

“Jesus ‘Food’ Is To Do the Father’s Will”

John 4:27-42

This is the second part of a two part study of Jesus’ meeting with the Samaritan woman at the well in Sychar, which is covered John 4:1-45. I mentioned two weeks ago that I was going to layer our study. What that means is that I intend to go back to things said in the verses covered in our previous study in order to address them more fully and then bring them to bear on our understanding of Jesus’ interaction with His disciples.

For our purposes, this narrative (4:1-26, 28-30, 39-42 and 4:27, 31-38) is theologically or thematically connected by two points of “misunderstanding” – first on the part of the Samaritan woman at the well and second on the part of the disciples when they return from town and see Jesus speaking with her. The verses which are key transitions within our study are 4:10 and 4:27.

Jesus Identifies Two Questions Which Are Fundamental To The Gospel And Which We Must Answer If We Are To Be On Mission With Jesus – cf. 4:10 “*If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.*” (NIV) – These are the questions which Jesus will answer for the Samaritan woman as He leads her through their discussion. They are theological questions which John answers in his prologue (cf. 1:1-18). I will address them in reverse.

Note: I want to note that this narrative isn’t being reported indiscriminately and in real time. This is the record of the Apostle John – who was a part of the moment recorded beginning in 4:27 – looking back at the life and ministry of Jesus through the lens of His cross, resurrection, and His ascension in glory where He is seated at the right hand of the Father, on our behalf, as the exalted man.

- “(If you knew) ***who it is*** that asks you for a drink” – This is something for us to ponder – for our sake. Who is this One? According to John’s own word this One sitting on the well and entering into what appears to be casual conversation with this unnamed woman is – **1.** He is the pre-existent “Word of God” (cf. 1:1-2; Hebrews 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16-17; Philippians 2:5-11). **2.** He is Himself fully God and fully man (cf. 1:1-2, 14-18; Hebrews 1:3; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:19; 2:9). **3.** He is the Creator who spoke it all into existence from nothing and who sustains it by His powerful word (cf. 1:3; Colossians 1:15-16; Hebrews 1:2-3). **4.** He alone is the One in whom is life – the One who makes alive (cf. 1:4; also 5:26; 6:57; 11:25; 14:6; Acts 3:15 – also 2:24; Hebrews 7:16; 1 John 1:1-2; 5:20; Revelation 1:18).

- “If you knew ***the gift of God***” – What did He actually come to do? What did He accomplish for His Father and on our behalf? **1.** The Son of God took upon Himself our humanity in order that He might be the 2nd Adam. The sin of the 1st Adam, and the alienation from God it brought,

was passed to all of humanity, so that we are born into the reign of sin and death. Jesus, as the God-Man, took our sin to Himself and He defeated the reign of Satan, sin and death brought in by the 1st Adam (cf. 1:14; Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28; 2 Timothy 1:8-10; Hebrews 2:5-18). **2.** Our sin was placed on Him and He took it to the cross so that He could offer us His righteousness and eternal life by grace through faith (cf. 1:16-18; 3:14-16; 11:25-26; 14:6; Romans 3:21-26; Ephesians 2:1-9; 1 Timothy 1:15-17). **3.** He offers us the forgiveness of sin and a new relationship with God as our Father – which is eternal life (cf. 1:4-5, 16-18; 3:16; 14:1-6, 15-23; 17:1-26; 2 Timothy 1:8-10; Hebrews 7:25). **4.** Having finally and ultimately defeated Satan, He could now take our humanity up with Himself into the very presence of God. Moreover, He makes us “sons of God” in Himself, who is the Son of God (cf. 1:10-12; 14:1-6, 15-23; Romans 8:5-17; Ephesians 1:15-23; 2:1-7; Colossians 3:1-4; Hebrews 2:5-18; 10:19-25). Karl Barth wrote;

“As the Son of God, He goes into the far country. As the Son of Man He returns home. And what He brings with Him – we almost say as the spoils of the divine mercy – from that far country, what He places in the closest proximity to God from the greatest distance, is the human essence assumed by Him.”¹

- This woman came to this conversation in bondage to her sectarian and cultural conditioning which left her blind to who He was/is, to what He was saying and what was actually taking place (cf. 4:9, 11-15). Her life was characterized by how her experiences and her choices shaped the way others – her culture and the declarations of her “faith – defined or viewed her. She saw herself through the lens they provided. She could not “see” what she actually was “seeing” or “hear” what Jesus was actually “saying” (cf. 4:15).

- Jesus then began to turn the light on or to turn up the volume and clear up the distortion (cf. 4:16-24). Now she heard a prophet speaking so she asked about worship (Note that she had been told by her religion that she was perpetual unclean and unwelcomed, as she was, and beyond salvation’s reach – both by the Jews and the Samaritans)

Note: As the dialogue reached its climax and the eyes of her heart were being enlightened, the disciples returned. John gives us a glimpse into the hearts of the disciples as they returned and saw Jesus talking with the Samaritan woman. Their misunderstanding is seen in what they thought and did not say – only to be given voice in their well-intentioned, clunky and out of touch call for Him to eat.

