

Series: Receiving life by believing in God's Son (a Gospel of John study)

Sermon Text: John 4:35-42

Kids Word: Gospel

(*This is the only account in all 4 gospels)

John said he wrote this letter to help us find “*fullness of life through believing Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.*” We’re working through **1:19-11:57** where he tells real-life stories of how it looked when people met Jesus.

- Who’s been in a conversation and thought, “*there’s more to this story*”? As Jesus explained this meet up with a ***Samaritan woman***, His disciples sensed this was not just about her. They learned it was about God’s concern for all ***Samaritans*** and every people group Israel had been dismissing and avoiding for reasons like sin, race, religion, politics, and socioeconomics. Isn’t that ironic? They knew God could solve any problem but refused to share Him with people they deemed problematic. As Jesus led His disciples across enemy lines, guess what they found...people who, while somewhat different, were not as foreboding as they’d been led to believe and who were spiritually thirsty like them! Thankfully, God’s concern for people isn’t altered by stuff we’ve heard about them. If we know God sent His Son to be ***Savior of the world*** by His life, death, and resurrection (cf. 1 Corinthians 15), why would we keep anyone from Him? Perhaps you agree but don’t know how to have a gospel conversation in a broken and polarized world. If so, I have “*good news*” ...1st century issues share similarities with modern issues, which means the approaches Jesus used can teach us how to have spiritual discussions today. This will be our...

BIG IDEA: We should share the gospel like Jesus did.

Let’s consider some key ideas and applications in our text.

I’d be remiss to share practical tips without mentioning how John’s letters repeatedly urge us to abide in God through Jesus. We can’t be anything like Jesus unless we do what He did...spend tons of time with His Dad, so He influences every move we make! From there we can read about and mimic Jesus’ interactions with people. **Chapter 4** is a gold mine of practical tips, so let’s begin with this: When sharing the gospel, remember...***The work is never all on you.*** Look at **John 4:35-38**, “***35 Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. 36 Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. 37 For here the***

saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' 38 I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.

- I know this farming metaphor sounds strange, but it clears up common misconceptions about sharing our faith. First, we don't *send ourselves* into the world. We're *sent* by God's authority with truth everyone needs to hear and obey. Second, we're never starting from scratch. Being a witness is like God *sending* us into well-established *farms* to *reap* where others have already been hard at *work*, including our spiritual ancestors! 1 Corinthians 3 says "*some plant, others water, and God gives the increase*" and likens our labor to building on a pre-existing foundation. The plan is in place, work has begun, and the message doesn't need updated. God just asks that we enter the *fields* of everyday life and *gather fruit* He's been cultivating. Spiritual conversations become more enjoyable when we view gospel labor like *farming*...it takes time, is never "*all on us*", and is always done in partnership with God and others.

Here's another tip about sharing the gospel...***Just share what Jesus did for you.***

- Some of us feel ill-equipped to have spiritual conversations because we haven't memorized a certain set of verses, canned speeches, or answers to common arguments. We should be life-long students of Jesus, but no further knowledge is needed to explain what Jesus has done for you. That's all this Samaritan *woman* knew in *verses 28-29*, "*The woman left her water jar, went into town and said to the people, 'Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?'*" Now look at *verse 39*, "*Many Samaritans from believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me all that I ever did.'*" Think back to *chapter 1* where Andrew and the guy who wrote this letter met Jesus...John the Baptist simply said, "*Behold the Lamb of God*" and they began to follow. Andrew told his brother, Simon Peter, "*We have found the Messiah*", and he began to follow. Jesus simply told Philip, "*Follow me*" and he began to follow. Philip said to Nathanael, "*We've found him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, Joseph's son*", and surprise...he began to follow. You became qualified to share the gospel the day Jesus rescued you. Just say, "*come and see for yourself...let's spend our lives getting to know Jesus together.*"

This segues into another tip about sharing the gospel...***Get out of the middle.***

