

The Harvest through the Eyes of Jesus

“And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When He 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 9:35-38

How do you describe a “search and rescue” mission? A child disappears from the home. The mother calls the police and family members. The community goes into high gear to find and save the child. The insanity of sin makes “search and rescue” much more challenging because supposed rational, mature adults don’t realize the danger they are in. The Son of God knew exactly what He was doing when He began the daunting task of “search and rescue” of those lost in sin. Let’s try to see through the eyes of Jesus just what He saw.

As I read the words of Matt. 9:35-38 and John 10:7-11, I am moved by Jesus’ compassion toward the multitudes whom He saw as distressed and scattered, like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus, our Lord and Savior, is the good Shepherd of the flock (John 10:1-18) who came down to earth to gather the fold and give them rest from the heavy burdens of sin, laying

down His life for them. Indeed, the good Shepherd genuinely cares and is moved to compassion for the souls of men (Matthew 11:28-29). Even though He was saddened by their foolishness, He never loathed them or spoke contemptuously of them. Although He was the King of kings and Lord of lords, He loved sinners with all His heart. Jesus, our Lord, looked upon the multitudes the way we should look at them. Since He was a man of great feeling (emotion, love, affection, tenderness, compassion, sympathy, empathy), He was *“moved with compassion.”* His heart yearned to rescue the lost and bring them back to the Father in heaven. He couldn't be indifferent to the mass of men who were sheep without a shepherd, whose souls were fainting and ready to die. Rather than moaning, He eagerly and willfully took action. His heart was stirred to help those He pitied. Jesus was never discouraged in laboring for the souls of people. He never said it was useless to preach to the sinful multitudes. He persevered until He could say on the cross, *“It is finished.”*

The problem is not the fields but the laborers. Jesus, Our Lord, is trying to say something:

1. Jesus saw the pitiful state of the harvest through merciful eyes.
2. Jesus saw the potential of the harvest.
3. Jesus saw the problem of the harvest.
4. Jesus commands His disciples to pray for laborers to be sent into His vineyard.

We will discuss this further in my study.

Because of Jesus' great compassion for the souls of the crowd, He turned to His disciples saying,

“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.”

Here, Jesus compares the world of that time to a harvest because many were ready and thirsty for knowledge and eager to become His disciples. Sadly, the only thing that was lacking was teachers. Therefore, they were instructed to *“pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”*

I. JESUS SAW THE PITIFUL STATE OF THE HARVEST:

“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”

When our Lord Jesus looked at the multitudes, He realized they were lost. He saw them as who they were. Jesus was able to look beyond the facade of self-sufficiency, self-righteousness, and self-confidence. He saw the pain, the helplessness, the hopelessness, the anguish, and the lonesomeness caused by the burden of sin. Likewise, Jesus was aware of the unreasonable and unrealistic expectations their religious leaders (teachers) forced upon them. He saw the people as “scattered” and slated to be cast down or thrown out; people who were walking the path of life aimlessly with no direction whatsoever. Jesus knew the religious leaders were leading them into error and were shamefully neglecting their duties. Jesus looked at the crowds with compassion because He knew these religious leaders performed their duties without heart, zeal, or sincerity.

Today, we live under the same conditions. *How many of those who know the Truth lack the zeal, love, and faith concerning Jesus and the power of His glorious Gospel to save souls?* Though many would preach the pure Gospel of Christ earnestly out of a good heart, some don't. Sadly, many preach some measure of Truth but often do not preach or teach it boldly as they should. Neither is there enough concern for the souls of men among them.

Jesus declared,

*“My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, then comes the harvest’? 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.** Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor. Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, ‘He told me all that I ever did.’ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. 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 indeed the Savior of the world.’”* John 4:34-42

Oh, how we need to see the multitudes through the eyes of Jesus! The way Jesus saw them. Sadly, many Christians sit on their beds of comfort, ignoring those souls who are on their way to hell. Oh Christian, open your eyes to the world around you! There must be more to this world than the things that surround us. Arise and open your eyes! Let us take Jesus’ words to heart. Let’s take His words seriously. Jesus never intended for us to be this way. Jesus says that His food is to do the will of the One who sent Him. Can we say that too? Are we partaking of the same food He ate? Are we living on what He lived? What is the food Jesus was talking about?

- Soul-winning.
- Seeking and saving that which is lost.
- Saving the world that is full of darkness from the bondage of sin.
- Finding the lost sheep.

Christian, this is the work the Father wants us to do for Him, a work that we are neglecting to do!

Indeed, the fields are white for the harvest. We cannot afford to be idle, sit back, and say it is the world's fault since they are too sinful and are not willing to obey and come to Jesus. *No!* We must teach them through the Gospel how to be saved from sin and condemnation. If we don't, we will be accountable on the Day of Judgment.

Knowing the immediate need and how serious it is to preach the Gospel of salvation to every man and woman that they might not perish eternally, it is hard to imagine how some who profess to be followers of Christ see the souls of those who are made in the image of God. *Why do I say this? Simply because they fail to lift up their eyes and see that the fields are white for harvest! Many souls are ready for spiritual harvest! They are ready to be reaped.*

Many good souls out there are desperately seeking and searching for the Truth. Souls that are waiting to be sown with the seed of God's Word. They want to be righteous. These souls are thirsty for the living water like the Samaritan woman. When she heard Jesus, she shared her faith with great joy, bringing others to Christ. *Oh, complacent Christian, there is no time for us to waste in the salvation of men!* They will not live forever. They will be buried, perhaps without the hope of salvation. You must reap at once, or they will be destroyed. They are crying out, *"We are perishing. Will you let us perish?" Or "Will you teach us the Gospel of salvation now? Or will you delay?"*

I see many who confess Christ but refuse to see the harvest as precious; as weary and scattered, like sheep without a shepherd; as perishing even though they are ripe for harvest; as a crop to be reaped and ready to be saved by the blood of Jesus. *Why is it that so many Christians refuse to see the harvest through the eyes of Jesus?!* I grieve because many souls are dying without knowing Jesus and the power of the Gospel.

II. JESUS SAW THE POTENTIAL OF THE HARVEST:

“The harvest is plentiful.”

When Jesus looked at the harvest (the world), He declared that it was plentiful and worthy of our prayers. He also recognized the main problem: *few laborers were working in His Father’s fields! Why?* Because He saw a multitude of lost souls all around Him.

Jesus, our Lord, who *“ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things. He has given us the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”* Eph. 4:11-13

Jesus saw souls that needed to be saved through His glorious Gospel of Grace. *He saw a harvest that was ripe for the picking!* He saw the crop’s potential: He saw souls that could be delivered from the bondage of sin; changed and regenerated beyond their lost condition; He focused not on the problem but on the potential of the harvest.

