

# Look! It is Harvest Time!

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[ 0 : 00 ] Today's Bible passage is part of the narrative Jesus and the Samaritan woman. To help us understand the passage, it is helpful to know a few important historical and cultural context of Jesus' times.

Walking from the south to the north. Logically, the shortest and fastest way to get to the north was to take a straight road through the Samaria region, the yellow line on the map there. However, most Jews would rather take a longer detour, and if you see the light blue line, and travel outside the eastern Samaria boundary.

It wasn't because they preferred the scenic route. The real reason was that Jews and Samaritans were enemies at that time. Another thing to note, a Jewish teacher in Jesus' time would not talk to a woman in public.

We need to recognize, not judge them, that it was part of their own Jewish culture. So Jesus and his disciples left Judea in the south and traveled a long distance.

[ 1 : 35 ] They were tired and thirsty, and they stopped to rest near the town of Syca in the Samaria region. If you see the red dot right in the center there, that's approximately where the town of Syca was located.

In Syca, Jesus was doing his public ministry, proclaiming God's salvation to the lost. Meanwhile, he used this Samaria event to teach his disciples about mission and evangelism.

What did Jesus do? What did Jesus teach his disciples? What can we learn about his heart's passion and work so that we may obey him?

There are three things that Jesus did and three principles that we can apply as followers of Jesus. Jesus engages a Samaritan woman with the truth.

Now keep in mind that Jesus and his disciples have traveled to the enemy territory. Jesus' disciples went to the town to buy food.

[ 3 : 01 ] And they brought the food, returned to Jesus. Now verse 27 says, Just then his disciples came back.

They marveled that he was talking with a woman. Disciples, all Jewish men, were marveled. More of a shock in a negative sense. He was talking to a Samaritan woman next to a public well. Jesus just broke two cultural rules. First, all normal Jews would bypass Samaria, avoiding the enemy territory.

Jesus had the choice to take the longer route as everyone else did. But he chose, he very intentionally chose to go through Samaria.

[ 4 : 07 ] Second, the disciples were shocked that Jesus, a Jewish rabbi, a teacher, was talking with a woman.

And other than that, in addition to that, we see that he was engaging a woman of an immoral background.

Again, Jesus chose to break the cultural norm of his time to engage a lost person, spiritually lost. Now it might not be known to the disciples that this woman already had five husbands and was living with another man who was not her husband.

An honorable rabbi, teacher, might want to avoid being seen talking to an immoral woman in public. [ 5 : 19 ] It will ruin their reputation. It will ruin their reputation. But to Jesus, the salvation of this Samaritan woman was more critical than the cultural norms and rules of his time.

It was Jesus' desire to meet this foreign woman and share the gospel of the kingdom, despite what others might think of him.

Jesus knew and yet did not avoid her amid her immoral background. She was a lost sheep living in darkness.

Today, a lost sheep could be anyone. Often, often the most unexpected person. A socially awkward person.

A not so popular person. A quiet person. A poor person. Who no one cares. You name it.

[ 6 : 27 ] The question we need to ask is, do we notice the lost sheep in our midst? The Bible says, for God so loved the world.

God's love is unconditional for all people. The Bible also says in Luke chapter 5, verse 31 to 32. And Jesus answered them, those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Jesus cared about the woman's salvation. Just like he cared about your salvation. He loved the people of the world.

Just like he loved you and I. God cares for all human beings. And his desire is not a single soul shall perish in hell.

[ 7 : 38 ] By talking with the Samaritan woman, Jesus was teaching his disciples about his priorities of seeking the lost, even in unexpected places.

Dear brothers and sisters, honestly speaking, we will find very few unbelievers or lost people in the church.

But there are many of them in our communities, in our workplaces, in our schools, in our cities, and in the world.

So, I've served in the Chinese churches in the United States for 20 years. The Lord has given me opportunities to serve others through short-term missions.

And I've been to Germany, Thailand, India. And two years ago, I was a very interesting experience to northern Kenya in Africa.

[ 8 : 48 ] And this year, the Lord has sent my wife and me to New Zealand to meet new people and work with local churches, training believers to do evangelism, mission, disciple-making, and planting healthy churches that multiply.

Let me share with you one of my experiences. And this is especially from Kenya two years ago. Our short-term mission trip was in the remote area of northern Kenya. Okay, so good. The picture is here. That day, our team was there to dedicate a new church building.

Many local believers, church leaders, and missionaries were gathering outside the main entrance. They were dancing, and they were singing praises to Jesus in their own language, which I knew nothing about, but I only knew one word, Yeshua, Yeshua, Yeshua, Yeshua, right?

