



Jesus, the Only Hope

Lesson 6 John 4:27-54

REVIEW

In lesson 5, we studied the conviction of John the Baptist that Jesus Christ was the only Savior. We also studied the conversion of the woman at the well. We ended that lesson with Jesus' self-identification as the Messiah who would tell her all things in John 4:26.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the events that followed the conversation with the woman at the well in Sychar of Samaria.
2. Apply the story of the healing of the nobleman's son to the individual's life.
3. Recognize Jesus Christ as the Only Hope for both the Samaritans and the nobleman and his son.

JESUS: THE ONLY HOPE FOR THE SAMARITANS (4:27-38)

A. The Astonished Disciples - 4:27

4:27 "And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?"

1. "Marvelled" means "to wonder, to wonder at."¹ It is sometimes translated "wondered" in the New Testament - **Luke 2:18, 4:22**
2. They marveled that Jesus was speaking with this woman. "There was a rabbinical precept: "Let no one talk with a woman in the street, no, not with his own wife." The disciples held Jesus to be a rabbi and felt that He was acting in a way beneath His dignity."²
3. The astonishment of the disciples proves:
 - a. The author was an apostle. He knew the thoughts of the disciples.
 - b. The author was a Jew. He was familiar with the Jewish attitude toward women.

B. The Woman's Witness - 4:28-30

4:28 "The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, **29** Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? **30** Then they went out of the city, and came unto him."

1. She left her water pot. She had gone to draw physical water but received spiritual water. In her excitement, she left it. - **4:28**
2. Once she received it, she wanted others to know about it - **4:28**
3. Her proclamation - **4:29**
 - a. "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did"
 - i. This is an interesting statement because Jesus, at least according to what is recorded in John's gospel, did not tell her all things, but what He did tell her convinced her that He could
 - ii. If He could tell her all things, He must be the Messiah - **4:25**

¹ Joseph H. Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 284.

² A.T. Robertson, *Robertson's Word Pictures of the New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1932), p. 68.

b. *“Is not this the Christ?”* or *“Can this be the Christ?”*³ She is convinced by her first statement, but she asks a question to pique the men of the city’s interest.

4. Its effectiveness: *“They went out of the city, and came unto him”* - 4:30

C. A Conversation about the Harvest - 4:31-38

4:31 “In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. **32** But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. **33** Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? **34** Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. **35** Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. **36** And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. **37** And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. **38** I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.”

1. The request of the disciples is “Rabbi, eat.” Remember that John uses this title when introducing an inadequate question or action. Jesus uses their request about a physical need to enter into teaching about a spiritual issue. - 4:31

2. The response of Jesus is a spiritual truth - 4:32

3. The disciples are mystified. They are looking at the physical realm - 4:33

4. Jesus’ teaching on the harvest - 4:34-38

a. His sustenance - 4:34

i. To do God’s will. It was God who sent Him.

ii. To finish His work

a) *“Finish”* means “to carry through completely, to accomplish, finish, bring to an end”⁴

b) *“Work”* is a redemptive work

b. Five truths about The Harvest

i. You must lift up your eyes to see the fields - 4:35

*“Jesus told his disciples to ‘lift up’ their eyes and ‘look on the fields,’ which were already white. Jesus could be referring to (1) the surrounding fields, which may have been prematurely ripe, (2) their task of evangelism, or (3) the Samaritan people already making their way to hear Him teach the word of God. These people were the white harvest field. The disciples were guilty of looking forward to harvesting while ignoring the harvest that was already ripe.”*⁵

ii. The harvest is ready now. The fields are white for harvest. - 4:35

iii. Already “he that reaps receives wages.” Jesus is already reaping the harvest with this woman. - 4:36

iv. The one who sows and the one who reaps should rejoice together - 4:36

v. The fields that you are working may have been worked by another - 4:37-38

vi. Jesus confirms the Old Testament words about those who sow and those who reap - **Job 31:8; Micah 6:15**

³ Ibid., p. 69.

⁴ Thayers, p. 618.

⁵ Elmer Towns, *The Gospel of John: Believe and Live* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 2002), 42.

D. A City is Changed - 4:39-42

4:39 “And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. **40** So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. **41** And many more believed because of his own word; **42** And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.”

1. This change took many forms
 2. Many Samaritans believed because of the woman’s testimony - 4:39
 3. Jesus remained in the city and many more believed because of His Word. They believed: - 4:41
 - a. Because they heard Him themselves. “*We have heard him ourselves*” - 4:42
 - b. He is “*the Christ, the Saviour of the world*” - 4:42
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A PROPHET WITHOUT HONOR IN HIS OWN COUNTRY (4:43-45)

4:43 "Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee. **44** For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. **45** Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilaeans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.”

