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Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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Called to Testify John 4:25-42

Lesson Background and Introduction

The story of Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well serves several purposes in the book of John. It teaches the spiritual nature of true worship (John 4:23-24). It clarifies the identity of Jesus as the chosen Messiah, or Christ, from God (4:25-26). It portrays Jesus as fearlessly moving beyond the boundaries of orthodox Judaism to an awkward encounter with a Samaritan (4:9). And it demonstrates the influence a person of conviction and urgency can have when talking to others about Jesus (4:28-30, 39). She was both a part of the harvest and a farmer-sower. Her work contributed to a fruitful harvest, indeed. Many who read the Gospel of John can identify with her: a forlorn, rejected person, ostracized by her community. A woman who came to get water at a time of day when she knew others wouldn't be there—only to encounter Jesus and be transformed. The village's object of derision became the mouthpiece of the Lord to bring others to faith. It would be nice to know the name of the Samaritan woman. It makes us wonder about other women of faith whose names are lost to history. Many of them have spoken out to bring others to faith. Many taught their sons and daughters to pray. Many read Scripture to their children to plant seeds of faith. Some even have lived with unbelieving husbands who finally submitted to Christ as Lord after years of patient prayer by their wives. Their names may be unknown to us, but they are not unknown to God. He has written their names "in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27). Someday in Heaven, we may be able to look into that book and learn the Samaritan woman's name, the name of one whose testimony changed her community forever.

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
We witness best for Christ when we say the least about ourselves

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK:
Through our words and actions, we testify of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. We are His messengers, but He is the message

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire (Luke 3:16 NKJV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", Jan 23, 2003)

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman - The history of the Samaritans can be traced back to Israel's northern 10 tribes who flagrantly disobeyed God. Eventually, the Assyrians captured and exiled most people from these 10 tribes in 722 B.C. (2 Kings 17). The remaining two southern tribes, Benjamin and Judah, hated and rejected their remaining northern brothers because the Assyrians moved Gentile people into the north, and those Gentiles intermarried with the remaining Israelites. That hatred lasted into Jesus' day He, however, still cared for the Samaritans. By showing compassion to a Samaritan woman, Jesus drew a part of this hated group back to the Father. After one meeting with the Messiah, the Samaritan woman became one of God's precious vessels to pour out His love and truth to the Samaritans. Through her testimony, many became believers in Christ.

Jesus Revealed His Identity - In the course of the conversation with the woman, Jesus eventually revealed His true identity. He convinced her that He was the Christ, the anticipated Messiah. He told her personal details about her life. He spoke to those empty places within her heart and promised to fill them with Himself. She placed her faith in His words. She returned to her village and told the men about Christ. God used her testimony, and many people came out to the well to meet Jesus.

Do God's Will - After the Samaritan woman returned to the city, Jesus' disciples encouraged Him to eat the food they brought, but He replied, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of" (John 4:32, KJV). The men were puzzled. Where did He get food? Then He went on to explain that doing God's will was His nourishment.

Work in God's Fields - Jesus gave them a picture of harvest fields ready for reaping. In this picture, Jesus was referring to the Samaritans, who were an unlikely delegation to receive Jesus' message. The Savior demonstrated to His disciples, through His conversation with the Samaritan woman, that people are ready to listen. God has placed a vacuum in the heart of every person that only He can fill. They want to hear about the Lord. All God needs is a faithful worker to proclaim the truth. One woman sharing her testimony enlightened an entire city. One faithful Christian sharing the Gospel can make a huge difference in many lives.

(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)

Series: Call in the New Testament

UNIT 3: The Call of Women

NEXT WEEK

Called to Support
(Luke 8:1-3; Mark 15:40; John 20:10-18)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Testify about the Messiah (John 4:25-30)

Messiah revealed (25-26)

- As revealed at the transfiguration (Mark 9:2-3)
- As revealed by Jesus Himself (John 1:51)
- As revealed by the blind man (John 9:1-3)
- As revealed by miracles done in Jesus' name (John 14:11-13)

Disciple's misunderstandings (27)

- Misunderstandings because God's choices are based on His own criteria (Deut 7:5-7)
- Misunderstandings because God does things as it pleases Him (Jer 27:5)
- Misunderstandings because God hides certain things from man (Matt 11:25-26)
- Misunderstandings because God's actions do not depend on man's desire (Rom 9:15-16)

Seeking to share the good news (28-30)

- Sharing the good news through preaching (Rom 10:15)
- Sharing the good news to make disciples (Matt 28:19-20)
- Sharing the good news to share truth (Col 1:3-7)
- Sharing the good news through qualified teachers (2 Tim 2:2)

Testify about Spiritual Needs (John 4:31-38)

Spiritual food (31-33)

- Spiritual food that comes from the word of God (Deut 8:3)
- Spiritual food that is the bread from heaven (Neh 9:15)
- Spiritual food that is the bread of life (John 6:32-35)
- Spiritual food that eternally satisfies (Isa 55:1-2)

Spiritual harvest (34-35)

- Gathering of the elect (Matt 24:31)
- Gathering of the scattered children of God together (John 11:51-52)
- Gathering by Christians to help gather God's kingdom (Matt 12:30)
- Gathering to give thanks, praise and worship to God (Ps 106:47)
- Gathering together of God's people into the assembly (Isa 43:6-9)

Spiritual reward (36-38)

- Rewards that come as the result of the earnest seeking of God (Heb 11:6)
- Rewards that come as the result of works done (Matt 16:27)
- Rewards that come as the result of inheritance (Col 3:24)
- Rewards that are dispensed by Jesus (Rev 22:12)

Results of Testifying (John 4:39-42)

Believing the woman's testimony (39)

- A testimony giving the reason for hope (1 Peter 3:15)
- A testimony that is given by the Holy Spirit (Matt 10:19-20)
- A testimony that cannot be resisted or contradicted (Luke 21:14-15)
- A testimony full of grace (Col 4:6)

Believing through personal contact (40)

- Personal contact because to hold on to instructions can result in eternal life (Prov 4:13)
- Personal contact because it helps to open our spiritual eyes (Luke 24:28-31)
- Personal contact between believers develops fellowship (Acts 16:15)
- Personal contact because it can aid in the salvation of the whole household (Acts 16:29-34)

Believing in Jesus ourselves (41-42)

- Believing in Jesus' ability to do all things (Matt 9:27-29)
- Believing is knowing that all things are possible for Jesus (Mark 9:23-24)
- Believing is knowing that Jesus is God's one and only Son (John 3:16-18)
- Believing is having our eyes opened to the true identity of Jesus (John 9:35-39)