So, they were praising and singing praise to Jesus. One of the leaders suddenly knelt and prayed, and many people followed.

[ 10 : 15 ] I also was kneeling on the ground. As I was kneeling on the ground, praying, and for some reason, I lifted my head toward the sky.

Look up toward the sky. I saw the cross on top of the church roof. A thought came to me.

It was all because of Jesus that Chinese Christians from the United States and Taiwan, including a brother from Uganda, were there together with the Kenyans to worship our Lord in the middle of the bushlands.

And one side note, that church that can host over 200 people, and there was no toilets. That was the main church building, like in the wide, open bushlands.

Some believers love Jesus and obey Jesus and take Jesus' word seriously. And they have brought the gospel to this remote place in Kenya.

[ 11 : 28 ] And this is what it looked like inside the church. And this is their church. Just four walls and a roof. Very simple. Consequently, many Turkana and Samburu people group would be safe.

The new church was packed with people. And there were some unbelievers who came just to attend the celebration.

My heart was overflowing with joy as I heard praises of Jesus in their own language and saw the people around me.

Jesus loves all people in all places. And look at this map. Look at this map. What do you see? You see a lot of red dots?

Each red dot represents one unreached people group. What is an unreached people group?

[ 12 : 32 ] It is less than or equal to 2% evangelical Christians. And it is a people group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate number and resources to evangelize it without outside assistance.

Meaning that these are the places where there is no gospel work. Because there are so few Christians. And you can see these dots where they are and scattered all over the world, especially in a few regions.

Today, there are still about 3.6 billion. We're talking about B. Billion people living in 4,487 unreached people groups.

Which they may not have the chance, opportunities to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. To hear the name of Jesus Christ. Unless someone from outside would bring the gospel to them.

Now, going back to 2,000 years ago, Jesus commanded his disciples, Go and make disciples of all nations. And he started with 12.

[13:56] But today, here, we are sitting here in New Zealand. And we are non-Jews. We are worshipping Jesus Christ. And because of the faithful 12.

Who are willing to obey their masters. And they literally, at that time, they took the gospel to the end of their world.

Right? Right? Jesus loves all people in all places. Now, would you say it to the person sitting next to you? Jesus loves all people in all places.

Just say it to someone next to you. Just remind one another. Now, just remind each other.

Jesus loves all people in all places. Today, Jesus is telling us to go and reach out to the billions of people who are lost.

[15:01] It is our responsibility as a follower of Jesus Christ. Not the church next door. Not the church down the street. Or not the church in another city.

Not Pastor William. Or not Dennis only. Not the missionaries. But all of us. God has given us that privilege.

To be his witness. So that others may hear the gospel. And come to trust him as Lord and Savior. New Zealand is a unique place. Not because of its beautiful. Not only because of its beautiful nature. And its scenery.

Because you don't have to go very far to find people of all nationalities in your community. There will be some UPG who come to you.

[16:02] A few months ago, Jessica and I, we were doing street evangelism on Queen Street in the CBD. That night, that particular night, we met people from China, Malaysia, Nepal, and of course, local Kiwis.

And that's already four countries, right? And I was sharing with her.

And it was an experience. And God had prepared a person. Actually, he and his wife and other sisters was sharing with her wife.

With his wife. And I was sharing with him. And both of them received Christ that evening. And we give praise and glory to God. Dear brothers and sisters, we cannot guarantee that the opportunity will continue forever.

It is this time that because of, you know, many reasons that many people from around the world, they arrived here.

[17:15] Now is the time to reach them with the gospel. Everyone needs to hear the gospel. And we will see next how Jesus feels about the gospel work.

Jesus feels a great urgency to save the lost. Jesus feels a great urgency to save the lost.

Jesus feels a great urgency to save the lost. How? How? Where did Jesus find food? What did he eat? Jesus, the Son of God, knew their hearts and their thoughts.

In verse 34, Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. Now, let's unpack this meaning of Jesus' food more.

What is Jesus' food? What is Jesus' food? Verse 34 says, Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.

[18:53] That is Jesus' food. Jesus' food was his purpose in life, his desire, and the type of work he would do.

Now, I would assume and I would think many of you here, you do have a goal or something you would like to accomplish as you go through life.

Perhaps, yeah, you have a dream that you are hoping to achieve. And Jesus has a life purpose, and he has been called to do one specific work, a type of work.

John chapter 3, verse 16 to 17 shows us Jesus' purpose and work. Jesus said, His will and work in life always align perfectly with the heavenly father.

We can call it Jesus' mission, Jesus' mission in life, to take away the sin of the world by dying on the cross.

[ 20 : 25 ] John chapter 3, verse 17 says, that the world might be saved through him. His mission is to die on the cross so that the world might be saved through him.

