

John 4: 27-54

Well, Jesus and His disciples were making the long trek from Judea to Galilee. In Judea, His disciples had baptized a great crowd of eager followers, but He had left all that behind.

Yes, because of a perceived rivalry between Himself and John, they could no longer work together, so Jesus moved on.

Would Galilee be as fertile a mission field as Judea?

Probably not.

Even though His popularity had improved, it was doubtful that it would ever measure up to Judea.

You see, Jesus was going back home.

He was returning to His own country, and as
He once said, "**a prophet hath no honour
in his own country.**"

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However, He wasn't there yet, and He had
other business to attend to along the
way.

Yes, even though the Samaritans were not
God's Chosen People, His light would at
least shine briefly among them.

And it would all begin with a despised
Samaritan woman.

However, as we found out last week, there
would be a lot of obstacles to
overcome.

When He asked for a drink of water, she
reminded Him, perhaps with a smirk on
her face, that "**the Jews have no
dealings with the Samaritans.**"

And that was only the beginning.

When He told her about "**living water,**" she immediately took offence. --- "**Art thou greater than our father Jacob --?**"

And when He tried to deal with her sin, she immediately threw up a smokescreen --- "**Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.**"

At this point, most of us would have said, *Forget it; I'm tired and hungry, and this woman won't even give me a drink.*

However, Jesus answered her question, and even went on to explain that although the temple was the appointed place to meet God, it wouldn't be for much longer.

"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

And then, when nothing else seemed to work, He clearly identified Himself as the Messiah --- **"I that speak unto thee am he."**

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But was He making any headway?

Actually, He was.

And strangely enough, the clincher was the very thing that we had evaluated as a hindrance.

Remember last week's lesson?

We listed what we thought were some of the hindrances to the success of this encounter.

One of them was the fact that Jesus was a perfect stranger.

No, she hadn't heard Him preach, nor had she witnessed a single miracle.

As far as she was concerned, He was just another despised Jew.

But as it turned out, this was the very thing that turned the tide.

Everyone else in town knew she had been divorced five times, and everyone else in town knew she was living common-law.

Oh yes, she had quite a reputation in Sychar!

But Jesus was a perfect stranger; and yet He knew everything about her!

That really blew her way! --- **"Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"**

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But I'm getting ahead of the story, am I not?

Let's go back to John 4:27 **"And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?"**

Certainly this wasn't the first time that they had marvelled at Jesus' activities.

He had driven the vendors out of the temple, refused to commit Himself to the residents of Jerusalem, and had left a thriving work in Judea.

Now He was talking to a Samaritan woman!

But they didn't ask questions.

After all, He was their teacher, their Messiah, and they had already witnessed His miracles.

No, they were going to mind their own business.

However, they were quite shocked.

And I think it showed on their faces, which probably was one of the reasons why the woman left.

However, to be quite truthful, she was just bursting to tell someone about the Messiah.

V 28-29 **"The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, 29: Come, see a man, which told in me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"**

Yes, that abandoned waterpot said it all.

She had found the Messiah (or rather He had found her) and she wasn't going to let anything slow her down.

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Amazingly, she didn't repeat a single word that Jesus said.

It would almost make you think she hadn't been listening.

She didn't mention the "**living water**", even though that was Jesus' main theme.

She didn't enlighten them concerning the proper place to worship, even though that had always been a long-standing argument.

No, the thing that impressed her most was the fact that He knew all about her.

And that was the subject you would think she'd be anxious to avoid.

After all, she'd done her best to change the subject when Jesus mentioned it.

But, no, her first and only message is found in V 29 "**Come, see a man, which told**

**in me all things that ever I did: is
not this the Christ?"**

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And certainly, Jesus' omniscience was the
very thing that had convinced
Nathaniel.

Remember that incident?

When Jesus told him He had seen him under
the fig tree, Nathaniel replied ---

**"Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou
art the King of Israel."**

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Well, her testimony might have been simple,
but it was effective.

