

Jesus Shows the Way into Our World

John 4:1-42

Jesus commissions us:

‘As the Father has sent me,
even so I am sending you’

John 20:21

Briarwood 3



Jesus' Three Years Ministry

- Primarily among the Jews
- 'I am sent to the lost sheep of Israel'
- This story 'The Woman at the Well' – and others
- Reveals his long-term goal for the Gospel
- To go far beyond the Jewish people
- First to Samaria
- Then ultimately, to the ends of the earth
- He is 'the Savior of the World'

A Brief Meeting

- Our text describes a brief meeting
- Jesus and a Samaritan woman
- Seemingly chance encounter and conversation
- Leads to a two day stay in the village of Sychar
- As a consequence many villagers come to believe in Jesus

Painting from the catacombs in Rome



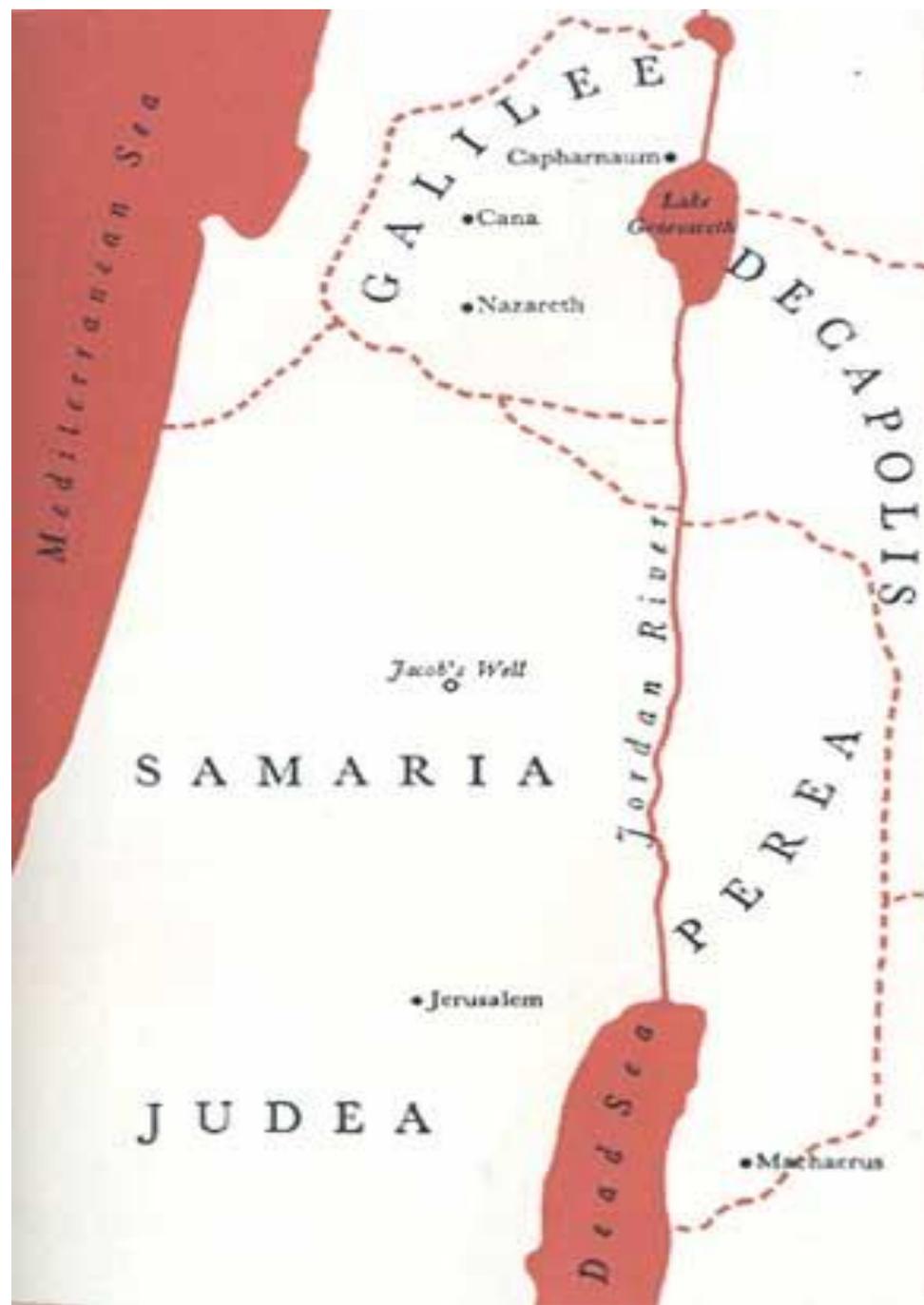
A Chance Encounter?