- God *sends* us to help people meet Jesus, not to be their life-long mediator. 1 Timothy 2:5 says, "*There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*" Jesus died

to give people direct access to God through Him, so a good pastor, group leader, or friend will slow down and ask, “*Are my disciples relating with God through Jesus or through me?*” Our elders often caution me to consider this. I’m also blessed to have spiritual mentors who don’t spoon feed me, they challenge me get into God’s Word and spend time in prayer. Look at the difference this made in *verses 40-42*, “*When the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay (abide) with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, ‘It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.’*”

Here's one more tip for sharing the gospel...***Just do what Jesus did.***

- Jesus packed a lot into His conversation in ***Samaria***, it’s like a Master class in disciple making. I’ve attempted to summarize it all into 4 “*Be*” statements to remind us to “*BE like Jesus.*”
 - 1) Be a Christian, not a universalist. A spiritual conversation can make people defensive or uncomfortable, so they’ll deflect to “*less personal*” topics, as the Samaritan ***woman*** did when she brought up historic wells, mountains, and other world issues. Another tactic she and others use is to say stuff like, “*I also worship God, just in my own way because, you know, all roads lead to God.*” Not wanting to be offensive, I’ve been tempted to let that go, but notice how uncompromising Jesus was on this point in *verse 22*. He said, “*You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.*” We too can ***BE like Jesus*** by reminding people that the only way to God is through His Son, Jesus Christ (cf. John 14:6).
 - 2) Be truthful, not full of yourself. Being harsh about sin is obviously unloving and selfish, but so is avoiding uncomfortable conversations. Jesus made informed judgements about sin without ever “*sweeping it under the rug*” or “*throwing stones*” (cf. Matthew 7; John 8). He let truth stand on its own without hammering or apologizing. His discussion with her about sin and repentance was understanding, positive, and inviting. This ***woman*** was used to being seen, known, and rejected; yet this man saw her, knew her, and was still willing to befriend her. Psalm 145:9 says, “*The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made*”, so it’s possible to be merciful without liking what people do. We too can ***BE like Jesus*** by speaking the truth in love (cf. Ephesians 4:15) and offering to be a friend of sinners regardless of their situation.

- 3) Be peaceful, not polarizing. Romans 12:18 says, “*If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.*” Jesus was not a right-wing extremist, nor did He hate left-wing extremists. He was peaceful and easygoing in conversation with both sides of the aisle--with an elite man like Nicodemus and with a lowly Samaritan **woman**. We too can **BE like Jesus** when our agenda is about “*God’s kingdom*” instead of “*right and left.*”
- 4) Be a learner, not an assumer. Some, unfairly judge the **woman** in this story. If we take time to learn about her history, we discover her people followed the Law of Moses, in which a **woman** could not initiate divorce. This means her 5 marriages ended because 5 men gave up on her! So, at least some of her issues stemmed from the poor choices of people who had faulty views of God’s perfect laws. Jesus took genuine interest in this **woman** and the history of her people, He didn’t dismiss her background or experiences, He spoke about stuff she cared about, He used language she could understand, and in contrast with other 1st century men, He saw her as an intelligent and worthy conversation partner. Micah 6:8 says, “*The Lord has told you what is good and what He requires of you...do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God.*” We too can **BE like Jesus** by not presuming to understand every situation and being open to learning and thinking critically about how people have experienced this wildly broken world.

Let’s pray...Father, salvation helps us lay aside our judgments and fears so we can begin to see ourselves in partnership with God and others. Instead of treating people like enemies, objects, and idiots, Your Spirit helps us realize we’re all broken by sin yet full of potential when reconnected with our Creator through Your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us realize that throwing solutions at broken people without offering them a supportive relationship is selfish, unhelpful, and unloving. Give us a patient curiosity to listen and learn how people think and feel about what they’ve experienced. Help us learn to treat others the way Jesus treated folks like Nicodemus and this Samaritan woman and her people. Their lives did not become perfect or trouble free when they met Jesus, however they did encounter someone who helped them see things they hadn’t previously realized and who offered them ***an eternal well of living water to drink from so they’d never thirst again.*** I pray more of us become like Your son. Amen.

