

## John, Part 13: A Testimony, The Will of The Father, and White Fields

**John 4:27 ESV** 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?” **28** So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, **29** “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” **30** They went out of the town and were coming to him.

**31** Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” **32** But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” **33** So the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought him something to eat?” **34** Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. **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.”

**39** Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.” **40** So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. **41** And many more believed because of his word. **42** 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.”

- I. We've spent the previous two weeks discussing Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well in John 4. You'll also recall that during this exchange, the disciples were at Costco buying groceries for the team.
  - A. So when the disciples return, they are surprised to find a scandal in the making! The Bible says that they “marvel” at the fact that Jesus is talking to **this** woman from the wrong race and gender, and the wrong morals, and therefore deemed by them to be a three time loser.
    1. They are sure Jesus won't get good press once news of his little chat with her breaks! How could they possibly spin the story once word gets out!
    2. But Jesus doesn't seem to notice how he's jeopardizing his reputation!
  - B. Sometimes people try to “clean up” the gospel, and make it respectable by giving it to the right people in the right way, and place, so that it doesn't embarrass us. To the disciples chagrin, this was not Jesus' way!
    1. Luke 7 tells of a time when the town whore came crawling into Simon the Pharisee's house in order to wash Jesus' feet with her tears, and dry them with her hair, showing her gratitude for his grace. While Jesus received and forgave her, what do you think Simon said in his heart?
      - a) **Luke 7:39b ESV** “If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner.”
      - b) Jesus enemies actually branded him “the friend of tax collectors and sinners! (Matthew 11:19)”. What a scandal!

2. Maybe the best thing that could ever happen to churches is for religious people all over town to begin to whisper, "Do you know what kind of people go there? Drunks and perverts, outcasts, and sinners!"
  3. I say let them whisper! And let all of the so-called "dregs of humanity" make their way into the church and find fountains living water, flowing freely to satisfy them forever. Isn't that what Christ modeled?
- C. But with a rare show of restraint, Christ's disciples don't say a word as they find their master speaking to the woman that day (which I'm sure was wise!), and John shifts the focus of his narrative back to the woman who had just been redeemed.
1. The first thing we are told by John that she "left her water jar". Now why do you think that John added that detail?
    - a) Perhaps it was because Christ told her that the water that she had been drinking could never satisfy her. He was talking not about the actual water from the well, but about religious solutions to her real problems.
    - b) Jesus told her those things would leave her thirsty, but that if she would dare to drink the living water he offered, that she would never be thirsty again - a much better deal, wouldn't you agree?
  2. Now, again, Jesus wasn't saying she would never again need to drink natural water; but what if the laying aside of her water jar was symbolic? What if she was saying to Jesus, "I have heard you. I believe you. And by faith, I lay aside this jar because you are all I need. You alone can satisfy me."
  3. You may accuse me of reading too deeply into the text; but may I ask, have any of us ever heard Christ, and while **saying** we believed him, clutched to our own water jars, "just in case"?
    - a) "What if he can't really satisfy me? What if I need something to fall back on? What if my friends and family think I am a fanatic?"
    - b) We ask these things, not realizing that Jesus will never **supplement** the "water" we choose to drink. He will only replace it!
  4. Know this: there is nothing lost when we cast aside our earthen jars of fear, doubt, unbelief, pride in our reputation, our comfort, our money and stuff, and really trust that Jesus is enough! God said through Jeremiah...
    - a) **Jeremiah 2:13 HCSB** For My people have committed a double evil: They have abandoned Me, the fountain of living water, **and dug cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that cannot hold water.**
    - b) Whatever type of container you're carrying this morning as a safety net, let me encourage you to drop it right where you are. Realize that it cannot hold living water! Only Jesus can supply all you need!
- II. But the woman doesn't just lay aside her water jar, she does something else. She runs into the town, and says to all of the people that have mocked, shamed and judged her for years, "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?"
- A. Take careful notice of what has happened here. A few moments before, she was a shameful woman, beat down, and covered in guilt. Her full-time job was

avoiding the stares and talk of the people around her, even as she couldn't seem to break free from the sinful lifestyle that enslaved her.

