

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
Presbyterian Church

“HOPE AND HARVEST”

For individual study or group discussion

John 4:27–42 concludes the remarkable discourse between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well. In a setting shaped by cultural tension and social barriers, Jesus transforms an encounter with an outsider into a moment of **hope and harvest**. What follows reveals how that singular conversation with Christ sparked spiritual renewal in Samaria.

An unlikely witness: come and see (vv. 27–30)

When the disciples return, they are astonished that Jesus is talking with a Samaritan woman. Jesus breaks all social, cultural, and gender boundaries to speak to her. According to NT scholar Ben Witherington III, “Jesus, however, not only speaks to her but refuses to treat her as unclean, engaging her in one of the most significant theological discussions in the whole of the Fourth Gospel.”¹ She responds in faith, leaving her water jar behind, rushing back to town with a simple invitation: “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did” (v. 29).

- In the social setting of the first century, the Samaritan woman would have been considered an unlikely and easily dismissed witness. Read Luke 24:6–12. Even though the women had followed Jesus along with the disciples, how did the Twelve respond to their report about the empty tomb? In light of this reaction, why is the Samaritan woman’s testimony especially significant?
- The early church father John Chrysostom presents the Samaritan woman as a model for imitation: “Observe her zeal and wisdom. She came to draw water, and when she had lighted upon the true Well, she after that despised the material one; teaching us even by this trifling instance when we are listening to spiritual matters to overlook the things of this life, and make no account of them.”² What “water jars” in our lives might distract us from responding fully to Jesus?

An urgent harvest: the fields are white (vv. 31–38)

Jesus teaches the disciples about the urgency of God’s mission. While they are focused on food, Jesus explains that his true nourishment is doing the will of the Father. He then tells them, “Lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest” (v. 35). The disciples likely would not have considered Samaritans part of their spiritual responsibility. Yet Jesus points to the very people approaching from the town as evidence that the harvest is already beginning. In light of the harvest imagery, Witherington suggests: “It may well be that the parable in vv. 37–38 is intended to imply that the woman is one of the sowers or reapers. The Samaritan woman then is seen by the Fourth Evangelist as one who properly models the role of disciple—to the shame of the Twelve.”³

- Read Matthew 9:37–38, Acts 10:34–35, and Galatians 3:28. How does today’s passage challenge our assumptions about who is ready to receive the Gospel? Who might we overlook as part of God’s harvest?

An undeniable faith: because of his words (vv. 39–42)

Finally, the passage reveals how faith grows and spreads. Many Samaritans believe because of the woman’s testimony, but their faith deepens when they hear Jesus directly. After spending two days with him, they proclaim, “This is indeed the Savior of the world” (v. 42). Their faith shows that the hope Jesus brings is not limited to culture, background, or reputation. The harvest God desires includes people from every nation.

- After two days with Jesus, the Samaritans declare, “This is indeed the Savior of the world” (v. 42). How does their proclamation challenge you to move beyond cultural, social, or personal barriers when sharing the message of Christ? (cf. Matthew 28:19–20, Luke 5:27–32, and Acts 17:16–34)

DATE: March 15, 2026

SPEAKER: Brian/Frank

SERIES: The Gospel of John

PASSAGE: John 4:27–42

Family Dinner Table

Where Hope Begins

After his wife Mary died, 82-year-old Dan Peterson fell into deep grief and depression. He spent months alone at home in Augusta, Georgia, often sitting and staring out the window, feeling as if he had no purpose left in life. One day, while reluctantly grocery shopping, Dan encountered a four-year-old girl named Norah Wood. Standing in a shopping cart, she waved and said, “Hi old person, it’s my birthday today!” Then she asked him for a hug. Dan gladly accepted, and the simple act of kindness deeply moved him. Norah’s mother later learned that Dan had recently lost his wife and was very lonely. She and Norah began visiting him regularly. What started as a brief meeting turned into a meaningful friendship that filled Dan’s home with laughter, hugs, and companionship. Dan later said Norah’s joyful presence changed his life and gave him something to look forward to again.⁴

In the story, Norah’s simple act of kindness brought hope to Dan’s life. In John 4:28–30, the Samaritan woman had a life-changing encounter with Jesus and immediately shared the Good News with others. Both stories remind us that when Jesus meets a person in their deepest need, he does not merely comfort them—the hope he brings transforms them.

- Read Matthew 5:14–16, Colossians 4:5–6, and 1 Peter 3:15. Why do small acts or simple invitations often open hearts to deeper conversations about faith?
- You can watch a newsreel on Norah and Dan’s story here: [CBS News: A Chance Encounter Brings New Purpose in Life](#)

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Jonathan & Maggie, world missions partners serving in the Asia Pacific region

^{1,3} Ben Witherington III. “Women in the Ministry of Jesus” Ashland Theological Journal 17.1 (Fall 1984): 24.

² John Chrysostom. Homily 34 on the Gospel of John. NewAdvent.org <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/24/0134.htm#:~:text=Observe%20too%20how%20prudently%20she,the%20wisdom%20of%20the%20woman?>

⁴ How a Man’s Chance Encounter with a Little Girl Gave Him New Purpose in Life. Nov. 18, 2016. CBS News. <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/a-moreperfect-union-widower-unexpected-friendship-with-little-girl-transforms-his-life/>