Jesus, he was talking about fulfilling the father's will as his life mission, but his disciples were out of sync with him.

They were thinking about physical food, the worldly things. Jesus was teaching his disciples how to be in the same frequency with him since they were following him.

And he was their master. Next, Jesus' mission has a timeline.

Let's look at verses 37 through 38. See verse 35. And it says, Do you not say there are yet four months?

[ 21 : 35 ] Then comes the harvest. Jesus was using an agriculture analogy. There were farming lands in Israel and the people planted grains for food.

When Jesus said, Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes and see that the fields are white for harvest. Again, it confused the disciple.

It was four more months until the grain harvesting time. There was nothing, nothing at that moment to harvest yet.

Was Jesus totally confused? What was he referring to? Verse 30 has the answer.

Verse 30 says, They, those are the Samaritans from the town of Sycaam, they were coming to him because of the woman's testimony.

[ 22 : 40 ] So, what Jesus saw was people went out of town came toward him.

So, Jesus taught his disciples something they were familiar with. Using the agriculture example to help them relate to spiritual principles.

To open their spiritual eyes. To see the world through the lenses of Jesus and of God. And what's Jesus what was Jesus teaching them?

The time to receive eternal life is now. Dear brothers and sisters, Jesus and it is not tomorrow. And for us, it's not until I finish school to find a stable job, until I make a million dollars, have a house and a family, nor until I retire.

Then I will have time to do Jesus' work. The time to harvest for an eternal life is now, dear brothers and sisters.

[ 24 : 05 ] Jesus has an important mission. his time to work is now. Now, there is still one thing that was in Jesus' heart. Can you guess what it is?

There's work to do, there's an expected time to complete it, and the third thing is the need for workers. Now, verses 36 to 38, you will note that Jesus taught his disciples that sowers and reapers were working together.

They were rejoicing together when gathering the fruit. God was the owner and he sent his workers. Today, God sends us, his children, his followers, to engage with unbelievers.

There will be people in our communities who have never heard about Jesus. And you'll be surprised and they know very little about Jesus.

Then, in that case, our work will be to plant gospel seeds in their heart. God may send another believer to do the harvesting.

[ 25 : 30 ] That will be okay because God has given us the role of a sower.

Also, do not be surprised that someone believes in Jesus the first time you share the gospel.

Perhaps other believers have planted seeds, the gospel seeds, in the unbeliever's heart.

And God will send you as the harvest person and to harvest the unbelievers.

to an eternal life. And it's all God's timing. And it's all God's work. And Brother Dennis has testified that God has prepared people before we even know they're in the field, in different places.

faith. And our faithfulness is to obey him and to faithfully communicate and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[ 26 : 50 ] We are called to work hard and be faithful in sharing the gospel. The rest is God's responsibility. ability. So, we've learned what Jesus taught his disciples.

Jesus has a mission. His time to work is now. His strategy is to send believers to work together under the Holy Spirit's guidance.

It's a Christian mission website called the Joshua Project. I wonder if you've heard about that special website. You can Google it when you go home.

That shows statistics and global mission information. According to their research, an estimated 107,000 and keep this in mind, 107,000 people die every day having never had a meaningful opportunity to hear the Christian gospel.

Now, imagine that. After I finished my preaching, about 30 minutes plus, 2,229 people would have died somewhere in the world, having never had a meaningful opportunity to hear the Christian gospel.

[ 28 : 18 ] And this continues every second, every day. what can we as a church and individuals do to proactively reduce this number?

We know, we know that our Lord, his heart is hurt and broken and seen that so many people are destined to be forever separated from him.

So think about yourself. What is your priority in life? What are you pursuing? What can help you move along with Jesus in his mission?

May the Spirit continue to help and guide us. how can I have the heart of Jesus? How can I be his instrument to bring the good news to those who need to hear it?

Now my last point, I know that my time is passing very quickly. When we go to harvest, do not leave Jesus behind. When we go to the harvest field, do not leave Jesus behind.

[ 29 : 47 ] Jesus saves the world. Or in other words, Jesus is the only savior of the world. So when we study these few verses, we see a pattern in John's reporting.

Can you recognize some of the repeating word? Many people believe because they had heard or encountered Jesus.

The first encounter in verse 39 with Jesus was many Samaritans. The first encounter with Jesus in verse 39 was many Samaritans from that town.

They believed because of the woman's testimony about Jesus. He had supernatural power to know all about her past.

Second, many more believed because Jesus stayed with them for two days preaching to them about God's salvation. They heard and know that Jesus was the savior of the world.

