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The Apostles Rejoin Jesus
John 4: 27-38

The apostles rejoin Jesus DIG: Why were the twelve surprised to find Jesus talking with a Samaritan woman? Why did she leave her water jar? How is Messiah's figure of speech once again misunderstood (Jn 2:19, 3:3 and 4:10)? Why does He continue to speak like this? In what way is God's will like food to Him?

REFLECT: Considering your interest in spiritual things this week, have you been more like the talmidim or the woman? Why? What distracts you from your walk with the Lord? How does doing the will of God supply the same essentials in your life that food does? What do you learn about being a witness from the parable?

The apostles had gone into town to get some food for **themselves** and **their Rabbi**. **The Lord** desired to have some time alone with this **Samaritan woman** for the purpose of evangelism. If they had stayed **they** would have merely been in the way. But, now the purpose of this had been accomplished.

Grace had achieved a glorious victory.

Just then His talmidim returned and were clearly **surprised to find Jesus talking with a woman.** The Jewish impression of **women** was very demeaning. **The rabbis taught that no man should talk with a woman in the street, not even with his own wife, and especially not with another woman.** But, even more, **the rabbis said that each man who talks with a woman causes evil to himself, puts an end to the Torah, and, in the final analysis, inherits Gehinnom.** This obvious breach of Jewish social norms could have been extremely awkward for **the apostles**, let alone **the Samaritan woman**. **But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her" (John 4:27)?** It was bad enough talking to **a Samaritan** man, let alone **a Samaritan woman**!

Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town (Yochanan

4:28a). She had come to the well for literal **water** to satisfy a physical need. But, when **she** found **the living water of eternal life (John 4:14b NCB)**, **she** had no more need of it. It is the same today. Once we perceive **Yeshua** clearly; once there is a moment of spiritual clarity of the soul; once **He** is known and received as our **Lord** and **Savior** there will be a turning away from that which our carnal mind was centered on beforehand. **Her** mind was on **Christ** and **she** had no thought of the well, **water**, or **her water jar**. **The Messiah's** glory was then **her** only goal. **She** had a single purpose because **she** knew **Him**, not from a second-hand source, but from personal experience. Immediately, **she** began to tell others.[364]



Her response was typical of new believers, one of the evidences of authentic faith. The person who has just had the burden of sin and guilt removed always wants to share the Good News with others. **The woman's** excitement would have been palpable. No longer was **she** avoiding the facts of **her** sin. **She** was basking in the glow of forgiveness with no shame.[365] **And** she **said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did."** It was like **He** could read **her** mind. **"Could this be the Messiah," she** asked **(John 4:28b-29)?"** The Greek construction of this sentence anticipates a negative answer. It was as if **she** were saying, "**He** couldn't possibly be **the Messiah**, could **He**?" Then, however, **the Samaritan woman** presented evidence to suggest that **she**, in fact, did believe **Yeshua** to be **the Meshiach**.

The interlude between **Jesus'** discussion with **the woman** and **His** ministering to the rest of **the town** allows us to see why **John** includes this incident in his gospel. **Yeshua had to pass through Samaria (Yochanan 4:4)** to redeem that **woman**, who brought **her** entire town to **Christ** with **her** testimony. But, just as important, **He had to pass through Samaria** in order to give **His talmidim** critical training in evangelism. This was **the Lord's** purpose in coming to the earth and the calling of **His apostles**. Furthermore, it was a tangible lesson on the first rule of the new Kingdom: **Obedience to the Word of God is more important and more**

satisfying than fulfilling any mere physical need (Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4; Lk 4:4).[366]

Verses 31-38 form a parenthesis and tell us something of what happened during the interval that followed **the woman** leaving the well and **the Samaritans** coming to **Christ** (**to see link click Cc – Many Samaritans Believe**) because of **her** testimony about **Him**. **They** record a first hand account that took place between **the Lord** and **His talmidim**. **They** had returned to hear **His** closing remarks to **the woman**, a notorious sinner, about **her five husbands** and the effect it had on **her** as **she** ran off to evangelize the town of **Sychar.**

A little earlier in the day **the apostles** had left **the Rabbi from Galilee** sitting on the well, tired from the long journey. **Meanwhile, they** left, bought some **food** and returned with it. But, **He** showed no desire for it. Instead of finding **the Meshiach** weary and faint, **the twelve** discovered **Him** to be full of renewed energy. **He** had received sustenance that **they** could not understand. Nevertheless, **they** persisted and **urged Him,** saying: **Rabbi, eat something (John 4:31). His** words puzzled **them**. Why wasn't **He** hungry?

Jesus once again moved from the physical to the spiritual. **He** already had **His** spiritual **food**. **But He** said to **them: I have food to eat that you know nothing about (Yochanan 4:32). Christ's** heart had been fed. **His** spirit had been invigorated. The great **Giver of gifts** had received one **Himself**. Peace and joy are a part of the blessing that comes from doing the will of **ADONAI**. And the obedient believer receives that which the world cannot understand. This was a teachable moment for **His talmidim**.

Therefore, **the Twelve said to each other, "Could someone have brought Him food?" They** were thinking in terms of the physical, not the spiritual. **Yeshua** said: **My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work (John 4:33-34).** The word **My** is in the emphatic position in the sentence. The work that **Jesus** did was no mere human work. It was that of **One** sent by **God**. Quite often in **John's** gospel, **The KING of kings** declares that the work **He** does is that which **the Father** has for **Him** to do **(Yochanan 5:30, 6:38, 7:18, 8:50, 9:4, 10:37, 12:49-50, 14:31, 15:10, 17:4)**. The heart of **God** hungers to reach out to those who do not know **Him**. That's what drove **the Suffering Servant**. In fact, the verb **to finish** (Greek: *teleioso*), is similar with that used on the cross in **John 19:30** when **Jesus** cried out: **It is finished (**Greek: *tetelestai*)**.**[367]

He was **God-sent**. Again and again **John** speaks of **Yeshua's** being **sent** by **Ha'Shem**. There are two Greek words the inspired author uses for sending. There is *apostellein*, which is used seventeen times, and *pempein*, which is used twenty-seven times. So, there are forty-four times in **Yochanan** where **the Lord** speaks about being **sent**. **The Galilean Rabbi** was **One** who was under orders. **He** was **God's man**.

