

"Open Your Eyes and Look"

John 4:27-54

We are back in John 4 this morning as we continue with Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman. What the reader forgets is that Jesus is not only interested in reaching out to her with a message of hope and forgiveness – which she needs and will receive – but He's also using this as a teaching lesson to help His 12 still green around the ears disciples, learn how to fish for men and women.

After engaging the woman in a conversation around both their needs for water, Jesus confronts the woman's uncomfortable past, drawing out her admission that she is not living in a God-honouring relationship. While some of her 5 marriages may have ended with the death of a husband, clearly she has had a responsible part to play in some of these marriages as well as the current live-in relationship shows. So a combination of her own sins and the sins of others has resulted in her disgrace and suffering in life, yet when Jesus tells her He is the Messiah she is looking for, she drops her water pot and excitedly returns to her village, telling these people who know her,

Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"

Now, however, we return to His disciples who are shocked that Jesus was talking to a Samaritan let alone a Samaritan woman. In a few verses Jesus is going to say something so obvious but at the same time so convicting when He says to His followers who are slow to see things the way Jesus sees them:

Open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.

The challenge for us as His disciples today is the same:

Look at People the Way Jesus Sees Them **(4:27-33)**

What was her name by the way? We never know. We only know her by the Samaritan woman. By a description or a label – she's a multiple divorcee; she's an immoral person. If we're honest we look at people through a label, a description of their sinful choices.

Jesus says we need to open our eyes and see all people as potential disciples, as people who need life giving water, who need the Messiah to save them, who need to find hope through forgiveness. That neighbor who annoys you, that co-worker that is lazy or late, that person who we've labelled because of poor choices they have made in life; Jesus sees them as needing forgiveness and hope. Of needing to meet the Saviour of the world so they can be lovingly confronted with their sin [because they know it's wrong but are too afraid to admit it] and ask and receive divine forgiveness and acceptance.

The disciples haven't learned to look at people like Jesus yet, and it is something we must learn and remind ourselves repeatedly and again. This is the lesson Jesus has for them.

²⁷ Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

Why didn't they say something? While they are still learning about Jesus, they've already seen Him do a miracle (water to wine), show righteous anger towards the religious at the temple courts, and told The Teacher of Israel, you need to be an infant again. So they keep silent and return to the thing that mattered to them. 'Here Jesus, we got you your food. You sent us to complete this task and we did it. Aren't we great? Aren't we spiritual?'

Jesus is going to point them to the Samaritans coming toward the ones who are hungry to hear from Jesus. What Jesus was saying to the disciples here essentially was

"I appreciate your willingness to serve Me by getting me some food and looking after my needs. But did you interact with any Samaritans in your task? You and I both know the Samaritans are lost and don't follow the truth. But did your heart break for them Or did you think my sending you to go get food was only about that – getting e some food. My food is to do God's will."

We often do the same thing. 'I read my bible this morning. I prayed. I gave. I served. I did these things for you Jesus.' And Jesus' response to us as His disciples is similar: did you show love to people when you did those things for Me? Were you interrupted by a family member during your quiet time and told them to come back later? Did you notice anyone who seemed off or quiet or hurting when you went to church today? Did you really look at the people who served you today in the eyes and can you remember what they did and who they were? If you want to please Me', Jesus is saying, 'look at them through My eyes.'

³² *But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about."*

³³ *Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?"*

The disciples don't get it yet so Jesus shows them what's happening because of His chat with the woman. He shows them and challenges us that the reason we don't look at people the way Jesus sees them is because we're not living by faith

Believing a Harvest Can Be Right Around You **(4:34-38)**

Jesus tells us what sustains Him more than food or anything else this world has to offer:

³⁴ *"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work"*

We need food for physical strength and energy to function but Jesus was pointing out that there's far more to life than enjoying the temporal things that we need. What sustains me Jesus said, is doing what God says. That sustains me and satisfies me more than anything earth offers. Seeing people hungry for God satisfies Me.'

Listen to these verses:

Ps. 63:1-5 ¹ O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. ² I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. ³ Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. ⁴ I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. ⁵ My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.

As a king, David knew good food. He says, knowing God and sharing God with others is more satisfying. We should pray Ps. 90:14-15 every morning

¹⁴ *Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.*

¹⁵ *Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, for as many years as we have seen trouble.*

Moses wrote this psalm, his only psalm. He knew affliction. He lived in the wilderness for 40 years before God called him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. And he did through God's miraculous intervention, only to spend another 40 years until his death wandering around in the desert because of the ungrateful and unfaithful Israelites. Maybe Moses prayed this when he saw the manna every morning. Thank you Lord, for once again this morning's provision reminds me of your unconditional love and never-ending promises, even though today may not be a great day. God can still satisfy us.

