

The Messiah's Meat and Our Model

By David Harrell

Bible Text: John 4:27-42

Preached on: Sunday, February 2, 2014

It's with great joy I come to you to minister the word once again this morning and I would encourage you to take your Bibles, turn to John's gospel. Once again, we find ourselves in John 4. We will be examining verses 27 through 42.

We return to this historical narrative where the Holy Spirit traces the actions and the attitudes of our blessed Savior in Samaria, things that are so profoundly instructive to us. Not only will we see more of this today but also learn much more about Christian service and evangelism through the instructions that he gives to his disciples and through the example of the woman of Sychar. Her sin has been exposed, as you may recall from our previous studies, as rousing her spiritual thirst, the Lord has caused her to see that indeed he is a prophet, a man of God. She has a desire to see the Messiah and when this comes forth within her heart, Jesus declares to her that he is the great I AM. What happens next is truly remarkable. Sometimes I fear we just kind of overlook the rest of this narrative but we will discover many hidden jewels contained in the remaining parts of this amazing historical account.

So, let's join together in mining these great treasures as we examine this passage very carefully. Let me begin by starting in verse 25 and just reading the text before we look at it more closely. John 4:25,

“25 The woman said to Him, 'I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.' 26 Jesus said to her, 'I who speak to you am He.' 27 At this point His disciples came, and they were amazed that He had been speaking with a woman, yet no one said, 'What do You seek?' or, 'Why do You speak with her?' 28 So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city and said to the men, 29 'Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?' 30 They went out of the city, and were coming to Him. 31 Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, saying, 'Rabbi, eat.' 32 But He said to them, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.' 33 So the disciples were saying to one another, 'No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?' 34 Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work. 35 Do you not say, "There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest"? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. 36 Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. 37 For in this case the saying is true, "One sows and another reaps." 38 I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored and you have entered into their labor.

“39 From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, 'He told me all the things that I have done.' 40 So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. 41 Many more believed because of His word; 42 and they were saying

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to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world.'

I would like to approach this text this morning by examining four aspects of our Savior's actions and his attitudes. We will look at his Messianic declaration; secondly, his mysterious meat; thirdly, his marvelous harvest; and finally, his miraculous word. Then we will close with a brief summary of some very practical lessons that we learn about Christian service that are woven throughout the fabric of this text.

Again, let's begin by focusing on his Messianic declaration. He said in verse 26, "I who speak to you am He." You may recall that the word "He" is not in the original language. It has been added but this is another one of the powerful "I AM" statements that the Lord uses 23 times in John's gospel, the name he gave to Moses to tell the people who it was that was sending him, "Tell them I AM WHO I AM. I AM the self-existent eternal one that has always been and will always be."

Now, it's fascinating that he does not reveal himself as the Messiah of Israel to his own people but to the Samaritans. Isn't that curious? I wonder why? Well, first of all, we know from other passages of Scripture as we will see, that the gospel would be preached first to Israel but they were never intended to be the exclusive recipients of it. In fact, in Isaiah 45, beginning in verse 22 we have a record of God's gracious invitation. There we read, "Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other." Later, in chapter 49:6, God spoke prophetically to the Messiah and said, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth." We see here, the implementation of global evangelism beginning in our Lord's encounter with this woman, this Gentile woman of Samaria. In fact, after his resurrection, Jesus himself declared in Luke 24:47, that "repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all the nations beginning from Jerusalem."

So, by making his first declaration as the Messiah of Israel to the Samaritans, he not only began the process of global evangelism by planting the seeds of saving grace among those Gentile people, but he also jarred his disciples from the rigid provincialism that tended to fuel their pride and prejudice against the Gentiles, a lesson that would be hard for them to learn and hard for many Jewish people to learn. Frankly, it's one that's hard for all of us to learn even this day.

But he also had to offer this self-disclosure in a subdued and secluded setting in order to allow the truth of who he was to spread very gradually, especially among the Jews who had a very military and political mindset. They were looking for a conqueror. Later, we will see this to be true. You will recall that after his miracle of feeding the 5,000 in John 6:15, we read, "Jesus therefore perceiving that they were intending to come and take him by force to make him king, withdrew again to the mountain by himself alone." So, Jesus revealed himself to be the Messiah to the woman at the well and in a moment we are

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going to see how this declaration through her began to spread to many others for grace now has achieved a marvelous victory here in her life.

