

CALLED TO EVANGELIZE

Bible Background – LUKE 2:36-38; ACTS 1:12-14, 2:16-21, 21:8-9

Printed Text – LUKE 2:36-38; ACTS 2:16-21, 21:8-9

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.”

Many Samaritans Believe

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.”

-----New Living Translation

Lesson Introduction

Across the world, ethnic and cultural groups struggle to relate to one another. The passage in this lesson encourages believers to build relationships and even to defy cultural norms in doing so. We can model Christ's sacrificial love, grace and mercy to everyone we meet. Jesus crossed numerous barriers in speaking with the Samaritan woman in this passage of scripture. Because of His overture, she was able to wonder at the person of the Messiah and was compelled to share the transforming power of God with others in her community.

Background: In John 4, Jesus and His disciples left Judea to return to Galilee. The route led them directly through Samaria. Although Jews and Samaritans both descended from ancient Israel, their religious practices and beliefs were slightly different, and there was long-standing hostility between them. While His disciples went into the city to buy food, Jesus rested by the well in the heat of the day. While Jesus rested, a Samaritan woman came to the well to draw water. Due to the social customs, the woman did not expect Jesus to speak to her. He asked her to draw physical water for Him and promised that He could provide her with living or spiritual water. There at the well, they shared a theological conversation. As the conversation progressed, she realized that Jesus was no ordinary Jewish man. Just before the disciples returned, Jesus revealed Himself to be Israel's long-awaited Messiah.

-----*Precepts for Living*, the UMI Annual Commentary 2020-2021, p. 269

“I Am”

John 4:25-30: We know little about the Samaritan woman with whom Jesus engaged in conversation. We are made aware that she has had five husbands and is currently living with a man. She may have been widowed a few times and probably divorced at some point. For a woman in that time, divorce carried quite a stigma. This may explain why she came to the well at noon, an odd time since most women came in the cool of the morning. Coming to the well at an odd time would probably help her to avoid the judgment and gossip of the other women in town.

The Samaritans and Jews worshiped the same God, but their religious practices and traditions were quite different. The Samaritans, however, did believe that the Messiah would come but they expected Him to come as a teacher who would reveal all truth (Deuteronomy 18:15-20). At the end of their theological discourse, Jesus revealed Himself to be the Messiah. This marked the first time He openly admitted who He was. Then the disciples walked upon this unlikely exchange between Jesus and this woman. For not only was she a woman but a Samaritan as well whom the Jews considered unclean. They were shocked, but out of their reverence for Him no one dared to say a word. “I am He” is a common phrase that Jesus uses in the Gospel of John. It is akin to “I Am” and reveals Jesus to be God. Even though His disciples struggled in their belief that Jesus was the Messiah, the Samaritan woman had no problem believing Him to be the Christ. She left her water jug at the well and ran to tell all the good news of the man who had “told her everything she had ever done.” She told the men of the city, probably the teachers and elders, with such sincerity that they came to find Jesus as well.

◆*Why do you think the Samaritan woman was so receptive to the idea that Jesus was the Messiah?*

Gathering Fruit for Eternal Life

John 4:31-38: The disciples asked Jesus to eat, knowing that He had been a while without physical food. His response baffled them, just as His response concerning “Living water” to the woman had baffled her. He began to explain to them that what was strengthening and power to His soul was to do the work that the Father had sent Him to do. It was imperative with Jesus to accomplish His Father’s work, as it should be with us. As believers, doing the will of the Father is a source of our strength and satisfaction. It should never be a chore or a burden. He saw His work as food for His soul. He was hungry for the souls that need salvation. As believers, do we have that same hunger? Are we willing to go to the least likely places to find souls in need of salvation? This especially important soul satisfying work is all about the souls of people. He illustrated this point with a comparison to sowing and reaping.

Jesus told them that the fields were ready for harvest—looking with a spiritual eye, the souls that need salvation are ready. Just like many people must labor and toil working the field long before the actual time of harvest, for one may sow while another one reaps. From a spiritual viewpoint, the Old Testament prophets put in their work in preparing the soil—the hearts and minds of people. It is now the task of later generations to see the unsaved as lost souls who need salvation. Each person plays an active role but there is only one purpose.

◆ *When is the last time you let someone know about the Lord’s indescribable love for them?*

Because of the Woman’s Testimony

John 4:39-42: Many Samaritans came to seek Jesus because of the woman’s testimony. She was a sincere and honest witness who simply told the truth. They came and sought Jesus because of the woman’s witness. But they believed because they encountered Him and heard His word. Her testimony was a good start for them, but they needed to know for themselves and they did. It was no longer hearsay. They, too, had become eyewitnesses to who Jesus is, the Savior of the world.

◆ *What experiences did Jesus have in Samaria that made Him convinced that the fields were ripe for a spiritual harvest?*

Conclusion

An excellent rule to follow is to never underestimate the ability of anyone, regardless of society’s labels. The very ones that we may write off may be the ones who have the most to share—in wisdom and truth. And likewise, do not be afraid to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with others. You never know who might be transformed by your witness!

Sources:

Banks, M. (Ed.). (2020). Call in the New Testament. *Precepts for Living*, 23(Fall Quarter), 265-275. The Urban Ministries, Inc. Annual Commentary 2020-2021.

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February 7, 2021- Study Guide 10

Lesson for Next Week – February 14, 2021 – Study Guide 11

MARY MAGDALENE: A FAITHFUL DISCIPLE

Bible Background ♦ MARK 15:40; 16:1-9; LUKE 3:1-3; JOHN 20:10-18

Printed Text ♦ LUKE 3:1-3; MARK 15:40; JOHN 20:10-18

Devotional Reading ♦ ROMANS 4:13-25

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Jesus Appears to Paul
(1 Corinthians 15:1-11)

TUESDAY

Present with Jesus at the Cross
(John 19:25-30)

WEDNESDAY

Spices Prepared to Anoint Jesus' Body
(Mark 16:1-8)

THURSDAY

Mary Magdalene Finds an Empty Tomb
(John 20:1-9)

FRIDAY

Angel Confirms Jesus' Resurrection to Women
(Matthew 28:1-10)

SATURDAY

Jesus Appears, Disciples Sent into Ministry
(John 20:19-23)

SUNDAY

Mary Magdalene, Faithful Disciple
(Luke 3:1-3; Mark 15:40; John 20:10-18)