

Gathering Fruit for Eternal Life

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[0 : 00] But let's turn now to God's Word and to John's Gospel, and Edward is continuing his series in John. And last week we were looking at the first section of chapter 4, and we're going to be returning to that.

And we're going to be reading from verse 1 of John chapter 4 through to verse 42. So do turn your Bibles there to John chapter 4. John 4 verse 1.

Now, when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John, although Jesus himself did not baptize but only his disciples, he left Judea and departed again for Galilee.

And he had to pass through Samaria. So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there.

So Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside that well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman from Samaria came to draw water.

[1 : 17] Jesus said to her, give me water. For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, how is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?

For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered her, if you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, give me a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.

The woman said to him, sir, you have nothing to draw water with. Jesus said to her, everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again.

But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

The woman said to him, sir, give me this water so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water. Jesus said to her, go, call your husband and come here.

[2 : 42] The woman answered him, I have no husband. Jesus said to her, you are right in saying I have no husband. For you have had five husbands and the one you now have is not your husband.

What you have said is true. The woman said to him, sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.

Jesus said to her, women, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the father. You worship what you do not know.

We worship what we know for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshippers will worship the father in spirit and truth.

For the father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. The woman said to him, I know that Messiah is coming.

[3 : 54] He who is called Christ. When he comes, he will tell us all things. Jesus said to her, I who speak to you am he.

Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, what do you seek or why are you talking with her?

So the woman left her water jar and went away into the town and said to the people, come see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ? They went out of the town and were coming to him.

Meanwhile, the disciples were urging him saying, Rabbi, eat. But he said to them, I have food to eat that you do not know about. So the disciples said to one another, has anyone brought him something to eat?

Jesus said to them, my food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. Do you not say there are yet four months?

[5 : 02] Then comes the harvest. Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes and see that the fields are white for harvest. Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life so that the sower and reaper may rejoice together.

For here the saying holds true. One sows and another reaps. I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor.

Others have labored and you have entered their labor. Many Samaritans from the town believed in him because of the woman's testimony.

He told me all that I ever did. So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them. And he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word.

And 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.

[6 : 14] Amen. May God bless his word to us this morning. Well, friends, good morning. Good to see you all.

Let's turn together to John's Gospel, Chapter 4. And to the story of Jesus meeting the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well outside the town of Sychar in Samaria.

And in just a moment, I want us to re-engage with the story at the point where we left off last week. But first, just a little reminder of where we're up to. Last week, we saw something of Jesus's love for the world and not simply for the people of Israel.

How he brought the good news of eternal life to Samaria. Samaria, which was regarded as the pits by respectable Jews from Jerusalem. And we saw how Jesus, in meeting this woman, was concerned for people living in a moral mess, as well as for upright pillars of society like Nicodemus, whom we met in Chapter 3.

We saw Jesus speaking to this needy woman about his gift to her of eternal life, which he pictured as a spring of refreshing water, constantly slaking her thirst to know the Lord.

[7 : 34] And we saw Jesus kindly and yet penetratingly opening up this woman's moral and emotional needs by talking to her about her marital history, her five husbands, and the man she was currently living with not being her husband.

And we saw how he gave her hope and joy as she began to realize who he was. Now, before we dive back into the story, I'd like to say a little bit about the way in which John the Evangelist has written up his account of the life of Jesus.

As you probably know, John wrote his gospel late in the first century AD, probably between 80 and 90 AD, when he would have been an old man. Once the gospel was written, it would have been copied and widely circulated in the Mediterranean area.

So imagine a Christian friend of John's picking up this book and reading it for the first time and calling on John so as to talk to him about it.

So he comes to visit John. He says, John, brother, I've just read a copy of your fascinating account of the life of Jesus. I very much enjoyed reading about Nicodemus and John the Baptist, Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, and that brigand Pontius Pilate.

[8 : 54] It stirs my memory. But, and this is really why I've come to see you, I can't help wondering if the whole thing wouldn't be more memorable, more teachable, if you set out your understanding of Jesus as a series of doctrinal statements, rather than giving us these stories of people that Jesus met and things that Jesus did.

