

Week 5 ~ True Witness (John 4:27-42)

March 21&22, 2020

Crossroads Christian Church

-Thanks for worshipping with us this weekend. I'm so thankful that even though we can't be physically in the same place, there is something special knowing that we are gathering together to worship, to pray, to study God's Word, and to share communion together.

-I'm grateful for my teammates who continue to think creatively and intentionally about our weekend worship experiences and ministry in this moment.

-We are surrounded by opportunities to live and love like Jesus like never before...being full of faith and loving our neighbors well.

-Keep reaching out to those you live near, work with, and have relationship, plus responding to felt needs in our community.

-And let us know how we can minister to you as you minister to others

-None of us knew in September, when we made the decision to teach through the entire Gospel of John in 2020, that we'd find ourselves in this situation impacted by COVID-19.

-But God did

-I think it is really amazing that as we've been trying hard to grow in our dependence on God as a church and as individual followers of Jesus, learning how to live and love like Him. We have been seeing Jesus interact with people and teaching them some powerful lessons we need to learn from right where we find ourselves.

-For the past 2 weeks, we've been listening in on a conversation Jesus is having while sitting at a well in Samaria with a woman. John said Jesus sat down because he was tired. I love that humanity picture of Jesus.

-This woman had come to draw water at an unusual time of the day...midday.

-Normally, woman came to draw water early in the day or later in the day when it was cool

-We infer she came when no one else was there because she was a social outcast or just didn't want to be around others, mostly due to the choices she had made in life.

-She came from a small village called Sychar and everyone knew she had had a string of failed relationships and most likely had been labeled some not so flattering names.

-But it wasn't accidental that Jesus chose to walk through Samaria or to sit down at the well

-This was a moment God used. He "had to go" through Samaria so he could encounter this woman!

-Jesus asked the woman for a drink of water and she points out he didn't have anything to draw water with AND that he really was breaking the social norms of the day...men didn't speak with woman in public, not even their wives, nor did Jews associate with Gentiles.

-In a chauvinist and prejudiced world, Jesus lives and loves differently than how this woman had experienced. He initiated a long, meaningful conversation with her and it caught her attention.

-So did the invitation, or the offer Jesus made to her by saying,

John 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."

-She recognizes he must be a prophet or a teacher and asks him some spiritual questions about where and how to worship and Jesus reveals his true identity to her saying, "I AM the Messiah"

-That's where we want to pick up the conversation today, so turn with me to JOHN 4

A TEACHABLE MOMENT

JOHN 4:27-38

-The disciples had gone into town to get food and were surprised when they returned to see Jesus speaking with this woman from Samaria...because of all the reasons we just talked about, especially because he was regarded as a Rabbi which was even more taboo.

-John records none of the disciples asked Jesus about this, but being fully God, and omniscient (meaning "knowing all things") he knew what they were thinking

-Ever had that happen?...you weren't saying words but someone knew what you were thinking?

-The disciples offer him some food they had brought back and Jesus turns the moment into a lesson about how to live and love like him

-Jesus declines the offer for food by sharing where he finds his fulfillment, his satisfaction.

John 4:32,34 "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."

-Have you ever been so excited about something or been so focused on something you forget to eat or don't want to take the time to eat?

[George Frideric Handel, composed the musical masterpiece, Messiah, in just a few weeks. He worked almost constantly without food, just operating from a "heavenly vision"]

-Jesus was fully committed to the task God had sent him to do. "This is my meat & drink!"

- **John 3: 16-17**

- **John 6:37-40**

- **John 17:1-4**

- **John 19:30** "It is finished" = indicated mission accomplished, satisfied, fulfilled

-Jesus is saying, "What just happened now while you were gone is where I find my greatest joy! I'm not tired anymore. This is what I was made for!"

-The disciples hadn't been present, so we could give them a little grace for wondering if he had already eaten, but they missed the point Jesus was making, thinking about earthly things, just like Nicodemus and the woman at the well.

-Jesus shares with them his mission, his purpose in coming to earth by using a farming illustration [not a green thumb/don't have patience: picture of champion pumpkins when I was 5]

-Jesus speaks of planting and harvesting in terms they could relate to, using familiar proverbs about agriculture to them, but making spiritual illustrations and principles

-He compares planting to sharing with people about who He is and finding life in Him

-Throughout Scripture, the good news about Jesus, also called the Gospel, is compared to seed that is scattered, planted, watered, and grows, spreads, produces fruit, and brings a harvest

-The harvest comes when a person believes the truth about Jesus and accepts the free gift of salvation made possible by Jesus dying on the cross to take the punishment for his/her sins

-This is what has just happened to the woman at the well...Jesus revealed His true identity to her, offered her salvation, and she had accepted His invitation to drink the Living Water!