Now, let's first of all notice what happens in verse 27. We read, "At this point," in other words, "at that very moment." There is great precision here in what the Spirit tells us through his inspired writer. "At this point His disciples came." Once again, beloved, we witness the miracle of divine providence controlling every variable in order to accomplish God's intended purposes. It's amazing when you think about it that all of history has been pre-written in eternity past and in ways that we will never understand. God is in control of all things. Isaiah tells us in chapter 14:24, "The Lord of Hosts has sworn saying, Surely just as I have intended, so it has happened and just as I have planned, so it will be."

Yet, his sovereignty never functions in a way that mitigates or in any way marginalizes human choice and responsibility. Nowhere in Scripture do we see that human choice ordained by God is not really a choice at all. Rather, in ways that are beyond our understanding, we see in the word of God that our choices are always voluntary, having real results yet ultimately ordained by God. Now, had the disciples come any earlier, it would have been awkward because their presence there would have interrupted our Savior's gospel presentation and had they come a minute later, she would have departed and they would have never witnessed the stunning encounter filled with so many lessons that they would need to learn.

Now, practically speaking, I want you to remember that God is still in charge of all things. He is even working in your life this very minute. It's an amazing thought. The Psalmist tells us in chapter 33:11, "The counsel of the Lord stands forever. The plans of his heart from generation to generation." In Proverbs 19:21, we read that "Many are the plans in a man's heart but the counsel of the Lord, it will stand." What a comfort it is to know that "our God reigns, that he is in control, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus," Philippians 1:6.

Now, notice in verse 27, "They marveled that He had been speaking with a woman, yet no one said, 'What do You seek?' or, 'Why do You speak with her?'" You see, they have already understood that Jesus is not restricted by any of the cultural social boundaries of that day even though this was a stunning violation of their social customs. A man would never speak to a woman, certainly a Jew would never speak to a Samaritan but they knew that he was the Son of God and he knew what he was doing.

Then in verse 28 we read, "So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city." Now, why did she leave her waterpot? Well, the text doesn't say. Perhaps she filled it up and left it for Jesus. Perhaps she was so excited, she wanted to run into town and to carry a waterpot would have been, frankly, in the way. But I believe that the sheer force of hearing the sacred ineffable title of God, I AM, caused her to forget about earthly things altogether. The solemn affirmation of God himself was an address that was so overwhelming it produced within her, I believe, the same reaction as those who would

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later hear it in the garden. You will remember in John 18:6, when Jesus said the same thing, they drew back and fell to the ground.

My friends, think about this for a moment: imagine talking to the Son of God. Imagine the penetrating eyes of God peering into your eyes knowing that he sees into every cavern of your imagination. He sees every dark spot in your heart. Then he comes along and he offers you the living water of himself as your Savior. My friend, drawing water from a well and being encumbered with a silly waterpot would be the last thing on your mind. It would be like being in your home, sitting at your computer, probably on Facebook, and suddenly Jesus appears. Can you imagine saying, “Oh, hang on just a second. Let me finish this post.” No, I mean, suddenly your eyes would be riveted, I hope, on who he is. However, in these days, I fear, the worship of self is so strong that some people would go ahead and finish the post. Once a man's soul has had an encounter with the living God, once it has a clear perception of who Christ Jesus really is, once a person understands the eternal significance of all that is going on, there will be an instant turning away from the things of the world and an instant turning to the things of God. I believe that her mind became instantly riveted on the lover of her soul and the glory of her Redeemer.

“So the woman,” it says, “left her waterpot, and went into the city and said to the men, ‘Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?’” You know, this will always be the actions of a newly found forgiveness and faith. A person will naturally want to tell others once they have encountered the living God and been given the gift of eternal life. So, now with the new nature, she loves Christ and she has compassion for her lost friends and her family and so she goes into the town. Imagine the scene: she goes to bear witness to them. Think about it: goes to bear witness to people she had previously been avoiding because she was embarrassed because they knew of her immoral character.

Her candor must have shocked them because, I’m sure, knowing the culture of that day, that they never heard anything from her. She lived in the shadows, shall we say. Now suddenly, she comes and she begins to share with them what Jesus has seen, basically a public confession. No doubt she said far more about her sin and the nature of their conversation than what we have here in the text. It was also both wise and appropriate for her to present her testimony with utmost tact because, after all, she had no standing in the community, she had no spiritual authority but her transparency, her humility, her zeal, her enthusiasm was contagious as is true of every genuine Christian testimony.