- Jesus stops to rest from his journey
- Does the woman just happen to be there at the well?
- From childhood Jesus committed to 'doing his Father's work'
- Jesus' teaching - everything he does
- Everything he says
- All in obedience to His Father's will (John 14:31; 12:49)

Jesus Our Pattern

- Jesus is the Father's pattern for our lives
- Our pattern for mission and evangelism
- Jesus does not go anywhere by chance
- His whole life a series of divine appointments
- His food to do what pleases his Father v.34

Map showing Jacob's Well in Samaria



‘Now he had to go through Samaria’

- Why does Jesus ‘have to go through Samaria’?
- Jews only through Samaria to Galilee – if urgency
- Jesus not in a hurry
- v. 42 - Stays two days in Sychar
- Three routes for a Jew to travel north from Judea to Galilee:
- Inland along the Jordan River
- The coast road along the Mediterranean
- Through Samaria - direct

Detailed map of Samaria showing Sychar and the well

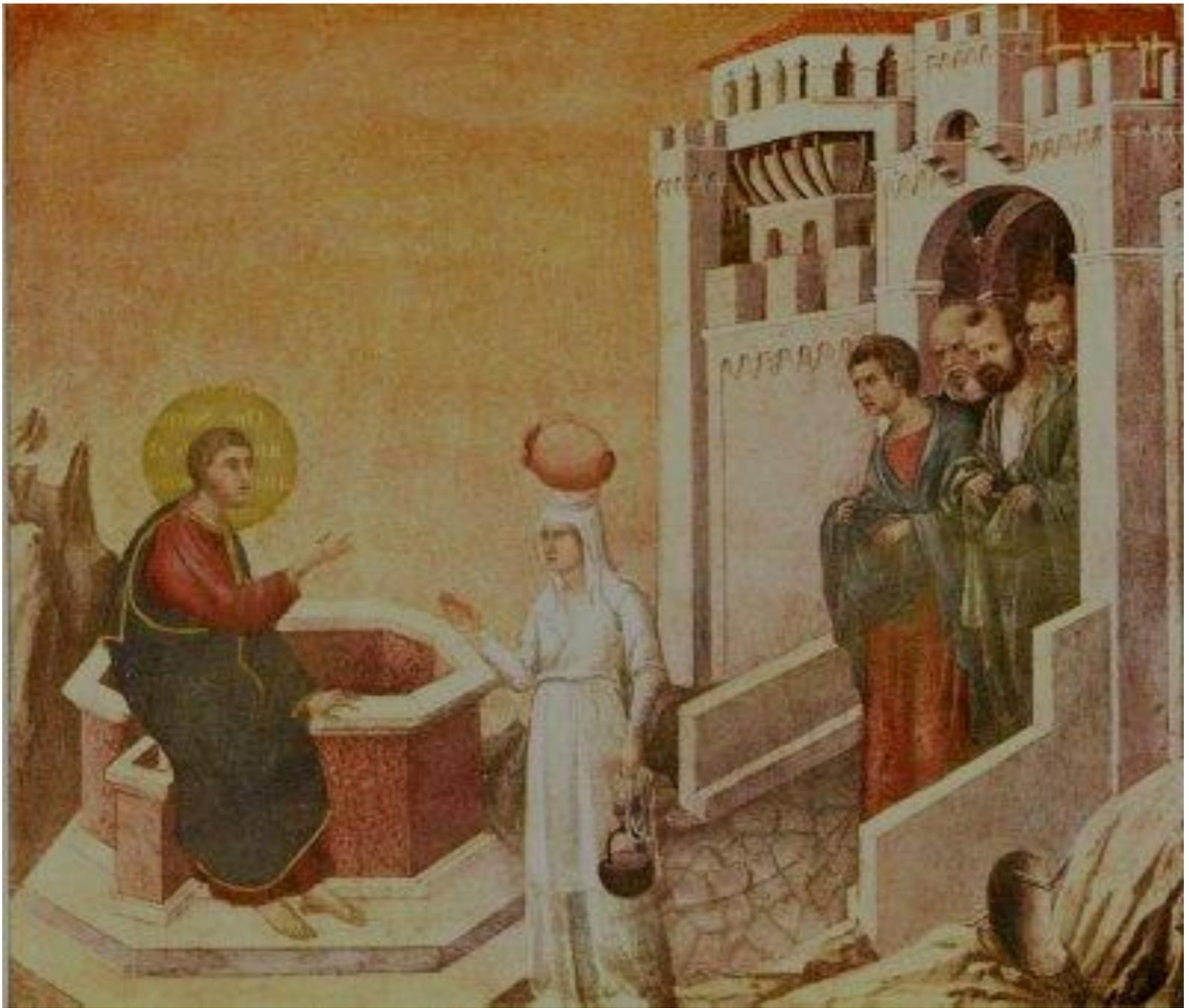


Detail Map of Jerusalem Region, circa 30 CE

The Third Route

- Most direct route through Samaria
- Jews – no shortcut through Samaria without constraint
- Avoid all contact with Samaritans
- Meet a Samaritan on the road - walk into the ditch
- Not even shadows to touch
- Jesus' compelling reasons to go to Samaria
- Eager to meet the woman at the well!
- Jesus walks through the heart of Samaria

Painting by Duccio 1311



Who was this person Jesus feels
constrained to meet?

An Outcast

1. The Problem of Her Race

- As a Samaritan she is a member of the wrong race
- (From the perspective of the Jews)
- The Samaritans were a people of mixed race – half-breeds
- Partially descended from remnants of ten northern tribes
- People from the northern kingdom of Samaria (Israel)
- Taken captive - resettled in far eastern parts of Assyrian Empire

Intermarriage

- Many intermarried in exile
- Like Esther - when she became queen in Persian court
- Many returned to Samaria after exile
- Others remained in Samaria after Israel's defeat
- Intermarried with other peoples settled by Assyrians
- Policy of conquer and resettle (2 Kings 17: 21-24)
- Jews: 'they polluted the pure blood of the patriarchs'
- No pure blood – think of Ruth!

2. The Problem of Her Religion

- Another offense to the Jews
- Samaritan religion is also mixed
- Samaritan religion - a blend
- The worship of the true God - and
- Pagan idolatry of the peoples from around Babylon