John Identified Two Questions Which Reveal The Disciple’s Dullness Of The Heart To The Scope And Depth Of Jesus’ Gospel Mission – (cf. 4:27) - The disciples came back to the well and were befuddled by His conversation with a woman. In their unspoken but shared thoughts there are two questions which reflect their ignorance of the true mission of Jesus – **1. Why** is He talking **with “her?”** **2. What** is He **seeking?** (cf. 4:23-24 – “the Father is ‘seeking’ such

¹ Gerrit Scott Dawson, “Jesus Ascended: The Meaning of Christ’s Continuing Incarnation,” page 218, note 32.

worshippers as worship Him...”). They did not ask these questions out loud but John includes them in the narrative to remind his readers just how much the disciples did not understand.

- The Disciples looked at a simple exchange between Jesus and a Samaritan woman and despite all they knew about Who He was and what He had come to do, they could not see beyond the bounds of their sectarian and cultural biases (cf. 1:29-51). The exchange of Jesus with His disciples hearkens back to His initial exchange with the woman in 4:10. Like the woman, Jesus’ disciples could not rightly “see” what they “saw.”

Note: This exchange sheds light on the dangers of over exposure to the thinking of our world (cf. Jesus’ prayer for us – John 17:1-26). It provides us with some practical questions to ask for application to our mission with Jesus in His coming – “Who He is” and “Why He came” or “Who is He and what has He come to accomplish?” It is important to note, going into this part of the dialogue and coming out of it, that *Jesus did not come simply to demonstrate a temporary or superficial kindness. He came to achieve a fundamental and cosmic victory – more than restorative but transformational at that level.*

Note: It is likely that from John’s post-ascension perspective, Jesus is alluding to the sending of the Holy Spirit (hence later reference to worship in (S)pirit and truth). The exaltation of the risen Jesus is the critical point of victory in the gospel truth.

- The woman left her “water jar” to testify to Jesus – to bear witness (cf. 4:28-30). The discussion had evolved to one of worship. *This is where the harshness of sectarian and cultural influences and biases have encroached upon the life of not only this woman, but also her people and the Jews, who would judge her unfit and beyond the saving reach of their religion – likely considered not worth the effort to save.*

Note: She did not yet fully understand who Jesus really was and what He really came to do – hoping beyond hope she asks “Could this one be the Christ?” (cf. 4:29).

- The disciples, avoiding the obvious and unspoken questions – the elephant in the room – asked the Lord to eat some of the food they brought for Him. Jesus, however, answered their questions with a reminder of the purpose of His coming, His very being as the God-Man. His food – the thing which satisfied the very hunger of His inner person – was the unspeakable pleasure of doing the will of the Father who sent Him (cf. 4:32-34).

- He then spoke of the harvest and subtly rebuked them for their dullness in understanding. This is a prevailing theme in John’s gospel (cf. **4:35-38**; 11:38-44; 14:1-30; 16:1-33). This woman was not beyond the reach of His love and grace. She was His mission at that moment. Speaking life to her was His soul satisfying food (cf. Hebrews 12:1-2). She would be among the new humanity. She would be taken up in the ascended and exalted Jesus into the very presence of God – into the life and love of the Divine family.

- The woman understood, at the level of the power of her joy in Jesus, that the people who were in town needed Him (cf. 4:28-30). She left her water behind because Jesus quenched her thirst. He was the One for whom they had been waiting, hoping – and all of humanity with them. A single women, considered by her culture to be perpetually unclean, rushed into the harvest for the joy she knew in Jesus – ***joy compels witness!*** Now they were coming out of Sychar to see for themselves (cf. 4:30-42). Jesus probably was seeing them when He spoke to the disciples about the harvest. The Samaritans coming from Sychar were the fields that were ripe for the harvest.

- The victory won by Jesus – the Incarnate Son of God – over the enemy, sin, death and the curse – the restoration of creation and of fallen humanity, which is beyond its/their created glory, was about to be accomplished in Jesus and He was setting His disciples on mission with Him. ***“Why is He talking to a woman/to her?”*** and ***“What is He seeking?”*** are questions which reflect a horrible earth boundedness or temporal perspective. The real question is ***“Why I am not talking to her?”*** and ***“Why am I not seeking her?”*** Do we really understand how big this gospel and the hope it secures is? Do I really understand and believe who this Jesus is and what He came to do/accomplish – what He did accomplish? Not from duty but from the joy of knowing Him – to be on mission with Him is water for my thirsting soul – food to satisfy most richly!