

JOHN 4:27-38

***“Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest?’ I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crops for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus the saying, ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labour.”***

(verses 35-38)

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*“Four months more and then the harvest.”* This might have been a popular proverb in use at the time, indicating the need to patiently await what is not yet here. Or, it might have been an exact statement from the disciples at that very moment, indicating the progress of the current farming season. Either way, it speaks to the expectation that harvest is definitely not happening now – it’s still a fair ways off. Presumably, the natural eyes of those disciples would look out on the surrounding fields and see only the bright green of the yet immature grain.

But Jesus tells them to lift their eyes to see the true spiritual reality. Beyond all expectation, spiritual harvest is now upon them. In fact, the fields, seen with spiritual eyes, are not green but white (that’s the literal word, translated here as “ripe”) with fully ripened, mature grain, simply crying out to be harvested. Indeed, needing it. The implication is: “Don’t wait. Don’t hang back. Don’t put off for an instant the urgency of the moment. Plunge in. Take up the sickle. Reap the harvest. Now.”

Jesus quotes another proverb: *“One sows and another reaps.”* It captures the reality of Kingdom work: we’re all in it together. Each has their own part to play, equally crucial to the process.

But more than that, the proverb rings with echoes of an Old Testament prophecy:

*“The days are coming,” declares the Lord,  
“When the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman  
and the planter by the one treading grapes.  
New wine will drip from the mountains*

*and flow from all the hills,  
and I will bring my people Israel back from exile” (Amos 9:13-14).*

As the Kingdom of God breaks in, the fertility of the fields is such that sowing and reaping, reaping and sowing, overlap one another in continual fruitfulness. Thus, Jesus says, *“the sower and the reaper may be glad together.”* So, don’t hold back. Engage in the harvest! It’s rich!

One commentator points out a compelling possibility in this unfolding scene. As Jesus is conversing here beside the well, looking out on the fields with his disciples alongside, the Samaritan woman has gone back into Sychar, spilling forth her news to previously judgemental neighbours. *“Could this be the Christ?”* (verse 29). Her question piques their curiosity. En masse they rally to trek out to the well where she had just encountered Jesus.

So, as the disciples obediently respond to Jesus’ command to lift up their eyes to the fields, the shining green of that immature harvest is moment by moment transformed to glistening white as, through the fields, comes person after person, a whole band of villagers, eager to meet Jesus, the white of their garments reflecting back the blaze of the mid-day sun.

Those villagers believe in Jesus because of the testimony of a less than reputable woman. The living water draws them. The joy of Messiah captures them. They step into the Kingdom.

The harvest has come.

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Lord Jesus, I take you at your word. The grain is ripe. The harvest is here. There is no reason to hold back from sharing good news or praying with faith or believing that I myself could be part of your crew of reapers. Lord, I offer myself to you. The gifting and effectiveness are yours, not mine. But use me as you will. To your glory. For the joy set before you.

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Pray:

Ask the Lord to use you this week to be part of his harvesting-crew. Watch for the opportunities he provides. Step into them.