Every day we see lost souls, sinners, all around us. Lost in filthiness and lawlessness like lost sheep. Jesus saw them as lost sheep who needed a Shepherd to guide or lead them, as sick souls who needed a Great Physician. Therefore, we must

see the harvest through the eyes of Jesus. Jesus wants laborers who will go down into the wheat. One cannot reap wheat without standing close to the stalks. He wants Christians who will move the hearts of people, bringing them to Him. Laborers who will walk among the stalks of wheat. Workers who will swing the sickle, cutting the wheat and casting it to the ground. God wants workers who don't come with soft and delicate words, flattering doctrines, self-help, and earnest endeavors. He curses such laborers. God's servants must call a sin a sin as one would call a spade a spade. The Gospel is intended to wound the hearers, hurt their conscience, cut through the heart of men so that the soul might be separated from sin and self as the wheat is divided from the soil. The sickle is made sharp so that it can cut. The Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword.

In Matt. 9:35-38, Jesus' disciples failed to see the people of Samaria as fields that were white for harvest. By nature, harvesting is a slow process. The Samaritans were pouring forth to come and see Jesus. Jesus saw them as a harvest of souls who were thirsty and hungry. Likewise, He saw them as souls planted with the seeds of Truth sown by the Samaritan woman. They were ready to develop and ripen and bear fruit by the power of the Gospel.

Sometimes, the harvest is rapid. Joy, satisfaction, and profit are the result of a good crop. Those who sow and reap the fruit of the harvest receive everlasting wages according to their labor. They will rejoice together as well (I Cor. 3:5-15). Those who reap are blessed by those who have sown before them. In John 4:35-42, Jesus' disciples were about to benefit from those who had labored before them: the prophets, John the Baptizer, and all others who proclaimed God's message.

You see, the Jews of Jesus' day despised the Samaritans. The Samaritans were the product of intermarriage between the Jews and the Gentiles that the Babylonians brought from other

lands. When Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman (a sinful woman), He saw her not as who she was but as a soul that needed to be saved; a soul hungry for the food He was offering. Jesus' disciples were about to notice a rapid harvest from the seed of Truth, which they had not sown themselves. They would reap where they had not sown before, and, of course, this was seen when the church was first established. We are often discouraged by the lack of active and visible results. When Jesus sowed, the results were certainly not obvious, but later the apostles, as reapers, gathered many souls on the day of Pentecost in just one day; more than Jesus did throughout His ministry (Acts 2:41).

Yet, those who obeyed were His, and the work His disciples did in reaping the harvest was His as well. Evidence of this is found in John 4:39 in those who believed in Jesus because of the woman's testimony. *Although Jesus came to His own people, the Jews, they did not receive Him (John 1:11), but the Samaritans did! When Philip and the apostles preached the message of salvation in Acts 8:5, they were ready!* Jesus reached the heart of the Samaritan woman because she was hungry for the food, He offered her. And as a result of this woman's receptive heart, multitudes of people hungered for the same Truth. *Isn't this an incredible joy!* May our Lord help us to see the harvest through His loving eyes.

III. JESUS SAW THE PROBLEM OF THE HARVEST:

"But the laborers are few."

Few laborers were working in His Father's vineyard! We have the same problem today! Reaping the soul harvest is hard work indeed, and few are willing to do it. Jesus in Matt. 4:18-22 called His disciples to follow Him and promised to make them *"fishers of men."* Of course, this would require the fisherman to go and gather the fish. Farmers know well that the harvest does not collect itself. They need laborers to gather in the har-

vest, doing the arduous and dirty work of collecting it. The same is true in bringing souls to Jesus. We cannot sit in our beds of comfort and wait for the harvest to reap itself. *We must reach out to the lost. We cannot sit and wait!* It is hard and dirty work, but it must be done if we want the harvest to be reaped.

The harvest indeed is great, but because so few laborers are willing to work, the work that God wants to be done will not get done. *Take heed! Oh, unconcerned Christian, this ought to shake us to our core! Have you no tears for the lost souls of men? Are you not concerned that we will give an account of what we have been doing with our lives? Surely, we will stand before the most excellent Judge of all as wicked and slothful servants who are not worthy of Him. Our greater fear should be that He will take away our crown of life and cast us into the lake of fire.*

As faithful followers of Christ, we must preach and teach His Gospel of Grace to the lost. When we fail to pass it along, we don't love the glorious Gospel of Christ. *Is that not right?* Since we have the Good News to proclaim, we must be compelled to share it. We must mention Him and His words of salvation to the lost. *How can we, who possess the seed of the Truth, the Gospel of salvation, be at ease while souls are dying without hope and going to hell? My heart is heavy and burdened! My fervent prayer is for the Lord to send into the fields sincere laborers that they might yield a great harvest of souls for His glory.*

As I look around me, I see scores of people, both men and women, going to hell without their Savior, our Lord Jesus. *It grieves me!* And until we see our neighbors with eyes of compassion like Jesus did, as scattered, distressed, and weary souls because of sin, we will fail to lead them to the good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. As those who love our Lord and Savior, we must understand the significance of seeing everyone as a being made in the image of God. We must see everyone as those who have eternal souls that one day will have to give an

account to the Creator for their deeds. We must commit ourselves to planting the seed of God's Truth when we speak to our neighbors. Jesus did not look upon men as things to be despised but rather as precious souls, even as wheat is valuable to the farmer.

The fields are just ripe and ready for the crescent sickle. Precious souls are decaying and perishing. It grieves the Great Farmer that it should be so. God, our Father, loves the souls of men so much that He gave His only begotten Son to bleed and die that they might not perish but have everlasting life. *Lift up your eyes and see! There is a mighty work to be done! Preach the Good News of Jesus and His precious blood, teaching all men that whoever heeds Christ shall be saved. I suspect many will hear you gladly! Let not the grain perish!* The fields of standing grain are begging to be reaped. Sadly, there are not enough reapers, even though many lost souls might be approachable. *What country in this world is not approachable to hear the Gospel preached by Christians with enough gumption, faith, and courage?* Countries in Asia, Africa, South America, North America, and worldwide are eager to listen to the Gospel with an open heart today more than ever. *It moves me deeply!* The world, as a whole, lies open before the reapers of our Almighty God, *but where are they?*

Jesus wants workers who will labor intensely and not live a comfortable life of idleness or laziness. Laziness is a form of rebellion and selfish self-centeredness. An idle or lazy person has no right to the kingdom of our Lord, His vineyard. *Why?* Because he is Satan's instrument in damning the souls of men. The one who labors must proclaim the Good News of salvation. But he must read and study to keep his mind sound. He must effectively tell the Truth. Above all, the laborer must put his whole soul into what he teaches that he may stir up men unto good works. *We need such workers!* Laborers who will awaken those who sleep because of sin; laborers who will not promote creeds, doctrines of men, philosophies, and human

reasoning but rather prick consciences with the Word of God (Heb. 4:12).

