

Themes in the Gospel of John

The Testimony of the Samaritans

Lesson #5 for November 2, 2024

Scriptures: John 3:26-30; 4:1-42; Jeremiah 2:13; Zechariah 14:8; Ezekiel 36:25-27.

1. This lesson is about Jesus's interaction with the Samaritan woman at the well and the other Samaritans she encouraged to hear Jesus.

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] Who were the Samaritans? The northern kingdom of Israel had been taken captive by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. To create political stability, the Assyrians dispersed their captives throughout their empire. Likewise, captives from other nations were brought to populate the northern kingdom, and these became the Samaritans, who practiced their own form of Judaism. [Paganism mixed with Judaism was a mess!]

Relations, however, were not good between them and the Jews. For instance, the Samaritans worked against the rebuilding of the temple at the return of the Jews from Babylon. The Samaritans, meanwhile, had built their own temple, on Mount Gerizim. But this temple was destroyed by the Jewish ruler John Hyrcanus in 128 B.C.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sabbath Afternoon, October 26.‡

2. What do we know about Samaria and the surrounding area?

[Internet:] **Cities, Towns, and Mountains of Samaria:**

Samaria - the capital city of the Northern Kingdom of Israel throughout the monarchic period; renamed Sebaste during later Roman rule

In the NT, mentioned only in the stories of Philip preaching in the city (Acts 8:5-13) and Peter & John confronting Simon the magician (Acts 8:14-25)

Shechem - oldest city in this region (ca. 2000 BC [*sic*]); destroyed in AD [*sic*] 67; archaeological site of *Tel-Balatah* today; about 1 mile E of Nablus mentioned 68x in the OT (esp. in Genesis, Joshua, and Judges), but only twice in the NT (Acts 7:16)

Sychar - a small city/town near Jacob's Well (near modern Nablus); name is possibly a Greek version of ancient Hebrew Shechem

In the whole Bible, mentioned only in **John 4:5** - "So he [Jesus] came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there..." [*sic*]

Mount Gerizim - highest mountain in the region of Samaria

Mentioned four times in the Hebrew Bible:

Deut 11:29 – "When the LORD your God has brought you into the land that you are entering to occupy, you shall set the blessing on **Mount Gerizim** and the curse on Mount Ebal."

Deut 27:12 – "When you have crossed over the Jordan, these shall stand on **Mount Gerizim** for the blessing of the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin."

Joshua 8:33 – All Israel, alien as well as citizen, with their elders and officers and their judges, stood on opposite sides of the ark in front of the levitical priests

who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, half of them in front of **Mount Gerizim** and half of them in front of **Mount Ebal**, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded at the first, that they should bless the people of Israel.

Judges 9:7 – When it was told to Jotham, he went and stood on the top of **Mount Gerizim**, and cried aloud and said to them, “Listen to me, you lords of **Shechem**, so that God may listen to you.”

Not mentioned directly in the New Testament, but probably the mountain referred to by the Samaritan woman and Jesus:

John 4:20-21 – “Our ancestors worshiped on **this mountain**, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.” / [*sic*]

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

[<https://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Geography-Samaria.htm>]^{‡Ω} [Bold type is in the source.][‡]

3. What was the relationship between the Jews and the Samaritans?

[BSG:] The Samaritans were despised by their Jewish neighbors. The Jews despised the Samaritans even more than they despised their Roman oppressors. The Samaritans were viewed as corrupt, insincere, and to be avoided at any cost. That is why travelers from the regions of Galilee avoided the shorter route to Jerusalem via Samaria and instead detoured through Perea, taking the longer route to the city.

The Samaritan problem started when Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.) took most of the population of Israel as captives to Assyria to settle there. These Israelites comprised what are known as the ten lost tribes of Israel. To complete this work of depopulation, the new Assyrian emperor, Sargon II (722–705 B.C.), exiled even more of the inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom.

