

The Gospel of John

The Gospel of John

Lesson #42
The Journey
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1

The Gospel of John

John 20:30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

2

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John 4:32 But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about."

3

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- It's not that Jesus didn't need or want food – he is simply telling us that doing God's will is just as satisfying as eating!
- Perhaps the best image here is to say that just as we look forward to our next meal, we will look forward to the next time we get to serve in his kingdom.
- We will anticipate it, we will prepare for it, and we will consider it as the best and most enjoyable use of our time – there will be nothing else we would rather do.

4

4

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- John 4:35 Do you not say, '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.
- In verse #30 we read, "**They went out of the town and were coming to him.**" Now we read, "**lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest**".
- The lesson for us is to "**lift up our eyes and look**" for opportunities to plant, to water, and maybe even harvest.

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5

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- I encourage you to not despair or think of yourself as a failure if you are trying to evangelize and it seems like nothing is happening.
- Be content to sow, water, or harvest – do not put pressure on yourself as though it all falls on you for it is always God who gives the increase.
- You are not a salesman and you do not have to offer "deals" that try to enhance the offering of the gospel – if the gospel isn't enough then they must not be ready yet.

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6

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As far as I can tell from scripture, we do not get to choose whether we sow, water, or harvest so we should always have our heads up looking for whatever is available to us. If I were to be completely forthcoming, I would add most of my opportunities have been sowing and watering and I do not prefer one over the other, nor do I think we should.

7

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- Not every conversion is immediate and dynamic – no one ever witnessed to me, and I had no conscious interest in God beyond some very surface feelings, but somehow the Holy Spirit prepared me and saved me with what appeared to be no human effort at all.
- However, I think I have identified the beginning and end of my conversion to Christ, and it did involve people – my ½ sister took me to Sunday School for a year when I was six and a friend gave me The Late Great Planet Earth to read when I was twenty-five.

8

8

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I find it very interesting that, aside from Jesus, we read of only a handful of personal evangelism accounts throughout the New Testament. What we do see though are lots of instructions for how to live for Christ while being conformed to his image. Was personal evangelism going on? I suspect all the time as each believer's life spoke of their love for, and commitment to God.

9

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1st Peter 3:13 Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, 15 but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

10

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- We are to live lives that provoke questions about us in the minds of those we know and meet.

“always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

- It ought to be our goal to exhibit a hope that causes the people we know to ask why it is that we are so hopeful.

11

11

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- It seems clear from today's text there were “fields” of people around Jesus and his disciples to be harvested if they were willing to see them.
- At the same time, I would tell you the scriptures emphasize all three phases of evangelism – sowing, watering, and harvesting.
- Lots of sowing and watering took place in Sychar that is not written about, but it must have happened.

12

12

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We love hearing testimonies about people being converted to Christ while rare are the accounts of all the sowing and watering that led to the harvest – but maybe there should be!

13

13

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Who is it that you want to see saved? Pray for them, sow and water when you can, and be looking for something to harvest. In today's text we read there are 4 months between sowing and harvesting so be patient. It is possible to sow and harvest the same day, but it sure isn't normal.

14

14

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There is a reason why there is far more sowing and watering than harvesting. We need to be honest with ourselves and acknowledge that most of the seeds we've sown will never be harvested, but we must plant or there is no chance of a harvest.

15

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- John 4:36 “Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. 37 For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ 38 I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”
- There are “wages” mentioned for the one who reaps, but without planting and watering there would be no reaping, so it is fair to assume all three have rewards.

16

16

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1st Corinthians 3:5 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So neither he who plants, nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8 He who plants, and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor.

17

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- John 4:39 Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.” 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of his word. 42 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.”
- The little village of Sychar must have been prepared for the testimony of the woman – **without the planting, and watering there would have been no harvest.**

18

18

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- “Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, **“He told me all that I ever did.”**
- What? No Romans road? No Four Spiritual Laws? Why she never even attended an Evangelism Explosion meeting!
- Surely this woman did not know enough and have sufficient training to be telling people about Jesus, did she?. All she seemed to know is what happened to her. 😊

19

19

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Is it not interesting that in Sychar there was no sinner’s prayer, no alter call, just a testimony followed by belief! Sometimes people are harvested by the foolishness of preaching, and sometimes people come to Christ just by the testimonies of their peers.

20

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- We should all be encouraged by the simplicity of the woman's testimony – **“he told me all that I ever did”**.
- She didn’t know a lot of scripture – she just tells what happened when Jesus shocked her with the **“you’ve had 5 husbands”** line.
- For her to proclaim that Christ has come she will have to air her dirty laundry of sin to be credible.

21

21

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Her sin, which was once her shame, is now part of her testimony – talk about redemption!



22

22

Evangelism Tips

Emphasize Jesus.
Be friendly, and aggressive.
Ask a leading question.
Without planting seeds there is no harvest.
Be prepared to go where the conversation goes.
Avoid pointless debates that get in the way of the truth.
Become more and more sanctified.

23

Questions?

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24