1. But then she met Jesus! And through his invitation to drink the water he was offering, the Holy Spirit has brought light to her soul, showing her the identity of the One who spoke to her! He was Her long-awaited hope! He was the Messiah!
  2. Now the Spirit's *illumination* of the truth has resulted in the woman's *proclamation* of that same truth! In other words, because of what Jesus has done in her soul, she is inwardly compelled to make him known!
  3. **Jeremiah 20:9 ESV** If I say, "I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name," there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot."
- B. When Jeremiah tried not to mention God, it was impossible! And when the woman drank of the living water that Jesus gave, her reflex action was to immediately let others know of it. And this is far from the only places we see this phenomenon in the Bible!
1. In Mark 7, a crowd brings a man to Jesus who is deaf and mute. Miraculously, Jesus heals the man completely. Look what happens next...
  2. **Mark 7:36 ESV** *And Jesus charged them to tell no one. But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. 37 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."*
  3. This happened over and over again in the gospels! Even when Jesus said, "keep a lid on it", the people went out and made him go viral!
- C. But If this is what we see all over scripture, why is it so seemingly difficult for us to proclaim to others what he has done in our life? Don't we love him enough? Has fear of man, or the pride of our hearts so gripped us that our lips are sealed? Could it be that what we claim he has done in us is not genuine enough for us to want to make him famous?
1. While all of those things may be real possibilities, I don't think that is the main problem for most of us. Most believers I know earnestly desire to speak to people about Jesus, and they feel a lot of guilt because they don't do so frequently or fearlessly. Perhaps you are among those people.
  2. But instead of all the reasons I just mentioned, maybe something else is more likely.
- D. I think most people think of sharing Jesus with a burdensome sense of duty. They categorize it under the things they "oughta" do or "gotta" do. But maybe we have forgotten that the word "gospel" means, "good news".
1. At our Christmas service, many of you met my friend James. I have known James since I was 3 years old. James is physically and mentally challenged. He lives in Odessa, and his parents are both dead; he has no real connection to any other family, so one of my favorite "ministries" is to look after James as best as I can, whenever I can.

- a) As James was getting older, he would talk about his intense fear of being alone. Like any human being, he experienced waves of loneliness, and subsequent depression.
- b) In addition to the physical and mental challenges, James doesn't work and draws full disability from the government. Needless to say on the surface, James' romantic prospects were few.
2. But in 2013 a lady with similar challenges, began attending his church and it wasn't long until they noticed each other, and cupid shot his arrow! James popped the question, and Lisa said yes! I was asked to be the best man.
  - a) So I drove to Odessa the weekend of the big event to do my job and provide some semblance of a "bachelor party". I must admit it was a wild affair! It was just he and I, eating pancakes at IHOP, and taking in a movie...just two wild stallions out on the town!
  - b) But there was one thing I noticed that weekend. James told **every perfect stranger** we came across that he was getting married the very next day, oblivious to the fact that they couldn't care less! He told the waitress, the young lady at the ticket counter, the kid who sold us popcorn, the cashier at the gas station, the guy next to him at the urinal...ok I admit I made that last one up!
3. But what is the point? James had to share his good news! He had been delivered from a life of loneliness, fear and depression and he wanted everyone to know! No one had instructed him, "Now James you better make sure you tell everyone about the wedding so they won't be left out!" No one had to! An unbridled explosion of joy **made him** speak up!
  - a) The reason most of us don't proclaim the good news more frequently and freely is because we've forgotten who we are in the story!
    - (1) We're the raggedy, ugly old maid that couldn't provide for ourselves and that no one wanted.
    - (2) But when all hope seemed lost, Prince Charming himself came riding up to the door of our slum and put a ring on our finger!
  - b) To proclaim the gospel doesn't require you to learn a bunch of theology and apologetics, and check off some spiritual quota; your motivation to proclaim the gospel is joyfully letting the world know that there is a ring on your finger, and who it was that put it there!
4. John Newton was a notorious slave trader until he met Jesus. He told of the ring that Jesus put on his finger in these words. "Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now I'm found; was blind, but now I see!"

III. **John 4:31 ESV** Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." **32** But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." **33** So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?"

- A. While the woman was back in the village proclaiming what Christ has done for her, the disciples are concerned for Jesus' welfare. "Have a sandwich, Jesus! You haven't eaten for some time!"
  1. Many Christians approach ministry like these guys. They think that their job is to take care of Jesus. To metaphorically help him by offering a sandwich.