We need laborers who will make the lost aware of their dangerous condition before the Creator. *We need workers, not idlers!* The kingdom of Christ is in desperate need of workers on fire. We must pray for such workers to be sent to work the fields. The harvest is indeed in need of good laborers willing to reap. Laborers who will do Christ's work and not be ashamed. Laborers willing to sweat at their job since nothing can be done in the harvest fields without hard work and the sweat of the soul.

So, God sends laborers into the fields to gather more laborers, Christians who will edify others in the faith. *Alas, so many laborers are scatterers, rending churches and souls to pieces! Alas, many are lost because they are not taught the Truth, the message of the saving Gospel of Grace!*

Sadly, many laborers seem to be more concerned about politics, the presidential elections, sports, economics, slandering the authorities, refusing to give due honor to them, disobeying the Lord and displeasing Him, complaining about their rights being violated, and so on. *Why not preach Jesus and the power of His Gospel of Grace to save souls? Go to the lost sheep and show genuine compassion!* Work together with zeal and enthusiasm in the kingdom of God. When we focus on the salvation of souls, we will face ridicule and persecution. *Accept it and embrace it!* After all, we are here to please God and not men (Gal. 1:10). *Oh, how we need laborers who will use sharp cutting sickles upon ungodly hearts!*

Likewise, we have many laborers who seem to be more focused on being patriotic than being faithful to the kingdom of heaven. They appear to forget that patriotism does not equate to spirituality and the furthering of the glorious Gospel of Christ. Many confuse our nation with the kingdom of heav-

en. American patriotism does not equate to godliness. As Christians, we are not seeking an earthly kingdom, but a heavenly one; one that has already been established and we must be willing to be in subjection to Christ. Our love for Christ and His kingdom and the souls of men must move us to set our minds on things above (Col. 3:2) rather than on earthly and temporal leaders.

Such laborers seem to forget that the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ surpasses all other civil authorities. God, the Father, has given Him all authority in heaven and earth (John 17:2; Matt. 28:18). Jesus is our Supreme Ruler. He is greater than any authority here on earth (Eph. 1:21). He is *“far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.”* All authorities have been created by and for Jesus, and He sustains them all! (Col. 1:16-17). Jesus is above every emperor, king, queen, president, and prime minister. However, Christians must submit to their earthly rulers because Christ gives them their authority (Romans 13:1-7).

We must understand that there is no authority given except from God and that those authorities that exist are appointed by Him, whether we like it or not. God has a purpose in establishing them. God uses all nations as instruments to accomplish His will, whether they are good or bad. All civil authorities are God’s servants, and we see it throughout the Old Testament when He used pagan nations to humble His people, the Israelites. Today, God demands that each Christian submit to whatever government under which he finds himself. We are commanded to obey civil authorities rather than resist them. *To resist them (God’s ministers) is to oppose God!* We owe this to our earthly authorities even when they are wicked. Our love for Christ must move us to bow before Caesar, the civil authority established over us by God. Our good works must shine before men that they may glorify our Father in heaven.

God alone is due our worship, love, and obedience, yet Caesar is God's established ruler over all things of a civil nature. It is easier to submit and honor a civil leader who is righteous, but Jesus commands us to submit to them and honor them. *We can disagree respectfully without being slanderous!* We do not have to like or approve of their political agendas to honor their office, but we must honor them since God has appointed them in that charge. Honoring them does not mean engaging in their evil behavior even if they try to force us to commit sin (Acts 5:29). Most Christians don't have a problem with obeying when it comes to paying taxes and complying with government regulations. Where they have a problem is with showing respect. Their attitudes and speech often communicate bitterness and slander toward their civil authorities.

Our brethren back in the first century had to endure severe persecutions from unbelievers and civil authorities, yet Peter exhorts them to submit and give honor to them (I Peter 2:13-17). Nero, the Emperor of those days, murdered Peter and a great number of Christians by setting them on fire like torches, feeding them to the lions for sport. If anyone understood the price of submitting to and honoring wicked civil authorities, it was Peter. To reject or despise authority is ungodly (II Peter 2:10; Jude 8). Jesus is another good example who did not despise authority when He was beaten brutally and unjustly crucified by the Romans (Acts 8:32). So, Christians must not speak evil of others. Let the words of Ephesians 4:29-31 sink deeply into your heart.

I am perplexed by the behavior of many Christians on social media, who utter disrespectful and indiscreet words about our government authorities. We ought to be praying that God give us just and wise rulers. When we rail against them, we dishonor our God, who placed them in their positions of authority. *Why not pray for them that we may live in peace and that many doors may be open to the Gospel?* This is agreeable to the Gospel rule: *"First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers,*

intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way." I Tim. 2:1-2

Let us get *busy teaching the Gospel to the lost*? The things that distract us keep us from sowing and watering the seed of God's Word. Leave the results to God (I Cor. 3:6-7). *Let us do our best to save souls. We must be governed by the need to save souls!* Their needs are paramount.

Our Lord Jesus wants volunteers to work in His vineyard. He would rather not force anyone to work for Him (Rev. 22:17). He wants faithful, humble, and sincere workers rather than lukewarm, proud, indifferent, and selfish ones (Rev. 3:15-17). Many souls are called through the Gospel (II Thess. 2:13-14) to come and enter God's vineyard as laborers, but unfortunately, few are chosen. *What does that mean?* It means that many are not willing to sincerely labor for the Lord and enter His vineyard under His conditions. And although many might reject the Gospel message as foolishness, that still does not change the fact that God is longsuffering and compassionate and is seeking sinners who are eager, hungry and thirsty for righteousness to come to Him.

The Master of the vineyard commands His laborers to work in the field all day (Matt. 20:14). *Our service is what counts with God and nothing else!* Let us labor faithfully, *"without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world"* (Phil. 2:14-18). Let us always remember that no one will be saved without God's Gospel of Grace. *Therefore, we must proclaim it! One day we may say we could have done more with deeper regret!* And let us also remember that the laborer's work is never done until the wheat is housed, stacked and put into a barn. His toil is never over. He never stops caring for the souls until they are saved.

IV. JESUS COMMANDS HIS DISCIPLES TO PRAY FOR LABORERS TO BE SENT OUT TO HIS HARVEST:

“Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

Since the laborers are few, Jesus commanded His disciples to pray for the Lord to send them. Our Lord Jesus cares a lot about the souls of men. He does not want any soul to perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). We must labor hard to bring in the harvest. Eternal souls are at stake. *Jesus loves the souls of men!*

“The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The Lord is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made” (Psalm 145:8-9).

