



John 4:1-43

### Part Two

*Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John 2 (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), 3 he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. 4 And he had to pass through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. 7 A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." 8 (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) 9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." 11 The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." 13 Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks of 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 of water welling up to eternal life." 15 The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water." 16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." 17 The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." 19 The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now*

here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” 25 The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” 26 Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”

27 Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you seek?” or, “Why are you talking with her?” 28 So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, 29 “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” 30 They went out of the town and were coming to him. 31 Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” 32 But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” 33 So the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought him something to eat?” 34 Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. 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.

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.”

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.”

43 After the two days he departed for Galilee.

1. The Reliability and Sufficiency of the Mission.

**2100 BC**—God spoke to Abram in Shechem.

**1900 BC**—Jacob willed Shechem to Joseph.

**1400 BC**—The Law was copied and read in Shechem.

**1375 BC**—Joshua renewed the Covenant in Shechem.

**1375 BC**—Joseph’s bones were buried in Shechem.

Shechem was the epicenter of the Promised Land.

**30 AD**—Jesus met the Samaritan woman in Shechem.

2. How to Share the Mission.

3. The Results of the Mission—Worship

## How to Share the Mission

### **1. Trust God to put you in the right place.**

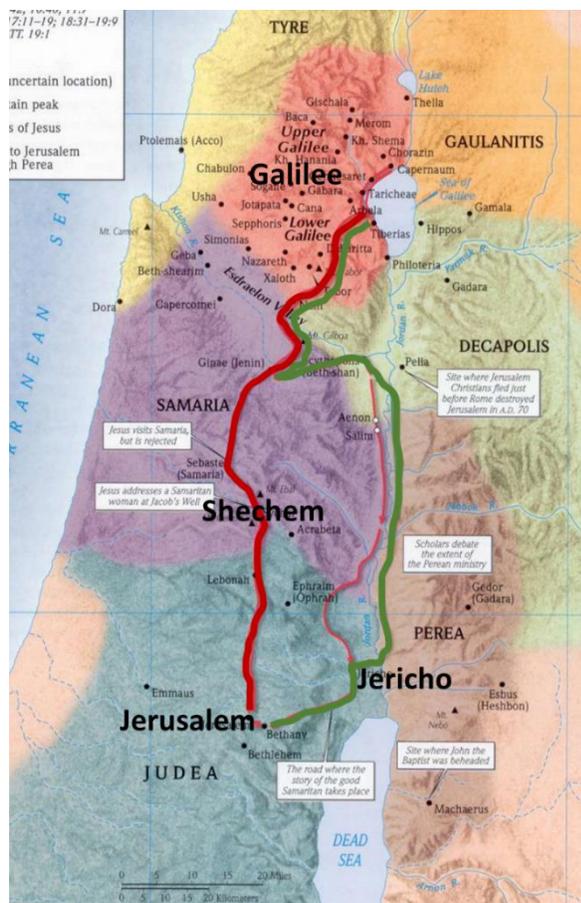
Have you ever had the feeling of being in the right place at the right time? Isn't it amazing when things seem to fall into place in just the right way? Sometimes this can end up being the very opposite of what you had intended.

Jane Spillane, one of the speakers from our Valentine's Banquet shared a story with our table last Sunday. And by the way, if you missed this event, you missed something truly special. It will go down as one of my top highlights in my fifteen years as pastor at Grace. Before Rod became a youth pastor in Sauk Prairie, he was an assistant principal in the Baraboo School District. He was always on the lookout for a principal's job at another school in the state. So when the position opened up in the Cazenovia, he naturally put his name in the hat to be considered. He did not get the job and Jane told us that she was really mad at God for that. It seemed like the ideal position for her husband. But if you recall, in 2006, 15 year-old Eric "Hainstock pried open his family's gun cabinet, took out a shotgun, retrieved the key to his parents' locked bedroom and took a .22-caliber revolver"<sup>1</sup> and proceeded to his school. The principal was able to wrestle the shooter the ground and sweep away the gun but not before being shot three times. He died from his injuries later that day. So Jane looks back on that incident and is thankful that her husband did not get the principal job, for who knows if she would have attended his funeral back then.