Let’s stand and lift our voices together in singing, “*Jesus, thank you.*”

So, what’s your NEXT STEP?

- Remember, our next step always begins with faith in Christ. Either placing faith in Him for the first time or exercising faith to repent, change, and grow. Either way, His Spirit will help you.

Quotes/Additional thoughts:

- **Context:** The Gospel of the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee, provides a clearly stated purpose. *John 20:30-31* says, “*Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*” Some people demand to have all their questions satisfied before bowing to Jesus, yet John claimed his limited account was enough to bring anyone to faith. As we read it, our Savior and friend emerges from the pages as a real person in the real world. Jesus shows us what we could become, if we too would rely on His infinite Father who will gladly supply whatever we need.
- **Life in his name:** Life is the Greek word, “*zōē*”, which means “Life, Living, Lifetime, Life-Giving” and is where we get the word, “zoology” in English. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words says it's “used in the NT of life as a principle, life in the absolute sense, life as God has it, that which the Father has in Himself, and which He gave to the Incarnate Son to have in Himself, Jhn 5:26, and which the Son manifested in the world, 1Jo 1:2. From this life man has become alienated in consequence of the Fall, Eph 4:18, and of this life men become partakers through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Jhn 3:15, who becomes its Author to all such as trust in Him, Act 3:15, and who is therefore said to be 'the life' of the believer, Col 3:4, for the life that He gives He maintains, Jhn 6:35, 63. Eternal life is the present actual possession of the believer because of his relationship with Christ, Jhn 5:24; 1Jo 3:14, and that it will one day extend its domain to the sphere of the body is assured by the Resurrection of Christ, 2Cr 5:4; 2Ti 1:10. This life is not merely a principle of power and mobility, however, for it has moral associations which are inseparable from it, as of holiness and righteousness. Death and sin, life and holiness, are frequently contrasted in the Scriptures.”
- **Sowers before us:** “All the generations of preparation within the life of Israel, the witness of seers, prophets, priests and leaders, culminating in the ministry of John the Baptist, have brought the harvest to fruition... Jesus is probably thinking specifically of John the Baptist, who had ministered recently in this area (3:23). His point is that there is a partnership in mission; none is sufficient to him or herself; we need each other; it is the church that can reach the world... The saying I sent you (38) anticipates the disciples' mission, which will be a major theme of chapters 13–17 of the gospel and will find specific focus after the resurrection (cf. 20:21; 21:1–23). It also makes the point, however, that the mission of Jesus and that of the disciples are indissolubly linked.” Pastor Bruce Milne
- **A ready harvest:** “In this case, there's no time lag at all! No sooner sown than reaped! Don't delay, it's harvest time already! ... You haven't done the hard work, but you're going to get the reward none the less... The thought of a brand-new field opening up for the harvest of the gospel was exciting then, and when the same thing happens today it remains exhilarating... Perhaps Jesus is thinking of John the Baptist as the sower, and himself and his followers as the reapers. Or perhaps he is thinking, not just of John, but of the whole sequence of prophets and righteous Israelites up to John. But the point is that the moment has come, the moment of fulfilment, the moment of harvest. And the unlikely midday conversation with a puzzled and outcast woman has made Jesus realize it in a new way... When were you last so excited about something that you didn't need to eat? For that matter, when were you last looking, with the eyes of Jesus, at the harvest waiting to be gathered? Might those two questions perhaps have anything to do with each other?” Professor NT Wright

