Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Messiah: The Living Water, Part 3
Scripture: John 4:27-42
Code: 43-22

I want you to open your Bible to the fourth chapter of the gospel of John. And I don't know that I need to make an explanation of what I do with a passage, but when you deal with a narrative passage like this, there's a story to tell, obviously, and this is a prolonged story, starting in John 4, verse 1 and running all the way to the forty-second verse. That's a long account by any gospel measure. Most accounts are cryptic. That is to say, they are condensed--kind of a Cliff Notes version of what actually happened. And that would be true in this case. But nonetheless, it's a long story and so it winds up being cut into pieces because somebody, I don't know when, said we can't preach for more than an hour.

I don't know who made that rule but my whole life has been unduly constrained by that ridiculous rule that someone made. I...I would feel much more comfortable if, like the apostle Paul, I could preach until people actually fell out of the window and died. But since I am unable to do that, I have to prescribe myself to what is demanded of me. And so we don't want a whole lot of loose babies running around in the patio at ten minutes after twelve, and that's how it is.

But on the other hand, to divide up a story like this is a necessity for its own sake because there is so much in the story. And one of the things we endeavor to do when we teach the Word of God is to take you back so that the story comes to life in its own context, because whatever its meaning is, it was established in the original context to what this meant then is what it still means now and always will mean. Since it's an ancient document and an inspired document, and it was revealed to a certain time and place and people, we have to reconstruct that in order to capture the heart of its meaning. And that's what we do, and that's why we stretch it out a bit. And this story could actually be drawn out because there are so many, many more issues that are introduced here.

Just the issue of worship alone could launch you for a prolonged period of time. You know that years ago I did an entire series on worship from chapter 4, verses 20 to 24--that worthy text--to expand the notion of worship. It ended up in a book called *Worship*, which is now available. And by the way, we give that book as a gift to all of our first-time guests who go to the visitors' reception. So there is much here.

As we come to the last part of the story, from verse 27 to 42, there's also much there. There's a lot there about missions; there's a lot there about evangelism. There are many texts there that have been preached as messages in and of themselves, and rightly so. But for us, since we're trying to

move sequentially through the gospel of John, we're not going to take every possible side route that we could; we'll try to stay within the story. But we don't want to just tell the story--you can read the story, we can read it, fill in a few blanks. We want to draw conclusions from the story as to why it's here and what the purpose of the Holy Spirit is to put the story here and to convey its truth to us. In this case, you don't have to look very long until you know exactly why the story is here, why all 26 verses up to now and the rest to verse 42 are here, and you will see that when I read to you starting at verse 27.

Let's pick up the story where we left off last week. "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?' So the woman left her water pot 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?' They went out of the city and were coming to Him. Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him saying, 'Rabbi, eat.' 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 said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work. 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 for they are white for harvest. 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. In this case, the same 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.' 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. They were saying 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.'"

The reason this entire story is here is so that the profession, the confession, and the declaration at the end of verse 42 can be made. This one is indeed the Savior of the world. It has already been declared that Jesus came to the world. John 1:9, there was "the true light which coming into the world enlightens every man." John 1:29, the testimony of John the Baptist, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Chapter 3, verse 16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life, for God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him."

The declaration then of the writer, John, is that Jesus is the Savior of the world. That has come from John, the author; that has come from John the Baptist, the greatest prophet who had ever lived. And now it is a declaration made by a most surprising group of people, a group of folks from a village in Samaria called Sychar, they make this great declaration, obscure gaggle of Samaritan villagers are given the privilege of making this most monumental of all declarations that the Savior of the world has

come and it is He--it is this One, Jesus Christ. This is a monumental moment in redemptive history, and they are *the* most unlikely collection of sinners. They are alienated from Israel. They are the product of inter-marriage between Jews and idolatrous Gentiles from centuries before, after the northern kingdom was taken into captivity.

They have a truncated understanding of God. Though they have the Pentateuch--that is their Scripture--they don't go beyond that, so they have information about God as Creator and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. There is much they know from the Pentateuch, but that's all the Scripture they have. Somehow, however, they have a rather clear view of Messiah, that the Messiah was to come. And by the declaration of the woman, they know that when the Messiah comes, He will declare all things. Perhaps they knew what was in Isaiah 11:3, that the Messiah would have by the power of the Spirit full wisdom, full knowledge, and full understanding. So they have a bit of Scripture, they have some knowledge of the coming of Messiah left over from their time prior to the captivity. But they have long been infected by idolatry. They are separated from the truth. They are alienated from God. They are plagued by immorality. They are detached from divine revelation and the work of God through His people Israel.