V 30 **"Then they went out of the city, and
came unto him."**

However, there was something else going on
out at the well, and it wasn't supper.

V 31-34 "In the mean while his disciples
prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

32: But he said unto them, I have meat
to eat that ye know not of.

33: Therefore said the disciples one to
another, Hath any man brought him ought
to eat?

34: Jesus saith unto them, My meat is
to do the will of him that sent me, and
to finish his work."

By now, it must have been seven o'clock, or
even a little later, but Jesus wasn't
hungry.

You might say *He had other fish to fry.*

Or to put it in His own words, His only
concern was "**to finish his work.**"

No, the whistle hadn't blown yet.

His Father's work day wasn't over, and
neither was His.

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He was just like Abraham's servant who would not sit down until he had delivered his master's message.

And He was just like Samuel who would not eat meat until he had anointed young David.

Or rather, they were just like Him!

No, there was no time to be wasted.

V 35 **"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."**

Can you hear the urgency in His voice?

As the Samaritans streamed out of the city, perhaps in their white flowing robes, Jesus could see a long overdue harvest.

Someone has said, *By the time the field is white, a lot of the grain has already fallen to the ground.*

So there was no time to waste.

Raising His arm and pointing at the Samaritans, He commanded them to, "**Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.**"

Yes, supper could wait. They had work to do.

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And even before they arrived, Jesus had another matter to attend to.

Someday soon, the message of the kingdom would be completed, and He would be returning to heaven.

Then, (under the direction of the Holy Spirit) the responsibility of preaching the gospel of grace would be theirs.

Yes, He must pass on His zeal to His
disciples.

They had been workers with Him, now they
must become workers like Him.

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So, as they waited for the Samaritans to
arrive, Jesus explained the principle
of seed time and harvest.

V 35-38 **"Say not ye, There are yet four
months, and then cometh harvest?
behold, I say unto you, Lift up your
eyes, and look on the fields; for they
are white already to harvest.**

**36: And he that reapeth receiveth
wages, and gathereth fruit unto life
eternal: that both he that soweth and
he that reapeth may rejoice together.**

**37: And herein is that saying true, One
soweth, and another reapeth.**

38: I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours."

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And while we are on the subject, I would like to take a few minutes to talk about labourers.

Although some are full-time workers, and rightfully live by the gospel, --- "**for the labourer is worthy of his hire,**" much of God's work is carried on by believers who we usually refer to as volunteers.

And I thank the Lord for volunteers.

They perform the many jobs that keep everything going, sometimes working long hours, or just being there when they are needed.

However, and I hope I won't shock you too much when I say -- in actual fact, there are no volunteers in the Lord's work.

Let me explain.

First of all, Jesus said on two occasions, -- **"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."**

We're not talking about volunteers here.

We're talking about labourers.

And we're not talking about asking, we're talking about sending.

Also, when Jesus gave us the great commission, He wasn't looking for volunteers, for He said **"Go ye."**

It wasn't a request.

It was a command.

So in the final analysis, we're not
volunteers. We're the Lord's servants.

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And, as the Samaritans streamed out of the
city, Jesus told His disciples
something else about the Lord's
servants.

First of all, He assured them that "**he that
reapeth receiveth wages.**"

That's right.

Even though our motivation should always be
love, there will be eternal rewards.

And not only that, but there will be
tremendous job satisfaction -- if not
now, then certainly later.

For the fact is, we are gathering "**fruit
unto life eternal.**"

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So why am I putting our Christian service on such a cut-and-dried basis?

After all, we're not just employees. We are God's servants.

Our work is a labour of love, or at least it should be.

Well, I only mention this fact because there's a worldly mentality out there that goes something like this:

Because our services are donated; and because we are only volunteers, we don't have to give our very best.

That should never be the mentality of God's servants.

We should always give our Master a good day's work for a good day's pay.

Not like the young man I once heard about who was looking for a job.

The perspective employer looked at him
sorrowfully and said, "I'm sorry, son,
but we don't need much help right now."