How about this, for example, as a series of doctrinal statements, which more or less pick up at what you're saying in the gospel. You could put it like this. Jesus is the Son of God.

Jesus is eternal. Jesus reveals the nature of God the Father. To believe in Jesus is the way to eternal life. Jesus teaches the truth.

Jesus is the truth. Jesus gives the Holy Spirit. Jesus gives the new birth. Jesus is the good shepherd. Jesus is the Christ.

Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. Short, sharp, crisp summaries, which convey the essence. John, are you listening to me, John? Are you asleep, my brother?

[10 : 03] I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. Yes, I was drifting. You need to cut a little slack with an old man like me. Well, John, what do you think of my more concise approach to things? Well, brother, your approach certainly conveys truth, and it's not to be despised.

And indeed, Scripture is full of doctrine, and doctrine is fundamentally important. But let me put it like this. As I've written it in my first chapter, the word, that is the abiding message of God, became flesh.

And we have seen him. I and the other apostles, we've seen his glory. More than that, we've eaten meals with him. We've laughed with him. We've worked with him. We saw him die.

I was there. I saw where he was buried. I saw him after his resurrection. Jesus, when he was with us, was a real man. And what a man he was.

When you were with him, you knew what manhood really is, what mankind is really like. And he's still a man, seated at his father's side in glory. He is, even now, resurrected and glorified flesh and blood.

[11 : 14] To be a Christian is to be brought to life as a human being. Jesus is so much more than doctrine. He is doctrine incarnate. He's life.

You can't know him properly by making a few short sentences about him. In my stories about him, my true stories about him, I want you to meet the real man. For example, Sychar in Samaria.

I remember that woman so well. I was there. She was haggard and lined and miserable when I first saw her. But she was brought to life. In later years, she was the life and soul of that little church in Sychar.

She would tell anybody about what had happened to her, how Jesus had transformed her. You can't convey that kind of thing in doctrinal statements. Jesus is a living human being.

So I want people, by reading my stories about him, to feel something of his life, something of his power. The word became flesh. Don't turn it into concrete.

[12 : 19] End of imaginary conversation. Now, friends, don't misunderstand me. We need Christian doctrine. We need to have our creeds, our doctrinal statements and catechisms and so on, because doctrine provides the backbone, the strength of our understanding of the Bible and the gospel.

But if God had wanted us to have only doctrine, he wouldn't have given us the Bible in the form in which he's given it to us. These true accounts of Jesus' words and doings flesh out our understanding.

They bring to us the living Jesus. As we read them, we feel his love and his power and his sanity and his humanity. He is God in human form.

He has come to save us for eternal life. So we need to get to know him. And that's why the gospels are written up like this. Yes, they are packed with truth, which can be expressed in doctrinal statements.

But we need more than doctrinal statements. We need these accounts of Jesus' doings so that we can really get to know the one who is, in John Newton's words, our brother, savior, friend, our prophet, priest, and king.

[13 : 32] Just think of Jesus sitting beside Jacob's well that day, mopping his sweaty brow and saying to this woman, give me a drink, I'm parched.

You'll never get that from a doctrinal statement. To grow up as a Christian is to grow in the knowledge of who Jesus really is. Flesh and blood.

Blood, sweat, toil, and tears. Jesus knew all of those things intimately. Blood, sweat, toil, tears, weariness, anger, frustration, love, tenderness, determination, love for truth, hatred for godlessness.

He was a man. He is a man. So we need to know him in all the rich perfection of his humanity. That's why the gospel writers present him to us in this way.

Yes, we need doctrine. But we need more than doctrine. We need to know him. Well, let's pick up the story where we left it last week at verse 19.

[14 : 38] And I want us to continue to work our way through the details. Throughout this fourth chapter, John is teaching us what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

So for Christians, this fourth chapter of John is an extended lesson in discipleship. And I want us to notice and to learn three lessons, particularly today.

First, from verses 19 to 26, we see Jesus revealing his true identity to the Samaritan woman. Now, back in verse 10, he's already given her a broad hint that his identity is the critical issue.

Look at his words spoken to her in verse 10. He says, if you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, give me a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.