Throughout the Bible, the LORD refers to His people as a Vineyard. He tended, pruned, and watched it with love and delight. The workers are called to labor at various times as in the parable of the workers of the Vineyard in Matthew 20:1-16.

“For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!” (Isaiah 5:7).

The Landlord in this parable is the LORD of all creation, the God, and Father of our Lord and Savior. He loves His harvest zealously. God, above everything, is seeking us out in the slave market of sin. Jesus said,

“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10).

God cares greatly about His harvest and desires that all His servants (those who have been redeemed) go to work in His vineyard. Therefore, workers are indeed needed to do this service.

And He said to them, "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." (Luke 10:2.)

Once we hear and obey the calling of our Lord, God's servants are commissioned to work in His fields. Our Lord needs men and women willing to bring in the harvest. We must see the souls of men as Jesus did: plentiful, precious, perplexed, and perishing. He will reward us with eternal life according to what we have done in His kingdom (Rev. 22:12). Jesus has well established the needs of the harvest, and He has told us what to do: Pray! *Why pray?* Because God will not supply us with laborers who will work for Him in His vineyard if we neglect to pray for them. *So, who is to blame?*

Too many precious souls are perishing every day because we are not praying, *"Thy kingdom come."* We must start praying for God to send forth laborers to His harvest. Yes, we must pray to God because it is the LORD'S business! Only He can send the right laborers to work in His vineyard. It is His harvest, and He has every right to send whom He wills to work in His fields. We must pray continually to Him (the Lord of the harvest) for a supply of earnest laborers. *Take heed that the harvest be not ours but His!* And if the harvest perishes, it is our heavenly Father's harvest that perishes. *This ought to put a heavyweight on our soul!*

As we begin to see the souls of men as Jesus sees them, then:

- We will start praying for the harvest.
- We will pray for the salvation of the lost.
- For the church to be trainers of reapers.
- For men and women to go into the harvest.
- We will pray for workers, laborers, servants, and givers.

However, we must do more than pray. We must take full responsibility for the harvest. Think of all the souls with whom you come in contact every day: family members, friends, neighbors, coworkers, the woman behind the cash register, the school teacher, the guy at the car wash and dealer, the gym, hair salon, our crafts and sewing class, Facebook and all social media. *The list is endless!* The harvest must be our priority. There is a great urgency to bring in the harvest. Remember, the Gospel can only be Good News if it arrives on time. *It demands urgent action!* Our job is to tell all those lost souls the Good News of the Lord of the harvest, the Gospel. *If we don't go, who will?* Let us not be a people of silence. It is a sin. Let us not make the Great Commission into a significant omission. *There is so much to do; the harvest is so vast; the needs are overwhelming! What can you do?*

Hence, we must keep praying as often as our prayer is in our heart; as often as we see the need, that the fields may not rot before our eyes. Let us pray for boldness to share the Gospel and reach out to the souls of men that they may know the goodness of God. Let us compel men through the Gospel to come to repentance. *The world is dying! Hell is boasting, and yet we have the Gospel that is "the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes!"*

- *Can it be that we do not care to win souls for the Landlord of the Vineyard and the Master of the harvest?*
- *Can it be that we don't care whether men are damned or saved?*

May the Lord awaken us from the slumber caused by our stony heart and make us care more for the souls of men, pray for them and work for them until He sends forth laborers into His harvest. May we never regret that we might have done more for God's harvest!

CONCLUSION:

We must see the harvest as Jesus saw it so that we may win souls to Christ effectively. Jesus saw the harvest as plentiful, precious, harassed, helpless, hopeless, perishing, and as a priority. Jesus saw the harvest as lost souls dying and facing judgment (condemnation) eternally.

Every day we see people dying, without Jesus and the hope of salvation. Until we see their souls as precious, we will not lead them to Christ. *Why not commit ourselves to speak with at least one soul each day regarding their salvation? Why not focus more on personal evangelism day after day, week after week, year after year? What do you see when you see souls (friends, relatives, coworkers, classmates, etc.), crowds of people?* We must learn to see souls like Jesus does: souls made in God's image with an eternal soul who will one day give an account to the Judge of all. *Therefore, let us have eyes to see!* There are many sincere souls out there seeking and searching for the Truth. Our focus must be on sowing and watering the seed of God's Word (wherever we can), letting God give the increase (I Cor. 3:6-7). *Are we doing that? Are we trying to speak with someone about their soul?* It will help us to see people's souls as God sees them. We are here to please God and do His will.

There are many lost souls everywhere. *Are you able to see them? Are you doing anything today to teach them the Good News of salvation? Or are you focusing on something else rather than on proclaiming the Gospel to the lost?*

So let us start plowing in hope that we may be able to share in the crop (I Cor. 9:10). The farmer that plows and threshes in hope will one day have the joy of reaping and partaking of his hope. It is hope that moves the farmer to work the soil while he can. Let us also sow in faith, trusting our Lord to give us *“rains from heaven and fruitful seasons”* to produce a good crop. *“Faith sees a beautiful garden blossom in a bulb, a lovely garden in a seed, and a giant oak in an acorn.”* Faith is vital for the work of harvesting. Faith causes us to plant a seed in the soil so that the Lord may multiply it (II Cor. 9:10-11). Sowing the seed demands hard work and diligence. Farming is not for the lazy or idler because it is hard work. It requires the sweat of one’s brow (Gen. 3:19). Daily work is required, *“for it is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.”* Sowing also requires vigilance. Not only does the farmer plow the ground to sow the seed, but he also guards the crop, the harvest. Many things can destroy the crop. The farmer must carefully guard what he has planted. Otherwise, the harvest may be lost. We must also sow in patience. Farming requires patience, lots of patience. And so is the harvest of souls. Finally, we must sow in joy. The farmer plants, plows, labors, watches, and waits so that he may reap. When the farmer finally reaps or harvests his crop, there is great joy indeed. The Psalmist says,

“Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him” (Psalm 126:5-6).

Let these precious words sink deeply into your hearts!

As spiritual farmers today, we must plow in hope, sow in faith, work with diligence, guard in vigilance, and wait in patience. If we do this, we will reap in joy. The fields are white for harvest and laborers to work it, but the laborers are few.

Praise be to God for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, the harvest! The Giver of eternal life and living water.

We must pray to the Lord for open doors to present His Gospel of Grace to the lost. Too many souls are lost because we are not aggressive enough to offer them the saving Gospel message. Many souls are seeking the Lord. They need to be encouraged to seek the right way. *I was one of those souls!* They need to be taught why they need forgiveness and what it means to be saved. These precious souls need to be taught about heaven, hell, and eternity. They need to be taught the will of God. We must pray fervently that we find such seekers, such precious souls. *What a joy it is when we find someone who is sincerely seeking to know the will of God!* Jesus said,

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you” (Matt. 7:7).

