

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 time we studied how Jesus helped a Samaritan woman who was a thirsty soul, wounded and ostracized. Jesus helped her spiritually by humbly asking her a favor, "Will you give me a drink?" At last, the Samaritan woman asked Jesus to give her a spring of water welling up to eternal life (15). Finally, Jesus helped her open her spiritual eyes to see Jesus as the Messiah (26). Today's passage tells us the result of Jesus' labor of love for the Samaritan woman. It is easy to work in a factory or in some office of a company. But it is not easy to labor in love, because it requires divine love for the sake of serving a thirsty soul. Let's see what was the result of Jesus' labor of love for the Samaritan woman.

#### I. The disciples' exasperation (27-30)

First, Jesus' disciples were surprised but did not say anything (27). Jesus is the Creator God, and in him there are no barriers. So he did not mind going through Samaria (4). In Judea, Jesus' conduct would have awakened no surprise. But Jesus' going through Samaria could have kindled controversy if the Jews had known about it, because the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. Ever since the Assyrians had invaded Samaria and made them intermarry, the Samaritans became the ten lost tribes.

The disciples followed Jesus to Samaria. But we can guess that their inner feelings were not delightful to pass through Samaria. For example, once Jesus' disciples were passing through Samaria. But the Samaritans did not welcome Jesus and his company, perceiving that Jesus would go to Jerusalem to suffer and be rejected by the Jews. Then John asked Jesus, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven and destroy them?" (Lk 9:54). Jesus' disciples had a strong sentiment toward Samaritans. After a long journey, they came to Sychar, Samaria, and it was noon. They had no food to eat. The disciples could not overcome their hungry feeling. With no choice, they went out into the Samaritan villages to buy some food, despite their sentiment toward the Samaritans. Their buying food in Samaria looked as if the disciples were a bunch of beggars. However, they did their best and got some food. So they came back to their Master Jesus with joy. They were happy to share food with Jesus. But they saw that Jesus was talking with a Samaritan woman. Surely they marvelled at the scene. Maybe they were rather exasperated by the scene. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?" (27) They did not say anything to Jesus, because they had an awesome respect for their Master Jesus. So they did not argue with Jesus. The disciples knew that arguing with their Master in ignorance was a sign of arrogance and rebelliousness. It is obvious that there was a spiritual order between Jesus and his disciples. They also had a right attitude toward their Master. At that time, his disciples were spiritually immature. But they had a moral

standard.

Someone happened to watch a WBA championship boxing match, in the featherweight division, held in Argentina. It was a vacant championship match. Ranking number one was a young man from Argentina. Ranking number two was a young man from Korea. The Korean boxer won the championship by way of knockout. What he did first was to find his coach and bow down his head to the canvas. People were amazed at his respect for his coach, more than his one-sided victory from the beginning to the end. It looked funny to modern people's eyes. But his respect for his coach moved even Argentine people, and he was greatly admired. Likewise, Jesus' disciples had a tremendous respect for their Master, to the degree that they shut their mouths out of reverence for their Master. People insult and curse one another, because they have no reverence for God.

Second, the Samaritan woman's evangelism (28-30). No sooner did Jesus' disciples arrive with some food which they had earned in Samaritan villages than the Samaritan woman, who was talking with Jesus, left her water jar and ran away to her hometown. The disciples were even more surprised. But in truth, she went to her hometown to tell about Jesus. She said, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" (29) When Jesus gave her living water welling up to eternal life, she was indeed happy and free. She felt that the heavenly sunshine smeared into her soul.

Her joy of drinking the living water affected a lot in her change. In the first place, she left her water jar. The water jar was the necessities of her life. So she could not just leave it behind. But she forgot about the water jar. This shows that she is no more thirsty. This shows that she drank living water welling up to eternal life from Jesus. It is surprising that such a wretchedly unhappy woman became so happy.

In the second place, living water welling up to eternal life changed her from the most despised Samaritan woman to a woman of God. In the past, she was too feeble to go to the well to draw water. But now she is full of strength to run to her townspeople. As we know, she was disparaged and ostracized. As a result, she could not associate with the same Samaritan women in her village. But she is now full of spirit to go back to her townspeople. When she drank the living water welling up to eternal life, she was free indeed. John 8:32 says, "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." We want freedom. The living water welling up to eternal life made her overcome all her sensitivity, fatalism, egoism, and her bondage of sins.

In the third place, she was compelled to evangelize her townspeople. When she went to her townspeople, she said in verse 29, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" She was free to confess her past sins. When we study history, we learn that the cowards are hypocrites who wanted to cover their sins. Truly great people are those who confess their sins before God and live a new life. David was a great man. He didn't have to confess his sin, because he was a king. But he confessed his sin before God (Ps 51). In the end, he became the root of Christ Jesus. St. Paul is great, not because of his great achievements, but because he knew God's grace. 1 Timothy 1:15

says, "Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst." When Paul confessed that he was the worst sinner, he knew the grace of God from his heart. 1 Corinthians 15:10 says, "But by the grace of God I am what I am...." In the past, the Samaritan woman was withdrawn into herself because of her sin. She was also tormented by Satan. She was condemned by others, and she condemned herself. But now she is indeed free since she drank the living water welling up to eternal life.