A. Matthew 13:57

“And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house.”

1. Jesus is in Nazareth, His hometown, teaching in the synagogues - **Matthew 13:54**
2. The people hear and are astonished at His wisdom and miraculous powers - **Matthew 13:54**
3. They question His power because of His obvious humanity - **Matthew 13:55-56**
4. The statement is made. “*A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house.*”
5. This means their unbelief dishonors the Prophet - **Matthew 13:58**

B. Mark 6:4 (same story as Matthew 13)

“But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.”

C. Luke 4:24

“And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country,”

1. In Galilee, preaching in the synagogues - **Luke 4:14-15**
2. In Nazareth, teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath - **Luke 4:16-21**
 - a. Reads a Messianic prophecy from Isaiah which speaks of the Messiah’s mission to preach the gospel to the poor, freedom to the captives, to restore sight to the blind and proclaim the favorable year of the Lord
 - b. Claims to be the fulfillment of that prophecy
3. The people wonder if He is God because of His human identity as the son of Joseph - **Luke 4:22**

4. The statement is made. *"No prophet is accepted in his own country"* - Luke 4:24
 5. He tells them to receive Him as Zarephath did with Elijah and as Naaman did with Elisha
 6. They reject him
- D. Meaning: a prophet is better received outside of his own people, house and country
- E. Contrast the belief of Samaritans with the unbelief of the Jews in Judea - John 2
- F. *"Went into Galilee"* resumes the trip that began in 4:3 - 4:43
- G. He is received in Galilee - 4:45
1. *"Received"* means "to welcome, to take by the hand, to receive hospitably"⁶
 2. *"Received"* because of what He did at the feast in Jerusalem
 - a. Cleansed the Temple - 2:13-17
 - b. Signs - 2:23

JESUS: THE ONLY HOPE FOR THE NOBLEMAN AND HIS SON (4:46-54)

(adapted from *Exploring the Gospel of John* by John Phillips)⁷

A. His plight - 4:46

4:46 "So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum."

1. The request was from *"a certain nobleman"* meaning "king's man"
2. Possibly an officer of Herod Antipas who was known as *"the king."* He was the one responsible for the beheading of John the Baptist. - Matthew 14:9
3. Made the 15 mile journey from Capernaum to Cana

B. His plea - 4:47-49

4:47 "When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. **48** Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. **49** The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die."

1. He *"besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death"* - 4:47
 - a. *"Besought"* means begged
 - b. *"Heal"* means cure
 - c. *"Son"* means son or offspring
 - d. *"Point of death"* means about to die
2. Jesus challenged their faith - 4:48
 - a. *"Ye"* is plural. It was intended not only for the man, but the crowd, too.
 - b. *"Signs"* are the spiritual aspect of the miracles. Signs were intended to convey some deeper truth. They proved that he who performed them was acting under the authority of God.

⁶ Ibid., p. 130

⁷ John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1989), 96-97.

- c. *“Wonders”* drew attention to the external aspect of the miracles. They were designed to attract attention.
- d. Contrast the nobleman’s (and Galileans’) need to have a miracle in order to believe with the faith of the Samaritans

3. The man’s response - 4:49

- a. *“Ere”* means before. The need for a miracle after death was out of the question, though Christ could have certainly done so.
- b. *“Child”* means “little one, dear one.” This is a tender term used by parents to describe their love for child.
- c. You can sense the desperation as this man’s word choice for his son changes

C. His path of faith - 4:50

4:50 “Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.”

- 1. *“Go thy way; thy son liveth”* was Jesus testing his faith. “I’m not coming down there. Do you believe even though you don’t see the sign?” is a test of faith.
- 2. The man’s actions:
 - a. He believed, which means “to have faith, to entrust”
 - b. He went his way

D. His proof - 4:51-54

4:51 “And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. **52** Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. **53** So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house. **54** This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee.”

- 1. The message received - 4:51-52
 - a. Your son lives
 - b. The healing took place at the seventh hour
 - c. The miracle believed - 4:53
 - i. The man believed
 - ii. His entire household believed
 - d. Distance is no obstacle for the Lord

LIFE LESSONS

- 1. The harvest is now. As disciples of Jesus, we must lift up our eyes, see the fields and labor for the harvest.
- 2. Jesus is the only hope for cities in spiritual darkness
- 3. Faith is taking God at His word
- 4. God’s timing is perfect
- 5. Don’t build your faith on the signs and wonders. Build it on the person of Christ.