So, in verse 30, it says that “They,” meaning the people of the city, “went out of the city, and were coming to Him.” Imagine the scene now, it's like wildfire, word is spreading: so the townspeople now make their way to Jacob's well while Jesus is engaged with his disciples. We're not sure how many but as we're going to see from the text, it's probably a fair amount of people.

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Verse 31, “Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, eat.’” This has been a three day hike. Jesus is tired the text tells us, he is weary, he is fatigued, he is thirsty, he is hungry, exhausted. So the disciples now have gone, they've come back, they've got these wonderful provisions but instead of finding Jesus as they left him, fatigued and thirsty and hungry, he is re-energized, he's refreshed. How curious. What's going on here? Now friends, what happens next is both fascinating as well as very instructive. Once again, Jesus is going to use a physical illustration to help his disciples and all of us understand a far more profound spiritual reality. Even as the woman had her mind on literal water, not living water, now the disciples are focused on literal food rather than the superior spiritual food that Jesus will now begin to explain to them.

Here we move from his Messianic declaration to, 2. his mysterious meat. Notice in verse 32, “But He said to them, ‘I have food to eat that you do not know about.’ So the disciples were saying to one another, ‘No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?’” Jesus has an amazing way of getting their attention and getting our attention. They're saying, “What's going on here?” And as he has done before, he uses the principal of what I call “divine confusion” to get their undivided attention in order to teach them some important spiritual truth. They are about to learn about a kind of spiritual food capable of sustaining them physically, a spiritual meat beyond the ordinary meat of man, meat only available to those who have a singular focus on doing the will of the Father. Notice verse 34, “Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.’”

Here you see it: Jesus has a singular focus. He is devoted to a solitary mission and that is to do the Father's will which denotes his unfaltering love for and intimacy with his Father, a subject which, by the way, will be the dominant theme that he anticipates later on in chapter 5. And what is this will? Well, he describes it, for example, in John 6, beginning in verse 38. There we read, “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.” Oh, dear friends, what an amazing truth this is. The kind of truth that would cause the Apostle Paul to just explode in a doxology at the end of Romans 11 and say, “All the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments and unfathomable his ways.”

Let me give you an overall summary of basically what's happening here, what Jesus is saying: as we look at the word of God, we understand that in eternity past the Father gave the Son a love gift of a redeemed humanity, a redeemed humanity that he had chosen. We read in 1 Thessalonians 5:9, “For God has not destined us for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.” That would be the destiny of this redeemed group of people and Paul tells us in 2 Thessalonians 2:13, “God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation.” So, this is peculiarly the work of the Father but the actual saving of those whom he has chosen is the work of the Son, a work that would require

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him to ultimately go to the cross as the substitute of the elect and then at the conclusion of that sacrifice say, "It is finished."

But his work also includes the seeking and the saving of this love gift from the Father. A work that he continues to this very day. A work that is happening right now as I speak, not just here but all over the world. And one day it will be accomplished. We read about this in various passages of Scripture but especially in Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 15:24, "When he delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when he has abolished all rule and all authority and power." My friends, it will be at that point that the Son will give back to the Father the redeemed that was first given to him that he has saved and he will do this as a reciprocal expression of his love for the Father.

I hope you understand as you think about this, that our salvation is only incidental to this glorious plan. Nonetheless, we rejoice in it with joy inexpressible and full of glory. So, here we see how the gratification he received in finishing the work of the Father is a spiritual meat, if you will, to his soul, something that sustains him in the midst of his labors, a meat that eclipses the normal sustenance and refreshment of food. In fact, Jesus is here echoing Deuteronomy 8:3. You remember that passage where Moses addressed the covenant people of Israel and tries to explain how it wasn't the manna that kept them alive in the wilderness necessarily, but the word of God that commanded it. There we read, "And he humbled you and let you be hungry and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know that he might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord." By the way, these were the same words that Jesus quoted to Satan in Matthew 4 during his temptation in the wilderness.

Now, this is not to say that Jesus or anyone else who does the will of the Father, no longer needs any kind of physical food. No, the Lord will provide that but it does mean that doing the will of the Father is far greater to our soul, it brings a joy so much greater, brings satisfaction so much richer, sustains our spirit in such a way that it becomes literal meat, so to speak, to our body. It's a refreshing kind of thing. Think about it: when we are absorbed in service to God, you might say that he fills us with the delicacies of heaven. He somehow feeds our souls in ways that causes us to forget about food, something the disciples knew nothing about, something that many Christians know nothing about. Christ Jesus was so satisfied, he was so satisfied. Now, think about this: so deeply absorbed and rejoicing in the prospect of dealing with this woman whom the Father had given him from all eternity, that he had no thought about his physical needs. Moreover, he received a heavenly meat that satisfies his soul and even reinvigorates his body. Haven't you been so engrossed in something in your life that it was just so satisfying that you really didn't even think about eating?

