

**Sunday, September 6, 2020**

**Clifford Baptist Church  
Amherst, Virginia**

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Senior Pastor**

(Transcription from the Morning Service that was Streamed Live)



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**Sermon #16 from the Book of John**

**“The Woman at the Well:  
The Harvest”**

**John 4:30-42 (King James Version)**

Welcome to everyone here in person or listening via media or FM signal today. We’re continuing our series in the Gospel of John. My prayer today is that God will use me and my stumbling tongue to give you the message that is perfect from Him from His perfect Word. It’s an amazing thing when you think about standing in the pulpit; I’m so grateful you join me here and allow me this privilege of opening God’s Word.

Two sermons ago I began a “sub-series” about a meeting Jesus had with a woman—He had an appointment with her. He was traveling in His ministry from southern Judea to northern Galilee, some 80-90 miles. There are three routes one could take which I described in my first sermon: Travel to the west, go by the Mediterranean Sea, and go back to Galilee. Or go to the east, go through Peraea and get to Galilee. These two routes were longer, and most Jews traveled them when they went from Judea to Galilee. The third route was straight from Judea up to Galilee; you would travel through Samaria; most Jews avoided this route. They didn’t want to see or interact with a group of people there—there was much hatred toward the Samaritans. In John 4:4, we learn Jesus intentionally went through Samaria. The Jews were a mixed race of people. Hundreds of years before a group of Jews living there were ruled by the Assyrians. They got friendly with each other, began to intermarry, and produced a mixed race—half Jew, half Gentile. The “full-blooded” Jews hated this race of people. They had watered down the Jewish race.

So Jesus traveled with His disciples through Samaria because of this divine appointment with a woman at Sychar; she didn’t know it but this meeting would lead from her to an entire group of people. Jesus arrives at “Jacob’s Well,” stays there alone, and sends the disciples to Sychar to get food. The woman arrives alone during the heat of the day around noon. She was an outcast and came at that time to avoid seeing anyone else. Jesus told her He knew all about her and that she had been married five times. Most theologians agree she did not lose five husbands to death; rather, she lost them to divorce. A woman had no right to institute a divorce; five men threw her away. So she became an outcast in the community. We studied her and Jesus’ conversation in verses 1-29. At the end of the last sermon when I preached, it dawned on this Samaritan woman that the Messiah was coming, a Savior she was to be looking for. Jesus told her it’s not so much where she worships but who you worship. Look at John 4:26—He identifies Himself “**...I that speak unto thee am he.**” I am the Savior, I am the Messiah, I am the Son of God you’re speaking with. Her eyes and mind opened, and she realized she was talking with the Savior! So she leaves her waterpot and runs into town to share not earthly water but living water with those who lived in the town. She shouted “come see a man; go to the well!” How did the people react? Let’s start with verse 28: “<sup>28</sup>The woman then left her waterpot and went her way into the city and saith to the men, <sup>29</sup>Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?” <sup>30</sup>Then they went out of the city and came unto him. <sup>31</sup>In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. <sup>32</sup>But he said unto them, **I have meat to eat that ye know not of.** <sup>33</sup>There said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? <sup>34</sup>Jesus saith unto them, **My**

meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. <sup>35</sup>Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold I say unto you, Lift your eyes and look on the fields for they are white already to harvest. <sup>36</sup>And he that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup>And herein is that saying true, One soweth and another reapeth. <sup>38</sup>I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour; other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours. <sup>39</sup>And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. <sup>40</sup>So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. <sup>41</sup>And many more believed because of his own word; <sup>42</sup>And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.” May God add His blessing to this precious, familiar portion of His Word.