- **Evangelism:** This is a word some Christians try desperately to distance themselves from today. It's the word, "*evangelist*" or "*evangelical*." For some, it stirs up memories of a guy screaming at them for hours during a tent revival or through a megaphone on a street corner. Our society likes to pretend the word represents right-wing extremism. While I agree some dumb things have been done under the banner of evangelicalism, we shouldn't throw the baby out with the bath water. Do you know that "*evangelism*" is a biblical Greek word (*euangelion*) that simply means "gospel or good news"? If a king had good news, an "*evangel*" or "*herald*" was sent out to announce it. Christians have big news the rest of the world needs to hear, right? In this sense, we're all called to be evangelists or evangelicals.
- **Seeing things like Jesus does:** "The disciples illustrate several attitudes that frequently keep us from entering the fields of harvest. Three come to mind. First, we are put off by prejudice or bigotry. The disciples saw Jesus talking to a Samaritan woman—to them, she was as low on the social ladder as one can descend—and they simply could not believe it. Let's face it; we care about the salvation of some people more than others. Our Creator, however, doesn't rank people on a scale of worthiness. We are all unworthy of salvation, yet equally loved by Him...Second, we are consumed with the mundane details of life. The disciples couldn't stop thinking about food long enough to notice their Master's excitement. They left Him weary, hungry, and thirsty from travel; they returned to find Him brimming with energy. Anyone the least bit perceptive should have set aside the food and asked the Lord what made Him so cheerful. But not those self-serving, shortsighted disciples. We spend most of our day dealing with the so-called necessities of life: fixing meals, keeping schedules, making a living. When is the last time you set aside time and made specific plans to share the good news at work or with someone you've become friends with in your neighborhood or community? ...Life-and-death struggle has a way of keeping things in perspective." Pastor Chuck Swindoll
- **Some Samaritan History:** "The Samaritans rejected the writings of the Prophets (including the histories [1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings, 1–2 Chronicles]) and wisdom literature (Proverbs, Psalms, etc.) because of these writings' emphasis on Judea and David's line centered on Jerusalem...In this culture water collection was a responsibility of women.¹⁰ In a world that isolated women socially, the task was not entirely burdensome but became an opportunity for women to meet and talk. Therefore, wells became the one locale where women could be either avoided or met. When Abraham's servant returned north to Haran looking for a wife for Isaac, he found the local well (Gen. 24) and met Rebekah there. Likewise, Moses fled to Midian and at a well met the daughters of Jethro (Ex. 2:15–16), one of whom became his wife (Zipporah). This motif is so prominent, some scholars have suggested John 4 may be influenced by ancient betrothal scenes in which (symbolically) Jesus calls a woman without proper marriage to a new, redeeming relationship with him." Professor Gary Burge
- **Views on marriage:** "Jesus' penetrating request that she bring her husband (16) elicits her evasive, but truthful, reply that she had no husband (since the Jewish law did not recognize a common-law arrangement). Serial marriage was not altogether frowned upon, though the rabbis generally taught that three marriages were the maximum allowable." Pastor Bruce Milne
- **Water and the Spirit:** In 4:7–15 Jesus explores the meaning of living water; in 4:16–26 Jesus discusses the sinful life of the woman and talks about true worship. In each case, conversations begin with mundane, earthly subjects (wells, husbands), and Jesus presses the woman to examine what these earthly things really mean for her...Water has become a symbol of this

new reality since the beginning of the book (1:31; 2:7; 3:5) and later will be defined as the Holy Spirit (7:37–39; cf. Jer. 2:13; Isa. 55:1; Ezek. 47:1–12; Zech. 14:8). Professor Gary Burge