Beloved, when we are absorbed in genuine self-sacrificial service to our glorious God, the Holy Spirit will refresh us and satisfy our spirit and even revive our body in ways that we cannot imagine even as he did for Jesus. I fear we know too little of this because our carnal minds tend to seek our own will rather than the will of the Father. But it's

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important for you to realize that this spiritual meat is not something that we are to seek nor is it to be measured by the results of our labor but rather by our faithfulness in doing the will of the Father.

This was Christ's meat. Is it yours? Think about it: what has he called you to do? Scripture is filled with so many specific things. What is your spiritual gift? Where have you been affirmed in serving Christ? Are you using it for his glory? Are you engrossed in doing the will of God? Regardless of what your occupation might be. Will you notice what it took for Jesus to be so satisfied and refreshed? Will you look at this? It took one woman. Not massive crowds, one woman. Just ministering to one very unlikely woman and doing it in utter obscurity. Nobody sees except the Father. Oh, what condescension. The Son of God gives her his full and undivided attention. It's an amazing thought to me. With tender mercy and pity for her soul, he peers into her eyes, peers into the very depths of who she is, sees her sin, loves her and offers her living water, the living water of saving grace and he sees in her the seed corn of a glorious harvest to come.

Too often we think our service is really not all that important because nobody sees, our audience is so small, the applause is too tepid, yet here you have the uncreated Creator of the universe, the Son of God, becoming a man and thoroughly investing himself in one sinful outcast Gentile woman. It's an amazing thought. No one is watching but the Father. Mother's: remember this the next time you read a Bible story to your child in the quietness of their bedroom. Father's: remember this the next time before your meal you share some spiritual truth that has impacted your soul and you want them to understand. A Sunday School worker, whatever your role might be, those of you teaching toddlers: remember this, when you teach them these eternal truths from the word of God through maybe some craft, some story, even as Jesus made this nameless woman the supreme object of his saving work, you too need to be fully absorbed in whatever soul the Father brings into your sphere of influence because your labor is not in vain. The Father sees. The Father rewards with a mysterious heavenly meat that I cannot describe. You must experience it for yourself but it is so real.

Again, in verse 34, "Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.'" Then he says something interesting in verse 35, "Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest." So friends, here we move from his Messianic declaration and his mysterious meat to 3. his marvelous harvest. Now, perhaps he was looking at some of the crops that were around that area, we do not know. More likely, I believe, that he was probably looking at the crowd of townspeople from Sychar that were coming his way to investigate the woman's testimony. I believe this to be a rebuke to the disciples who were surprised that this harvest of souls would include Samaritans? Gentiles? How often we, like them, consider some people to be so far beyond the reach of saving grace that it's not worth our time to really be around them, much less share the gospel. Think about it: there are probably some people groups in your mind, in your heart right now, that you despise so severely that you really place yourself in the same position as Jonah who hated the Ninevites.

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But, friends, we never know how God is at work. We never know what seeds of truth may lie dormant in the souls of those that come into our sphere of influence, the result of the labors of some faithful person in days gone by. Perhaps a grandparent or a parent or a Sunday School teacher or whatever. To this day, I can see the faces of most all of my Sunday School teachers and my Boys Brigade leaders and many others who probably thought that their words were falling on deaf ears but some of it, by the power of the Spirit, got through.

Many times, those we think who would be most likely to receive Christ become the least likely and vice versa so you never know. This was made abundantly clear to the disciples as they watched the power of the gospel penetrate the hard and ignorant hearts of these despised Samaritans. It dawned on me as I was meditating upon this text that we don't hear much about what's happening around the world but do you realize there are literally thousands of Jews and Moslems and people of other pagan religions that are coming to Christ? We don't see a lot of it in the United States. I fear that God's wrath of abandonment has basically allowed these people to experience the consequence of their iniquity but we still see people coming to Christ but especially in other parts of the world.