Brightening up a little, he replied, "Oh,
that's all right. I'm not much help."

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Well, Jesus wasn't wasting His time.
He had gotten His disciples on board, and
now He was ready to receive the
Samaritans.

Yes, the seed that He had planted in the
heart of that woman had borne fruit,
and now it was time to reap the
harvest.

V 39-42 **"And many of the Samaritans of that
city believed on him for the saying of
the woman, which testified, He told me
all that ever I did.**

40: So when the Samaritans were come

unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

41: And many more believed because of his own word;

42: And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

There's something extraordinary here.

Jesus had told the woman plainly that He was the Messiah, and the Samaritans had believed her testimony.

But now they had gone even further, for they said --- **"we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."**

Yes, not just the Messiah, but --- **"the
Saviour of the world."**

What insight, and without a single miracle!

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We are told in John 2:23 that **"--- when he
was in Jerusalem at the passover, in
the feast day, many believed in his
name, when they saw the miracles which
he did."**

Again in John 7:31 **"And many of the people
believed on him, and said, When Christ
cometh, will he do more miracles than
these which this man hath done?"**

However, these miracles were reserved
exclusively for Israel.

They were one of Christ's witnesses,
specially designed to convince the Jews
that Jesus was their Messiah.

On the other hand, the Samaritans hadn't
been given a single miracle, and they
didn't need any.

As V 41-42 tells us "--- **many more believed
because of his own word;
42: And said unto the woman, Now we
believe, not because of thy saying: for
we have heard him ourselves, and know
that this is indeed the Christ, the
Saviour of the world."**

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He could only spend two days with them.
It was short, but exceedingly sweet, not
only for the Samaritans, but for Jesus
Himself.

How it must have gladdened His heart to see
their implicit faith in His word, and
in His word alone!

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And that's how it is today, isn't it?

No miracles -- just God's inspired word, and
the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Yes, **"--- faith cometh by hearing, and
hearing by the word of God."**

No, we shouldn't be taken in by those who
claim they can work miracles.

Miracles were for Israel, and for the early
church to authenticate the apostles'
doctrine in the absence of the New
Testament Scriptures.

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V 43 **"Now after two days he departed thence,
and went into Galilee."**

Admittedly, it had been a short visit, but
He must press on.

He was Israel's promised Messiah, and
Galilee was His destination.

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But don't worry. The Age of Grace was at the door, and the Samaritans' time would soon come.

In four or five years, Philip, a missionary of the newly formed Church of Jesus Christ, would be preaching the gospel in their streets, and with the same amazing response.

Acts 8:5-8 **"Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.**

6: And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

7: For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were

healed.

8: And there was great joy in that city."

Oh, did I hear the word miracles?

Yes, I did.

Previously, when the living Word had been among them, there had been no need for miracles.

But Philip wasn't the Messiah. He was only a follower of Jesus Christ.

In his case, miracles were necessary, and miracles were provided.

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Let's get back to John 4:43-44. **"Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee.**

44: For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country."

I'm not quite sure of the sequence of events here.

However, since the word "**testified**" is in the past tense, then Jesus' remark must have referred to something in His past. And we read about such an event in Luke 4:14-16.

After His temptation in the wilderness, "---
Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

15: And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

16: And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read."

So He had been teaching in the synagogues of Galilee, and everything was going well. I suppose they were proud of their hometown boy.

This was the carpenter's son, and now He was a teacher.

But then, **"he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up,"** and again He taught in their synagogue.

The Scripture for the day was Isaiah 61, and in honour of His visit, Jesus was asked to read.

However, He stopped right in the middle of V 2, which, by the way, is the dividing line between His first and second coming.

Turning to His audience, He said **"This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."**

Now it was OK for their hometown boy to be a teacher.

In fact, the whole countryside was proud of Him, but now He had gone too far.

Yes, He was actually claiming to be their Messiah, and they wouldn't have it!

It was then that Jesus said, "**no prophet is accepted in his own country.**"

After that, things turned ugly.

