

John 4:27-42

II. Jesus Reveals Himself to the World (1:19-12:50)

F. John the Baptizer's Farewell (3:22-36)

G. The Second Discourse – The Water of Life, Part One (4:1-26)

The Second Discourse – The Water of Life, Part Two (4:27-42)

At this point in Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well, His disciples had returned from *the city to buy food* (v. 7). Upon their return, they *marveled that He talked with a woman* (v. 27), but no one spoke up to question him. Their astonishment was similar to that of the woman herself, as we saw last week (v. 9). Not only would a Jewish man avoid speaking to a woman in public, but here He is, a Jewish man, speaking to a Samaritan woman! The reactions show that Jesus was going against the grain when it came to social customs and norms. Jesus' interactions with women foreshadowed what Paul would write in Galatians 3:28:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

All of the classifications dissolve away in Christ. That doesn't mean that there still aren't differences in this world, but when it comes to equality in the eyes of God, there's no social hierarchy in the Church! This mindset shift began in the ministry of Jesus itself.

The disciples having arrived, the woman *went her way into the city* (v. 28). John even mentions how she *left her waterpot!* It's like she forgot the reason why she was out and about to begin with; she may have stumbled upon the Messiah! The men of the city *went out. . . and came to Him* (v. 30).

While the woman was in Sychar gathering men, the disciples urged Jesus to eat. After all, they just came from the city, having bought food! But Jesus, for His part, seemed content to continue His metaphor about living water to drink, this time telling His disciples, *I have food to eat of which you do not know* (v. 32). While His disciples wondered where this food came from and, if He had food, why He'd send them into town to find food, *Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work"* (v. 34).

Yet, just as He was speaking of figurative water (i.e., the washing and regenerating work of the Holy Spirit), so also He is speaking of figurative food: the fields are *white for harvest* (v. 35). He's not talking about wheat or barley or other grains, He's speaking of a harvest of people who will hear and believe the Gospel. This harvest is most immediately seen in the number of Samaritans who *believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified* (v. 39). When Jesus stayed in the city another two days at their request, *many more believed because of His own word* (v. 41).¹ These Samaritan men said to the women: *We ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world* (v. 42). That's a ripe harvest! The grain was fully developed and ready to be brought in from the field!

Before we end for the morning, though, let's take a further look at vv. 36-38:

And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent

¹Again, these Samaritans are now inviting a Jewish man to remain with them!

you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.”

Later in the New Testament, we read Paul echoing Jesus’ words in 1 Corinthians 3:5-11.

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

As Jesus sent out His disciples to harvest the spiritual grain, so also He intends for us to do some farming of our own as the Church today. It would be wise of us to focus on our faithfulness to what the Lord has entrusted to us, rather than the results of our ministry (or perhaps the lack thereof). God gives the increase. It is the message of Jesus and the conviction of the Holy Spirit that produces the fruit of belief and eternal life, not our persuasiveness. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, we won’t be evaluated for how much wheat we harvested; rather, for how faithful we were to the tasks which the Lord has given to us.