God is always with us – that's what unfailing love means. He's committed to us. So let's serve Him with our lives and trust Him and see that doing His will really is satisfying.

Ps. 34:8 Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

³⁴ *"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.*

For Jesus finishing His work is dying on the cross. That's what He said just before He died, *"It is finished."* What was finished? Paying the debt we owed for our sins. He paid the price. He makes reconciliation with God possible by believing in Him as the Saviour of the world (v.42).

Jesus compares this work to sowing and reaping. He just sowed the Word and already a harvest was taking place! The woman believed He was the Messiah and Lord. Jesus knows everything. He knows our sins. He knows what's in our hearts. Jesus was showing His disciples this is how we fish for men and women, by

Planting the seed of His Word (v.34)

trusting God by His Spirit will do the work of bringing what's spiritually dead to new life through faith alone. Normally, Jesus says, reaping and harvesting are two different seasons. But in God's economy it can happen in a short period of time. He planted the Word; the Samaritan woman is the first fruits of the harvest and now she's planting and the harvest is coming to you.

³⁵ *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. ³⁶ Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. ³⁷ Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. ³⁸ 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 labor"*

The disciples need to accept that they are going to be used by Jesus to minister to people they are uncomfortable with and experience the awesome satisfaction of doing the will of God. So

Be ready to welcome new family members (vv.35-38)

Jesus was showing they were blinded by their cultural barriers that they didn't know this woman would do what Jesus was calling them to do – share His Word. We don't know who will respond, but because Jesus has finished the work on the cross we can confidently share His message knowing someone is going to come to faith eventually. How do I know that? Peter reminds

us in 2 Pet. 3:6 that God once destroyed the world by a flood. That's a foreshadowing of the final destruction of earth.

⁶ By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. ⁷ By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. ⁸ But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. ¹¹ Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹² as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming

But it hasn't happened yet because God's heart is to see more people saved. Since it hasn't been destroyed yet, there must be more people yet to be saved. We don't know who but that's why we can share the gospel in faith.

And how do we do that? The Samaritan woman gives us a great example and reminds us

Share the Gift of Salvation Because You've Been Gifted with Salvation **(4:39-42)**

Eph. 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

It is the gift of God. You don't earn gifts you receive them. Earlier on John's gospel John wrote,

^{1:12} Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

Look at the joy of the woman now saved. How does she help others come to know Jesus?

Tell your story of how Jesus saved you (v.39)

³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did."

When we were confronted with our sin, we are shown that because of our sin, we are separated from God. However, we are also shown in the Word that Jesus died for our sins and by believing in Him as the only one who saves us, we can have eternal life and be reconciled to God. Tell them our story but

Point them to Jesus in His Word (vv.40-42)

And this is what happened here

⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹ And because of his words many more became believers. ⁴² They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”

We want to help people know about Jesus and they need to go to His Word, the Bible, to see what He said, how He lived a sinless life, the miracles He performed to show he was God's Son and ultimately how he died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead proving He can assure us of victory over our death one day, and be in His presence for all eternity.

Remember, this was a lesson the disciples needed to learn. They end up staying two days in Sychar with Samaritans, eating their food, drinking their water and staying in their homes! This is what happens to people when they get saved. Barriers come down. Fears disappear. Hearts are open. And people worship together in spirit and truth.

All because one person was saved, who then shared her joy with others and many more were saved. When was the last time you and I were engaged in a spiritual conversation with someone about God, Jesus or salvation? Do we pray for ourselves to have an opportunity to share Christ? We need to prepare for opportunities by praying for them. We won't think about it if we're not spiritually prepared. If we're too caught up in our little world with work, kids, and recreation that we're missing the divine appointments God wants us to have while we're on the journey to glory. We're here for a reason. You're saved for a reason. There are people in your life that God wants you to connect with to share Christ. You accepted the gift of life when someone else shared Jesus with you. We need to do the same for others. This woman was saved for less than a day! And she told others.

And the chapter doesn't end yet. Jesus and the disciples head to Galilee where a royal official (a Gentile who works for Herod most likely) asks Jesus to come to his house and heal his son. *“Jesus said ‘You may go. Your son lives’. The man took Jesus at His Word and departed.”* (4:50). And found out that his faith in Jesus was rewarded. Wow, what faith!

Think back now about the three people in these two chapters who were saved. The nice religious guy. The poor, long suffering, sin-scarred foreign woman. And a politician who works for the guy you would never vote for. All came to believe in Jesus! We don't know who will be saved. Let's not pre-judge people as potential candidates or not. Let's pray for opportunities to share, be open to tell people our own story of how we discovered we needed Jesus and show them in God's Word where it says all this. And you'll experience the satisfaction of doing God's will.

* * * * *

If you have any questions or comments about this message please contact us at oliviet@rideau.net