

The power of an effective witness

John 4:27-42

How can a person effectively share their faith? How do you convince someone to consider the claims of the gospel? John 4:1-26 describes the encounter between Jesus and the woman of Samaria at the well in Sychar. Her response (27-42) shows that she was transformed after meeting Jesus. She came for water and left her waterpot. Initially, she was avoiding people and now she can't wait to talk to people. Her simple message is "Come meet Jesus." *An effective witness combines personal testimony with the Word of God to introduce people to Jesus so that they can believe the gospel.*

The effective witness of a transformed life (27-30)

When Jesus' disciples return from their shopping trip, they are amazed to see Jesus talking to a woman (27). Their reaction reflects the typical Jewish prejudices against Samaritans.

The woman left her waterpot because of her excitement at having met the Messiah (28). When one is gripped by Jesus, one cannot keep quiet.

The woman was convinced because Jesus knew her past as well as by his words and works (29). She framed her thinking in the form of a question, which elicited investigation, rather than a dogmatic assertion that could be rejected out of hand.

The people came out of the city to investigate (30).

An effective witness requires a new sense of priority and a new sense of urgency (31-38)

While Jesus was undoubtedly hungry, he showed little interest in eating (31-32). The disciples sensed something was happening.

Jesus used the disciples urging to teach them about priorities (33-34). Just as the woman focused on physical water, the disciples focused on physical food.

Jesus responded that spiritual nourishment that came from doing the Father's will and advancing his work was more satisfying than physical food (34).

The reference to four months (35) is the approximate time between the last sowing and the earliest harvest reaping. Barley grain would turn from green to light brown. White for harvest means extremely ripe. If the grain isn't harvested in time, the seed pods fall off the stalks. Perhaps the disciples observed the customarily white-clothed men of Sychar, wending their way through the fields toward them as so much living grain.

The reaper was Jesus, but the disciples could be as well (36). The wages are rewards and joy.

Both sowers and reapers are necessary for a good harvest (37-38). The Old Testament prophets and John the Baptist had sowed, but now Jesus and his disciples were reaping.

An effective witness introduces someone to Jesus so that they can believe (39-42)

Many of the Samaritans came to meet Jesus because of the woman's testimony (39).

The Samaritans showed great humility in asking Jesus to stay with them (40). Their openness stands in contrast to the hostility of many of Jesus' hearers.

The additional converts believed because of Jesus' word. This confirmed what the woman had said about him (41-42). Their faith now had a firmer foundation than just the testimony of one person.

"Savior of the world" is unique to the apostle John. It ties in with the "Lamb of God" who takes away the sin of the world (1:29).

Jesus had to pass through Samaria (4) in order to redeem a woman (5-29), who brought her entire town to Christ (39-42), and to teach the disciples about evangelism (34-38).

Application

Serving Christ is more important and more satisfying than fulfilling any mere physical need.

Ask God for a new sense of vision.

Ask God for a new sense of urgency.

Share your story and then introduce people to Jesus.