-The teachable moment comes by Jesus telling his disciples: this is what the mission is!

-He says in vs 35, "don't say...4 months from now we will harvest" which was a typical period between when seeds were planted, and crops could be harvested in the ancient world.

-He speaks to them of **the power of the Gospel and the urgency of the mission!**

-He had just seen a woman who was headed in the wrong direction, empty, alone, rejected, thirsty respond in faith to who He is and accept His invitation to find life in Him

-He says, "Look, the fields are ripe with harvest. The harvester is getting paid right now cause there's harvesting happening."

-Jesus was constantly training and commissioning the disciples to be harvesters by the way he lived and loved

MATTHEW 9:35-37

-This is exactly what has just happened in his encounter with this woman and where He expects those who follow him to find their fulfillment and joy. It's God's will and the work he has called us to do!

John 14:12..."whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing..."

-It's exactly what the woman did! She became a powerful witness! Planting and harvesting like Jesus

A TESTIMONY MULTIPLYING

JOHN 4:28-30, 39-42

-The woman was so excited from tasting the Living Water Jesus offered her, she left her jar (probably a heavy pot) at the well and ran back into town telling everyone, "You've got to come meet this person who might be the Messiah!"

-She shares about her encounter with Jesus, saying, "He knew everything about me and still offered me love, acceptance, and eternal life. You've got to come meet him!" (an invitation!)

-I love that she was vulnerable about her life and pointed people to Jesus!

-John records, "many believed because of the woman's testimony"

-She shared with whom she'd found love, acceptance, help, and hope

-They all knew her well, some might have even been her ex-husbands, and I believe could see something was different about her...they had to see for themselves who she had met

-KJV quotes Jesus as saying "look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" vs 35

-One scholar shared the Samaritans living in Sychar were most likely field workers who typically wore white clothing while working...and Jesus could be speaking of them as he sees them coming toward the well that day, knowing the seed of the Gospel that had been planted by the woman was going to bring harvest of many people coming to Christ

-This woman didn't know much about Jesus; she wasn't a theologian; she didn't have all the answers. She simply knew what had happened in her life when she met Jesus...one minute she was trapped in a life of immorality and then offered living water. She was immediately impacted.

-She seems to have placed in her faith in who He is, and that was changing her

-She drank the Living Water and wanted everyone to as well!

-She went and told everyone she knew, and many believed! She didn't have a debate or argue, she just shared what happened to her when she met Jesus.

-She pointed them to Jesus, they spent time with Him and placed their faith in him

John 4:42 '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.' (savior = Roman emperor, Greek god)

-Jesus is not a prophet or a teacher, but the real Savior...and not just for a few but for everyone!

-WOW! Again, I find it amazing that in September, we didn't know we'd be facing the circumstances around us. Yet, I find the teachable moment Jesus had with his disciples, and the example of the woman, to be so relevant, so timely, so practical

-The world has lots of anxiety, lots of questions, lots of unknowns right now

-Everyone is searching for peace, for answers, for some hope

-What do those who know you, see in you, as you walk through this moment?

-Could this be a moment for us to plant seeds of the Gospel and see a spiritual harvest?

-For the past several weeks, we have been intentionally sharing people's stories with you...just simple 30 second moments of people describing how their life was before meeting Jesus and what it is like now. You heard 3 more today.

-We thought this would be a powerful way to celebrate the life changing power of the Gospel!

-We also thought it would equip every person who calls CCC home to reflect on their own personal story and find a way to share it with others...thinking you might find the opportunity to:

- share it with a neighbor you've been praying for all during February
- make it part of an invitation to Easter services coming up next month to a coworker or friend
- Post it on a social media platform that someone you haven't seen since high school might hear it and see something different in your life and want to meet Jesus

-There's never a "bad time" to be prepared to share how Jesus has changed your life, but I wonder if this is one of those "for such a time as this" moments where the fields are ripe for harvest. Because of all the turmoil the coronavirus has caused, people might be more open than ever to hear about Jesus and how you are finding hope, peace, and strength in him

-It is often the effect of one life upon another that leads a person to know Jesus

-If you've tasted the Living Water, it should become a spring of water welling up to eternal life, not just for you, but for all who come in contact with you!