- **The woman was understandably defensive:** “This was a very intelligent woman with a delightful sense of humor; however, a rough life had ground her wit to a razor’s edge...many men had charmed her and then left her broken. Now, any man who thinks he’s God’s gift should think again. Most men would have gotten the message and backed off. But Jesus didn’t want to use her like other men used her...She wore the emotional armor of a woman beaten down by the morality of the righteous. He honored her closely guarded vulnerability by appealing to her kindness...Six times Jesus appealed to the woman, and six times she attempted to deflect the discussion: Jesus appealed to her kindness (4:7), and the woman responded defensively (4:9). Jesus appealed to her curiosity (4:10), and the woman responded sarcastically (4:11-12). Jesus appealed to her spiritual need (4:13-14), and the woman focused only on physical needs (4:15). Jesus appealed to her personal interest (4:16), and the woman responded with a half-truth (4:17). Jesus appealed to her conscience (4:17-18), and the woman raised a controversial issue (4:19-20). Jesus appealed to her will (4:21-24), and the woman tried to delay any decision (4:25)... ‘What are you doing asking me for a drink?! You, a Jew, despise me as a non-Jew, as a woman, and as a Samaritan. You can’t instantly overcome centuries of barriers like that.’ ...Jesus bypassed her sarcastic assault and then appealed to her spiritual need. She needed new life. Sin had destroyed her old life, both in the theological sense and in the emotional. She had long since stopped living and was merely existing.” Pastor Chuck Swindoll
- **The “I AM” is here:** “The Lord successfully bypassed all of her defenses in order to lay the ultimate truth before her. He said, in effect, ‘Good! You don’t have to wait any longer. I am the Messiah, and I am here just as promised.’ In the Greek, the phrase ‘I am’ is particularly emphatic: egō eimi [1473, 1510]. It harkens back to God’s self-identification to Moses: ‘I AM WHO I AM’ (Exod. 3:14). Both Jews and Samaritans understood Jesus’ meaning. In fact, the religious leaders accused Jesus of blasphemy for claiming to be God because of His repeated use of the ‘I am’ formula (6:48; 8:18, 24, 28, 58; 10:7, 11; 11:25; 13:19; 14:6; 15:1-3; 18:5-8).” Pastor Chuck Swindoll
- **A Savior for all people:** “The way the passage ends is worth pondering deeply. Here is a woman who, a matter or an hour or so before, had been completely trapped in a life of immorality, as a social outcast. There was no way backwards or forwards for her; all she could do was to eke out a daily existence and make sure she went to the well at the time of day when there would be nobody there to sneer or mock. Now she has become the first evangelist to the Samaritan people. Before any of Jesus’ own followers could do it, she has told them he is the Messiah... And then, as they have come to see Jesus for themselves, they have become convinced...Jesus is indeed the world’s saviour. That is part of the task and role of Israel’s Messiah. Salvation may indeed be ‘from the Jews’ (4.22), but part of the point of it is that salvation is designed to reach outside Judaism to embrace the world. Now, with this incident in Samaria, that process has begun
- **Unexpected responses:** “The response of the Samaritans stands in sharp contrast to that of the religious leaders in Jerusalem. Unlike the theologically trained Jews running the temple, the hated “half-breeds” welcomed Jesus and asked Him to teach. And, as a result of hearing Him,

‘many more believed.’ ...While the woman’s testimony brought them to hear Christ, it was their own encounter with the Word that caused them to trust Jesus as their Savior.” Pastor Chuck Swindoll