To unify the Assyrian empire, people from Assyria and the Mesopotamian regions were brought into Israel to repopulate it. Thus, these newcomers mixed with the remnant of Israel, both religiously and racially. The outline here is but a brief overview of the events that transpired. Other negative incidents that occurred later on, such as the Samaritan attempt to sabotage the rebuilding efforts of the Jewish exiles when they returned to their country, only served to compound the problem and intensify racial tensions between the Samaritans and Jews. [Later, the Jews destroyed the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim.]—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 65.[‡]

4. Basically, the Jews and the Samaritans had been at war since the 2nd century B.C. and had been hostile for centuries before that.

5. After that background, we turn to this lesson. People were beginning to compare the progress and results of John the Baptist’s ministry with that of Jesus and His disciples.

John 3:26-30: ²⁶So they [John’s disciples] went to John and said, “Teacher, you remember the man who was with you on the east side of the Jordan, the one you spoke about? Well, he is baptizing now, and everyone is going to him!”

²⁷ John answered, “No one can have anything unless God gives it to him. ²⁸You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah, but I have been

sent ahead of him.’²⁹The bridegroom is the one to whom the bride belongs; but the bridegroom’s friend, who stands by and listens, is glad when he hears the bridegroom’s voice. This is how my own happiness is made complete.³⁰**He must become more important while I become less important.**”—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., John 3:26-30). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].^{†‡}

John 4:1-4: ¹The Pharisees heard that Jesus was winning and baptizing more disciples than John. ²(Actually, Jesus himself did not baptize anyone; only his disciples did.) ³So when Jesus heard what was being said, he left Judea and went back to Galilee; ⁴on his way there he had to go through Samaria.—*Good News Bible*.*

6. As Jesus saw these tensions developing, He decided it would be better to leave Judea for a while and return to Galilee. The most direct route was through Samaria. But, most Jews did not travel through Samaria because of the animosity between the Jews and Samaritans. However, Jesus had a mission in Samaria; He had a woman to meet and a town to convert.

John 4:5-8: ⁵ In Samaria he came to a town named Sychar, which was not far from the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

⁷ A Samaritan woman came to draw some water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink of water.” ⁸(His disciples had gone into town to buy food.)—*Good News Bible*.*

[BSG:] **Jacob’s well was located right next to Shechem, while Sychar, where the woman was from, was about a mile away (1.5 km).** Jesus sat by the well while His disciples went into the city to buy food. He had no access to the cooling water of the well. When the woman came to draw water, He asked her for a drink.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday.^{†‡}

7. Jesus interacted with the Samaritan woman by asking her for a drink of water. Reading again:

John 4:7-9: ⁷ A Samaritan woman came to draw some water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink of water.” ⁸(His disciples had gone into town to buy food.)

⁹ The woman answered, “You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan — so how can you ask me for a drink?” (Jews will not use the same cups and bowls that Samaritans use.)—*Good News Bible*.*

[BSG:] **In the culture of the Jews in Jesus’ day, there was an obligation to reciprocate hospitality, which was acceptable when the reciprocator was a fellow Jew but not when he or she was a Samaritan.** Receiving a favor and reciprocating it tended to draw people closer to one another. For this reason, the Jews were totally against this practice with foreigners. But Jesus transcended the national prejudice of the Jews, for He came to minister and to save the high and the low, both within and without Jewish society. Furthermore, why would such a societal obligation bother Him when His mission was to go to the extreme extent of dying for humanity?—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 67.^{†‡}

8. It would be wonderful if we had a way to transport ourselves back into that environment and understand exactly what was going on. Even today in the Middle East, asking for a favor is

like opening a door to friendship and requires the receiver to return the favor.

9. Taking a side trip for a moment, it is very interesting to compare this one-on-one encounter with the woman at the well in Samaria, with His one-on-one encounter with Nicodemus, a Pharisee and one of the Sanhedrin members and a ruler of the Jews. Nicodemus came at night to find Jesus, hoping to avoid discovery. The Samaritan woman went to the well in the middle of the day, trying to avoid contact with other human beings, especially other women.

[BSG:] In John 3, it was surprising that Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews and a rabbi, would lower himself to come to Jesus. **He came by night to avoid discovery.** But, in John 4, **the woman hides in broad daylight**, perhaps avoiding contact with other women who came either at the beginning or end of the day when it was cooler. After all, why did she go such a long way to fetch water, and in the middle of the day when it was hot? Whatever the reason for her being there, meeting Jesus would change her life.