God can create circumstances to guide you in any way he chooses, so he can certainly use circumstances when it comes to sharing your faith. For example, did you notice how Jesus wound up in Samaria? It happened through a simple decision. *Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John... he left Judea and departed again for Galilee.* The summary is that Jesus was too successful. Even this early in his ministry, both Jesus and John the Baptist were under the watchful eye of the Pharisees. We are not exactly sure why this was a reason to leave Jerusalem. Maybe he did not want to cause any more divisiveness between John's disciples and his own. Perhaps he wanted less attention on himself so early in his ministry. But whatever the underlying motive, the catalyst for the decision was that he was on the Pharisees' radar.

So the application is to not fight against your circumstances. Jane was mad because her husband did not get the principal's job but it may have saved his life. If you get a flat tire, that might be an opportunity to minister to someone. There are all manner of circumstances and decisions that we face every day but we need to have eyes to see that God is using all of these things—good and bad—to put us in the right place at the right time with the right people.

### **2. Pray for divine appointments.**



Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup>

When Jesus left Jerusalem to return home to Galilee, John told us in verse four that Jesus *had to pass through Samaria*. So the question is, why did Jesus “have to” because it was a shorter distance or because Jesus had a divine appointment with the woman at the well? It was both, wasn’t it. Jesus really did have to go through Samaria in order to save time and distance. This route was known to be shorter and quicker. From this map you can see two different routes to get from Jerusalem to Galilee. You could either cross the Jordan River at Jericho, travel up the East bank of the Jordan and cross the river again in Northern Samaria, or you could go straight up through Samaria, which was obviously the shorter route. First century historian Josephus recorded this for us.

I then wrote to my friends in Samaria, to take care that they might safely pass through the country: for Samaria was already under the Romans, and it was absolutely necessary for those that go quickly [to Jerusalem] to pass through that country; for in that road you may, in three days’ time go from Galilee to

The route through Samaria was obviously the shortest route, so in that sense, Jesus “had” to go through Samaria. But I am convinced that there is a double meaning here. Jesus knew that there was a divine appointment awaiting him in Samaria. So putting the first two principles together—trust God to use circumstances to lead you to the right place and pray for those divine appointments. The prayer part is your own personal readiness. Who knows how many times God has led us to the right person at the right time but we were just not ready. We did not prepare or pray in advance. Jesus had to go through Samaria to meet this needy woman who was drawing water.

### 3. Engage in spiritual conversations.

It doesn’t do any good to pray for divine appointments if you are not ready or willing to have a spiritual conversation. Jesus had the most effective opening question ever—“give me a drink.” Do you think you could manage such an advanced line of conversation with someone? It’s so simple—just four words in English and three words in Greek. “Give me a drink.” But even that simple question was filled with significance, wasn’t it? Jesus knew that he was going to develop the living water idea and build upon that.

You never know when you will be able use something as common as a drink of water as a spiritual conversation starter. At Sunday night’s banquet I was sitting next to a woman who was

raised in Thailand as a Buddhist. Even though she attended a so-called Christian private school in Thailand, she was never taught the basic of the faith. She recently converted to Catholicism and married a Catholic man. But she wanted me to know that she didn't convert just for her husband. She told me that she really came to understand and believe that Jesus died and rose for her. I asked her and her husband if they ever read the Bible on their own and the answer was no, they never do. As we were sitting there eating this wonderful meal. As I pointed to my plate of lasagna and green beans, I explained to her that for me, reading the Bible regularly is like eating spiritual food. I absolutely need this food for sustenance. I did not condemn them for not reading the Bible but simply explained what I do and why I do it. They agreed that reading the Bible on their own sounded like a great idea so I sent them some Bible reading plans.