In other words, what you need to know is who I am. Now, come on to verse 19. Sir, she says, I perceive that you're a prophet.

[15:46] Now, she says this because he has just told her that she has had five husbands and is now living with a man who's not her husband. So she thinks, how can this man possibly know all these things about me?

I've never met him before. He's a stranger in these parts. He's obviously got some unusual source of knowledge. She might even be thinking, this is perhaps the prophet of Deuteronomy chapter 18. Now, I say that because the Samaritans accepted the books of Moses, the first five books of the Bible, as scripture. They didn't accept the rest of the Old Testament as scripture. But those first five books, including Deuteronomy, they did accept.

And the prophet of Deuteronomy chapter 18, verse 15, was in their understanding probably the same person as the Messiah. So here in verse 19, she's beginning to wonder.

A little seed of Bible theology is beginning to sprout in her imagination. Could this be? Might this possibly be? Anyway, having said, I perceive that you're a prophet.

[16:55] She immediately launches a little Sally into an ancient theological controversy. She picks up an old chestnut and gives it a tentative bite. So she says in verse 20, our fathers, our Samaritan fathers, worshipped on this mountain.

But you, you Jews, say that Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship. Now, this is a longstanding debate between the Samaritans and the Jews about the correct location of the temple. And needless to say, there's a lot of history behind this and a lot of bloodshed. But the nub of it was that the Samaritans had built their own temple on Mount Gerizim.

Mount Gerizim, very close to Sychar. So she, the woman and Jesus, would have been within sight of the mountain as they were speaking. That's why she says this mountain. Well, that was Samaritan history.

Their temple built there. The Jews, of course, built their temple in Jerusalem. And the Jews had destroyed, had burnt down the Samaritans' temple on Mount Gerizim in the second century BC.

[18:01] And that was one reason why there was such bad blood between Jews and Samaritans in Jesus' day. So in our verse 20 here, the woman tosses out this remark, perhaps as a gentle challenge to Jesus.

Or perhaps because she was the type of person, we've all met a few, who can't resist stirring things up and making some controversy when chance presents itself.

Jesus' reply, however, is startling. And in effect, he abolishes the temple. Verse 21. He said to her, woman, believe me.

It's almost like saying, truly, truly, I say to you. Believe me. The hour is coming when neither on this mountain, Gerizim, nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. Why should he say that?

Why is true worship to be suddenly unhitched from its traditional temple sites? Well, the reason is that Jesus himself is the new temple.

[19:04] He's already made this clear in John chapter 2 at verse 19. He's just driven out the money changers from the temple in Jerusalem. And he's in confrontation with the Jewish leaders. And he says to them, destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

They can't begin to understand him. They think he's talking nonsense. So they say to him, it's taken 46 years to build this temple. You think you can raise it up in three days?

But, John adds, the temple he was speaking about was the temple of his body. Now, the Bible idea of the temple is this.

It's the place where God and man meet. And it's the place where atoning sacrifice is offered. And that is Jesus. God and man meet in him.

And he is himself the atoning sacrifice to end all atoning sacrifices. So the temple in Jerusalem is no longer the way to God. Because Jesus is the way to God.

[20:07] Jesus has made the temple obsolete. Now, the implications of this are staggering. And they completely overturn our natural assumptions about religion.

Naturally, men and women assume that God must be worshipped in special places. In a temple or a shrine. A cathedral or church building. Maybe a place with spooky associations like Glastonbury. Or a place of pilgrimage like Mecca or Santiago de Compostela in Spain. Jesus blows all that thinking out of the water in verses 23 and 24.

But the hour is coming, he says, and is now here when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

God is spirit. And those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth. So he's saying true worship is not a matter of going to a building. It's spiritual.

[21 : 11] It's not physical. That's what spiritual means. Not physical or material. It's not defined by location or geography or a building. When Jesus says in verse 24, God is spirit.

He's not saying God is a spirit. He's saying that God is not physical or material. His nature is spiritual. Non-material. Not bounded by place or geography.

Not contained in a building or a geographical nation. God is other than anything that we can see or touch or measure. And therefore, Jesus is saying real worship of God is a matter of truth.