What scene unfolds next? A Jewish teacher is compared to a Samaritan woman of poor reputation. What a contrast! And yet, in this exact context, a remarkable encounter unfolds.

What are some of the taboos in your own culture that could hamper your witness to others? How do we learn to transcend them?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday, October 27.^{†‡}

10. Are there places that you do not go or do go because of special beliefs? Are you afraid to attempt witnessing in some places? How can we overcome these prejudices? Reading again the description of the start of Jesus's encounter with the Samaritan woman:

John 4:7-15: ⁷ A Samaritan woman came to draw some water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink of water." ⁸(His disciples had gone into town to buy food.)

⁹ The woman answered, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan — so how can you ask me for a drink?" (Jews will not use the same cups and bowls that Samaritans use.)

¹⁰ Jesus answered, "If only you knew what God gives and who it is that is asking you for a drink, you would ask him, and he would give you **life-giving water.**"

¹¹ "Sir," the woman said, "you haven't got a bucket, and the well is deep. Where would you get that life-giving water? ¹²It was our ancestor Jacob who gave us this well; he and his sons and his flocks all drank from it. **You don't claim to be greater than Jacob, do you?**"

¹³ Jesus answered, "All those who drink this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks 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 which will provide him with life-giving water and give him eternal life.**"

¹⁵ "Sir," the woman said, "give me that water! Then I will never be thirsty again, nor will I have to come here to draw water."—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

[BSG:] Water is necessary for life; humans cannot exist without water, and so **water can be a powerful and appropriate image of eternal life**, as well. Hence, Jesus says, "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life" (*John 4:14, NKJV*).—*Adult Sabbath*

11. Jeremiah 2:13 and Zechariah 14:8 in the Old Testament talk about fresh, living water.

Jeremiah 2:13: “For my people have committed two sins: they have turned away from me, the spring of fresh water, and they have dug cisterns, cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all.”—*Good News Bible*.*

Zechariah 14:8: When that day comes, fresh water will flow from Jerusalem, half of it to the Dead Sea and the other half to the Mediterranean. It will flow all the year round, in the dry season as well as the wet.—*Good News Bible*.*

12. The water that Jesus was talking about with the Samaritan woman was on a whole different level. Later, at the Festival of Lights, Jesus made this declaration:

John 7:37-38: ³⁷ On the last and most important day of the festival Jesus stood up and said in a loud voice, “Whoever is thirsty should come to me, and ³⁸whoever believes in me should drink. As the scripture says, ‘Streams of life-giving water will pour out from his side.’ ”—*Good News Bible*.*

13. ***What did they think Jesus was talking about? What do you think He was saying?***

14. Ellen White had some interesting comments about Jesus’s “opening wedge” with the woman.

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] **The hatred between Jews and Samaritans prevented the woman from offering a kindness to Jesus; but the Saviour [sic-Br] was seeking to find the key to this [woman’s] heart, and with the tact born of divine love, He asked, not offered, a favor. The offer of a kindness might have been rejected; but trust awakens trust.** The King of heaven came to this outcast soul, asking a service at her hands. He who made the ocean, who controls the waters of the great deep, who opened the springs and channels of the earth, rested from His weariness at Jacob’s well, and was dependent upon a stranger’s kindness for even the gift of a drink of water.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 183.4-184.0.†‡

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15. Of course, one of the advantages that Jesus had that we do not have was His ability to know in advance the details of each person’s life, thoughts, and motives. He knew the story of Nicodemus, and he knew the story of the Samaritan woman.

16. Jesus did not waste time on these occasions. He went straight to what He knew was the important thing that needed to be talked about for that individual.

17. When looking at this story, we might think that this is the first time God had specifically offered water to an individual. But, of course, He provided water to the entire Israelite nation for 40 years. More than that, He offers to give this very special kind of “water” to all of us.