Don't you quote the proverb, "There are four more months and then comes the harvest?" The Jewish agricultural year was divided into six, two month, periods: (Oct-Nov) seedtime, (Dec-Jan) winter, (Feb-Mar) spring, (Apr-May) **harvest**, (Jun-Jul) summer, and (Aug-Sep) the time of extreme heat. In other words, **He** was saying, "You have a **proverb**; if you sow the seed, you must wait **for** at least **four months** before you can hope to begin and reap **the harvest**." **Sychar** is in a region famous for its corn. Agricultural land was very limited in stony, rocky Palestine; practically nowhere else in the country could someone look up and see waving **fields** of golden corn. As **Jesus** looked up, **He** saw **the Samaritans** come **out of the town and** make **their way** up the hill **toward Him.** Few crops are **white** at **harvest** time, certainly not corn. So it seems that **the Samaritans** were wearing **white** garments, which stood out against the golden corn and the blue sky. As **the Lord** swept **His** gaze and **His** hand around, **He** said: **I tell you, look up and see that the fields are already white** (Greek: *leukos*) **for harvest (John 4:35 NET)! The Master** was telling **His talmudim** that the time for waiting was past; **that the fields** were "**white** already," meaning that the grain stalks were already mature with heads ripe for **the harvesting**. It had taken **four months** to grow; but in **Samaria** it was time **for harvest**! And this was **the harvest** that **He** wanted **His talmidim** to see.[368] The long-awaited **Messiah** had come. **God's** time was now. The Word must be sown, and the spiritual **harvest** was waiting for **them**, as **they** saw before **their** very eyes.

This was Evangelism 101 taught by **Jesus** in **His** apostolic college. **He** said: **Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together (Jn 4:36).** To the Israelite sowing was a sad and backbreaking time; it was **the harvest** that was the time of joyfulness. **Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy. Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them (Ps 126:5-6).** An incredible thing had happened because of this new spiritual **food**. **The sower** and **the harvester** could rejoice at the same time.

Thus there is another proverb, and it is just as **true, "One sows and another reaps" (John 4:37).** Then our **Savior** went on to make two applications. First, **He** said: **I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. The Lord** told **His talmidim** that **they** would **reap a crop** that was not produced by **their labor**. By this **Messiah** meant that ***He*** was sowing **the seed**. There would come a day when **the apostles** would go out into the world and **reap a harvest** that **Yeshua's** life and death had **sown**.

And secondly, **others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor (Yochanan 4:38). The Nazarene** told **the twelve** that there would come a day when ***they*** would **sow** and others would **reap** after **them**. There would be a time when the believing remnant would send out workers into the field but they would never see the harvest. Some of them would die as martyrs, but as the second century Church Father Tertullian once said, "The blood of the martyrs is **the seed** of the Church." It is as if **Christ** said, "There will be a time when you will labor and see nothing come of it. Some day **you** will **sow** and **you** will pass away before **the harvest** is **reaped**. **But don't let your hearts be troubled (John 14:1).** The sowing is not in vain; **the seed** will not be wasted. Others will witness **the harvest** that was not given for **you** to see."[369]

The Samaritan woman's testimony had an undeniably positive effect. **The people of Sychar came out of the town and made their way** up the hill **toward Jesus**. **They** were irresistibly drawn to **the Man** who was possibly their **Savior (Yochanan 4:30).**

The apostles revealed several attitudes that frequently keep *us* from entering **the harvest** fields. **First, we are put off by prejudice or bigotry.** When **the apostles** saw **the Master** talking to **a Samaritan woman**, **they** couldn't accept it. To **them**, **she** was at the bottom, the very bottom, of the social ladder. When we are truthful with ourselves, we must face the fact that we care about the salvation of some people more than others. And although its hard to admit, we hope some contemptible, vile souls never escape the darkness of hell. Thankfully, our **Creator** doesn't rank us on the scale of worthiness. We are *all* unworthy of salvation **(Romans 3:23)**, yet equally loved by **Him**.

Second, we are consumed with the everyday details of life. The talmidim couldn't stop thinking about food long enough to notice their **Rabbi's** excitement. **They** left **Him** weary, hungry, and thirsty from travel. But, when **they** returned, **they** found **Him** bursting with energy. Anyone the least bit

perceptive should have set aside the food and asked **the Lord** what made **Him** so energetic, but not those shortsighted **apostles**. We spend most of our day dealing with so-called necessities of life: taking care of our children, keeping schedules, making a living. **Jesus** had a strategic plan for **His** evangelism. Do you? Make a "Ten Most Wanted" list of people to pray for and watch **the Holy Spirit** go to work.

Third, we are lulled into inaction by the promise of tomorrow. The twelve didn't appreciate the urgency of **their** calling. **Yeshua** used a popular **proverb** among farmers of **His** day: **There are four more months and then comes the harvest**, to stir **them** into action. **He** said, in effect, the time is now! No more waiting. But, we procrastinate. We presume upon tomorrow. Meanwhile, death continues to **reap**. Furthermore, the time before **the Lord** returns draws shorter and shorter.[370]