This outcast woman leaves the well and Jesus behind. As she runs into town, the disciples come back with food. They know Jesus is hungry—proof again He is fully God and fully man. He felt every emotion and every physical pain and need that you and I feel. The disciples said, “Master, eat something.” Look at verse 32 again; the disciples didn’t quite understand what He meant. He says I have nourishment you don’t know about, so the disciples look to each other and ask who brought Him something to eat? Jesus clarified in verse 34—my truest nourishment and truest satisfaction is not a full stomach. My greatest fulfillment is finishing the work God gave me to do. If you write in your Bible, underline the word finish and then reference John 19:30 where Jesus says from the cross “**It is finished.**”). Jesus had finished all the work God gave Him to do in His earthly life of 33 years culminating with the shedding of His blood on that cross. At the end of the Book of John, he says that if he wrote down everything Jesus did in His ministry on earth, the whole world could not contain the books. He accomplished much while on earth but finished what God gave Him to do.

What Jesus says about Himself applies to you and me. When He says I want to finish the work God gave Me to do, I want you to realize that we, too, have work to do. If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, He has you here. You woke up this morning, you have this day, and every tomorrow God gives you to finish the purpose He has for your life. There’s a reason for us to be together; a reason believers get up every day. The world will teach us we’ll be successful with a bank account full of money; have worldly fame; the newest car, the fanciest house. Jesus says No! The greatest success and satisfaction is not earthly things but what you do to fulfill God’s purpose in your life. The world says your storehouse and stomach ought to be full. Think of the richest people in the world—the more they get, the less they’re satisfied. Things won’t satisfy us; “stuff” won’t bring us true happiness. You will only find true nourishment, peace, and satisfaction at the end of the day by working towards finishing God’s plan in your life. Now that I’ve reached six decades my intention is focused on finishing what God has put me here to do. I believe one of those things is to plant the seeds of the gospel in two little boys’ lives who call me “Papa.” I am to pursue the church ministry and all that goes with that until Jesus takes me home. It’s true for each of us! The best prescription for true happiness is to get our eyes off earthly stuff and do what Jesus tells us to do.

As Jesus and His disciples stay at the well in the heat of the day, the woman is rushing into town telling groups of men to “go see the man at the well.” I want you to understand this woman had a “reputation” in Sychar as I’ve mentioned earlier. So the townspeople wonder what has changed her. We know! But their curiosity is peaked and who changed her to be like she is now. They start towards Jacob’s Well outside the city. Jesus sees them coming

and calls their attention to his disciples. Read verse 35. Concerning the “**fields white for harvest**,” I remember in Sunday School that my teacher said since this was a hot time of year, most people wore white clothing. She said as these people were coming through the gate, those robes were kind of flowing in the wind—“the fields white for harvest.” I recall from a meeting last year with the Southern Baptist Conservatives hearing a great preacher, O. S. Hawkins, former pastor at First Baptist Church in Dallas. He told of when he was a brand new, twenty-something pastor and his first church was in the Midwest. An old farmer took him around the area (made me think of Morris Thomas who did the same for me) and they passed a wheat field he harvested. He told O. S. when the wheat tassels out and the field turns white, it’s time for the harvest. But if I let that field sit for too many days before I harvest it, the wheat will rot and die. I have just a window of time to do the harvesting or else it will be lost. So Jesus, looking at the crowd coming towards them, tells His disciples today is the day to harvest these souls in salvation. The harvest cannot be put off; it has to happen today! We have a window of time—He stayed there two days (verse 40) to bring those souls to the Kingdom of God. Jesus said if we put the harvest off today most likely they will die—let’s not miss our window of opportunity. As the crowd gets closer, read verses 37 and 38 again. From His words, it seems like someone had already been to Sychar and planted seeds that the Messiah was coming. Who could that have been? This area was close to the wilderness where John the Baptist lived. It’s probable some of his followers or maybe John the Baptist himself traveled through this area; he was the forerunner of Jesus Christ. Jesus said now we’re here to reap the harvest that was grown before we came.

