

Livin' the Life
Living Water and A Living Testimony, part 15
John 4:1-42
February 10, 2018

We continue our series in the Gospel of John, Livin' the Life. My burden in this series is that we see and savor the glory of the Word become flesh by understanding better that he is better, more satisfying than every sin we battle in this life. I want us to more faithfully trust his wisdom, power, and faithfulness to meet our daily needs. Bottom line, I want us to be convinced that Livin' the Life, experiencing and enjoying eternal life Jesus is where it is at! Today's message, Living Water and a Living Testimony, we finish the story of the Samaritan woman by highlighting some points from Jesus' interaction with the woman at the well then look at her response to Jesus.

The text tells us that when the Pharisees learned that Jesus was becoming more popular than John the Baptists, he left for Galilee (1-3). Jesus did not run from the Pharisees nor was he fearful. He was sent by the Father to fulfill a mission and at this moment he had to go to Samaria to give living water (4). The translated verb, had to, is used in the gospels to show divine necessity or divine determination and shows us God's sovereign plan in the life and death of Jesus. Jesus had a purpose to fulfill and his life is leading to that purpose. He will fulfill his mission and nothing will circumvent it. There was a harvest in Samaria and Jesus was going to reap that harvest. Jesus and his disciples arrive in Sychar at about noon. He sat down to rest at Jacobs well while his disciples go buy groceries (5-6). While Jesus is sitting there, a Samaritan woman comes up to draw water (7). She comes to Jesus like the rest of us, emotionally broken, relationally broken, spiritually broken and blind, with a history, and desperately needing living water. During their conversation, she deceives him about her personal history (17), she deflects attention away from her sin, and she debates theology with him (19-20). Yet rather than being put off, Jesus patiently and persistently lights up every shadow she is hiding behind, climbs every mountain she is hiding behind, kicks in every wall of sin that separates them, and tears down every lie until she believes. Jesus is on a mission and he will not back down until he fulfill it. He had to go to Samaria to reap a harvest and reap he will. At the climax of the conversation, she tells him that she believes Messiah is coming and when he does, he will tell us all things (25-26). Jesus' response is a nuclear bomb, I who speak to you am he (26). Jesus is not only the Messiah she is looking for but he is also the great I AM! I am is the great self-disclosure of God in the Old Testament that Jesus uses of himself in this gospel (6:20 8:24, 8:28, 8:58, 13:19, etc). She does not come to this conclusion on her own, it was by Jesus' specific self-disclosure to her (see Mat 16:15-17). She was blind until Jesus opened her eyes (2 Cor 4:4-6). And it is what Jesus for every one of us. This is the first reason Jesus had to go through Samaria.

Just then, the disciples show up from Safeway with food, surprised to see Jesus, a Jewish Rabbi talking to a Samaritan woman yet did not ask him about it (27). As Seth said last week, there was great animosity between Jews and Samaritans. But additionally, Jewish men in general and rabbis in particular, did not talk to women in public, not even their own wives. Jews considered women second class citizens. Jesus' treatment of women was a radical departure from the culture of his day. He let them travel with him, be under his teaching, and be a disciple. He treated her with respect. He did not look down on her, did not shame her, even when he exposed her sin. The current Me Too movement is symptomatic of human fallenness. Sin distort all relationships, including between men and women. So, we have men in power and influence that force themselves upon women sexually. And we have women who are intimidated by these men and their ability to advance or derail their career so they give into unwanted sexual advances. This is particularly true in an industry and culture that values women for their sex appeal. Yet, Jesus uses his power and influence to serve her best interests.

This woman's newfound faith cannot be contained so she rushes into town, leaving her water jar there, and tells everyone about this man she met who told her everything she ever did (28-29; see also 25)! She left her jar because she found living water that has cleansed and freed her from her history of sin and shame, producing a living hope with a living testimony. She is the first Samaritan

disciple and she immediately engages in Jesus' mission. The gospel comes to us because it is always moving towards others. Meanwhile, his disciples are offering Jesus food, oblivious to the town people coming to meet Jesus (31). Jesus turns their offer of food into a spiritual lesson to explain what God is doing in Samaria. He has food to eat that they do not know about. They do not understand and think that someone else has brought Jesus food (32-33) so Jesus explains himself. My food is to do the will of him who sent me, that is, to accomplish his work (34). In other words, Jesus is strengthened to do what God has sent him to do by doing what God has given him to do. This food gives Jesus strength to do what God sent him to do. Jesus' source of strength to do God's will is God's will! But that does not make sense! It does not make sense if Jesus is only a man but Jesus is God so he can talk like that. Humans need sources of energy outside ourselves but Jesus' energy is self-existent within himself. His power to act is to act. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth (Jn 1:14).

But what is the will of him who sent Jesus, to accomplish his work (34)? We get a clue from the fact that John tells us Jesus had to go to Samaria and that he told the woman of living water that wells up to eternal life (4:14) and that Jesus is gathering fruit for eternal life (4:36). God's will for Jesus, the work he gave him to accomplish, is to give eternal life. This is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life (6:40). Simon Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life (6:68). The Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life (12:49-50). Jesus' food is to give eternal life because he is eternal life! Jesus' point is that he is sowing and reaping and the harvest is the crowd of Samaritans coming toward them as they speak! He is collapsing the normal gap between sowing and reaping into one event (35-36). He can do that because he is God and he gives eternal life. He is God and God is having his way. Then he tells the disciples that others have labored before you (37-38). Jesus and the Samaritan woman have been sowing and the disciples are now reaping with Jesus! Jesus is not just the Messiah for the Jews, he is the Savior of the world.

This harvest all started with Jesus giving living water to one person. And that living water welled up into eternal life within the woman. That eternal life gave her a living hope that could not be contained, could not be capped so she testified about Jesus.

Questions for Life Groups:

1. Can you tell us of someone, maybe yourself, with a history of sin and as a result their life was gripped by shame?
2. Everyone comes to Jesus broken?
3. What is David's burden in this series?
4. How does seeing and savoring the glory of the Word become flesh help us overcome our sin?
5. What is the greatest struggle with sin in your life?
6. Why do the disciples often not get spiritual truth?
7. The Samaritans faith could not be contained, she must share it. Do you identify with this? Why or why not?
8. What is the mission of Jesus? Are you participating in his mission?
9. The Samaritan woman was the first disciple in Samaria. Do you remember the definition of a disciple?
10. What is eternal life?
11. How does this story encourage you?