[ 30 : 54 ] Now Holy Spirit helped them to see that the one who stayed with them, the one who spoke with them is the savior of the world.

So the testimony is about Jesus, the savior of the world. John 14 6, Jesus said to him, I'm the way and the truth and the life.

No one comes to the father except through me. And again, Acts chapter 4, verse 10 and 12 says, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom you crucified, whom God raised from the death and there is salvation in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

How can we be saved? How can a lost person, a sick person be saved and receive the eternal life? Everyone must believe in Jesus, the only savior of the world.

Jesus is the savior of the world. Unfortunately, there are many countries, many places, they will tell you or even their rules against talking, sharing about Jesus.

[ 32 : 33 ] And in some places, especially in the western countries, they give you freedom, however, they have restriction. They use a more rounded or more soft way of restricting you.

Now, in the name of diversity, in the name of tolerance, in the name of respect for one another, please don't mention the name of Jesus. You can live whatever you like to live, you can practice your faith, but in your place of worship at your home, but not in the public.

But dear brothers and sisters, we as followers of Jesus Christ, we do not leave our faith at home, or at church.

We leave Jesus Christ 24 by 7. May God give us the bonus, and may God give us the heart of Jesus, and the courage to live for him.

I mean, we don't have to be an odd person, we don't have to be very confrontative, but we can live a life of Jesus Christ that others may see and may hear our witness, so that they can know that Jesus is the Savior of the world.

[ 34 : 14 ] Let me finish with a story. Last year, before we came to New Zealand, we had to attend a missionary training in the United States.

It was weeks two and three, the trainer sent us out to the street meeting strangers and sharing the gospel with whomever God had prepared to listen.

Some were open and some said, no, thank you, so we walk and find the next God prepared person. Jessica and I, we walked to this area, there were shops and there was one Japanese buffet restaurant and one teenage girl, she was standing there sharing keychains, so we felt that, okay, we will walk up to her and we will have, we will engage her in conversation.

So as we walk up to her and so we kind of start with small talk and then after that Jessica asked her, say that, you know, can we pray for you?

And she said, yes. And then she started to share her story. A family, was facing financial hardships and dad lost the job, so she had to come to the streets and sell keychains.

[ 35 : 58 ] And then as Jessica was praying for her, she started to cry. She started to cry. And then after my wife prayed for her, then I asked her, have you been to a church?

Do you know about Jesus? He said, oh, my grandfather, my grandfather is a pastor of a church. Wonderful. Then I asked, do you have a relationship with Jesus?

Okay, don't assume that people who go to church is a believer. Okay, that's my point. Okay, so I asked, do you have a relationship with Jesus? And then I proceed to share the gospel with her.

And then I asked her, do you want to have a relationship with Jesus? She said, yes. I said, yes. So I asked Jessica to let her do a prayer.

And this kitchen here, then we bought two kitchens from her. and our intention was to give it to our grandchildren, but I felt that it's too precious, so I brought it with me and it's hanging in our kitchen, on top of that kitchen cabinet handle to remind us that there are people whom God has prepared.

[ 37 : 33 ] God has prepared for us to share the good news. And then after we finished sharing, the mom came over.

She too was sharing, was selling keychains, but in a different area. And she came back to meet up with her daughter and she told us more about the story.

She said two weeks ago, there was a baptism in her church. And she asked her daughter, do you want to be baptized? The daughter said, no, I'm not ready yet.

but that day, God brought us two Chinese people and to speak. I learned that day that family actually was a gypsy family in the USA.

It was my first time in 40 years to meet a gypsy people in the United States and a Chinese missionary couple. plus the gospel of Jesus that saved that girl.

[ 38 : 46 ] Now, she's part of God's people and God's family because of Jesus. Dear brothers and sisters, you can have the same experience and same story if you are willing.

If you are willing to be an instrument of God. Finally, let's take a look at this one here. Jesus is the savior of the world and he sends us out to engage people with the gospel.

And there are still 3.5 billion individuals unreached may not have the opportunity to hear about Jesus in 4,487 people group.

3.5 billion people. Does it bother you? how can we respond to God's love?

And by bringing God's love in his gospel of hope, of salvation, of peace and of joy to the world.

[ 39 : 55 ] And may the word of God continue to remind us to stir our heart, that we will live for the glory of God.

Let us pray. Father God, I pray, pray that Lord, you will continue to speak to us, not just the past 30 minutes, but Lord, continue to remind us of your goodness, of your faithfulness, and your love, not only for us, but Lord, for the people of the world.

And Lord, we present ourselves as a living sacrifice. Lord, may you use us in whatever capacity that you see fit, and we want to obey you.

And Lord, thank you for your word, and I pray all this in Jesus' name. Amen.