

12. Jesus Saw Many Believe in Him in Samaria

We saw in our last topic that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to give hope to those who feel that their lives have been such failures that no one would ever accept them or forgive them. Jesus helped the woman at the well realize that He knew all about her past and that He still accepted her. We saw that acceptance by Jesus changed the life of that woman. In our topic today, we will see how many others also had their lives changed when they met Jesus.

In our last topic, the disciples came back to Jesus while He was talking with a Samaritan woman from the city of Sychar. They did not say anything but just watched and listened as Jesus spoke to the woman. However, that changed quickly once the woman left to go back into the city. John 4:31-34 says, “In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, eat.’ But He said to them, ‘I have food to eat of which you do not know.’ Therefore the disciples said to one another, ‘Has anyone brought Him *anything* to eat?’ Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.’” The disciples immediately encouraged Jesus to eat the food that they had bought while they were in the city.

Instead of eating, Jesus made a very important statement to His disciples. Jesus said, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.” This immediately caused the disciples to begin to question one another. They wondered if someone else had brought Him food while they had been in the city buying food. Of course, the only thing that the disciples even thought about was the physical food that we eat. 1 Corinthians 2:13 says, “These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” The disciples had no idea that Jesus was actually trying to help them begin to compare spiritual things with spiritual.

Then, Jesus gave a second statement. He said, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.” Suddenly, the disciples were forced to realize that Jesus was not talking about physical food. Jesus had just said that His food was to do the will of the One who sent Him and that had nothing to do with eating physical food. The disciples had only been following Jesus for a short time. They had to learn to think in a whole new way. One of the first things that they had to learn was that the greatest concern of Jesus was always to do the will of His Father. Jesus would repeat that same thought to them many times in the coming months.

However, Jesus also added a second thing to that statement when He said “and to finish His work.” Here, we see that the Father had given Jesus a particular work to finish. The word translated “work” means *a business, that in which anyone is occupied, or that which a person undertakes to do*. This is not talking about the fact that Jesus would pay the penalty for sin on the cross. Jesus did not use this word in relation to His death on the cross. The last time this word is used by John is in the prayer of Jesus the night before He was crucified. John 17:4 says, “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.” The disciples did not understand what Jesus meant because they were His work. He had been sent to equip them to become reproducing disciples that would continue to reproduce until Jesus returns. In Acts 13:2, we see that Barnabas and Saul were sent out to do this same work. That verse says, “As they

ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’” In Acts 14:21, we read that they made many disciples. Then, in Acts 14:26, we read, “From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed.” In the same way, our work as Christians is to make disciples.

Jesus went on to help His disciples learn to see the spiritual harvest field. John 4:35-38 says, “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! 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 you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.” Here, we see that Jesus wanted to help His disciples learn to recognize that they were in a spiritual harvest field. They had gone into this Samaritan city and never saw the spiritual needs of the people there. They just bought some food and came back to Jesus. In the next group of verses, we will see that the woman went into the city and came probably less than an hour later with a large group of men that were looking for spiritual life.

That is why Jesus told the disciples to lift up their eyes and look so that they could begin to recognize the preparation that God does for a spiritual harvest. Jesus said that the fields were white for harvest. When a grain field is golden, the harvest is already ready. However, when a harvest field is white, the harvest is already ripe and must be gathered quickly or the grain will fall off the stocks and be lost. Jesus was saying that the spiritual harvest in this city must be gathered quickly before the present harvest was lost.

Then, Jesus explained why this harvest field was ready. First, Jesus explained that in a spiritual harvest both the sower and the reaper receive their wages from the Master. It is true that the one who reaps receives wages and does gather fruit for eternal life. However, the one who does the reaping is only a small part of the total work put into that harvest. Jesus said that both the one who sows and the one who reaps are able to rejoice together because they have both had a part in the harvest and both are promised a reward.

Second, Jesus explained that there had already been sowers. Mark 4:26-29 says, “And He said, ‘The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.’” The disciples were there with Jesus to see the harvest. However, Jesus said that others had already labored to sow the seed of the Word of God among the Samaritans. Now, the disciples were just being given the privilege of being there for the harvest time. Others had already worked and would receive their wages. The disciples were going to have the privilege of entering into the labors of others as they later shared with others about the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Third, the disciples were given the privilege to see how God had already prepared this harvest

field. John 4:39-42 says, “And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, ‘He told me all that I *ever* did.’ So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then, they said to the woman, ‘Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.’” The Samaritan woman had one message as she had gone into the city. John 4:29 says, “‘Come, see a Man who told me all things that I *ever* did. Could this be the Christ?’” We see the response of the Samaritans to the message of the woman.

In these verses, we see that many of the Samaritans believed in Jesus because of the saying of the woman. This woman had a past that was filled with pain to her human spirit. However, she met Jesus and He changed her future. We see that the first thing that happened in her life was that many of the Samaritans believed the saying of the woman and followed her out to the well to meet Jesus. These people did something that was very unusual for the Samaritans when they talked to Jews. They urged Jesus to stay with them for a few days so that they could learn more about Him. Jesus accepted their invitation and stayed in that city for two more days. During those two days, the disciples learned many things about a harvest field that is spiritually ripe.

Those two days also had a powerful impact on the people of the city. We see that many more people in that city believed as they heard Jesus speak to them. Romans 10:17 says, “So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” During those two days, the people of that city had the opportunity to hear the Word of God taught by the One who is the Word of God. They realized, as John 1:14 says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” We see the response of the people at the end of those two days of observing and hearing Jesus.

We see that many more people believed after they had heard the teaching of Jesus. John 4:42 says, “Then they said to the woman, ‘Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.’” The people of that city saw that Jesus was full of grace and truth. They saw the grace in His life. They heard and understood the Word of God as Jesus explained the Word to them. These Samaritans now knew for sure that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world. However, because they now believed, they also knew that He was their Savior. Jesus had healed the pain of the Samaritan woman and set her free from her past. Then, He had done the same thing for many other people in that city. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to clearly share that message of liberty. Galatians 5:13 says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to share that same message with others so that their lives can be set free also.