The one who is a sincere seeker will want to believe and obey the Truth and will understand it.

It is a tragedy that so many souls are deceived by lies and that many souls will be lost as a result. That is why we must pray for the good laborers to be sent to work in the harvest of the Lord. Laborers who will share the simple Truth about Jesus (the Messiah as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world) and His requirements for salvation.

Therefore, we must pray for laborers who will preach Jesus, sin, condemnation, and eternity rather than something else (false teaching, interpretations of prophecies, human philosophies, emotional experiences, etc.). God has already done His part by making redemption accessible and possible. He is inviting all sinners into His Grace. God, in His providence, makes every opportunity possible for each soul to be

saved. God provides all we need to be saved by sending laborers to work in His vineyard.

May we be like the Samaritans who developed a genuine faith in Jesus. May we also be like the Samaritan woman sharing our faith with the lost, bringing them to Christ, the Owner of the vineyard and the Master of the harvest. May we show commitment to His cause rather than complaining and disobeying Him. May we live for Christ and learn that our chief goal in life is not self-gratification but the total commitment of one's whole being to do His will. May we hold fast to the Word of life so that in the day of Christ, we may rejoice that we did not run or labor in vain (Phil. 2:14-16). Finally, may we pray for the harvest that He send forth laborers into His harvest to yield a great and mighty harvest of souls for His glory.

The following song, "*Send The Light*," compels us to sound forth God's message of salvation. It is a song that motivates us to proclaim the Gospel that saves souls because they are precious to God (Matt. 16:26; Heb. 10:39). It stresses the need to pray for those who are lost and for the preaching of the Gospel of Grace to abound everywhere (Rom. 10:1; 5:15-20). Our song compels us not to grow weary in sending the light. We need to persevere in gathering jewels, souls, for God which will be our joy and crown (Phil. 4:1). Thus, Christians must share the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ everywhere. Let the light of the Gospel shine from shore to shore and forevermore. *Let us send the light! The blessed Gospel light! Let it shine forevermore!*

Send the Light by Charles H. Gabriel

There's a call comes ringing o'er the restless
wave, "Send the light! Send the light"
There are souls to rescue, there are souls to
save,
Send the light!
Send the light!

Chorus:

Send the light the blessed gospel light;
Let it shine from shore to shore!
Send the light the blessed gospel light;
Let it shine forevermore!

We have heard the Macedonian call today,
 “Send the light! Send the light!”
And a golden off’ring at the cross we lay,
Send the light!
Send the light!

Let us pray that grace may ev’rywhere abound,
 “Send the light! Send the light!”
And a Christ-like spirit ev’rywhere be found,
Send the light!
Send the light!

Let us not grow weary in the work of love,
 “Send the light! Send the light!”
Let us gather jewels for a crown above,
Send the light!
Send the light!

The Living Water

“Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. And he had to pass through Samaria. So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give me a drink.’ (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?’ (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.’” John 4:1-15

The Gospel of John presents the tender side of Jesus that we can only imagine if we allow that He spoke to this Samaritan woman as the Son of God who cared for all men and women just like our Heavenly Father. Jesus was resting by Jacob's well as an unknown woman approached with her water jar. Rather than withdraw and avoid the embarrassing moment, He spoke to her asking her for some of the water that she had drawn from the well. That one question starts the whole drama of John 4 and leaves us smiling as we see a broken woman come alive.

The fourth chapter of John's Gospel relates the same message as found in the other stories in this Gospel. The message is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. The first six verses set up the encounter: The Pharisees notice Jesus' growing popularity because Jesus' disciples are baptizing more than the disciples of John. Now, the Pharisees are turning away from John (cf. John 1:24) and focusing on Jesus. As a result, Jesus decided to leave Judea and head north to Galilee to be away from Jerusalem, the heart of the Jewish leadership and rule.

Let me take a moment first to focus on verse 2.

“(although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples).”

Jesus did not baptize people, but His disciples did.

Do you wonder why Jesus did not physically baptize people but allowed His disciples to do it? What do you suppose would have happened if Jesus was the person baptizing along with His disciples? Pause for a moment and put yourself in the first century. Imagine standing in line to be baptized. Whose line do you think would be longer: Jesus or Bartholomew? Do you think if Jesus was baptizing people, that could have been a problem? Likewise, imagine what people would have said? Surely, they would have boasted about being baptized by Jesus and not the apostles. This is ex-

actly what happened in 1 Corinthians when Christians were boasting over which apostle baptized them. Paul was glad he did not baptize any of them because of that very problem (1 Corinthians 1:14-17). It is no different today when people want to be baptized by a particular preacher as if who baptizes has more impact or meaning. Although Jesus did not baptize, that does imply that baptism is not essential. *If baptism was not essential, why would Jesus' disciples waste their time doing it? You see, by instructing His disciples to baptize, He was free to use His time more wisely!* If Jesus had baptized people Himself, many problems would have occurred.

I. OUR STORY'S BACKGROUND:

In John 4:4-5, we read,

“And he had to pass through Samaria. So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.”

Verse 4 states that Jesus had to pass through Samaria. The most direct route from Judea to Galilee passed through Samaria. However, many Jews avoided Samaria because of their disdain for the Samaritans who lived there. But this was not the only route to Galilee. You see, one could cross the Jordan River to the east and travel through Perea, crossing back to the west into Galilee. But John's point is greater than geography. *Why?* Because the Lord had an appointment in Samaria. What was about to happen was not an accident. It was part of God's plan. Jesus went to Sychar in Samaria. *So, why is this story important?* Notice that this location is near the field that Jacob gave Joseph (verse 5). This well is Jacob's well. Jesus went to this well and sat beside it.

“Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.” (John 4:6)

The humanity of Jesus is evident because He was weary from His journey. The Gospel writers always acknowledge the humanity of Jesus instead of hiding it. God was in a body. Notice how the Gospel of John starts.

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”
(John 1:14)

Jesus is God in a human body. He experienced the limitations and challenges of the human body just like we do.

II. THE WOMAN AT THE WELL:

Part One: John 4:7-12

“A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give me a drink.’ (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?’ (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.’”

“Jacob’s well” was located approximately half a mile south of the village of Sychar. The well was located 100 yards from the base of Mount Gerizim. Some commentators have described its depth as over 65 feet deep with a diameter of over 7 feet. This well is one of the few Bible sites where there seems to be no dispute. It is most likely the only place on earth where one can confidently say that the feet of Christ stood within the

circumference. Most likely, it was around 6 pm. that day (since it appears that John is using Roman time).