A matter of knowing him in truth. Knowing the truth about him. Loving and understanding the truth about him. So it's not a matter of going to a particular country or going into a particular building.

It's not defined by anything physical or tangible. So we don't need flying buttresses or soaring gothic arches or delicate spires.

[22 : 20] A beautiful cathedral. And many of our cathedrals are very beautiful. A beautiful cathedral can become an elegant golden calf. The best reason for us having a building like this is that it keeps the rain off our heads.

And it has the capacity to seat a large number of people so they can hear the gospel. Friends, we need to ditch any remains, relics of temple mentality which lurk in us.

The Bible teaches that Jesus is the temple. And by extension, we who are Christians also are the temple. Because we are his body in which the Holy Spirit dwells.

So from the moment that Jesus uttered John 4, 24, the temple building was abolished. And geography became irrelevant to true worship.

It's wonderfully liberating. Look again at verse 23. The hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

[23 : 23] For the Father is seeking people like that, such people, to worship him. Isn't that extraordinary? The Father is seeking and searching for people like that.

He's not seeking people who think that the essence of true worship lies in venerating pretty piles of granite and marble. Now all this makes more sense.

When you think of Jesus' mission in John chapter 4, he is moving out into Samaria. He's leaving the borders of Judea. He's beginning to fulfill what he said in his final commission to the apostles in Acts chapter 1 verse 8.

That you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and out to the ends of the earth. The gospel knows no geographical boundaries.

It is loosed from its Jerusalem moorings and from its ties to the temple in Jerusalem. Now there's another consequence of all this. And that's a consequence for mission.

[24 : 26] It means that we are able to have confidence that the gospel is for all people around the world. It's as much for people in Africa and Asia and the Middle East as it is for the Western world.

And you know how voices are often raised in opposition to Christian missionary work. There are strands in modern anthropology and sociology which strongly disapprove of churches sending missionaries and Bible translators to Africa and Asia.

Leave those people alone, we're told. Don't impose Christianity on them. Aren't Islam and Hinduism and Buddhism sufficient? Well, no.

Not according to Jesus. His visit to Samaria is his first step out towards the ends of the earth. And why does he send his apostles and their successors, which includes us, to the ends of the earth?

The reason is because there is no salvation except through him. As he says in John 14, verse 6, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except by me.

[25 : 33] And when Jesus locates access to the Father exclusively in himself, he's picking up and fulfilling an element that is deeply embedded in the teaching of the Old Testament.

For example, God says in Isaiah chapter 45, there is no other God besides me, a righteous God and a savior. There is none besides me.

Turn to me and be saved all the ends of the earth. For I am God and there is no other. That's why we need to keep on sending missionaries to the ends of the earth.

There is only one true God and his only begotten son, Jesus, is the only way by which people can come to be reconciled to God and saved. Now, in John chapter 4, we see this truth gradually

dawning on the woman at the well.

Let's notice how the scales are progressively removed from her eyes. First verse 9. What is her perception of Jesus in verse 9?

[26 : 40] Well, she sees him simply as a Jew. How is it that you, a Jew, should ask a drink of me, a Samaritan woman? That's stage 1. A Jew. Now, verse 19.

Sir, I perceive that you're a prophet. That's stage 2. Now, verse 25 and 6. The woman said to him, I know that Messiah is coming, he who is called Christ.

When he comes, he will tell us all things. Jesus said to her, I, the one speaking to you, I am he. Literally, he says, I am.

The cat is thoroughly let out of the bag at that moment, isn't it? I am the Messiah. Now, what does she make of that revelation? Look on to verse 29.

29. By this time, she's gone back to the town and she's speaking to her neighbors there. And she says, come see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ? She's beginning to think that it can be.

[27 : 43] So stage 1, he's a Jew. Stage 2, a prophet. Stage 3, the Christ. But there's a final stage. Look on to verse 42.

By this point in the story, many of the townspeople are believing in Jesus. And they say to the woman, verse 42, It's 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. Jew, prophet, Christ, savior of the world. It's an unfolding revelation. The light dawns and spreads. As John has put it back in the first chapter of his gospel, the light shines into the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

So Jesus reveals his true identity step by step to this Samaritan woman. So that's the first lesson in discipleship in John chapter 4.

