

John 4:24-42

For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

²⁵ The woman said, “I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

²⁶ Then Jesus told her, “I am the Messiah!”

²⁷ Just then his disciples came back. They were shocked to find him talking to a woman, but none of them had the nerve to ask, “What do you want with her?” or “Why are you talking to her?”

²⁸ The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, ²⁹ “Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?” ³⁰ So the people came streaming from the village to see him.

³¹ Meanwhile, the disciples were urging Jesus, “Rabbi, eat something.”

³² But Jesus replied, “I have a kind of food you know nothing about.”

³³ “Did someone bring him food while we were gone?” the disciples asked each other.

³⁴ Then Jesus explained: “My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work. ³⁵ You know the saying, ‘Four months between planting and harvest.’ But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest. ³⁶ The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike! ³⁷ You know the saying, ‘One plants and another harvests.’ And it’s true. ³⁸ I sent you to harvest where you didn’t plant; others had already done the work, and now you will get to gather the harvest.”

³⁹ Many Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus because the woman had said, “He told me everything I ever did!” ⁴⁰ When they came out to see him, they begged him to stay in their village. So he stayed for two days, ⁴¹ long enough for many more to hear his message and believe. ⁴² Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not just because of what you told us, but because we have heard him ourselves. Now we know that he is indeed the Savior of the world.”

Background Notes

Jacob’s Well is in modern Nablus, Israel, beneath a Greek Orthodox church. You can still drink from it. Nablus lies between Mount Ebal (known as the mountain of cursing) and Mount Gerizim, where Israel’s covenant with God was ratified in the days of Joshua. When the Samaritans emerged in the 7th–8th century BC, they chose Mount Gerizim as their worship site (John 4:20). Archaeologists uncovered a temple on Mount Gerizim, possibly modeled after Solomon’s.

This was the setting for Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman. She came to the well at midday, which was not normal. She likely did this to avoid others due to her reputation, but it was perfectly timed according to God’s plan.

Teaching Points

1. Worship of God must be in spirit and in truth.

This means worship is not about fancy buildings, rituals, or outward forms. It's about a sincere connection with God. He seeks those who worship from the heart, grounded in the truth of who He is. Worship must be Christ-centered and scripturally accurate. People can be sincere in worship while worshipping the wrong things. Sincerity alone isn't enough. Worship must align with the truth of God's Word. True worship comes from knowing God personally and honoring Him as revealed in Scripture.

2. Service to God may be planting or harvesting.

In verses 37-38 Jesus said, *"One plants and another harvests,"* reminding us that in God's work, some "plant" the initial seeds of faith and others "harvest" as lives are changed. Both roles are important, and there's no place for jealousy in our mission for God. In John 4, the disciples harvested where others, like John the Baptist, had planted. Many Samaritans came to faith in Jesus because of the initial work of John the Baptist. Whether planting or harvesting, there's deep fulfillment in doing God's work.

Application

1. Use your personal testimony to witness.

The Samaritan woman believed in Jesus and immediately began sharing her experience, telling others (verses 28–30). She may not have had all the answers to tough questions, but she simply shared her encounter with Christ. Likewise, we don't need to be experts to witness. Just tell your story. Your personal testimony is a powerful and effective tool for evangelism.