So how is it then that this obscure group of Samaritan villagers are God's chosen instrument to declare that this Jesus is the Savior of the world? Not the high priest of Judaism. Not the chief priests, not the priests (the common order of priests), not the Sadducees, the Pharisees, the scribes, the rabbis, not the Jewish Sanhedrin (the council), and not the population of Israel. But these rejected outcasts--despised, hated Samaritans with whom the Jews have no dealings, as we read earlier in the story; they are despised by the Jews. Sad to say, Israel was a nation of Jonahs.

You remember when God told Jonah to go to Nineveh, a Gentile city, and preach repentance, and that if they repented and believed in God, He would forgive them and spare them His judgment. Jonah didn't want to go. He didn't want to go. Why? Because he knew God was a God of compassion, God was a God of mercy. He says that in chapter 4, verse 2; he says, "I knew that if I went You would do this, You would forgive them." And so he didn't go until finally God rerouted him through a great fish, got him there, and then when they did repent and God did forgive and withhold judgment, he went out and asked God to kill him because Gentile conversion was so distasteful to that reluctant prophet.

Well, by the time you get to the time of Christ, they're still a nation of Jonahs and they have disdain for the Gentiles and a special disdain for the Samaritans because they were once Jews who intermarried with idolaters. But it is to that people that God gave the privilege of making the first declaration that this is the Savior of the world. And isn't that the point?

If the Jews had come to the conclusion that He was the Savior, they would have been glad to say He is the Savior of Israel. They would have been far more reluctant to say He is the Savior of the world.

And in any case, it is appropriate that non-Jews, Gentiles, are the ones who declare Him to be the Savior of the world because they're a part of that non-Jewish world.

And so it is that the whole story is to get us to the end where an entire village proclaims Jesus to be the Savior of the world. Salvation came through the Jews. We know that. Jesus said that back in verse 22 to the woman at the well. Salvation is of the Jews. What did He mean by that? That the truth about salvation came through Holy Scripture and the entire Old Testament came to the Jews. They were the caretakers of divine revelation in the Old Testament. And so, as Romans 3 and Romans 9 says, "To them was given the Law, the Scriptures, the Covenants, the promises, and it is to them that the Messiah came, both His father and mother in the line of David."

So salvation comes through Israel, both Scripture and the Messiah, both the written Word and the living Word come through the Jews. The Jews, however, were never meant to be the end; they were meant to be the means to the end. They were to be a missionary nation. They were to take the truth of the true God, the one god and they were to proclaim Him to the ends of the earth. And when Messiah came, He would be the Savior of the world. They should have known that. They should have fully embraced that because that's what the Old Testament says.

For example, the Servant chapters of Isaiah declare this. Chapter 42, which introduces the Messiah, says this, "Behold My Servant." That's the Messiah, which introduces the Messiah; says this: "Behold My servant"; that's the Messiah, "whom I uphold, My chosen one in whom My soul delights." This is God the Father, speaking of the Messiah, the Son of God. "I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry out or raise His voice, or make His voice heard in the streets. A bruised reed He will not break and a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish," meaning He will not be lacking in compassion to those that are hurting. "He will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not be disheartened or crushed until He has established justice in the earth and the coastlands will wait expectantly for His Law. Thus says God, the Lord who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and its offspring. Who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it. I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, You, My Servant, Messiah. I will also hold you by the hand, I will watch over you and I will appoint you as a covenant to the people as a light to the nations to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon and those who dwell in darkness from the prison."

The prophecy, Messiah, will be a light to the nations. In the forty-ninth chapter of Isaiah and verse 5, "And now says the Lord who formed me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him [meaning Israel] that Israel might be gathered to Him, He says"...this is important, verse 6, Isaiah 49..."it is too small a thing that you should be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob. It's too small a thing that Messiah would come only to the tribes of Jacob and only 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. Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel and the Holy One."

Will He redeem Israel? Yes, but not only Israel. He is to be the Savior of the world. And so in this amazing story of the woman, we reach this marvelous, ultimate moment where these obscure Samaritan villagers make this proclamation that indeed this is the Savior of the world. This then becomes the message at the book of Acts, as the gospel is taken to the world, to the Gentile world. Peter goes to Cornelius and then Paul launches into the Mediterranean Gentile world to take the gospel and plant the church in the Gentile lands. The epistles written by the apostles and their associates declare that God is in Christ reconciling the world to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19).