[28 : 46] We too need to know, if we're disciples, that Jesus is the Christ and the savior of the world and that no other savior is needed. When we know those things about him, we will have confidence to tell other people about him.

Now second, Jesus instructs his disciples about the nature of their work. And that is that they are to be laborers in the harvest field of the world.

Let's trace the way that Jesus develops this idea. Look at verse 27. The disciples, verse 27, come back to Jacob's well.

They've gone into town to buy food. So they're clutching their filled rolls, whatever they've just bought in Sychar. And they're amazed to find Jesus talking with this woman. But the woman is in a state of some excitement at what Jesus has just revealed to her in verse 26, when he says, I am the Messiah.

In fact, she is so intrigued and so thrilled that, verse 28, she leaves her water jar at the mouth of the well. She suddenly has a more pressing priority, something much more important than her need for water.

[30 : 00] She heads back into town, probably no more than five or ten minutes walk. And she says to the townspeople, verse 29, come see a man who told me all that I ever did.

Can this be the Christ? And her manner must have been so convincing, so persuasive, that they drop whatever they're doing, mopping floors, shouting at children, hanging out their stockings to dry.

And they come straight out across the fields to look at Jesus for themselves. Meanwhile, verse 31, the disciples are unwrapping the sandwiches that they've just bought, and they're urging Jesus to eat.

I love that phrase at the end of verse 31. Rabbi, eat, they say. But he doesn't. He says, I have food to eat that you do not know about.

Huh? They say to each other, somebody else brought him something to eat? But Jesus then says, my food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work.

[31 : 05] In other words, my fuel, the thing that gives me strength and energy and purpose, is to do and to finish the work that God has sent me to do. Surely there's an echo there of Deuteronomy chapter 8, verse 3.

Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. It's God's word and will that sustains Jesus and fuels him.

And then Jesus immediately breaks out into this beautiful picture of laborers gathering in the harvest. He says to his disciples in verse 35, you know the old farmer's proverb, don't you? Four months to go, and then the harvest is ready. But he says, lift up your eyes now, and look, the fields are white and ready for harvest right now. So what do they do?

They lift up their eyes, and they see people, dozens of them, wearing the pale whitish robes of the Middle East, looking for all the world, like a field of wheat in Aberdeenshire, ready for the combine harvester.

[32 : 10] And what are the laborers doing? How does Jesus describe their work? Verse 36, gathering fruit for eternal life. So that, and just notice the joy here, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together.

So Jesus is saying to his disciples, he's teaching them, he's saying, this is your job. Verse 38, I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor.

Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor. Those others being, the Old Testament prophets, who've been making preparations for centuries, sowing gospel seeds.

John the Baptist, who's been preaching repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Now, says Jesus, your job is to gather in the harvest, to gather fruit for eternal life.

And friends, it's our job too, because after the death of the apostles, their role as harvesters has been passed on to the whole church. So just think about this for a moment.

[33 : 15] If you are a Christian, you are a gathered sheaf of corn. You are now fruit gathered for eternal life. It's a picture of joy and safety, safe in the barn, saved from the tsunami of judgment, which will overwhelm the unrepentant.

That's why we have courage and confidence to go to Africa and Asia with the gospel of salvation. We'd go to Antarctica if there was anybody there but penguins. Jesus sends out his workers, his laborers, into the world.

And that's why we have confidence to brush aside the accusations of atheistic anthropologists who tell us that African tribal religion or Hinduism should not be disturbed.

Of course it should be disturbed if there's only one God and only one Savior. The most loving thing we can do for the world is to keep bringing the gospel to it. The most loving thing that God did for the world was to give it his only son so that whoever believes in him, including the atheistic anthropologist, should not perish but have eternal life.

But the atheist and the agnostic needs to repent and believe in Christ while there is still time. So the Tron Church, our church, is constantly called to this joyful labor of gathering in the harvest, gathering fruit for eternal life.