But my point is that I was able to use something as simple as eating food to communicate a vital spiritual truth. It's not always that simple, I realize, but if you keep the first two principles in mind—trusting God for guidance and praying for divine appointments—do you think that your spiritual conversations might go better? I confess that I did not even pray before the dinner, and I was the one who invited this couple. So there is no magic formula for success, but a basic readiness and willingness is an absolute must.

#### **4. Meet them on their turf.**

This goes right along with the last principle. Jesus did not have to invite the Samaritan woman to a talk he was giving at the local Synagogue. She wouldn't have gone, right? The Samaritans worshipped on Mt. Gerazim and the Jews worshipped in Jerusalem-or some other approved synagogue. Jesus did not invite her into his place of comfort but he went to where she was most comfortable. Jesus entered into her daily life by meeting her at the well. And what is more routine in that day than going to the well to draw water.

I love that you invite people to church on Sunday or some other event. That's awesome. But we will never reach people if we are dependent on inviting them into our environment. We must go to where they are, into their daily lives. For most of you, that will happen at work or a bowling league or something else you are already doing. Scott Kniprath did double duty on Sunday night. There's a young man who works for him and Scott's been reaching out to him and having great spiritual conversations. He also invited him and his wife to the Valentine's Banquet. So Scott met him on neutral ground at work and then invited him to a church event. We need all kind of connections in order to make a difference.

#### **5. Move from the natural to the supernatural.**

We need to meet them on their own turf and be able to engage people in good conversations but eventually we need to move from the natural to the supernatural. What I mean is that Jesus slowly transitioned from a conversation about the natural realm—asking for a drink of water from a literal well—to discussing living water.

*The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" After her question John tells us that "Jews have no dealings with Samaritans."*

I summarized the history of the Samaritans last Sunday and how the Jews were the ones responsible for creating the people for whom they loathed. Apparently, the Samaritans had no love for the Jews either. In Ad 93, historian Josephus recorded their mutual strife.

Now there arose a quarrel between the Samaritans and the Jews on the occasion following: It was the custom of the Galileans, when they came to the holy city at the festivals, to take their journeys through the country of the Samaritans; and at this time there lay, in the road they took, a village that was called Ginea, which was situated in the limits of Samaria and the great plain, where certain persons thereto belonging fought with the Galileans, and killed a great many of them.<sup>3</sup>

This is one reason why the woman was so surprised to be talking with Jesus. As we said, many Jews would take the long way around and avoid Samaria altogether but if you did take the short route straight through, a Jew would never have a conversation with a Samaritan, let alone with a Samaritan woman.

*Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."*

From this point on, the woman mistakes the supernatural for the natural. She did not have eyes to see what Jesus is telling her.

*The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." 13 Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks of 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 of water welling up to eternal life." 15 The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."*

This is exactly what happened to Nicodemus, isn't it? Jesus told him that a man must be born again and the first thing that came to his mind is "how could a man enter a second time into his mother's womb?" Which leads to our next principle.

#### **6. Don't worry if your listener gets lost.**

It is your job to present spiritual truth. It's not your job to make anyone understand. I am not saying you should be lazy with your words and effort but one thing I have learned after all of my spiritual conversations is that I am powerless to bring understanding to my listener.

Even the disciples were often lost. They were just as lost as the woman in this story. After Jesus told them "*I have food to eat that you do not know about*" the disciples were confused and said to one another, "*Has anyone brought him something to eat?*" Just like the Samaritan woman and Nicodemus, they were confusing the natural with the supernatural. They did not have eyes to see higher truth in what Jesus was saying.

The woman remained lost in the conversation. "*Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.*" Jesus had just told her that he could give water

leading to eternal life and all she wants is something that will save her time. She wants what he has but she doesn't understand what it is that he has. I don't think she was being lazy or greedy, she just did not understand.

I wonder how she seemed to so easily pass over the promise of "eternal life. Was she at all intrigued by the offer of "eternal life"? With these words, Jesus clearly broke through any natural walls that should have remained. This was water welling up to eternal life. This was no mere drink of cool well water on a hot day in the dessert. But if she was at all intrigued by the offer of eternal life, she did not indicate that she was.