## II. "Open your eyes and look at the fields!" (31-38)

First, "they are ripe for harvest" (31-35). Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something" (31). Look at verse 32. "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?" (33) Probably, they wondered if the Samaritan woman had brought some food. But their guess was wrong. Look at verse 34. "'My food,' said Jesus, 'is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.'" Jesus expresses here his sense of mission. Eating is the sustenance of human life. When a man does not eat, he dies. Likewise, to Jesus, to do the will of God by feeding a sheep was more important than his life itself. Praise Jesus!

At the time, there were four months more to the harvest. Jesus said in the last part of verse 35, "I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest." Here we learn two things. Firstly, Jesus' compassion for the Samaritan woman. Jesus saw that the Samaritan woman drank the living water welling up to eternal life and she leapt for joy. Then Jesus' heart went out for all the Samaritan women of the world. Jesus wanted to harvest all the Samaritan women of the world and make them happy. Secondly, she was just like wild American Samaritan women. In the first part of John 4, Jesus was scratched by the Samaritan woman three times. The first time was when she said, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman" (9). The second time was when she said, "You have no bucket" (11). The third time was when she said, "Are you greater than my father Jacob?" (12) But Jesus patiently endured the pain of being scratched. Jesus helped her to drink the living water and open her spiritual eyes to see that Jesus is the Messiah. Spiritual harvesting is not easy. Yet Jesus saw that there are so many Samaritan women, like crops ripe for harvest, who should be harvested.

Second, Jesus' vision (35). Jesus had a hard time to evangelize the Samaritan woman. But he was very happy when she accepted the Messiah and ran to her townspeople to talk about what Jesus has done for her. This Samaritan woman was probably a middle-aged woman. She must have had traces of beauty, even though she was getting old, because she had married five men and now she had a boy roommate. But this one Samaritan woman was evangelized and became a missionary to her townspeople. What did Jesus see through this event? He saw a vision. Jesus believed that through one-to-one Bible study with a Samaritan woman, he could evangelize all the Samaritan women of the world. Here we see how great Jesus' vision was. Through this one Samaritan woman's conversion, Jesus was overjoyed, hoping that all the Samaritan women in the world would be raised as mothers of prayer and missionaries.

Third, Jesus urges them to participate in harvesting (36-38). Look at verse 36. "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." In the ancient times, the harvest was a time of joy among all nations. Isaiah 9:3 says, "You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder." In verse 36, Jesus is saying that the harvesters of eternal life are very important, and they are most precious. They receive God's reward, as a reaper draws his wages. Look at verse 37. "Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true." This verse tells us how God works in the harvest of lost souls. We think we can evangelize many people. But God's work cannot be done all by oneself. Even Jesus alluded that the Samaritan woman's conversion was extended from others' labor of love. Through this verse, Jesus encourages that his disciples should be the harvesters of lost souls (36).

Read verses 37-38. Jesus alluded in these verses that John the Baptist was his co-harvester. He sowed the seed of the gospel before the coming of Christ through his message of the baptism of repentance. Now Jesus wants his disciples to work hard as John the Baptist did. Jesus also teaches them a sense of history. God spread the seeds for the harvest, beginning with Abraham, and next, through many prophets, all the way until John the Baptist. The spiritual harvest is God's work. Throughout history there have always been Samaritan men and women. But we must not lose heart. Instead, we must endeavor to harvest many Samaritan men and women. It is not necessary to be scared away from Samaritan women. We are not scared when we see the Samaritan women's inner persons. We must see them as lost souls. We must help them open their spiritual eyes and see the Messiah.

### III. Samaritan evangelism (39-42)

First, the Samaritan woman's evangelism (39-41). Look at verse 39. "Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony." It is amazing that though this Samaritan woman was once the object of contempt, now when she talked about Jesus, even the Samaritans believed in Jesus through her testimony. So the Samaritans decided to invite Jesus to come and stay with them. And Jesus stayed two days. Because of Jesus' words, many more became believers. Her townspeople wanted to believe the Messiah and drink the living water welling up to eternal life as the Samaritan woman did. This is a principle in evangelizing others. This is possible when we know that we are sinners, but by the grace of God we are what we are. We must show others that we are changed people in Jesus.

Second, personal faith (42). 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 believed that Jesus is the Messiah because of the Samaritan woman's testimony. But after studying the Bible with Jesus, they could have personal faith. At first, they had group faith. But now they have personal faith through the word of God. This is very important. Faith is very personal. We must all go to heaven. By a husband's faith, his wife cannot go to heaven. Even though they were

Samaritans, they became the people of God by hearing Jesus' words. Here we remember John Knox (1515-1572). He was born in Scotland. At that time, Scotland was under the influence of the state church of England and the Catholic Church. He was confused what to believe. So he studied the Bible diligently. When he had questions, he went to Geneva to talk with John Calvin and solved all his questions. He went to Geneva many times to learn something from Calvin. Thus he became an ancestor of the Puritans. His personal faith became so influential that he could dethrone the Queen of Scotland of the time. If one has a personal faith, a great awakening always happens.

Today we see Jesus' vision. When one Samaritan woman was converted, Jesus saw the vision to evangelize the whole world. May God grant us God's vision.