2. They reason that, if not for their efforts, the gospel won't be preached, the ministry will go broke, the godless liberal agenda will succeed, the reputation of Christ will be besmirched, and the entire Christian church will collapse!
- B. But guess what? The success of God's purposes and plans in no way rely on you or me!
1. You can choose to participate in God's purposes, but never fall in to the trap of thinking God needs your help!
  2. **Psalm 50:12 ESV** "If I were hungry, *I would not tell you*, for the world and its fullness are mine."
  3. But not only does he not need your help, but you can also never derail what he intends to do!
  4. **Isaiah 14:26 ESV** This is the purpose that is purposed concerning the whole earth, and this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations. 27 For the Lord of hosts has purposed, and *who will annul it?* His hand is stretched out, and *who will turn it back?*
- C. God is a gracious Father, and he loves to let us share in his global enterprise! But never, ever make the mistake of thinking that you get to set the agenda, or that success or failure depends on you. That's just arrogant!
- D. So Jesus looks at the lunch they bring him and says, "I have food you guys don't know about."
1. He is stating clearly that he has no lack in himself that they can fill. But we see in the passage that they have no clue what he's talking about. "What! Did someone else bring him a sandwich? That's *our* job!"
  2. So Jesus clarifies for them. **John 4:34 ESV** Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work."
- E. He was saying, "You may be trying your best to attend to my needs, but I've got bigger fish to fry, and nothing can stop me from doing what I intend."
1. He was making it clear that what nourished and empowered him was to do the will of the Father, until that will was fully accomplished. He did not need to be ministered to, but he was passionate about ministering in the name of and to the glory of the Father.
  2. **Mark 10:45 ESV** "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
- F. The point is that Jesus doesn't need your sandwich. He doesn't need a helping hand, but in joy, he has invited us, though he doesn't need us, to share in his work...and his work is urgent!
1. **John 4:35 ESV** 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.
  2. If you are going to participate in his work, the time is now! And why is this important? Because while we are trying to maintain Jesus "health" with theoretical "sandwiches" (our service, contributions, opinions, etc.), he is concerned with the biggest picture; the fact that the world without him is perishing. Look what he says next...

IV. **John 4:36 ESV** 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."

- A. Jesus is saying it's his work, not theirs! And he has had an army of laborers sowing the seed of the kingdom since the beginning: Abraham, Moses, the prophets, John the Baptist and even Christ himself have sown and cultivated a crop that now the disciples will have the joy of harvesting!
  - 1. And since Jesus time, sowing and harvesting have been coinciding non-stop! The word of God is going out to the whole world and some people are rejecting it, and some are responding to it!
  - 2. And we should never forget that no where in the Bible is the work of "sowing" deemed inferior to the work of "reaping".
- B. Everyone wants to be the guy who harvests the fruit, escorting people into the kingdom.
  - 1. But there is great reward for the one who faithfully sows "light" to brighten the world with truth, and the "salt" of righteousness to give it flavor, as it says in Matthew 5.
  - 2. So if you can't reap, sow joyfully! If you have an opportunity to reap, do it to the glory of God.
- C. Adoniram Judson was American missionary to Burma in the 1800's. It took him a full 12 years to make 18 converts. Was he a failure? No! He was a faithful sower, and great is his reward in Heaven!
- D. Whether sowing or reaping, God is not interested in commissioning celebrities and super heroes, but rather a body whose members will labor side-by-side, rejoicing together, for his glory.

V. **John 4:39 ESV** Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." **40** So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. **41** And many more believed because of his word. **42** 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."

- A. Witness in this passage the power of a sincere, joyful testimony. One woman of ill-repute shares her experience with Christ and a whole town lays aside it's prejudice, and mistrust, and believes and is transformed!
- B. Do you and I have anything to testify about? Who needs to hear us say, "Come see a man that told me who I was really me to be, and satisfied me so I will never thirst again." A friend? A family member? A co-worker? An enemy?
- C. My prayer today is that we will be motivated to proclaim Jesus as we remember what we have been rescued from, that he is our champion, our "Prince Charming"! That from a wave of joy, we will not be able to contain our message!
- D. And whether we sow, or whether we reap, we will make the one who satisfies the thirsty soul famous!