- **True transformation:** “All we know is that the woman forgot all about her original task and ran back to the town to confer with her own religious authorities...Remarkably, the details she so painfully avoided discussing earlier had become a joyful confirmation of her spiritual hope...Jesus “had to pass through Samaria” (4:4) to redeem this particular woman, who brought her entire town to Christ with her testimony. And, just as importantly, He “had to pass through Samaria” in order to give His disciples crucial training in evangelism (4:34-38)...this encounter provided a tangible lesson on the first rule of the new kingdom: Obeying the Word of God is more important and more satisfying than fulfilling any mere physical need (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4). Professor NT Wright
- **Jesus challenged false religions:** “In chapter 3 Jesus challenges Judaism’s teaching office, asking how it is that a rabbi like Nicodemus could not understand basic things about God...(ritual purity at Cana, the Jerusalem temple, Nicodemus), he overwhelms and replaces abundantly those things that the institutions offered...Jesus fills water vessels with wine, astonishing a party; he challenges the temple, suggesting that he himself will replace what it offers; he instructs a Jewish teacher in the deeper things of God. Now he comes to a traditional well associated with one of Israel’s greatest heroes, Jacob, and he offers what Jacob never could: living water (interpreted as the Holy Spirit) that turns people into life-giving wells (4:14). Jesus even challenges the sanctity and significance of Mount Gerizim and Jerusalem, holy places to Samaritans and Jews.” Professor Gary Burge
- **God’s supremacy over all things:** It can be scary and difficult to talk about Jesus today. The mere mention of Jesus can get you lumped in with extremists. It’s sad how everything is so polarized and politicized. That’s not the way it’s supposed to be. We must stop believing when the world says, “*Your religion should remain private.*” Is that what they do? No! To be clear, all people worship something, which we often hear preached on the news and social media. Why must we “*shut up*” about or be embarrassed by what we believe, especially if what we believe is that God created the world and has the right to determine what goes on? We live in a country that practices the “separation of church and state”, but let’s remember God is the supreme ruler over all the earth, including governments. Psalm 103:19 says, “The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.” Don’t you think folks should know that?
- **Only one superstar in God’s kingdom:** We love to take credit, don’t we? We say things like, “*I led that person to Jesus*”, totally ignorant of verses like 1 Corinthians 3:7-9, “*Neither he who plants, nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. For we are God’s fellow workers.*” In that passage, Paul was dismantling the insidious concept of idolizing certain workers over others. Aren’t we supposed to be exalting Jesus as Savior of the world? Then why do churches keep propping up certain pastors and singers as “*superstars*”? How can we not recognize this is too much pressure for one person? There’s only 1 superstar in the kingdom of God, and His name is Jesus! None of us can harvest this massive field of people by ourselves, just like no professional level sportsperson or businessperson can be amazing on their own. Nobody is self-made and nobody reaches success without people helping

them...period! Scripture is clear that God designed humanity to be interdependent, not independent. The aim of salvation is to restore two critical relationships...with God and with others! Maturity is not about becoming self-sufficient; maturity is learning to do what God created us for...working together! What about all the problems people have and cause? Well, that's why we need graces of the cross like mercy, forgiveness, and reconciliation! Of course, before we can truly be united with others, they must be united with Jesus, right? Let's talk about that next.

- **True worship:** The same conclusion is reached by another route in verse 24. The spiritual nature of God (God is spirit) means self-evidently that we cannot relate to God satisfactorily in physical terms. He is invisible and intangible and hence beyond our immediate sense-apprehension. For God to be known and focused by us, thus making worship possible, he must take initiative to disclose himself to us. This he has done initially in the Old Testament Scriptures (verse 22, the Jews 'know' whom they are worshipping). But the further and fuller revelation of God is now at hand in the Son who makes the Father known (1:18). Hence, we reach the same conclusion. True and satisfactory worship is worship offered in and through Jesus Christ; only through the truth he embodies, and the Spirit he imparts, can we know God and worship him...This section has something to teach about hindrances to true worship in the church, which is often the cause of much division. It is hindered first by wrong practices...The woman illustrates this principle. Until her life is put right and its failures addressed, true worship cannot happen for her...We assume that if the externals of worship were in place, God would be satisfied. He was not, and is not today: 'Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them ... Away with the noise of your songs!... But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!' (Am. 5:22-24)...God does seek a sincere and humble dependence upon him and a genuine commitment to live in obedience to him...Secondly, worship is hindered by wrong priorities...These look suspiciously like the issue raised by the woman in this passage. They are concerned with form rather than content. In fact, it is beyond question that true and sincere worship can be and is offered using each of the alternatives mentioned above. It is also true that insincere and unworthy worship is offered using each of these same alternatives. Decisions about form are often in essence matters of taste and temperament and should be seen as such. One of the implications of the fact that God is spirit is that no form can ever be made the absolute one. No worship form can, or ever will, meet every need. If it did it would detract from the glory that is God's alone. The true priority is the content of worship, a worship from the heart which truly exalts God...A third barrier is wrong perceptions, particularly about who God is and about our relationship to him." Pastor Bruce Milne
- **Food for thought:** "If Jesus could go to Samaria, where are there "new Samaritans" for the church today? What traditions of place, form, or ritual do we defend that suddenly find themselves at odds with the work of the Holy Spirit? Do humans (Christian and non-Christian alike) have a tendency to create religious traditions as a part of the architecture of their lives? Does tradition have limited value? Where is Samaria today? I am thinking about Samaria as a metaphor that represents a major political and cultural boundary that stands between the church and a needy people. Jesus has crossed such a boundary and so should we. We must think about those social, economic, and political boundaries that circumscribe the church's activity, and we

must cross them. John 4 challenges us to take a risk, to examine the margins of our world and cross them.” Professor Gary Burge