A few months ago, I was in Israel and I was reminded again of how many people from all over, how many Jews in particular, from all over the world are coming back to their land as God has promised they would do just before the pre-kingdom judgments of the tribulation and the Second Coming of our glorious Messiah. I remember one night being in a secluded courtyard that's about the size of this inner section here, maybe not even this big, under the beautiful star lit skies of the Israeli desert and in that courtyard we had a Shabbat service and they brought us in and said, "We want you people to sit here." There were 11 of us from the United States and they said, "We want the Poles," people from Poland, "to sit in this section. We want the people from Russia to sit over here. We want the people from South America, the Jews from South America to sit over in this section. We want those that speak Arabic to sit back over here. And the Hebrew speaking people sit over here." And it went on, I think there were 8 or 9 different people groups and as we all got situated, there was an interpreter for each group. Our brother, Wes T., was speaking that night and when he got up to speak, he would say something and all of a sudden you would hear nine interpreters and nine different languages proclaiming the word of God to people who have been saved by God's grace from all over the world. It was a stunning sight.

You know here, as you think about it, John, an eye witness to what is happening, sees these Samaritans coming. They begin to understand that indeed salvation is going to these other people and it's little wonder that he would later describe the harvest of souls from all over the world that would come to Christ. In Revelation 5:9, he sees this and he records it. "And the sang a new song saying, Worthy art thou to take the book and to break the seals for thou wast slain and didst purchase for God with thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation." It's an amazing thought, is it not? By the way friends, that describes us. We will be there.

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Now, since the spring harvest was in April, this probably means that this incident took place in December but the point here is that there may be four months until harvest but with respect to salvation, the harvest has already begun. That's what Jesus is saying. Now, Jesus follows up his mild rebuke to them with a word of encouragement in verse 36 and he says, "Already he who reaps is receiving wages." "Already" could be translated "even now." You don't have to wait four months from now when the physical harvest is ready, it's already happening now and we're receiving the wages. The wages would be the joy of seeing people come to Christ, seeing people follow Christ. He says, "and is gathering fruit for life eternal." My, what a soul-satisfying joy that is, to see a person come to Christ, a joy that is shared not only by the person that has been saved but those who have sowed and those who have reaped. Then he says, "that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together."

Now, think about what the Lord is saying here: often we sow and we sow and we sow and then somebody else reaps the harvest that we're never permitted to enjoy. But you've got to remember that there is no reaping apart from sowing, right? So both are equally as important and the Lord is graciously underscoring this fact in this text. Think about it: while Jesus reaped the harvest of this woman at Sychar, Jesus is gracious to acknowledge the diligent labor of the sowers before him, laborers like the patriarchs, like the prophets: Moses, John the Baptist and so forth. Countless laborers, faithful to preach the word about the coming Messiah. So, many seeds of saving grace were sown centuries before and then suddenly, by the regenerating power of the Spirit of God, they are awakened within this adulteress' heart and also many other Samaritans.

Now the disciples themselves will enjoy the privilege of harvesting these souls even though they played no part in sowing the seed. That's what Jesus said in verse 37, "For in this case the saying is true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored and you have entered into their labor." I would imagine Philip recalled these words a few years later when he went to the Samaritans and began preaching the gospel to the multitudes of Samaritans. You read about this in Acts 8. Beloved, this should be a comfort to each of us. Sometimes we sow, sometimes we reap. What I have found is that most of the time you sow. Most of the time you sow. Both are distinct aspects of gospel ministry but both are equally important. Again, you cannot reap if you do not sow and the Samaritans were an example of fields that had already been sown.

I want you to also notice he says "others have labored." The word is very important. In the original language it means "to toil" or "to work to the point of utter exhaustion." Martin Luther has said it well, "The ministry is not an idle man's occupation." Unfortunately, I fear that sometimes it deteriorates into that but it shouldn't be that way. Speaking specifically to pastors and to elders: we should work harder than all others; we should set the pace in the race. There is nothing more despicable than a sluggard, especially if that sluggard is a man who claims to have been set apart to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ and shepherd his flock. 1 Corinthians 15:10, Paul says, "By

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the grace of God I am what I am and his grace toward me did not prove vain but I labored,” there's the word, “I labored even more than all of them yet not I but the grace of God with me.” Why would anyone want to follow a sluggard? Why would anyone respect a man who does not lead by example? And I preach to myself here. The work of the ministry is exhausting but it is equally exhilarating, worthy of the highest esteem. 1 Thessalonians 5, Paul says in verse 12, “But we request of you brethren that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction and that you esteem them very highly in love.” Why? “Because of their work.” Moreover, in 1 Corinthians 16:16, we read that the church is to be “in subjection to such men and to everyone who helps in the work and labors.”

