

Topic	The Lord Of The Harvest
Reference	John 4:25 – 42
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BACKGROUND:

Jesus and his disciples had been in Judea and they were heading north to Galilee and the scripture says, **Jesus must go through Samaria** and as they went through Samaria, is about noon, very hot, as they were approaching the village, they saw well outside the village. So Jesus sat down at the well and the disciples went on into town to buy some food. Pretty soon a lady from that village came to the well and when Jesus saw her he said, “would you please give me some water to drink.” She was startled, she said how is it that you a Jewish person is asking me, a Samaritan woman for water.

Jews and Samaritans had nothing to do with each other and they definitely would not share utensils or drink from the same cups. Jesus replied and he said, “if you knew who it was who was asking you for water you would ask him and he would give you living water.” The lady didn’t understand and she said, how can you give me water, you don’t have anything to draw to water with. Do you think that you are greater than our ancestor Jacob is, who gave us this water?”

Jesus said, if you drink of this water again you will get thirsty again, but he who drinks of the water that I give will never thirst again, but that water will well up into eternal life. The woman said, I would like some of that, give me that water and Jesus said, well first go into the village and bring your husband back. The woman said, I don’t have a husband. Jesus said, you have said correctly, you’ve had five husbands and the man you are living with now is not your husband. The woman said, well sir I perceive I recognize that you must be a prophet, tell me our ancestor say, we should worship God on this mountain right over here but you Jews say, we should worship God in Jerusalem, which is right and Jesus told her, the time is coming and already is here that we will not worship as a center of our worship either on this mountain or in Jerusalem but we will be worshipping God in spirit and truth because God is spirit and those that worship him will worship in Spirit and Truth.

The lady said, well I know the Messiah is coming and when he comes he will explain everything to us, to which Jesus then replied I am the Messiah. And about that time the disciples came back, they have brought food but Jesus wasn’t interested. The disciples didn’t say anything but they were wondering why in the world is Jesus talking with that woman. The lady went in, she told the people about Jesus and then when Jesus started talking to his disciples, he started talking to them about spiritual food he had, food to do the will of God and complete the task.

And then Jesus changed his metaphors again, he had spoken about water in a figurative sense. Then he has spoken about food in a spiritual sense and now he is going to talk about the harvest and we need to understand that this is also a metaphor, it is not literally going out into

the palm tree plantations or the rubber plantations in working, we are going to be talking about going into the harvest fields today and just like Jesus using the metaphor, he is talking about going into the world, going to where the people are, especially going to where people are that don't know Jesus and then working in those fields, sowing the seed of sharing the gospel, harvesting the crop when people express interest and want to repent and place their faith in Christ and acknowledge him as the rightful Lord of their life.

The title 'Lord of the Harvest' was given to Jesus in Gospel of Matthews.

*When Jesus saw the crowds, he had **compassion** for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The **harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.**" Matthew 9: 36-38*

Then we see the same title again in Luke and evidently the disciples had already prayed that the Lord would send out more harvesters because that has exactly what happened. We see that Jesus sent out 72 others but again telling them, pray that the Lord of the harvest will send out more laborers because the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. They needed more and that's true today, the Lord of the Harvest is wanting to send us into the fields. We are going to talk about that, but before we talk about the Lord of the harvest sending us into the fields to work, I want us to look to see first of all how the Lord of the Harvest is equipping us in order that we will be ready and able to go into the fields.

The first thing that we will see is that,

- 1. equips us (shows us how) to work in the fields**
- a. Place priority on doing God's will, finishing His work.**

He shows us how to place the highest priority on doing God's will, place a high priority on finishing the work that God has given us, on doing the task of sharing the gospel and making disciples of all people. When physical food was given to Jesus, he was not interested he said, I have food to eat that you don't know about know.

*John 4:31 Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." 32 But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." 33 So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?" 34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to **do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.***

Jesus priority in life was to do the will of God, to complete the God given mission that he had. Now Jesus life is ultimately culminated in the crucifixion as he gave his life as a sacrifice for sin and then the resurrection. At this particular point in Jesus's ministry, the task Jesus had at that moment was to sow the seed and harvest the seed. Jesus was in a mission field, in Samaria and

there were people, they are hungry for the gospel and it was God's will for him to talk to this woman that was at the well and it was God's will for him to then also share with all the people of that village, his food was to bring in the harvest.