- Settled in Samaria
- By the conquering Assyrians (2 Kings 17:21-41)
- Samaritans accepted only the books of Moses as Scripture

Place of Worship

- Built temple on Mt. Gerizim
- Mt. Gerizim - the proper place to worship the Lord
- Jews fought war against the Samaritans
- Burned temple - place of abominable sacrilege (128 BC)
- Jews despised Samaritans as heretics
- Confused theology
- Improper worship
- Worse than paganism to the Jews

3. The Problem of Her Gender

- Why should this be considered a problem?
- Jewish Rabbis/teachers – no women disciples
- Women not allowed to be witnesses in court
- Rabbis - women irrational and untrustworthy
- Prayer of the Pharisees
- ‘Thank you God that I am not a Gentile, but a Jew;
- that I am not a slave, but am free;
- not a woman, but a man’
- Paul - converted Pharisee - overturns this prayer Galatians 3

Not a Problem for Jesus

- Jesus, God's Son, the second person of the Trinity
- Eternal Word, Creator of man & woman in his likeness
- Who better than Jesus to show by his example?
- Women - designed and created by him
- The full equals of men
- Every woman in this world
- Fully the representative and bearer of God's image
- You are the crown of creation
- Crowned with glory and honor
- Everything under your feet

Jesus Honors Women

- Jesus loves to honor women
- Asks them to bear witness to him
- Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph
- The first witnesses of his resurrection – ‘told the others’
- Jesus trusts the witness of women
- Eager to meet this woman
- Gladly calls women to faith & discipleship

4. The Problem of Her Sin

- Her sin is not secret or 'respectable'
- Known by all to be a sinner
- Married five times
- Now living with a man outside of any marriage contract
- Divorce easy for men
- If a man found another woman more to his liking
- If he found fault with a woman for any reason
- (Matthew 19:3) - he could divorce her

Moral Outcast

- Woman always viewed as the one 'at fault'
- A woman divorced five times - a person despised by all
- No need to marry her to have her
- Now a woman passed from man to man
- Scorned and hated by other women
- Failure in her marriages
- Danger to their marriages
- Almost certainly why she is at the well alone

Painting by Paolo Veronese 1550



Jesus, Friend of the Outcast

The Gift of God

The One Who Gives Living Water

A Prophet

One Greater than the Patriarch Jacob

The Messiah

The One Who Will Explain Everything to Us

'I Am He'