In John 4:9, Jesus' disciples have gone into the city to buy food. Most likely, Jesus has sent them away to prepare for this encounter with this woman. This woman was not from the city of Samaria but the province of Samaria, located between Judea and Galilee. She came to the well, and Jesus made a simple request. He asked this woman to give Him a drink of water. Today, Jesus' request would probably not be considered out of the ordinary. However, this request was not common in the first century. *Why?* Because of the woman to whom Jesus made the request, not because of what He requested. *Remember, she was a Samaritan who was also a woman!* By Jesus' speech and manner of dress, the woman recognized Jesus as a Jew. She expressed her surprise that Jesus would want to speak to her, a Samaritan since the Jews and Samaritans were enemies and had no social "dealings" with one another. Most Jews had contempt for Samaritans. This is why the parable of the good Samaritan is so shocking. However, that racial prejudice did not interfere with trade or other matters involving money (e.g., 4:8). According to tradition, a Jew would not accept any hospitality from a Samaritan. They would not have a Samaritan as a guest to eat their bread because that was as polluting as to eating swine's flesh. *Amazing!* Even today, Samaritans who live in this region do not eat, drink, or marry Jews but only trade with them. Thus, the woman was shocked by Jesus' request.

Now think for a moment about how this discussion started. Jesus asked the woman for a drink. She asked, *"You are asking me for a drink?"* Jesus responded, *"You should ask me for a drink. If you knew who I was and the gift of God, you would have asked me, and I would have given you living water."*

If I had been in this woman's place, I would have said,

“You asked me for a drink, and now you are telling me that I should have asked you for a drink.”

But this woman was very cordial toward Jesus.

Jesus’ response to this woman’s question was similar to His response to Nicodemus in John 3:3.

“Jesus answered him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.’”

Although Jesus spoke of a physical event to her, His message was spiritual, much to the confusion of the inquirer. This Samaritan woman knew that Jesus was a Jew, but she was unaware of His real identity. *Had she known that He was the Christ, she would have asked Him for that which He alone could give: the living water of eternal life!* Both positions were reversed spiritually. *Why?* Because the woman was the one in need of a “drink,” and Jesus could give her “living water.” *Do you remember what Jesus told the crowd in John 7:37-39?*

“On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

And though the woman would have normally understood “living water” to be a reference to flowing or running water, on this occasion, she evidently believed Jesus was referring to the well water.

The Samaritan woman perceived an impossibility. She asked Jesus how He would provide water, considering He did not have a bucket and the well was deep. There may have been a little edge to her voice as she contrasted Him to Jacob, the giver of the well. It's as if she had said:

“Surely, stranger, you aren't greater than Jacob with his sons, cattle, and wealth, are you?”

She would soon find out the answer to that question.

Where would He get that living water? We must understand that living water would have been very valuable. Instead of working with a bucket to draw water from a deep well, one could go to the spring of flowing water. With a spring, one could quickly draw water. So, she asked where this flowing water was located. Further, in verse 12, she said that if He could give them living, flowing water, that would make Jesus greater than Jacob. Jacob dug this well for them. They survived on this well because there was no flowing water around there. So, if Jesus was offering flowing, living water, He was greater than Jacob.

Jesus agreed with her observation. The water Jesus offered was better than Jacob's well. One who should drink this water would never be thirsty again. Further, the water Jesus offered the Samaritan, He still offers to the world. It becomes a spring of water welling up to eternal life. Jesus was using prophetic language to describe the water He offered.

“Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.” With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say in that day: “Give thanks to the LORD, call upon his name, make known his

deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted.” (Isaiah 12:2-4)

“On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. It shall continue in summer as in winter. 9 And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day the LORD will be one and his name one.” (Zechariah 14:8-9)

“As I went back, I saw on the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other. 8 And he said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, and enters the sea; when the water flows into the sea, the water will become fresh. 9 And wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish. For this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes.” (Ezekiel 47:7-9)

Part Two: John 4:13-19

“Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come here.’ The woman answered him, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband.

*What you have said is true.' The woman said to him,
'Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.'"*

In John 4:13-19, Jesus drew a contrast between earthly and heavenly blessings. The water of Jacob's well satisfied physical needs but only for a short time. The Samaritan woman would have had to return to the well again and again. However, the living water that Jesus was offering her was a fountain that would never fail, for it would be ever satisfying, springing up into eternal life. Nevertheless, this Samaritan woman could not understand what Jesus was offering yet. In verse 15, she asked Jesus,

*"Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty
or have to come here to draw water."*

She asked Jesus to give her this water so that she would never be thirsty or have to come to the well to draw water any longer. Her response in verse 15 indicated that she did not understand the true nature of Christ's offer. Perhaps, she was convinced of two things:

1. She wanted the wonderful water Jesus described to her.
2. Jesus could and would give it to her. It is difficult to know for sure if she really believed this second point.

Perhaps her answer carried a bit of sarcasm:

*"If you've really got this kind of water, why don't
you give it to me?"*

We must see the point Jesus was making and not misunderstand it as the people of Jesus' time did. Allow me to explain.

1. In John chapter 2, the people misunderstood Jesus when He said that He would destroy the temple and raise it in three days.
2. In chapter 3, Nicodemus did not understand how the new birth worked.

In the same way, this woman did not yet grasp the meaning of the living water Jesus offered. At the end of this story, we will notice that Jesus' disciples likewise did not understand how Jesus was not hungry when they gave Him lunch. *Such physically and materially minded people we are! How easy it is for us to become so consumed by life that we fail to see with spiritual eyes! How easy it is for us to lose our spiritual discernment! How sad it is that we cannot understand Jesus' words quoted in the Gospel! How easy it is to become dull of hearing as quoted in Hebrews 5:11! But guess what? We are the woman in this story. Jesus has to move our hearts from the physical to the spiritual. How tragic to lose focus of eternity and live in the now!*

In verses 14 and 15, Jesus offered eternal life, and this woman seemed not to want to come out in the heat to draw water.

"But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."

The same occurs today. Jesus is offering eternal life, and all we want to do is relax and take it easy. We want "easy Christianity" and "easy Grace." We dare to treat Jesus like a social club where we occasionally pay dues and show up when we feel like it. Jesus is offering eternal life, and we dare ask if we have to come to church on Sunday night. Jesus is proclaiming living water, and we dare ask how He will make our life more

convenient and comfortable. *Wake up, people! Today is the day of salvation!*

In John 4:16-18, Jesus said to her,

“Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come here.’ The woman answered him, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband.”