Jesus wants us to partake of the same food. He wants us to know and to do the will of God. He has given us the task of the Great Commission, making disciples of all people and he wants us to finish that task, be faithful doing that task that he has given to us. So he models for us, how we can place priority in our lives on knowing and doing God's will and this is a result of true worship. When you truly worship God, the result of this worship will be that you will be involved in evangelism and mission, you will be going into the harvest field. If we submit ourselves to the lordship of Christ, who is the Lord of the Harvest, of course we are going to be involved with him in the harvest field. So Jesus models for us rightly placed priorities of doing God's will.

b. Be Intentional

We see this when we go back to verse 4 in the text. The text says, Jesus must go through Samaria. It was **necessary**, he had to pass through Samaria. Now this was not a geographical necessity. There were other routes he could have taken, but this must have been a spiritual necessity. Going through Samaria was something he knew he should do, he ought to do, he wanted to do because he knew that's the way God was leading him. Now many people will point out that when Jewish people went from the southern part of Judea up to the Northern part of Galilee that the shortest route would be going right through the middle of Samaria, but many good Jews would refuse to go through Samaria, especially the pious religious people because the Samaritans to them were unclean. So instead they would take a different route which is bigger. So when Jesus went straight on, he was going purposely on a route that many people of his day would have purposely avoided, but as one commentator pointed out, we don't know really where Jesus was, the direct route through Samaria would be direct only if you were in the middle of Judaea, the Jordan River was on the right and we know that right before Jesus went north to Galilee that he had been baptizing people. We don't know where he was baptizing but if he was baptizing on the Jordan River, the shortest route would have been to just go ahead and cross the Jordan, stay in the Jordan Valley, head north and then cut over to Cana of Galilee where he ended up. So if that was the case, if he was already on the Jordan River, he went out of his way, he added extra kilometers to a strip in order that he could go through Samaria. So either way, you want to look at it, Jesus was intentional with the route that he chose. He chose a route that purposely ignored the way most pious Jews would have gone or if he had already on the Jordan he purposely took a route that added extra time to his trip in order that he could go. Jesus had a divine appointment and he was intentional in going through Samaria. Jesus wants us also to be intentional. He wants us with intent to look for divine appointments, to go out, see people that don't know Him, get into conversation, share with them.

It was necessary for Jesus to go through Samaria because Samaria was a mission field and the entire village was waiting to hear, it's necessary for us to be intentional in taking steps to be able to share the gospel with people around us, because we are in a huge mission field, many-

many-many people here need to hear the gospel. So Jesus shows us the importance of placing a high priority on doing God's will, which includes sharing the good news of the gospel with all peoples and he models for us being intentional in our witness even if it means going out of our way, taking intentional steps to share the gospel with those who otherwise might not hear.

c. Go outside of your "comfort zone".

Jesus models for us, how to go outside our comfort zone. Jesus went way out of what would have been the comfort zone for the Jewish people of his day. I am sure it was way outside the comfort zone of his disciples and when his disciples heard he was going through Samaria there is no reaction given in the Bible but just based on what we know about relations between Jews and Samaritans, the disciples were probably not too pleased with this particular choice of route and the fact that they had to go into a Samaritan village to get food, that wasn't nice either and then it got worse because at the end of the time there they had to spend two more days, way outside the comfort zone of the people in Jesus days. Not only did Jesus want his early disciples to go out of their comfort zone, he wants us to be willing to go out of our comfort zone, to be able to share with people that don't know.

Possibly one of the biggest hindrances to the spread of the gospel is so many Christians are just not willing to go outside of their comfort zone and the reality is most of the people around us are not like us. They are of different ethnic groups, different religious groups, different socioeconomic statuses and sometimes it is just not comfortable to go around people that are different from us, but that's what Jesus model, going outside of the comfort zone. We see people that are different from us and rather than seeing that as an opportunity we often see like "Uh! that we don't want to be around that kind of person" and the barriers that we have erected or the barriers that have been erected within our society that we have adopted, stand in the way, but look at Jesus example once again. The Samaritans and Jews, they hated each other, they had nothing to do with each other, they wouldn't drink or eat of the same utensils, they wouldn't even speak to each other, the Jewish people thought, we are a superior race, you folks are beneath us, we are better than you and they looked down their nose at the Samaritans and because the Samaritans were from a different ethnic, different racial or different religious group, they had nothing to do with them. Jesus crossed that barrier but there were more barriers he crossed, the lady was obviously a lady, a woman and in that day it was a cultural taboo for a Jewish man to speak with a woman in public. But Jesus knew she needed to hear. Not only was she a woman, she was a Samaritan woman. Now according to the Jewish rabbis, they taught that the Samaritan woman are unclean throughout their whole life, they don't have a chance and Jesus goes beyond that barrier.