-Jesus challenged His disciples to see the fields that were ripe for harvest and they had a powerful example, not only in Him and his commitment to plant and harvest, but also in the woman from Samaria!

-Jesus makes a couple of powerful points I don't want us to miss.

- **This is God's work!** It's why he sent Jesus, what he calls and commands us to be doing as Jesus' followers, and it's by His Spirit that people receive salvation!
- **Some plant and some harvest!** Both are essential to the process in farming and in spiritual work. You might have shared the Gospel in many ways and many times with someone, but then God allows someone else to be present when that person finally accepts Jesus' invitation. Or you might be the one God allows to be present when someone accepts Jesus' invitation after many others have planted and watered the seeds of the Gospel in his/her life. Jesus says, "...the sower and the reaper may be glad together..." John 4:36

-Paul referred to these truths when he addressed some people bickering among the Corinthian church between who Paul or Apollos had led to Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:5-9 (The Message) "Who do you think Paul is, anyway? Or Apollos, for that matter? Servants, both of us—servants who waited on you as you gradually learned to entrust your lives to our

mutual Master. We each carried out our servant assignment. I planted the seed, Apollos watered the plants, but God made you grow. It's not the one who plants or the one who waters who is at the center of this process but God, who makes things grow. Planting and watering are menial servant jobs at minimum wages. What makes them worth doing is the God we are serving. You happen to be God's field in which we are working.

If Jesus is our Savior and Lord, sharing how he changed our lives is something we all SHOULD be doing and is something we all CAN do! AND THIS MIGHT BE THE NEXT BEST OPPORTUNITY for you to plant and water spiritual seeds of the Gospel, and see God bring about a spiritual harvest!!

-Our satisfaction in life should come from pursuing the will of God and doing living and loving like Jesus! We must open our eyes and see that it's harvest time! We want to equip you! How would you describe your life before meeting Jesus versus now? Where are you finding hope, peace, comfort during this time?

[30 Second Story training...Monday, March 23, at 6:30pm on Facebook Live]

-Tim Keller says, "Being public with our faith simply means not hiding your heart, not hiding the wellspring of your life, not hiding where you get your questions answered, not hiding from other people who you really are, and pointing them to Jesus."

-Jesus lived His true identity and was motivated by love. We should follow his example.

-The woman and her fellow Samaritans came to understand who Jesus is by having an encounter with him.

-They recognized Him as the "Savior of the world" just like John the Baptist had proclaimed Jesus was the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world...and that included them!

-It includes you and me...wherever you might be joining us from today, no matter who you are, no matter what you've done.

-Jesus offers us, invites us, to drink of the Living Water, to find life, abundant life, life to the fullest, eternal life in Him.

-And when we do, we should drop everything, just like the woman left her water jug at the well, and go tell everyone we know, anyone who will listen about who Jesus is!

-We don't share our story to glorify our sin or where we've been, but to point people to Jesus and to let them drink the Living Water he offers freely

-Did you notice the woman went from calling Jesus sir, Jew, prophet, and then Messiah?

-I love another progression that flows from John 3 and 4 in how Jesus is revealing his identity to people...first to a Jew named Nicodemus, next to a woman and her fellow Samaritans, and then finally, as we will see next week, to a Gentile centurion...

-It's just like Jesus promised and commanded it to happen when he commissioned the disciples after his resurrection in Acts 1:8

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

-The NLT says, "telling people about me everywhere!"

[pastor friend, praise God for Mark Zuckerberg who created FB, originally to connect with others, now proclaiming the Gospel around the world...and Al Gore who supposedly invented the internet]

- We may not be able to leave our homes for much right now, but the power of the seed of the Gospel is not limited by anything of this world
- Let's view these circumstances as something God is sovereign over.
- What times and opportunities do you have now to do the work of God, like Jesus talked about, that maybe you wouldn't have had two weeks ago?
- The gospel message we carry has the power to transform lives.
- What if this "interruption" season is a time that God is "tilling the soil" in the hearts of those around us?
- So, let's start planting and watering...trusting God to provide a harvest!
- And before you rush off to save the world, I'd encourage you to focus your attention on those God has placed in your life...your family, your neighbors, your co-workers, your friends...
- Consider those who might be close to you that are hungry, hurting, isolated, feel rejected, outcasts of our society but right here in our community
- If you've tasted the Living Water, don't you dare keep it to yourself!

PRAY