Ezekiel 36:25-27: ²⁵ “I will sprinkle clean water on you and make you clean from all your idols and everything else that has defiled you. ²⁶**I will give you a new heart and a new mind. I will take away your stubborn heart of stone and give you an obedient heart.** ²⁷**I will put my spirit in you and I will see to it that you follow my laws and keep all the commands I have given you.**”—*Good News Bible*.*† [How does God do that? Couldn’t He do that to everyone?]‡

18. Compare Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Jeremiah 31:31-34: ³¹ The LORD says, “The time is coming when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. ³²It will not be like the old covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt. Although I was like a husband to them, they did not keep that covenant. ³³The new covenant that I will make with the people of Israel will be this: **I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.** ³⁴None of them will have to teach his fellow-citizen to know the LORD, because all will know me, from the least to the greatest. I will forgive their sins and I will no longer remember their wrongs. I, the LORD, have spoken.”—*Good News Bible*.^{*†} [Who is doing the active things in this passage? It is important to realize in these verses that it was God who was/is acting!][‡]

19. It is obvious that neither Nicodemus nor the Samaritan woman understood, at first, what Jesus was talking about. So, each of them tried to change the conversation. What Jesus had suggested seemed impossible to them. Then, Jesus touched a tender spot. Suddenly, the conversation became very personal. Reading on:

John 4:16-18: ¹⁶ “Go and call your husband,” Jesus told her, “and come back.”

¹⁷ “I haven’t got a husband,” she answered.

Jesus replied, “You are right when you say you haven’t got a husband. ¹⁸You have been married to five men, and the man you live with now is not really your husband. You have told me the truth.”—*Good News Bible*.^{*}

[EGW:] Jesus now abruptly turned the conversation. **Before this soul could receive the gift He longed to bestow, she must be brought to recognize her sin and her Saviour [sic-Br].** He “saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.” She answered, “I have no husband.” **Thus she hoped to prevent all questioning in that direction.** But the Saviour [sic-Br] continued, “Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*^{* 187.5.}^{†‡}

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20. **Jesus opened her to receive the gospel by that very personal conversation.**

John 4:19-24: ¹⁹ “I see you are a prophet, sir,” the woman said. ²⁰ “My Samaritan ancestors worshipped God on this mountain, but you Jews say that Jerusalem is the place where we should worship God.”

²¹ Jesus said to her, “Believe me, woman, the time will come when people will not worship the Father either on this mountain or in Jerusalem. ²²You Samaritans do not really know whom you worship; but we Jews know whom we worship, because it is from the Jews that salvation comes. ²³But the time is coming and is already here, when by the power of God’s Spirit people will worship the Father as he really is, offering him the true worship that he wants. ²⁴God is Spirit, and only by the power of his Spirit can people worship him as he really is.”—*Good News Bible*.^{*}

21. Jesus took a moment or two to discuss the differences between the way the Samaritans were

worshiping and the ways and the Person that the Jews supposedly worshiped.

22. Then, the conversation took another turn.

John 4:25-26: ²⁵ The woman said to him, “I know that the Messiah will come, and when he comes, he will tell us everything.”

²⁶ **Jesus answered, “I am he, I who am talking with you.”**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

23. What a revelation! Jesus revealed Himself as the Messiah to that Samaritan woman!

[BSG:] **In all four Gospels, this is the only passage before His trial** [just before His crucifixion] **in which Jesus plainly stated to someone that He was the Messiah.** And He did it not to some large crowd or important personage but to an unnamed Samaritan woman, alone, at Jacob’s well. He is interested in any lonely soul who feels separated.

And so to this woman, who not only was from a foreign culture but also was not of the highest moral character, **Jesus openly reveals who He is.** And, having revealed to her His knowledge of her darkest secrets, He also gave this woman a great reason to believe in Him, as well.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*^{*} for Wednesday, October 30.^{†‡}

[BSG:] This simple woman, a sinner with a dubious character, was entrusted with the weighty truth that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah. The Savior gradually led the Samaritan woman to the truth, culminating in His honoring her—more than anyone else before His resurrection—with the specific truth about His Messiahship. “ ‘I who speak to you am He’ ” (*John 4:26, NKJV*). Likewise, we must not show favoritism in reaching people, be they wealthy or poor, of “higher” or “lower” social status. Such distinction should not matter to us because it did not matter to Christ. All with whom we come in contact have one common denominator: their need of forgiveness and redemption.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*^{*} 67.^{‡§} [This woman responded to what was to her a complete stranger. But, of course, Jesus knew all about her!][‡]

24. What barriers exist in our world today that make it hard for us to witness to certain groups? What was the woman’s response to hearing that Jesus was the Messiah? When the disciples returned, the woman dropped everything and went to her town and started evangelizing.

