I believe about Jesus. You cannot be saved based upon what others believe. You can only be saved by believing for yourself! So the question shall always be, in regards to salvation, what Jesus one day said to His very own disciples.

**"But you", He asked them, "Who do YOU say that I AM?"**

**Matthew 16:15**  
(emphasis added)

John tells us that many believed because of the Samaritan woman's testimony (**vs. 39**). And then she brought them to the well to meet The Savior himself. After they encountered Him face to face, they believed in Him completely. And as a result, they invited Jesus to stay with them. The disciples had mistakenly believed that they were just passing through this place on the way to another, but now they knew differently. Samaria **was** a mission field, and the harvest was plentiful! John goes on to say that many believed in Jesus, because of the woman's witness of Him. But many more believed when they heard the words of Jesus for themselves.

**So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ.** **Romans 10:17**

The most wonderful part of this story, in my opinion, is the final testimony of the Samaritans.

**... "We no longer believe because of what you said, since we have heard for ourselves and KNOW that this really is the Savior of the world."** **John 4:42b**

And why is this statement so important? Because they understood fully what Christ's coming to Samaria truly meant. For no "religious" Jew would ever have dared to come to that place. But God sent His Son there. Why? Because God so loved... THE WORLD! And these born again Samaritans were living proof! Aren't you thankful that God's arms of love reached farther than anyone had ever expected? And the good news is that they are still reaching out today. So share the message of the gospel while there is still time. Make hay while the sun shines! Don't get so distracted by the things of this world that you miss what truly matters. Look around and see that the harvest is all around you!

And let the sowers and reapers all say... TRUTH!!!