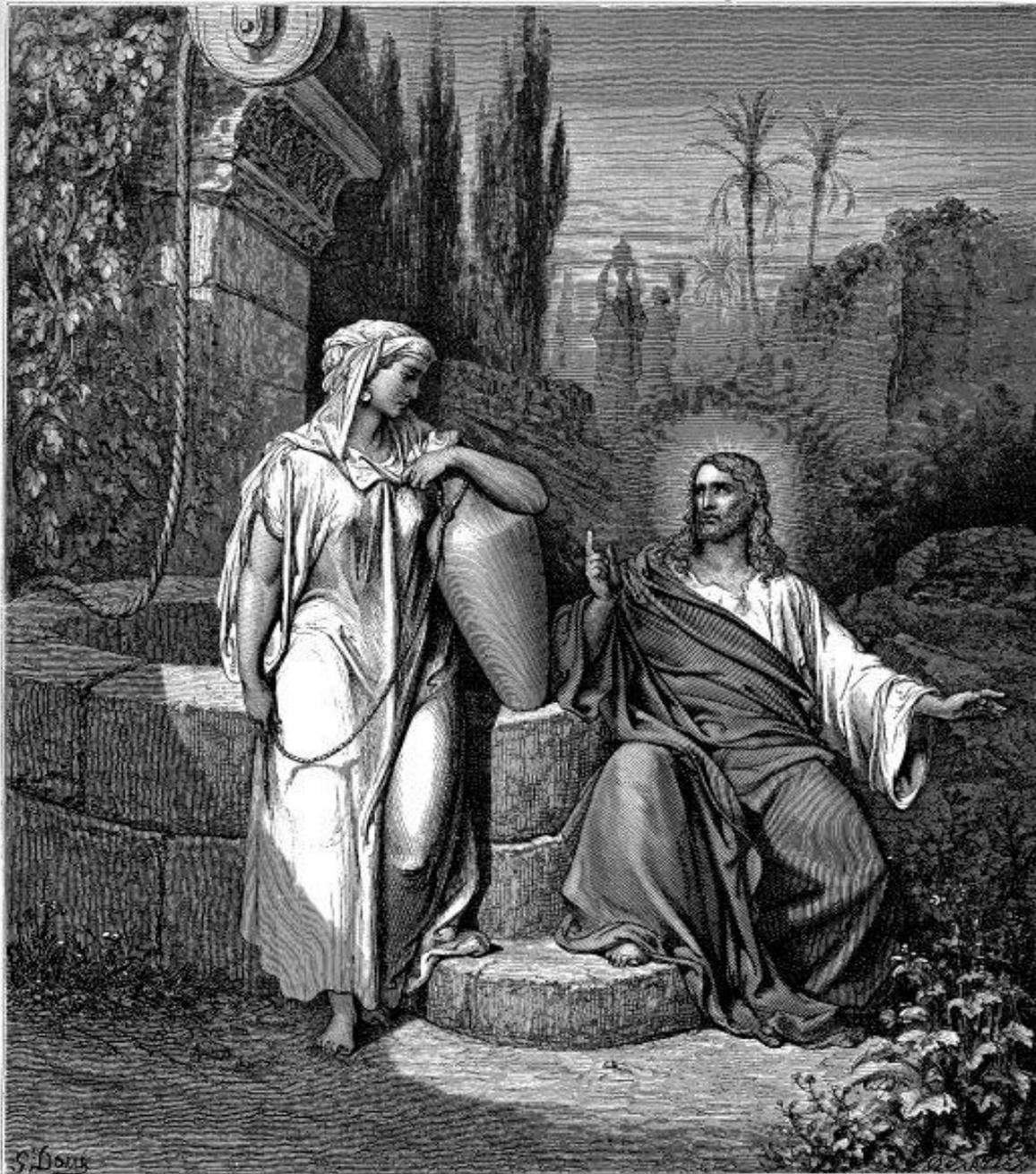
The One Who Can Tell Us Everything We ever Did

The Savior of the World

How does the Son of God, Meet the Woman at the Well?

How does the God/man
In his Godhead and manhood holy
Separated from sinners
How does he relate to this person
With many barriers between himself and her?