John 4:28-30: ²⁸ Then the woman left her water jar, went back to the town, and said to the people there, ²⁹ “Come and see the man who told me everything I have ever done. **Could he be the Messiah?**” ³⁰ So they left the town and went to Jesus.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†} [Note that she did not say, “I have found the Messiah.” She asked a question that suggested that they should investigate for themselves. She became a “missionary” as quickly as did the demoniacs!][‡]

[BSG:] **It is interesting to note that the tasks that she intended to accomplish were left undone. She was supposed to take a jar of water to her village of Sychar, but in her excitement about her amazing discovery of the Water of Life, she left the filled water jar behind. She meant to give Jesus the drink of water to alleviate His thirst, but she failed because she left in such a hurry.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*^{*} 66.^{†‡}

[EGW:] The woman had been filled with joy as she listened to Christ's words. The wonderful revelation was almost overpowering. Leaving her waterpot, she returned to the city, to carry the message to others. Jesus knew why she had gone. **Leaving her waterpot spoke unmistakably as to the effect of His words. It was the earnest desire of her soul to obtain the living water; and she forgot her errand to the well, she forgot the Saviour's [sic-Br] thirst, which she had purposed to supply.** With heart overflowing with gladness, she hastened on her way, to impart to others the precious light she had received.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 191.2.†‡

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25. For now, we will skip John 4:27,31-38 about Jesus's interaction and conversation with His disciples; we will discuss them later.

26. When the Samaritans were willing to listen to Jesus, He spent two days in that Samaritan village. How do you think His disciples felt about that? Did they learn something? Were any of them concerned that when the word got out that they had stayed in the Samaritan village, they would be despised?

John 4:39-42: ³⁹ Many of the Samaritans in that town believed in Jesus because the woman had said, "He told me everything I have ever done." ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans came to him, they **begged him to stay with them**, and Jesus stayed there two days.

⁴¹ Many more believed because of his message, ⁴²and **they said to the woman, "We believe now, not because of what you said, but because we ourselves have heard him, and we know that he really is the Saviour [sic-Br] of the world."**—*Good News Bible*.*†‡ [Did any Jews respond like this?]†

27. Sometimes we think of Jesus as being not really human. But, He longed for human tenderness, courtesy, and affection—just as we do. He approached the Samaritan woman, asking a favor.

[EGW:] Though He was a Jew, Jesus mingled freely with the Samaritans, setting at nought the Pharisaic customs of His nation. In face of their prejudices **He accepted the hospitality of this despised people. He slept with them under their roofs, ate with them at their tables,**—partaking of the food prepared and served by their hands,—taught in their streets, and treated them with the utmost kindness and courtesy. And while He drew their hearts to Him by the tie of human sympathy, His divine grace brought to them the salvation which the Jews rejected.—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing** 26.3.†‡

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28. Can we compare Jesus's encounter with the Samaritans with His interaction in the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus?

[EGW:] Our Saviour [sic-Br] appreciated a quiet home and **interested listeners. He longed for human tenderness, courtesy, and affection.** Those who received the heavenly instruction He was always ready to impart were greatly blessed.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 524.3.†‡

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29. What roles, if any, do different languages, racial backgrounds, cultural customs, and

economic status have in impacting our witness? Jesus came from a perfect environment; and yet, He was willing to reach down to associate with the lowest among human beings.

30. Have you ever been convicted by the Holy Spirit that you should witness to someone or some group, but you really did not feel comfortable associating with them?
31. Let us now go back slightly in time to Jesus's interaction with the disciples after His encounter with the Samaritan woman.

John 4:27-32: ²⁷ At that moment Jesus' disciples returned, and they were greatly surprised to find him talking with a woman. But none of them said to her, "What do you want?" or asked him, "Why are you talking with her?"...

