

The Harvest

John 4:34-42

34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. 35 Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! 36 And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. 37 For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' 38 I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did." 40 So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of His own word.

42 Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world." NKJV

Here in Illinois most people understand the concepts involved in planting and harvesting. This year the planting was delayed by wet weather. And everyone understands the principle of the harvest. You cannot harvest what has not been planted. You will probably harvest more than you plant. Harvest is a time of thankfulness and rejoicing for both the planters and the harvesters. And the harvest is gathered into storage facilities or sold.

Now the disciples were also well aware of this pattern. The entire country was dependent on the ability to bring in a harvest. But when it came to a spiritual harvest, the harvest of souls, there were some definite differences. Spiritually the planting and the harvesting are not always 4 months apart. Most probably you will not harvest where you planted exclusively.

So let us look at this passage and understand what Jesus is saying to us.

- I. Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'?
 - A. In the natural world we plant and wait.
 - B. We cannot plant one day and harvest the next.
 - C. There is a growing stage, a maturing stage that must take place before we can harvest the crop.
 - D. If you try to harvest before the crop is mature, you will lose.
 - E. But when it comes to the spiritual harvest sometimes some of these rules can be bent a little.
- II. Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!

- A. As the disciple would look back over the barley fields toward the city they would see the men of the city coming for the harvest that had only been planted today.
 - B. And although the labor of the barley fields had taken weeks of preparation this harvest of souls began with the planting of seed in the heart of one woman.
 - C. The disciples were going to witness a great harvest that day and no doubt be a part of it by teaching and witnessing of Jesus to these Samaritans.
- III. And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.
- A. There are wages to be made.
 - 1. Prov 11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who wins souls is wise. NKJV
 - 2. Dan 12:3 Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever. NKJV
 - 3. 1 Cor 9:19-23 For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; 20 and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; 21 to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; 22 to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. 23 Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you. NKJV
 - 4. James 5:19-20 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins. NKJV
 - B. We gather fruit for eternal life
 - 1. Not our own for salvation is by grace and not of works. Eph 2:8
 - 2. But the fruit, the souls, we gather have eternal life.
 - 3. Much more important than grain that perishes with the eating.
- IV. For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.'
- A. We may reap what others have sown and others may reap where we have sown.
 - B. It is up to the Lord of the harvest to determine that and not us.
 - C. But yet both rejoice together when the sinner is won to Christ.

- V. I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."
- A. The disciples were entering into the greatest enterprise of all time, the salvation of human souls.
 - B. We get to enter into the work of prophets of old.
 - C. Of great men through whom God sent his Word into the world.
- VI. And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did."
- A. We notice that there were two different type of believers in this passage.
 - B. There were those who believed in Jesus because of what the woman had told them.
 - C. There were also those who believed in Jesus because they heard Jesus himself.
- VII. So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word.
- A. Jesus was interested in more than winning them to eternal life.
 - B. He stayed there to teach them in kingdom life.
 - C. We might think this somewhat interesting seeing as how these were not Jews but Samaritans, in a sense, enemies of the Jews.
 - D. So all this began with the winning of one sinful Samaritan woman.
- VIII. Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."
- A. What did they believe?
 - 1. That Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, the anointed of God.
 - 2. That He was the Savior of the world.
 - 3. That He was their Savior.