So here we see Jesus crossing barriers that are cultural or religious, ethnic, he also crosses the barrier of social status. This woman was also a moral person, nobody had respect for her, so many barriers to cross, way outside the comfort zone of most people. That's why the disciples in verse 27 when they came back and saw Jesus talking to a Samaritan woman who probably had an immoral character, a lower social status, they were thinking to themselves, why in the world are you talking to her. We think sometimes the same way, how in the world can I talk to

somebody like that? Jesus helped his disciples to get out of their comfort zone and he will help us to move out of our comfort zone.

Jesus disciples had their first experience seeing Samaritans come to faith right now at this point. It is only a couple of years later, two or three years later Jesus is going to tell his disciples to go, be my witnesses to people like you in Jerusalem and Judea but also go to the Samaritans and Jesus already prepared his disciples, he enabled them to already learn how to go outside their comfort zone. Today's God's people need to be willing to cross cultural barriers, be willing to cross barriers between ethnicities and religions. The prejudices that we harbor we need to be able to cross those and that's one of the most difficult things for many Christians.

Almost every culture thinks that we are the superior race and I don't want anything to do with people different from me. Some people are so blinded by their prejudices that they just don't understand the heart of God, they are blinded to the truth, blinded to God's will. They don't see or maybe they refuse to see such a huge contraindication in their lives and their attitudes toward others, some people just don't let the gospel penetrate their heart and change their attitude and change their prejudices. Jesus is showing us that we need to be able to go past the cultural barriers and reject the cultural prejudices, that we whether through our own making or whether through the adopting of our societies prejudices, we need to be able to move pass those and Jesus models for us how we can do that.

There might be people group that you don't like, there might be certain types of people you would rather not associate with. If you don't want to associate with them, I guarantee you won't be sharing the gospel with them, but yet Jesus wants us to share the gospel with people even from groups that we don't like. Many times we feel we are superior than them but Jesus showed us by speaking to one of the lowest members of society in his days. God wants us to get to the point that we can see all people as people that he created in his image, people that he loves, people that he loves so much that he sent Jesus to die for them. To do God's will, to finish his task of making disciples of all peoples, we are going to have to take intentional steps to purposely go outside of our comfort zone.

d. *Take The Initiative.*

Jesus began the conversation humbly, politely, in a vulnerable position, needing some help, he started talking with the lady, just asking her for some water. We sometimes talk about small talk, just something to break the ice, just something to get a conversation started, just something to get a connection there and that's what we see Jesus do. It can be difficult to start a conversation with somebody you don't know, especially if that person is an introvert. Jesus not only took the initiative to get the conversation started, then even more importantly he took the initiative to bridge to a spiritual conversation. Now some of us are quite good at getting conversation started, but to get the conversation going onto spiritual things, that's where we have trouble.

It is very seldom that somebody will come to us and ask about Jesus, but if we take the initiative and bring it up some of those people with whom we talk are going to be glad that we did. Jesus wants us to take the initiative not just to get started but to get onto spiritual topics.

e. Be Persistent

It means don't give up too soon, don't give up too easily. Jesus could have given up right at the very beginning of the conversation with the lady, but he persisted with the talk and she came to faith. Be persistent in getting to the goal of helping people to understand who Jesus is, so they can come to faith.

2. ... SENDS US INTO THE FIELDS WITH A SENSE OF URGENCY

The Lord of the Harvest equips us in many ways because he models for us how to go into the harvest field and work and do the will of God who has sent us. Jesus is sending us into the harvest fields, most of us have heard the Great Commission, go make disciples of all peoples, we know that but it is not a matter of whether we know it, it is a matter of are we doing it. Many of us will say, well yeah I know what to do and I am going to do that someday, there is somebody at work that I am going to talk to about Christ someday. There is somebody in my neighborhood that I know I want to share with, I really want to share with and someday I am going to do that. To me someday never comes, so we see that Jesus is sending us out into the fields with a sense of urgency.

