

THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD

John 4:31-42
Key Verse: 4:42

Lesson #10

The Samaritans of the village of Sychar were a despised people. No one expected them to believe and receive Jesus. But when Jesus passed through their country, something happened. Jesus humbled himself and asked a drink of water from one woman who was even more despised than the Samaritan villagers. She talked with Jesus and received the water of eternal life from him. She accepted him as the Messiah, and she rushed back to her village to tell the good news. They despised the woman, but they could see that something had happened in her life. So they came out of the town and made their way toward Jesus.

1. Look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest

The disciples returned from the town with the food they had bought. They didn't dare ask Jesus why he was talking with that kind of woman. They were surprised that he was no longer hungry or tired. Jesus taught them about the harvest field of the world. He could see a possibility in one changed woman. He could see a whole village, and beyond that, the whole world coming back to God. Then, they looked up and saw the people of the village coming out to them. Jesus told his disciples, "I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests for eternal life." The woman had sowed the seed. Even before she had told them about Jesus, they had read the Old Testament prophets and they knew that Messiah was coming. The seed that had been sown was ready for harvest.

2. The Samaritans who received the word (39-42)

"Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I ever did.'" (39) The Samaritans believed the woman's testimony. The Samaritan woman met Jesus at the well. She was a spiritually thirsty woman. When Jesus offered her the living water, she could accept it. The thing that convinced the woman that Jesus was the Messiah and her Savior was not their theological discussion about worship. It was his real and personal interest in her, his love for her. He knew all about her personal life--a sordid record of failure--but he accepted her and revealed himself to her and drew her to God. She left her water jar and went back to the village and told the people there, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"

The people of Sychar despised her and looked down on her, but they

recognized the sincerity of her testimony; they did not just accept her words as information. They received her words in their hearts and acted on them. They left their work and came out to see Jesus.

The content of the woman's testimony was not sufficient to build faith, so they asked Jesus to stay with them they began to study the Bible for themselves. Our first step to Jesus often begins when we recognize the sincerity of a friend who has been changed by Jesus. But this is not enough. We must come to Jesus and learn for ourselves.

Verse 41 says, "And because of his words many more became believers." Jesus accepted their urgent invitation and stayed with them two more days. They spent time with Jesus. They received his words, not with only their minds, but with their hearts. They came to believe in Jesus for themselves, based on their personal investigation of his word. They told 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."

Jesus is the Savior of the world. He is not only the Savior and Shepherd of the Jews; he came for the Samaritans and for all the people of the world. The Samaritans made this confession because they accepted Jesus as their Savior. Even the proud Jews who despised them could not keep them away from God because they found the way to the Father through Jesus the Son. Someday Jesus' disciples would realize the significance of the Samaritan confession and they would accept his command to go to the ends of the earth with the Gospel.

May all of us come to Jesus and meet him for ourselves through prayerful and repentant personal Bible study.