"Jesus and the Woman of Samaria" by Gustave Doré



1. Setting aside Custom and Law

- Asks the woman at the well for a drink of water
- Jews did not drink or eat from vessels used by Samaritans
- Rabbi Eliezer taught:
- ‘He who eats the bread of the Samaritans is like one who eats the flesh of swine’
- Jesus breaks social customs
- Breaks Jewish law
- ‘Use your water jug to draw from the well’
- ‘Give me a drink from your jug’

- No Jew ever requested food or drink from her
- Jesus will drink from an unclean container she has handled
- She is amazed
- Aware of extraordinary nature of his request
- ‘You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman.
- How can you ask me for a drink?’
- No man ever addressed her as a social equal
- His disciples
- Surprised to find him talking with a woman when they return (v.27)

Strozii 1640

Henryk Siemiradzki 1886





2. Revealing His Needs

- Jesus shows his vulnerability and need to her
- He is tired and thirsty
- The Creator of the world
- The source of every river, spring, ocean, drop of rainfall
- The fountain of living water
- The One who needs nothing from anyone
- This One asks the Samaritan woman for a drink
- He dignifies her by acknowledging his need of something she can do for him
- An ordinary request
- Jesus could not have done anything more honoring

3. Respectful Discussion

- Jesus treats the Samaritan woman as rational and thoughtful
- As the Creator of women he knows her fully
- Her intellectual abilities
- Her capacity to learn and reason
- No teacher (and no man) has ever spoken to her in this way before
- Jesus enters into a theological discussion with her

What Did They Discuss?

- John's account is a summary of central points
- A full account one day
- The living water – spiritual life
- Only Jesus can give this
- Fills the soul to overflowing for ever
- The patriarch Jacob
- Giver of the well to his descendants
- Honored by the Samaritans
- The proper site for worship – Jerusalem - the Jews
- Or Mt. Gerizim - the Samaritans
- The nature of true worship

Mt. Gerizim – photo taken from Mt. Ebal



The Messiah

- The coming of the Messiah
- Samaritans called him 'Taheb' – 'The Restorer'
- The promise of a great prophet like Moses
- Would teach all the truth - Deuteronomy 18:17-19
- Samaritans had first five books of Bible
- Salvation will be from the Jews
- Messiah would come as the lion from the tribe of Judah
- Would rule all the nations (Genesis 49:10)

God's Testimonies of Truth

- Jesus aware of the Father's testimony in her life
 - Her knowledge of Books of Moses
 - Her interest in worship
 - Her spiritual need
 - Her hope for Messiah
 - Her sense of shame
-
- God always has his testimonies in every person we meet

4. Gentleness and Grace

- Jesus speaks to her gently
- Even about her sin
- Weighs heavily upon her
- ‘Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?’
- The villagers refer back to this
- ‘Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony’
- “He told me all that I ever did”

Defined by Sin

- Failures in the area of marriage and sexuality
- A definition of her whole life
- Everyone characterized her by her broken marriages
- She also
- Jesus' knowledge of her leads her to the conclusion
- 'You are a prophet - the Messiah'
- Jesus' plain declaration that he is indeed the Messiah
- She puts her faith in him

5. Commissioned for Service

- Jesus trusts those who come to him
- Gives responsible tasks in his service
- He commissions this Samaritan woman
- Bear the good news to your husband - bring him back
- She bears the good news to her neighbors
- Brings them to meet him
- The first witness to Jesus in her community
- Jesus gladly commissions women
- Ambassadors of his reconciliation
- Witnesses to his divine nature, to his being the Christ, to his amazing love

A Successful Evangelist

- Her words to her neighbors bear fruit
- They come immediately to meet Jesus
- Jesus sees them in white garments
- Coming across the fields
- ‘Do not they say, “Three months more until the harvest”
- But I say to you, look up and see the fields are already white for harvest’
- I have done the hard work – broken the barriers
- Now you can labor among these people

A Stay in 'Unclean' Territory

- Jesus stays two more days in the village
- Apparently 'chance encounter' with the woman
- Many in community meet Jesus
- Become believers
- Come to know - this man is the 'Savior of the world'
- 'Side-trip' to Sychar
- One of the most successful times of mission recorded for us in the Gospels

Jesus Eating Unclean Food

- Peter's protest: "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common of unclean" (Acts 10:14)
- Peter forgot whose house he was staying in
- He also forgot the lack of a Kosher restaurant in Sychar

Lessons from Jesus

- Intentional lives
- Overcoming barriers
- Setting aside custom and Christian rules
- Being vulnerable
- Asking what testimony the Father has – Philippians 4:8
- Receiving the good gifts of unbelievers
- Respectful discussion – traces of truth
- Gentleness and grace about moral failures
- See our own sins
- Commissioned for service