They thrust Him out of the city, and actually tried to throw Him off a cliff!

How would you like that kind of a homecoming?

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John 4:44-45 "**Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee.**

44: For Jesus himself testified, that a

**prophet hath no honour in his own
country."**

I wonder why the Holy Spirit interjected
Jesus' words in this chapter?

After all, the whole incident had happened
some weeks or months before.

Perhaps His countrymen's violent reaction
was much on His mind as He trudged
along the dusty road to Galilee.

The simple faith of the Samaritans had
contrasted so strikingly with their
callous disbelief.

Yes, down through the ages, Israel had
consistently disregarded God's
prophets, and now they were missing the
point once again.

It was a grief of mind, and His
dissatisfaction would soon boil over.

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However, His initial reception was quite good.

V 45 **"Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilaeans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast."**

Yes, things were different now.

The signs and wonders that He had performed in Jerusalem had raised His status quite remarkably.

And although I'm not sure if they were aware of it, His campaign in Judea had also been a tremendous success.

Yes, the Galileans had a much better opinion of Him, but He wouldn't be visiting Nazareth.

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V 46 "So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum."

At this point, I must mention that Capernaum is 12 to 15 miles from Cana.

V 47-48 "When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.
48: Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."

I think the poor man got both barrels.
Where was the gentle Jesus now?

Where was the One who had been so patient
with that rather rude Samaritan woman?
Well, we shouldn't try to put Jesus in a
box.

His reactions are not always predictable,
but they are always appropriate.

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So what was the problem?

Weren't Jesus' signs and wonders given for
that specific purpose?

Well, yes, they were, but this man's faith
wasn't any longer than Jesus' arm.

Let me explain.

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Do you remember the Centurion that we read
about in Matthew chapter 8?

He also lived in Capernaum, but he was a
Gentile.

And both of these men had petitioned Jesus because of someone at home that was critically ill.

However, in the case of the nobleman, his son was 12 to 15 miles away.

In contrast, Jesus was already in Capernaum when the Centurion found Him.

So, quite naturally, Jesus said, **"I will come and heal him."**

However, the Centurion was fully prepared to operate by remote control.

Just **"---speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed."**

"When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

And really, that was the problem.

In spite of all His signs and wonders, He
had not found so great faith in Israel,
and especially in this nobleman.

No, that man insisted on hands-on treatment

"--- Sir, come down ere my child die."

Oh, he certainly believed Jesus was a
healer, just like some of their other
prophets in the past, but *speaking the*
word only?

Only God could do that.

Let me tell you, this was one Jew who was
going to learn a lesson in faith!

V 50 **"Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy
son liveth."**

Have some faith man. Jesus isn't coming! ---

**"And the man believed the word that
Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went
his way."**

What was that I heard?

Yes, "the man believed the word" --- "and he
went his way."

I can almost hear Jesus sigh.

At last. A Jew with the faith of a Gentile!

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Well, the nobleman's faith was well
rewarded.

V 51-54 "And as he was now going down, his
servants met him, and told him, saying,
Thy son liveth.

52: Then inquired he of them the hour
when he began to amend. And they said
unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour
the fever left him.

53: So the father knew that it was at
the same hour, in the which Jesus said
unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself
believed, and his whole house.

54: This is again the second miracle

**that Jesus did, when he was come out of
Judaea into Galilee."**

Yes, he believed!

Not only that Jesus was a healer, but that
He was the Son of God.

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And how would we rate ourselves on the
subject of faith?

Are we like those dwellers in Jerusalem who
Jesus wouldn't commit Himself unto
because of their insincerity?

Or are we like those Samaritans who
immediately recognized Christ, not only
as the Messiah, but as "**the Saviour of
the world?**"

Or possibly we're like that Centurion who
confidently said, just "**speak the
word,**" and I will believe.

I hope so.

Yes, I hope we don't have the limited faith
that the nobleman had when he first met
Jesus.

If we have, then we should allow Him to
increase our faith.

It might require a time of testing, but it
will be worth it.