*John 4:35 Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, **lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.** 36 Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. 37 For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' **38 I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.**"*

This is urgent, open your eyes, look all around you and Jesus was telling his disciples, look and probably at that time some of the Samaritans who would heard the lady's testimony were already coming from the village and he looked out and he saw as they were coming, possibly some were wearing white turbans to protect their head from the heat of the sun and these white colours were coming, look there is a harvest field. He is telling us today, wake up, open your eyes, look around you, the people need to hear about Jesus. There is a mission field for us. We can fulfil the Great commission without ever leaving the valley. There are people from everywhere that are right here. The Lord of the harvest is calling us to go into the fields with a sense of urgency. In agricultural field, if you wait too long to bring in the harvest, you end up losing the harvest. There is no guarantee that we or them going to be around, so there is an urgency to utilize our time and share the gospel. Wake up, there is a sense of urgency.

Jesus when he sends us with this urgency, he is sending all of us, look at the lady she had no theological training, she had just met Jesus and yet with excitement she was ready to go and

tell other people, not only does he send all of his followers, all those who acknowledge him as Lord of the harvest but also he sends us to all people groups, no exceptions, you cannot rule out the Samaritans. We cannot rule out the people that we don't like.

When we are sent out, sometimes our job is to sow, sometimes our job is to reap. Many of us like reaping because it does bring joy to see somebody come to faith in Christ, but before somebody is going to come to faith in Christ they have got to hear and so the Lord is sending us into the harvest to both sow and to reap.

3. ... WORKS WITH US IN THE FIELDS!

Another thing that we see the Lord doing, we see that the Lord of the Harvest is going to work with us in the field. Now it is not stated in our text but we know from other scriptures that Jesus is with us. He sends us to make disciples of all people and he promises to be with us and the verse we just looked at a minute ago where he sends us to all peoples of the world, we are doing that with the power of the Holy Spirit and our text gives us a great example of how Jesus is working with us in the harvest.

John 4:28 So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, 29 "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?"

The result was

39 Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did."

That's what Jesus wants us to do. Go and tell people what Jesus has done for us and then invite them to come. When we look at the text we see that she did two things, share what Christ has done and then ask them to come and see Jesus and that's what God wants us to do, this is what Christ has done for me and let me tell you who He is, let me introduce you to him.

John 4:41 And many more believed because of his word. 42 They said to the woman, "It is no longer just because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."

It is not our job to save anybody, we have the same responsibility as the lady did, tell others what Jesus has done for us, invite them to come meet Jesus, sharing with them from the scripture, helping them to know Christ, but Jesus is the one who does the conversion, Jesus is the one who does the saving. When we point people to Christ he will reveal himself to them and he will show them their need for salvation and reveal their sin, reveal their need to repent and place their faith in him and to acknowledge him as the rightful Lord of their lives. So we go, we share what Christ has done, we point people to Jesus and Jesus works with us. He is the one who will draw people to faith.

4. ... REWARDS HIS WORKERS, BOTH SOWERS AND REAPERS

The first thing I want to point out is once again going back to the metaphor of food. He will give us from the food, the spiritual food that he has, food that nourishes, food that sustains, food that fulfills, food that brings joy. Other rewards that we receive treasures in heaven, eternal life, joy and the promise that there will be a harvest and we see all of that in this verse

4:36 Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together.

They are receiving eternal life, both eternity with God in heaven as well as a new quality of life now and there is joy. We have the promise that there will be harvest if seeds are sown abundantly. People are not going to come to faith, if they have never heard. Romans 10 tells us. How can they hear unless somebody tells them? But when seeds are sown in abundance like there will be some response. We have the promise of a harvest. How will you respond today? I would encourage you to respond to the lord of the harvest the same way the Samaritan woman did, leaving her water jug and going to tell people what Christ has done for her and inviting them to come and meet Jesus. I would encourage you to respond the way that Jesus modelled for us, as we place priority on doing his will, being intentional in our witness, going outside our comfort zone, taking the initiative and not giving up.