- **A team mindset:** Jesus said, the *sower and reaper are to rejoice together*. Over the years, I’ve come to realize our interactions are NEVER about one person unless that person is Jesus... God is always, up to more! This story wasn’t about one *lady* being converted, and we’d do well to remember this everywhere we go. My family finds it funny that I find people I know just about everywhere we go. You wouldn’t believe the stories, and I’d love to share them in private. I find my life both scary and comforting...a dear brother once said to me, “*Never forget God has eyes and ears everywhere*”, which reminds me of Psalm 139:7 which says, “*Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?*” God is everywhere and is always up to something. Do you truly believe that? I experience it daily because God has opened my eyes to it, but this isn’t just peculiar to me...redemption grants each of us the privilege of partnering with God and others to achieve a bigger picture in almost every situation! Like the disciples, God wants to open your eyes to this bigger picture of life. You might say, “*But I’m not prepared to be a witness!*” Well, I agree, but not because you haven’t learned the canned speeches but because you fail to live with awareness. God can use anyone, anywhere, once you have eyes to see every moment as a God moment. I agree “*sharing the gospel*” seems scary and overwhelming, especially in our polarized world, but I think we’re reading a story where Jesus shared the gospel in a world like ours and in an easygoing manner because He knew something we forget...God does all the heavy lifting!

Articles/Songs/Videos:

- These Casting Crowns’ songs came to mind as I studied this text: [Jesus Friend of Sinners](#), [If We are the Body](#), [Stained Glass Masquerade](#), [Love you with the Truth](#), and [The Well](#).
- [Message by John Piper](#)
- [Tips for sharing your faith](#)

Helpful thoughts for discussion leaders:

1. Go for a single, not a home run...don’t drag the night out; realize more people = less deep sharing.
2. Keep discussion around 30mins. Once you hit the “sweet spot”, spend your time there.

Challenge Questions

Review the BIG IDEA: We should share the gospel like Jesus did.

-Simple questions...What is God teaching you? What are you going to do about it? How will it help you love & serve others?

Preparation questions for John 4:35-42.

- What do you think Jesus was trying to say with His farming metaphor in verses 35-38?
- What do you think we’re meant to understand about evangelism and disciple making from verses 39-42?

Application questions from John 4:35-42.

- What can we learn about gospel labor from the farming metaphor in verses 35-38? What do you think the Lord might want you to work as you’re helping others in their faith?
- We all tend to overcomplicate gospel conversations. What keeps you from telling others what Jesus has done in your life? Think of a recent situation and share with us how you could have

naturally brought up your faith. Processing and discussing helps us all become better at sharing the gospel.

- Ask yourself, “Are my disciples relating with God through Jesus or through me?” What are some ways you tend to play the part of Jesus or the Holy Spirit in the lives of people you love? Why do you think you do this?
- Our sermon described 4 ways we can BE like Jesus: 1) Be a Christian, not a universalist. 2) Be truthful, not full of yourself. 3) Be peaceful, not polarizing. 4) Be a learner, not an assumer. Which one do you struggle with most and why? How might you begin to work on this?

Here are some great resources for digging deeper into community group life...

How life together looks <http://austinstone.org/stories/film/item/140-missional-community-lukes-story>

Rethinking what we do https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvWnXYSELF4&feature=player_embedded

Numerous articles to provoke thought <http://toddengstrom.com/archives/>

What groups of 2-3 might look like <http://toddengstrom.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/LTG-Overview.pdf>