In verse 14, Jesus asked her to get her husband. She admitted that she had no husband as a vague explanation for why she couldn't fulfill His request. Jesus already knew this. That is why Jesus said what He said. Evidently, this was a sensitive subject. When Jesus told her to go and bring her husband back with her, He changed the direction of the conversation immediately. This was essential as the first step in meeting this woman's spiritual need. It was necessary for her to first be convinced of her sinfulness before recognizing her need to quench her spiritual thirst with living water. Jesus was trying to make her think about the spiritual state of her soul.

When Jesus told her she had five husbands and the one she had now was not her husband, notice her response: *“You are a prophet!”* Jesus' response was unexpected, to say the least. When this woman declared Jesus was a “prophet,” she basically confessed the truthfulness of Jesus' words. *Jesus, though a stranger to this woman, knew specific details about this woman's life (cf. 2:25)!* It is not revealed why she had been married to five different men. *It is useless to speculate!* Most Jews had a lax attitude toward divorce because of rabbinical misinterpretations (cf. Matt. 19:3ff). And it is unlikely that the Samaritans held any higher standards or principles. Thus, her husbands could have divorced her for the most trivial reasons. We are not told,

so we must not speculate. But there's one thing we know for sure: she was living an immoral life of fornication.

Jesus exposed this woman's sins, and He is still exposing our sins as a loving act.

It would be cruel on God's part to be silent. *We must know our sins so that we can wake up!* When we see our sins for what they are before a righteous God, we will be very concerned about the spiritual state of our souls and eternal life. But when we overlook our sins and forget that we are condemned and in danger of perishing, we will fail to be concerned about our soul and the direction it is heading. When we acknowledge our condition as sinners, we will be more concerned about eternal life, keeping our eyes on Jesus. *Jesus indeed made a remarkable impression on this woman!*

Part three: John 4:20-26

"Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."

When this Samaritan woman realized that she was in the presence of a prophet, she asked Jesus His view on the great

dispute between the Jews and Samaritans, that is, *where is the proper place to worship God?* She had been taught throughout her life that only on Mt. Gerizim would God accept worship. Her Samaritan ancestors worshipped God on this mountain because Moses commanded an altar to be built here in Deuteronomy 27. Thus, they worshipped there because their fathers did. The Jews claimed that God must be worshiped in Jerusalem. The Jews worshipped in Jerusalem, not because of tradition, but because God ordained it (cf. Deut. 12:5-14; I Kings 9:3; II Chr. 3:1). *So, who is right?*

Indeed, the Samaritans were wrong in their contention. In John 4:21, Jesus said,

“Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.’”

And though Jesus could have closed the discussion here without dealing with who was right, He didn’t avoid the issue. Instead, He went on to explain the difference that existed.

Jesus used the word “hour” in John 4:21 to indicate that the time was near when God would not be worshiped at a physical place like the Temple but through Jesus. Jesus is the new Temple where we must worship God, meet Him, and find atonement. Religious distinctions regarding the place of worship would be abolished. You see, the Samaritans had a flawed knowledge of God and worship. They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament. They rejected the other books of history, wisdom, and prophecy. Their rejection of these books kept them from knowing many things about the nature of God and His will. They were wrong about where and how to worship God in an acceptable manner.

In John 4:22-24, Jesus said,

“You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

In John 4:22, Jesus affirmed that *“salvation is of the Jews.”* Since salvation would come from the Jews, it meant that the Messiah would come from them. The Christ came from the Jews, according to prophecy. Jesus is the source of eternal life and the one they must worship.

1. The prophets foretold His coming.
2. The Jewish sacrifices anticipated Him.
3. And their land supplied the place of authorized worship, Jerusalem.

And though Jerusalem was the location, it would be irrelevant, for Jesus is what matters.

In John 4:23,24, Jesus spoke about the great religious changes that were about to happen. Thus, the time would come when worshippers were no longer recognized by their devotion to a temple but by worshiping the Father. The Father is looking for people who will worship Him properly (John 4:23-24). That implied that the place of worship in both cases would not matter.

1. “True worshipers” worship God sincerely and wisely as opposed to mechanically and ritualistically.
2. True worship is directed toward the Father and is shown “in spirit and truth.”
3. True worship is in harmony with God’s Word, His Truth (John 17:17).
4. “True worshippers” worship in this manner.

5. Not all worship is pleasing to God.
6. It is possible to worship God and yet be displeasing to Him when the worship is not offered *“in spirit and truth”* (cf. Matt. 15:7-9; Acts 17:23).
7. The Father is seeking people who want to worship Him sincerely.
8. Since God is Spirit, He is not bound by fleshly restraints: mountains, temples, or holy shrines.
9. God wants worship from the heart, for it leads to proper worship.
10. Our love for God allows us to understand His Grace toward us and compels us to worship Him the way He commands.

In John 4:25, the woman responds to Jesus saying,

“The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.”

Although the Samaritans did not accept the inspired writings of the prophets, which foretold the coming Messiah, they did believe in a Savior, mentioned in the books of Moses (cf. John 4:25). The woman responded that she knew the Messiah was coming and that He would explain everything when He came.

John 4:26 is the focal point of this story.

“Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am he.’”

Jesus is the Messiah. I, the one speaking to you, I am. Jesus knew what He was talking about regarding worship because He was the Christ and the Savior. He came to offer eternal life. When Jesus affirmed these truths, the light bulb began to shine for her. It was not an academic discussion any longer, for He is the Christ. This woman’s mind must have been reeling from

all the things Jesus had said to her. *Do you remember what Jesus told this woman back in verse 10?*

“Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.”

Jesus offered her something full and truly satisfying. Think about those words in John 4:14.

“Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.”

Jesus was telling this woman and is telling us today that He will provide what we lack in life. When our life is not right with God, we are thirsty and unsatisfied. This woman had five husbands and was on her sixth man. She is indeed thirsting for pure and living water. The water she was drinking was only providing her temporary relief. *And that is exactly the world we live in!* The world provides temporary enjoyment, only to leave us thirsty again. They keep running to the wrong well only to find disappointment and loss. How sad!

Jesus offers living water to all who are condemned because of sin. He calls them to eternal life with Him. But before they accept the living water that will give them eternal life, they must move their hearts from physical to spiritual concerns. The Light is shining brightly in the world so that nobody will be blinded by the darkness anymore. Sadly, Satan is blinding many with the things of this world. He is impeding them from seeing the treasure, Jesus, and the living water He provides. The world must see that what Jesus is offering is more valuable than anything this world can offer. Jesus is the pearl of great value. We must sell all to acquire Him, the treasure and the pearl. *Don't you think Jesus is worth everything?!*

CONCLUSION:

In John 4:26, Jesus said to the Samaritan woman,

“I who speak to you am he.”