Dear Christian, regardless of your gifting or your place of service, you are to labor for the Lord whether you're cleaning the church, you're taking care of infants in the nursery. Whether you're doing something in the office; whether you're working with the toddlers. Whatever it is, do it with all of your heart. 1 Corinthians 15:58, Paul says, “My beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in,” what? “In the work of the Lord knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.” Paul says in Acts 20:35, “And everything that I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

And I'm reminded of workers like you that were in the churches there in Rome. Paul greeted them at the end of Romans, in verse 6 of chapter 16. He says, “Greet Mary who has worked hard for you.” Verse 12, “Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord. Greet Persis the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord.” Beloved, never underestimate what God has called you to do. Do it with all of your heart. God is often pleased to use the unknown, even the feeble among us, to accomplish glorious tasks. Think about it: he used a woman and her daughter to hide a little baby in the bulrushes of the Nile that he might become the mediatorial ruler of God's people. Think about it: he used a young Hebrew slave to become second in command of Egypt and to preserve the covenant bloodline of the Messiah. He used a young shepherd boy to vanquish the mighty Goliath. He used a peasant virgin rather than a princess to become the mother of the Lord Jesus Christ. And here he uses an immoral outcast, uneducated woman of Sychar to unleash the gospel to the Samaritans and he can and he will use you in ways that you may never know. We all work together in this great enterprise of the gospel. What a joy and a privilege it is to know that we can give our lives away, work to the point of exhaustion, exert ourselves in doing the will of the Father and then in so doing, he sees and he nourishes our soul with a mysterious meat of invigoration that causes us to literally forget about everything else in our life. It's an amazing thought.

Finally, in verse 39, “From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, 'He told me all the things that I have done.' So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. Many more believed because of His word ; and they were saying to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have

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The Messiah's Meat and Our Model

By David Harrell

Bible Text: John 4:27-42

Preached on: Sunday, February 2, 2014

heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world.” Here we close, thinking of his miraculous word.

Ah, my friends, it is one thing for me to tell you about what Christ has done in my life but it is altogether more compelling for you to go to the word of God and hear him tell you who he is. The woman of Sychar planted the seeds of salvation in her brief but passionate testimony and then the Lord comes along and he nourishes that seed with his all-powerful life-giving words. Then, as you think about it, together the woman and the Savior reap this glorious harvest and then the disciples many more. She never saw a miracle but she saw and heard something far more compelling. She encountered the living Christ, the Son of God they called the Savior of the world. Not just the Savior of the Jews but the Savior of the world.

May I close by challenging you in a few ways? This passage is so rich; there are so many truths here. Let me conclude with some lessons pertaining to Christian service. 1. Like this woman you will never be effective in serving Christ unless you have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, one that is the result of an intimate and ongoing encounter with the one who gave himself for you. When this is happening, your heart will explode with excitement. Your service will not be drudgery. You will not do it out of duty but out of desire.

2. You will never be faithful and happy in doing what God has called you to do if you find your satisfaction in results or the applause of men. My friends, we are not called to be successful or popular, we are called to be faithful and humble, willing to labor even in total obscurity. We are to find our satisfaction not in results but in doing the Father's will who then feeds us this heavenly meat. Most of Jesus' disciples, as you will recall, will eventually leave him. In fact, his results were not that spectacular by men's standards today because he preached the truth unlike many today.

3. At the hear of true Christian service will be a sense of divine urgency. My friends, the fields are already white for the harvest. If I can mix my metaphors here: serving Christ is not a stroll in the park, it is a battle of epic proportions. Come join the fight. It is exhilarating.

4. Be encouraged knowing that together we are gathering fruit for life eternal as we read here in the text. Do you realize, the woman of Sychar will be in heaven some day and we'll meet her? We will meet many of these people that came to see Jesus. When I was thinking about this, these lines came to my mind and I jotted them down.

“What a celebration that will be,
When our Savior's face we see,
When with the throng of twice born saints,
We'll sing the song of saving grace.”

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Finally, whether you sow or whether you reap, know full well like every organ in the body, we are mutually dependent upon each other so let's serve together and we are totally dependent upon Christ who is our life. Oh, I pray that you know my Savior. I pray that you know my Savior.

Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for these eternal truths. They are overwhelming when we consider them. I pray that by the power of your Spirit you will cause us to live these truths out in such a way that they should bring great glory to yourself. May many people come to Christ because they see him in us. We thank you and we give you praise. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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