So this is a monumental declaration. Let me tell you the importance of it. You can put the emphasis in two ways on this statement, that the Savior will save people from throughout the world--from every tongue, tribe, nation, and people. That He is the Savior of the world in that He will redeem people from the world, from every part of the world. He's the propitiation for our sins, but not for ours only but the sins of the whole world. So there's the emphasis on the fact that He will save people from the whole world.

But there's another emphasis to be made and that is this: that for the whole world there is only one Savior. He will save many people from all parts of the world but there is only one Savior for the world. So when it says He's the Savior of the world, it means He's the only Savior the world has. "I am the way, the truth and the life," He said, John 14, "No man comes to the Father but by Me." The apostles preached that in Acts 4, "There's no salvation in any other name than the name of Jesus Christ." He is *the* only Savior in the world, which means that unless you come to faith in Jesus Christ, you will die lost in your sins. Jesus said it that way in John 8:24, "You will die in your sins because you believe not on Me. If you die in your sins, you end up at divine judgment and eternal hell." All religions of the world that do not point to salvation in Christ are Satanic-—all of them, all of them.

You hear so much in a political correct environment about the fact that we have to give equal honor and respect to every religion. We need to give respect to every person. We need to give love to every person caught up in every religion, but anything but the gospel of Jesus Christ is a Satanic religion. There is only one Savior and only one way of salvation, and that is by grace through faith alone apart from works.

This is beyond simply significant. This is an epic moment that we find in this text of John. In 1 Corinthians 16:22 the Bible says, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be damned." Anyone, anyone who rejects the one Savior is condemned.

Now this comes at the end of this encounter. Jesus had left Bethany, maybe walked twenty miles or so, a tough walk up to Jacob's well in the area of Samaria near the little village of Sychar. He sat down on the well, you remember the story. His disciples went into the village a half mile to a mile away to get some food, which indicates that they didn't hold to the ridiculous Jewish scruples that the

Samaritans were cursed people and you shouldn't interact with them, you shouldn't participate with them. For many Jews you wouldn't even go through their country; you'd go some circuitous way to avoid it. That didn't hold with our Lord or His disciples. They were happy to go that way. They were glad to go into the village, interact with the people, buy their food, eat their food. That was not an issue for them. It's showing Jesus' disdain for the artificial rules that had been developed by the Jews to isolate them from other people in the name of supposed holiness.

Jesus arrives at the well. His disciples go into town to get some food for Him. He's sitting there alone. This woman comes. It's noon when she comes. Women don't go to the well at noon; it's too hot. She goes to the well at noon. We could speculate that perhaps because she wanted to avoid all the other women who went in the early evening when it was cooler because she tried to avoid exposure since she was such a wicked woman. She had had five husbands. She was living with a man who wasn't her husband. She had probably been through many adulteries, consequently that kind of history. She was a scorned woman. She would be virtually deemed as a prostitute in that society.

And in her loneliness and isolation, she comes at high noon to get water, and there she encounters Jesus and they're alone. She's there; He's there; the disciples have gone and the conversation starts. And you remember I showed you this is a model of how one engages an ignorant, indifferent, irreligious stranger into the gospel. And what does Jesus begin with? He begins by telling her the gift of God, the water of life, the eternal life that God has for her if she only asks, that's how you launch the gospel. Let me tell you what God has for you if you only ask. You don't earn it; you ask for it. And if you only knew who you were talking to, and you only understood that I could give you this living water, this gift of God, this eternal life if you only ask. That's how you launch, that's how Jesus launched the gospel. And she said, "I want that, I want that."

And then He said, "Well, wait a minute; now we have to back up and talk about an issue." And He exposed her sin, and she was shocked because He knew her history. He not only knew what people thought, we saw that in chapter 2, verses 23 to 25, but He knew their whole history because He knew everything. He was God; He is God, omniscient God. And she knew then that He was a prophet from God and that He was speaking the truth. She was exposed; she felt the weight of that conviction. She wanted to make it right. She wanted to repent. She wanted to connect with God so she said, "Where do I worship? Where do I go?" And Jesus at that point told her, "You've got to divest yourself of false religion."