This passage is the first recorded and perhaps the clearest declaration made by Jesus regarding His identity. Simon Peter did not confess Him as the Messiah until the last year of His ministry (Matt. 16:16). *Why do you suppose Jesus spoke so freely here?* Perhaps we can point out a few reasons:

1. The Samaritans would make no effort to take Him by force and make Him a king (e.g., John 6:15) and
2. His short stay in Samaria accounted only for an explicit and brief revelation.

John 4:26 is the focal point here. The Samaritan woman did not seem to understand what Jesus was telling her fully but acknowledged to Jesus that the Messiah was coming and would be explaining everything. Jesus told her that He was the Messiah, the Christ.

“The woman said to him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am he.’” (John 4:25-26)

Jesus is the Christ, the Savior, the gift of God, the living water, and the only One who can offer eternal life. Prior to John 4:21-25, Jesus had offered her what would give her true satisfaction. He said to her,

“But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” (John 4:14-15)

Jesus was calling this Samaritan woman to repentance. She needed salvation, the salvation that Jesus offered. Jesus had to penetrate her conscience with a sense of sin. *She needed Christ!* She needed Christ to reveal her sin and affirm His authority. Jesus offered her the living water freely (salvation). But Jesus was seeking a commitment on her part as He did with Nicodemus. Jesus was looking for a heart that would produce faith. Jesus invited her to become a true worshipper (*the hour is coming and now is!*) through submission to His will. She recognized this truth as coming from a prophet. Thus, she declared her faith in the coming Messiah (John 4:25).

Jesus declared to her His own identity. This woman was ready to make that commitment Jesus wanted from her (John 4:28-30).

Isn't it marvelous that this woman had come to get a bucket of water and instead found the one who could transform her into a true worshiper of God, the Messiah!

After she committed to following Jesus, the Messiah, she wanted to lead others to the same “water” she had found. She invited others to investigate the evidence. Her first desire was to lead others to the same “water” that she had found. Indeed, her faith in Jesus bore fruit as she taught others her faith. John 4:39-43 confirms this.

“Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, ‘He told me all that I ever did.’ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. 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 indeed the Savior of the world. After the two days he departed for Galilee.’”

In the New Testament Law of Christ, Jesus is the foundation of our new temple where we come to worship God and find redemption. Salvation came from the Jews because Jesus, the Savior, came from the Jewish people, fulfilling all the prophecies and promises of God to Abraham. And since Jesus is the only source of eternal life and the only One we must worship, Jerusalem is not relevant anymore, for Jesus is what matters. So now we are commanded to worship the Father and not the Temple according to the Law of Moses. The Father is seeking those who will worship Him the way He has authorized.

“But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:23-24)

Since God is spirit, we must worship Him properly. *Why?* Because it is a matter of the spirit rather than a physical location, physical posture, or an external ritual. God demands that we worship Him from the heart, for it leads to the kind of worship that He demands that we offer. When we understand God’s Love and Grace toward us, we will be compelled to worship Him from the heart, the way that He wants.

How sad it is to see Satan blinding people with the things of this world, causing them to fail to see the treasures found in Jesus and His living water! We must examine our hearts and see what our Savior is offering. He is offering something precious, priceless, and more valuable than anything this world can offer us. Since our Lord Jesus is the most valuable pearl in this world, we must sell everything to acquire it. He is our most precious and priceless treasure worthy of all!

Those who thirst for righteousness accept the gift of God that Jesus is offering. Righteous and holy living is as essential

to them as food and water are. These are the ones who can never get enough of the riches of God's Word to be satisfied. Their relationship with God is like the eating of rich food (Isaiah 55:1-2). Our culture's satisfaction is found in carnal pursuits and goals.

1. Bodybuilding.
2. Weight loss.
3. Group therapy to heal the social ills.
4. And the empty-headed vain fashions that absorb our times.

They promise what will satisfy their worldly and fleshly desires. Everyone yearns to be satisfied with the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life. Sin fills their hunger and thirst. They desire lesser things. Jeremiah, the prophet, described this thought in Jeremiah 2. The people of his time were described as having broken cisterns that could not hold water.

"But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the LORD, for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water." (Jeremiah 2:12-13)

This is precisely the problem with our world. Our world rejects God's prescription that quenches the thirst caused by sin. No matter how many pleasures they try, the only enjoyment they can find is temporary, so they thirst again. They keep running to the wrong well where they find disappointment, heartache, and loss. They reject Jesus' offering of living water and eternal life, so they stand condemned. They reject the things of God and choose the physical things of this world.

They are blinded by this world's darkness even while the Light brightly shines and leads them to eternal life.

Fools reject what God is offers them: flowing, clean, and pure water. Yet, they are eager to drink the old, stale, contaminated water. They deceive themselves thinking that they will still be satisfied with such contaminated water. *Indeed, worldly satisfaction comes with such a decaying way of living!* They would rather pass by the pure and unpolluted water of righteousness, holiness, and godliness.

Those who love righteousness thirst for the living water. They understand what Jesus said to them.

"I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst." (John 6:35)

The more we hunger and thirst for the righteous things of God, the more we will be satisfied. The more we are dissatisfied with other carnal substitutes, the more we will thirst for God and His kingdom of righteousness. The path of righteousness destroys self-righteousness because self-righteousness will bankrupt our spirit and cover up our need for repentance. Jesus is challenging us to examine our hearts, that we might thirst for salvation. Salvation is for those who sincerely and genuinely want it. Our spiritual bankruptcy must compel us to mourn over our sins and desire salvation, restoration, reconciliation, and righteousness.

You see, Jesus, our Lord, supplies what our souls are lacking. We are thirsty because of sin. Sin separates us from God. When sin rules, our lives are not right with Him. This Samaritan woman was very thirsty for "this water," for she had had more than five husbands and was living in sin and separated from God. Although she was drinking the well-water, she was still thirsty because no water could supply what she needed.

She was drinking from the wrong kind of water and finding only temporary relief.

Jesus is standing at the door calling for true fanatics, who would eat and drink from Him and His kingdom of righteousness. *Jesus does not want us to substitute Him for worldly pursuits, for He is not our hobby or pastime!* Those who are hungry and thirsty don't want merely a substitute either. They hunger and thirst for Jesus' food and water. Only those who sincerely hunger and thirst for God will conform to the will of their Father in heaven. Those who have the right disposition of seeking, searching, and groping after the righteousness of God will be filled and satisfied (Matt. 6:25-33; Acts 17:26-28; James. 1:12; Rev. 2:10).

Are you thirsty? Who can satisfy that thirst?

May the yearning in our heart and soul find the only source of eternal life, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. May we hunger and thirst for Him, our Manna, and Living Water, that we may be blessed and be satisfied with His righteousness. May we be renewed in Him by drinking of the fountain of Living Water, the Only source of eternal life.

"Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst, but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.'" (John 4:13-14)

"Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." (Revelation 22:1)

This is a sample of the material contained in
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