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**“It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world.” John 4:42**

## The Samaritans Come to Jesus

**JOHN 4:31–42** <sup>31</sup>Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, “Rabbi, eat something.” <sup>32</sup>But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” <sup>33</sup>So the disciples said to one another, “Surely no one has brought him something to eat?” <sup>34</sup>Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. <sup>35</sup>Do you not say, ‘Four months more, then comes the harvest’? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. <sup>36</sup>The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup>For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ <sup>38</sup>I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”

<sup>39</sup>Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I have ever done.” <sup>40</sup>So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. <sup>41</sup>And many more believed because of his word. <sup>42</sup>They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world.”

The disciples have returned to Jesus, and the Samaritan woman has returned to her city. The contrast between the male disciples and the woman could not be greater. While the men are “astonished that he was speaking with a woman” (verse 27), this astonishing woman has gone forth to witness to Jesus (verses 28–29). While the men are occupied with eating the food they had bought, the woman was evangelizing the Samaritans. While the disciples are trying to understand why Jesus doesn’t seem hungry (verses 31–33), the Samaritans were already leaving their city to come to Jesus as a result of the woman’s testimony (verse 30). Clearly this woman does the work of an apostle: proclaiming the good news, witnessing to Jesus, and bringing others to him.

As the disciples are urging Jesus to eat something, Jesus states that he is sustained and nourished by doing the work of the Father: “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work” (verse 34). Likewise, the “daily bread” of us who follow Jesus must be seeking God’s will and carrying out the work he has given us. Even though we might maintain a balanced diet of physical food, we become malnourished unless we are sustained by a meaningful life in relationship to God. Jesus invites his disciples to the nourishing work of reaping the harvest that will result from what Jesus is sowing. Jesus tells them to look around and see the Samaritans coming to faith in him, like fields ripe for harvesting (verse 35). Jesus, sent by the Father (verse 34), in turn sends his disciples to continue his work (verse 38).

The Samaritan woman becomes an effective witness to Jesus, as she goes out to tell her villagers what she has experienced (verse 39). She demonstrates a zeal like Jesus’, since it is impossible to keep such good news to oneself. Her faith in Jesus continually deepens through her encounter with him: she has come to believe first that Jesus is a prophet (verse 19), then the Messiah (verses 25–26), and finally, along with increasingly more Samaritans, Savior of the world (verse 42). Though the Samaritans must have seemed to the Jews of the time unlikely prospects for salvation, the seeds of grace are sown in unlikely places and reap fruit for eternal life (verse 36). Many Samaritans came to believe in Jesus “because of the woman’s testimony” (verse 39). Then, when they welcomed Jesus into their lives and spent time with him, “many more believed because of his word” (verse 41). They came to know and trust for themselves that Jesus is “truly the Savior of the world.” God’s purposes are being fulfilled: God sent his Son into the world “in order that the world might be saved through him” (3:17).

## Reflection and Discussion

- What nourishes and sustains my life? What is the “daily bread” for which I pray? What is the fruit I am called to reap for God in the world?

- The Samaritan woman is the most effective evangelizer in the whole gospel. What does she have to teach disciples about witness and missionary endeavors?

- What new insights have emerged from my engagement with the story of the Samaritan woman?

## Prayer

*Savior of the world, I thank you for sowing the seed of your word within me through the labor of others before me. As my life ripens for the harvest, you invite me to the mission of sowing your life in the hearts of others. May I rejoice with you when others come to believe in you.*