No matter your age today, this applies to all of us who believe Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior. Every day your words, attitude, and actions can be planting seeds for Jesus Christ as Savior. That’s part of our purpose together. The harvest may not come the moment you plant the seed; it may come later as we see in this chapter. Maybe people seeing our witness don’t immediately come to Christ but we’ve planted the seed of the Gospel which will take root, grow, and come into fruition. We must always be intentional and look for the ways we’re to plant seeds of the Gospel in people’s hearts. We’ll trust Him for the harvest! From this Scripture series, the impact of this woman running through town giving the good news is amazing! She’s the one who energized everyone to leave town and go to the well. Her witness had quite an effect on the people in Sychar; they began to believe the Messiah and Savior was there at the well because of her message and how she’d been changed. Read again verses 41 and 42. The harvest in Sychar that day and the next was huge. So many Samaritans came to Him as Lord and Savior and were given eternal life. It first started by the woman’s witness which helped them but His word saved them. He’s the one who gave us life.

A few years ago a regular listener of our radio ministry contacted me to say he listened every week and that our program had deepened his walk with Jesus. We texted several times, and I learned he had been in prison but had paid his debt and was now living in this area. He said he thanked God for a prison chaplain who shared the good news of Jesus Christ and “saved me.” I gently corrected him to say the chaplain led you to Jesus; he opened the Bible and showed you Jesus loves you, went to the cross for you, and rose from the dead for you. But only Jesus can save you, not a chaplain! The chaplain planted the seed, but Jesus reaped the harvest! Believers, today, the account of the woman at the well lives on.

When we leave through these doors at Clifford Baptist Church or those watching by media and close down your screens, you’re walking into the fields of harvest. You’re walking into a world that desperately needs the word of Christ. It’s a tough mission field, but it is a mission field white for harvest nonetheless. We’ll go out there in a few

minutes to plant seeds and to share the Gospel. People look at you and me to see what Jesus looks like through us—what’s different about this believer I need? They’re drawn to Jesus by what they see in us. The greatest satisfaction, contentment, and fulfillment in life is when we realize our purpose is to walk into the harvest planting seeds and harvesting souls. That’s what Clifford Baptist Church’s ministry is all about—putting people to plant and harvest. Think about your family, your children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews. Think about your co-workers and friends—all those who cross your path—then rededicate your life to the harvest. Rededicate your life to planting the seeds. Rededicate your life to reaping the souls when you have that opportunity to speak that word of invitation to Christ. We’re supposed to labor in the fields and not let the “earthly” things take over what our purpose is. Plant the seed. Watch that you’re walking in a white field of harvest. Would you rededicate your life and say Lord, in spite of all the busyness of my life, don’t let me take my eyes off what my true purpose is. Let me finish what You gave me to do the moment I said yes to Jesus. Let me finish well and don’t let anything take my eyes off following You.

If any of you today have not received Jesus as your Lord and Savior, know this: I cannot save you. There’s nothing I can do from this pulpit; I’m nothing more than a sinner saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. But I want to lead you to Him. I want you to know you’re nothing but a sinner, too. “All of us sin and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23) But there’s a Savior who wants to save you—a Messiah who wants to give you life. I want to bring you to His feet. He gave me life, purpose, family, home, ministry, and satisfaction. He wants to give you a satisfied soul as well by being your Savior. If you need Him, don’t put the decision off—come today! Say yes to Him; tell Him I’m sorry for what I’ve done. But I know through the cross, You can and will forgive me and accept me as your son or daughter. Believers, this week, will you be planting the seeds for harvest? Church home, healing, whatever you need—He meets us here just as He met that woman in Sychar.

**Let Us Pray:** Our Father, our God, thank You for these moments. Thank You for bringing us to the foot of the cross and the feet of the Savior. We know we live in the fields white for harvest; help us to be planting seeds. Father, when we have the opportunity help us to speak a word for Christ that will lead a soul to the Savior. Help us never to take our eyes off our true purpose: to finish the work You gave us when we came to Christ as Savior. Bless us; bless that one who needs You as Savior and Lord. He or she can come right now and be assured of eternal life. Bless us in the mighty name of our Lord, the Messiah God, Jesus Christ. Amen.