

Made for More | April 29, 2018

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Reading: John 4.31-35

Introduction

- One of the themes of John's gospel is truth and so we often find Jesus leading people deeper, further into truth or reality. And the further into the truth we go the more truly ourselves we become.
- This strange little exchange comes in the middle of the Samaritan episode in John 4. Jesus has a conversation with the Samaritan woman and he is about to find further favour with the rest of her village. He has offered the woman "living water", a truth beyond the reality she knows, a life beyond the life she has experienced.
- We find the same kind of exchange between Jesus and his disciples.

John 4. 31-34

- *"I have a kind of food you know nothing about....My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work."*
- Catching up with Jesus, the disciples urge him to eat. Perhaps John includes this in order to fill out the frame. Not only is Jesus leading the Samaritans into truth, his disciples are being invited along also. Just like the discussion about water with the woman, Jesus takes the disciples' concern about his nourishment and points deeper. The Samaritans aren't the only ones who need to face the truth and receive the life Jesus offers.

- This deeper nourishment Jesus speaks of (something beyond the physical) comes from working out his vocation, what he calls “the will of God” and finishing what he was sent to do.
- This brief exchange demonstrates Jesus as not only the consummate Israelite, but the total human. Via his own example, Jesus points into a life beyond mere eating and drinking. A life where one becomes fulfilled by joining in with the broader work of God around them.
- The disciples have found Jesus working out the intrinsic purpose of being human – partnering with God in the shaping of his world. When humans work out their central vocation/purpose a deeper nourishment results.
- In other words, humans become thoroughly human when they “do the will of God” and “finish his work”. Not in the sense of worth or nature, but purpose. The question of “why are we here?” is answered in Jesus’ example and teaching.
- I was sent for more than mere eating and drinking and getting by in a humdrum kind of life, says Jesus. I am nourished, I am fed by recognizing my intrinsic purpose that’s only found when I join with God in his wider work.
- Jesus says that there’s more to life as we know it. And the inference is that human beings were made for more.

John 4.35

- We discover how much more there is when we open our eyes to what God is up to around us. This is exactly what Jesus spells out next.
- *“You know the saying, ‘Four months between planning and harvest.’ But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for the harvest.”*
- Over the years the language and imagery of “the harvest” in Christian circles has become so well worn that we might think we know what Jesus means by this. But the point of his use of

this imagery is not simply to inform us that there are plenty of people in need of salvation (though this is true) but to open his friends up to a larger vision of life.

- Using an obvious agricultural certainty (it takes some time once seed is sown before wheat can be harvested) Jesus calls attention to the fact that there is work to be done.
- In other words, Jesus is saying that his friends have work to do now. God has already prepared the land and the time is now to join him harvesting it.
- This is punctuated, of course, by the Samaritan episode he and his friends are in the middle of. Jesus' Jewish friends might expect God to do something for their kind of people, in their land, but here is God drawing even the Samaritans, a group of people the Jews despised and looked down on.
- It is as if Jesus is saying, God is on the move and you had better not miss out. The good and loving purposes of God are rolling out and it's time to wake up to what's all around you.
- So, not only is Jesus inferring that his human beings (including his friends) are made for more, but he's also saying that such a life is ready to be joined in with right away.
- There is more to life as you know it, says Jesus. You were made for more – wake up and get on with it! And it might be opening up in places you least expect.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Are you hungry? Are you interested in becoming more of yourself, not less? How has purpose played a role in your nourishment or satisfaction in the past?
2. What kind of Samaria do you find yourself in? What kind of ground that might look hard and unreceptive?

3. How does this exchange between Jesus' and his friend encourage us to think about where and how the gospel spreads?