It's understandable for a Samaritan woman to be lost and confused when talking with Jesus. Remember that for Samaritans, their Bibles ended at the book of Deuteronomy. She did not have the foundation that a Jew would have had. It's a little different that Nicodemus was so lost when he talked with Jesus. And Jesus told him so, didn't he? When Nicodemus confused the natural with the supernatural, Jesus said, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things?" So Jesus clearly expected Nicodemus to not get so lost.

But even worse than the confusion of the Samaritan or Nicodemus is when the disciples get lost. Jesus is the hardest on them, for sure. Therefore, if you are having a spiritual conversation with someone and they seem lost, it may not be your fault. If it happened to Jesus it can happen to us, right?

#### **7. Remember that the fields are white for harvest.**

After their conversation, the Samaritan woman left to return to town—but she'll be back. I'm not skipping the meat of their conversation because I will cover that in the message on worship. But for now, I am skipping ahead to Jesus' conversation with his disciples. They show up presumably right near the end of their conversation. Jesus is probably thinking, "Hey guys, bad timing. Can't you see I am witnessing to this woman?!"

After the whole, misunderstanding about who brought food to him, Jesus got right to the heart of what was happening. *34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. 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.*

This must be the fuel for our missions and for our spiritual conversations. The fields are white for harvest. The souls of men and women are ready to repent and receive the gospel, they need only for someone to tell them about it. Think back to your own conversion. How old were you? How long had God been preparing you prior to your conversion? I can think of several incidents in the one to two years before I was saved where my heart was burning inside. I was on a winter retreat with my youth group. After the lesson, the leader has us get to a place where we could be alone and answer a few questions. For the life of me I will never remember what those questions were but I do recall the beginning of what is sometimes called a quickening. Something was happening in my spirit. Little did I know that the Holy Spirit was using a youth group in one of the most liberal denominations on the planet to begin to awaken me to the good news. Do you see, I was one of those stalks of wheat that was turning white for harvest? I was not ready to be harvested just yet, but it was like the grain had budded and was starting to sprout.

If the fields were ripe for harvest in Jesus' day, before his death and resurrection; if they were ripe for harvest before the church was born and spread over the entire Roman world in a single generation; if there were souls ready to be plucked into eternal glory before the Protestant reformation, before the gospel was released into the world—if the fields of the souls of men and women were white for harvest in all of those day, how much more are they white for harvest today?

But you say, "Well that's not my experience. I talk to people about the Lord and they reject the message. I barely see single stalks of wheat coming to Christ let alone whole fields white and ready for harvest." That may be true. But could it also be true because you are not trusting God to put you in the right circumstances? Could it be that you are not praying for divine appointments, that you are not engaging in spiritual conversations? I know as well as anyone that the fields don't seem very white at times. I wish that there were more coming into the harvest but I can tell you this, if we do nothing, we are guaranteed to never see a harvest.

To whom was Jesus referring when he told his disciples about the fields just waiting to be harvested? Of course he is talking about the woman who just left and those whom she will tell. The harvest was white and ready but even his disciples did not understand this. But you and I should know better by now.

Who do you rub shoulders with every day who just might be ready for a gospel harvest? Who is that person? Has God been putting you near them for influence? Are you praying for a divine appointment? Are you in any sense prepared to engage them in a spiritual conversation?

**Rich Maurer**  
**February 21, 2016**

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<sup>1</sup> [http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/nation/2006-09-29-principal-shot\\_x.htm](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/nation/2006-09-29-principal-shot_x.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Josephus, F., & Whiston, W. (1987). *The works of Josephus: complete and unabridged*. Peabody: Hendrickson.

<sup>3</sup> Josephus, F., & Whiston, W. (1987). *The works of Josephus: complete and unabridged*. Peabody: Hendrickson.