[34 : 45] It is joyful and it is labor. But the goal of it is the eternal safety of those who belong to Jesus. Well, we've seen so far that Jesus reveals his identity and that he commissions his disciples to be laborers in the harvest field of the world.

But let's notice one more thing from the passage. And that is the key role played by the Samaritan woman herself. And there's a lesson for all of us here, a lesson from her example.

Look at verse 39. Many Samaritans from that town believed in Jesus because of the woman's testimony he told me all that I ever did.

Now she doesn't say much, does she? But a little can go a long way. Think of this woman. She hadn't been instructed. She hadn't learned her catechism.

She hadn't even been in the primary one class in Sunday school. But she didn't know nothing. She knew something. And it opened the hearts of many people at Sychar to the point where they put their faith in Jesus.

[35 : 54] What did she say to them? Well, the slightly fuller version is in verse 29. 29. Come see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?

It was that condensed but excited message that aroused their deep curiosity. They didn't write her off because she had been a woman of questionable morals.

They didn't say you can't take seriously anything that a woman like that says. They could see that she was changed and they respected her just as Jesus deeply respected her.

She became a powerful influence for the gospel despite her past. Isn't that an encouragement to us? We too can have a past and yet can be very useful in gospel work.

And look at the consequence of her few words. Look at verse 40. So when the Samaritans came to him they asked him to stay with them and he stayed there for two days.

[36 : 58] So the Samaritans came to Jesus walking out across the fields to Jacob's well and they looked at him and he looked at them.

He had been rejected by many of his own people in Judea. As John puts it in his chapter 1 verse 11 he came to his own people and his own people the Jews did not receive him.

But these people they received him these half-Gentile foreigners look at verse 40. They asked him to stay with them and he stayed there in the town for two days.

Just imagine imagine that somebody rushed back and prepared a bedroom for him and cleaned up brushed down the taps and so on and prepared food.

And his disciples they must have been invited to stay as well. That little town would have been buzzing for two days. Mrs. McKinley can I borrow a pound of flour? I've got two hulking great hungry fishermen staying with me called Peter and Andrew.

[38 : 00] They can eat I tell you. And by the way the mayor has organized a meeting for this evening for everybody in the village to meet Jesus and listen to him. Can you come? Yes.

Yeah I'll come. In fact I'm beginning to think that he might be the Messiah. Yes says our friend and so do I. He's obviously a Jew but he's come to us Samaritans. In fact I think he's the savior of the world.

Just compare verse 39 with verse 41. Initially 39 they believe in Jesus because of the woman's testimony but a day or two later they believe because of Jesus' word his teaching.

He must have spent hours talking with them over those two days patiently opening up the Old Testament scriptures to them and helping them to understand that he was indeed the promised Messiah and their savior.

So we have testimony followed by the words of Jesus and isn't that really how our own faith in Jesus becomes established? We first hear a brief word of testimony from somebody.

[39 : 10] Somebody says to us you know I believe that Jesus really is the Christ and the son of God and the savior but don't just take it from me. open up your Bible and read Jesus' words for yourself and you do and you're persuaded.

That's certainly how I started the Christian life. A friend of mine at school said something to me and then I slowly started to read the Bible and the conviction gradually took hold of me that Jesus is the savior of the world.

Well a moment more and we're done. this account of Jesus and the woman of Samaria it's about the revelation of the identity of Jesus.

A revelation given to a poor struggling human being whose life was something of a car crash. But Jesus revealed himself to her in order to rescue her for eternal life.

Not only her but many of her neighbors in the town. so let's thank God that Jesus is still in the business of rescuing struggling human beings like you and me.

[40 : 24] And why is he still in that business? The reason is that God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

let's pray together. dear God our Father we thank you so much for tutoring the Apostle John to write these things and to give such a clear compelling account of Jesus your eternal wonderful son our savior.

and we pray dear Father that as we read this gospel and indeed the whole Bible you will increasingly persuade our hearts and convince our minds that he is the savior of the world and we pray that you will give us joy in knowing that eternal life is ours because of him and that you'll give us courage and confidence to share this news as the Samaritan woman did with her friends to share it with many others.

and we ask it in Jesus name Amen.