³¹ In the meantime the disciples were begging Jesus, "Teacher, have something to eat!"

³² But he answered, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about."—*Good News Bible*.*

[BSG:] When Jesus' disciples came back with food to alleviate His hunger, they were utterly surprised that He was not hungry anymore.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 66.†‡

John 4:23-38: ³³ So the disciples started asking among themselves, "Could somebody have brought him food?"

³⁴ "My food," Jesus said to them, "is to obey the will of the one who sent me and to finish the work he gave me to do. ³⁵You have a saying, 'Four more months and then the harvest.' But I tell you, take a good look at the fields; the crops are now ripe and ready to be harvested! ³⁶The one who reaps the harvest is being paid and gathers the crops for eternal life; so another who sows and the one who reaps will be glad together. ³⁷The saying is true, 'One sows, another reaps.' ³⁸I have sent you to reap a harvest in a field where you did not work; others worked there, and you profit from their work."—*Good News Bible*.*

32. And what had the woman done for Jesus? She got water from the well for Him but rushed off, apparently without giving Jesus any water.

[BSG:] Jesus was deeply moved that such a despised woman opened her heart to Him as the long-awaited Messiah—a much better response than from many of His own people, who closed their minds to Him. **So moved was Jesus in doing His Father's work in reclaiming lost souls for the kingdom of heaven that He lost His bodily thirst and hunger, sated [satiated or totally satisfied] as He was in His soul by heavenly water and nourishment.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 66.†‡

33. How important to us is the opportunity to witness to others? Is it more important than eating? Or, drinking? It was to Jesus! We do not know what the effect of a single witness might be.

[EGW:] **As soon as she had found the Saviour [sic-Br] the Samaritan woman brought others to Him. She proved herself a more effective missionary than His own disciples.** The disciples saw nothing in Samaria to indicate that it was an encouraging field. Their thoughts were fixed upon a great work to be done in the future. **They did not see that right around them was a harvest to be gathered.** But through the woman whom they despised, a whole cityful [sic] were brought to hear the Saviour [sic-Br]. She carried the light

at once to her countrymen.

This woman represents the working of a practical faith in Christ. Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary. He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life. The receiver becomes a giver. The grace of Christ in the soul is like a spring in the desert, welling up to refresh all, and making those who are ready to perish eager to drink of the water of life.—

Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 195.1-2.†‡ [Are we doing that?][‡]

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34. Contrast this response of the woman who immediately listened to Jesus to that of the Jewish leaders! How do you explain the difference?

[BSG:] It seems strange that Jesus' narrative about a harvest would interrupt the story of the conversion of many in the city. But John wants us to see how Jesus understood what was happening. **Sharing the plan of salvation with a Samaritan woman was far more important to Him than eating. To lead souls to salvation was His purpose, and He used this occasion to teach His disciples the urgency of sharing the gospel with all people, even with those not like them.**

There are many high points in the Gospel of John. Surely John 4:39–42 is among them. Many of the Samaritans believed because of the woman's testimony: "He told me all that I ever did" (*John 4:39, NKJV*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, October 31.†‡§

35. In conclusion, this story about this despised Samaritan woman who was known for unacceptable behavior could teach us many things about Jesus and His relationship to the people of His day. Think of yourself in the place of Nicodemus and also in the place of the Samaritan woman. Think how you would have responded in each situation.

[BSG:] Jesus practiced reciprocity in His ministry, for He was willing to give and receive help. Such an approach is an effective way to validate others and help them to feel worthwhile and needed. Contemplate how effective this approach proved to be with the Samaritan woman. **Jesus asked her for a simple drink of water, which she could provide, and He reciprocated with the gift of the Water of Life, which He alone could give. Then the woman, in turn, shared this good news with her people, and the entire town came to meet Jesus and to believe in Him.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 67.†‡ [How many of the people of Sychar knew this woman's history?][‡]

36. ***If we were open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, might He guide us to such encounters? What boundaries prevent us from witnessing in our day? Why do you think the Samaritans were so welcoming to Jesus when so many of His own people were so antagonistic?***

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