

Pt 22 Woman at the Well Part 3 – John 4:31-42

A sermon series in the Gospel of John, by Pastor Byron Chesney at Porchlight Baptist Church www.pbcknox.com

John 4:31-42

31 In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.
32 But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.
33 Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat?
34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.
35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.
36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.
37 And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.
38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.
39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.
40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.
41 And many more believed because of his own word;
42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard *him* ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

Last week we looked at verses 15-30 which detailed Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well. We saw how Jesus called her out on her sin and then she tried to deflect the conversation to religion. Jesus played along with her for a while and discussed religion briefly but then revealed to her great Spiritual truths and even point blank told her that he was the Messiah. It was at that moment that she believed in him as Savior then immediately she left her waterpot, headed into the city and started witnessing to people there. Then those that she witnessed to left the city and came out to see Jesus.

That is where we pick up in our text today with Jesus giving a lesson in the sowing and reaping of the Gospel.

31 In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

Here we find the disciples being worried that Jesus hasn't eaten. They are concerned about his physical well being. He has traveled a long distance and did not have any food with him, and it is already past lunch time he must be starving. So they urge him to eat something.

32 But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.
33 Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat?

His answer to the disciples confuses them. It does seem rather cryptic. I like how Jesus does that though. Everything he does and says is for a specific reason. In this case it isn't to confuse them but to get them to think.

Their first thought was that someone must have already given him something to eat. So they start asking one and other if one of them had already brought something.

The disciples weren't well known for their mental prowess, after all, most of them were fishermen or blue collar workers. But just as Jesus had to cause the woman at the well to think outside of the physical realm, he must do the same thing with his own disciples.

34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

Jesus responds by explaining that He has a different kind of sustenance—the nourishment of doing God's will and completing the work that the Father had given Him. In other words, he is more concerned with Spiritual food than he is with physical food.

This is where we see a great difference between the disciples and Jesus, or between us and Jesus for that matter. We are no different than Peter, James, and John, always thinking of ourselves first. Thinking about our own needs, our physical needs before anything else.

Let's be honest and ask ourselves, what was our first thoughts this morning when we woke up? Was it excitement to get up and do the will of the Father? Maybe your's was? You may be much more spiritual than I am. My first thoughts were do I really have to get up? Can't I just lay here and go back to sleep? Then when I did get up it was all about taking care of myself, taking a shower, getting breakfast, and especially coffee. Then after all my needs were met, I started focusing on Church and the things of the Lord.

I can guarantee that Jesus is nothing like I am. In fact, the Bible tells us in **Isaiah 55:8-9** For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

Jesus keeps on comparing their physical way of thinking compared to a Spiritual way of thinking. When the disciples think of a harvest, they think of the crops that were going to come in, which was still four months away. Before the harvest things were lean. They had to conserve what food they had and make it last.

But Jesus has a different harvest on his mind, and it isn't wheat, barley, grapes, olives, or figs; all which were the main crops harvested in that time. The harvest Jesus has in mind is a Spiritual one. He tells them "**Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.**"

The truth is this spiritual harvest is a never ending one. As far as the eye can see the fields of lost souls are white already to harvest and the time to do it is NOW. The urgency of sharing the Gospel is great. This old world is winding down and time is running out. People need to be reached now.

According to the **Pew Research Center**, approximately 65% of Americans claim to be Christian. That number gets lower every year. They also say that about 3 in 10 U.S. adults are now religiously unaffiliated, meaning, 29% of the U.S. population is made up of people who describe themselves as atheists, agnostics or "nothing in particular" when asked about their religious identity.

Also, according to the **Barna Research Group**, 2 in 5 (or 39%) of Christians are not engaged in discipleship at all and keep their Christianity private.

There are many ways to be a witness to others. It doesn't require that you go around knocking on doors. We used to do that but with the way the world and culture has changed, that type of witnessing is just not the best and may actually do more harm than good.

36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. 37 And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.

Jesus tells the disciples that both sowing and reaping are necessary and whether you are a Sower or reaper, both will rejoice together in the fruit that results. The fruit is referring to those who have been saved by the Gospel.

In Jesus' day the Sower most likely was the Prophet's and men like John the Baptist, who sowed the seeds of God and the promises of the Messiah who would come. The disciples would be the reapers who would tell the world that the Messiah has come, and he is Jesus. They build upon the Word that has already been sown.

The Bible gives us examples of the Sower and the Reaper working together for end results.

Turn with me **Matthew 13:1-9**

- 1 The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.
- 2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.
- 3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;
- 4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:
- 5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:
- 6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.
- 7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:
- 8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.
- 9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Now look down at the interpretation Jesus gives for the Parable of the Sower:

Matthew 13:18-23

- 18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.
- 19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked *one*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.
- 20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;
- 21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.
- 22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.
- 23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth *it*; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

The sower represents believers and disciples who share the Gospel message of salvation. They plant seeds of truth in the hearts of people. This shows our responsibility as believers to be faithful in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with others, regardless of the response they receive. Some people are not going to accept it, but some will. It is not up to us to pick and choose who we share with.

The reaper represents those who witness and participate in the harvest. They could be those who come after the sower, and build on the foundation that has been laid. They see the results of the sown seed, bringing people to faith, and gathering them into God's Kingdom. The reaper experiences the joy of seeing lives transformed and souls saved.

The Apostle Paul understood the importance of sowing and reaping:

1 Corinthians 3:6-9 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. 8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. 9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

Now look back at our opening text in John 4:

38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

Jesus reminds His disciples that they are part of a chain of laborers, building upon the work of those who came before them; the prophets, John the Baptist, and others.

This truth wasn't just for the disciples in Jesus' day, it is for us as well. We have inherited the responsibility to continue the work of sharing the Gospel, and benefiting from the fruit of the labor of those before us.

Now, we will look at those last 4 verses which picks back up with the woman at the well who had went into the city to share the Gospel. We will see the fruits of her labor of being one who sowed. 39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. 40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. 41 And many more believed because of his own word; 42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard *him* ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

Here we see the power of a simple testimony. Simply because this woman told others what Jesus had done for her, it piqued their interest. It caused them to want to seek Him out for themselves.

Don't ever downplay the importance of your testimony. You don't have to have some miraculous story of how you were the worst person to ever live and go into details about each sordid thing you did before you were saved. In fact, I get a little skeptical of some testimonies when people put more emphasis on their sins than they do their Savior.

The woman at the well had a very simple testimony that she shared: **John 4:29** Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? She did not go into great details about all the sordid things she did and the husbands she had, she just told them about Jesus. A simple planting of the seed. What was the result? They came seeking the truth and they found it in Christ and believed.