This is how you process a person. You make the offer of the glories and promises of the gospel, and then when they want that, when they desire that, you say, "We've got to deal with your sin." And you bring them to the point of conviction. If the person says, "I want to deal with that sin, what do I do? Where do I bow? How do I connect with God? How do I worship God? How do I have a relationship with God? How do I find forgiveness?" You say, "The first thing you have to do is turn from your idols...turn from. Remember 1 Thessalonians 1, that they turned from idols to serve the living and true

God. They have to disconnect from a false religion and then in the moment that she saw the light on that, and she said, “Well, when Messiah comes, He will show us everything we need to know.” He said, “I who speak to you am He.” And the revelation was complete.

She went from being indifferent, ignorant, unconcerned, physically irreligious to having a revelation of Christ. Incredible story. The last words that Jesus says to her, “I who speak to you am He,” and at this point the disciples came, verse 28, and the woman left. The conversation was over. The disciples didn’t come until He had said that final statement, that final revelation. That is so important.

Now that introduces us to some theological things that are going on in the story. I’ll tell you the rest of the story but I want you to understand that there’s a profound process going on here so that we understand that this is truly the son of God, the Savior of the world.

The first thing is this. This opens up for us the deity of Christ with evidence from providence. That’s point number one, evidence from providence. There are no miracles in this account, no physical miracles, no healings, no natural miracles, only His omniscience. But there are things going on that are so incredibly miraculous that though they’re not physical miracles, they’re something far greater, I think--they’re spiritual miracles. And the first one is that we can see that He’s the Son of God, and the evidence comes from providence.

What is providence? It’s that theological word that means God controls all contingencies, all circumstances, all exigencies, all choices, all events, all people, all time to converge to precisely fulfill His will. It is *the* massive miracle of redemptive history. Jesus walks twenty miles. He arrives at exactly the right moment. The woman seeking isolation arrives at exactly the right moment. The disciples are gone. Jesus is alone. He needs water; that becomes the entrée.

He goes through the whole process of bringing her to understand who He is and desiring a relationship with God and true worship, and at the moment that He has brought that revelation to its culmination, notice verse 27, “At this point,” and in the Greek that is very, very specific. “At this point,” at this specific moment. This is a critical juncture. The disciples had finished their business in Sychar. It took whatever time it took to do whatever they needed to do to get the food and walk back. They returned to the well at this moment, at this point. You wouldn’t use that phrase unless you were trying to make a point of the precise timing that was going on there. The very moment Jesus had declared who He was, and the woman turned with that in her and couldn’t get to the village fast enough to tell everyone, at that moment, as that conversation comes to an end, the disciples arrive. If they arrive earlier, the conversation gets interrupted. If they arrive earlier, they begin to ask questions. They engage in the conversation, and we know what their questions would be because they have them in their minds. If they arrive late, they don’t even know about the conversation. The timing is perfect. They’re not too early and they’re not too late. They arrive exactly on time to see Jesus shattering barriers of tradition and prejudice. They see Jesus do what He wants them to do. What does He want

them to do? He's going to tell them...He's going to tell them before His ascension in Acts 1:8, He's going to say, "You shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, Judea"...Then what?..."Samaria and the ends of the earth." He's showing them what He wants them to do.

Yes, the gospel was for Israel, but it was for the world. And when it couldn't go through Israel, God put judgment on Israel and carved out a new channel--His church made up of Jew and Gentile. God foreordains everything. When it said that, of necessity, Jesus went through Samaria, it was a divine necessity to be at a certain point at a certain time. Every moment, every detail, a thousand details caused everything to converge exactly the way it did, and yet Christ moves, as He always does, effortlessly through the conversation. It's not forced. It's not hurried. It comes to its climactic end with the claim that He is the Messiah and she affirms that. He operated on that amazing schedule. He says over and over again, and particularly to the gospel of John that we are in debt for this, "My time has not come," "My time has not come." His time had not come. And there are occasions when He said, "My time has come; My hour has come." He was operating on a divine timetable.

But they couldn't know that. He told them, "It's not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has put in His own power." Jesus Christ is in fact God, and God is the time keeper of the universe, and He is the author of history. History is His story. He arranged the circumstances of everything for His own divine purposes.

So here's this subtle but magnificent and beautiful look at divine providence. The disciples come back. They see Him speaking with a woman. That's...that's out of bounds, a man talking with a woman? A Jew talking with a Samaritan? A rabbi talking with an outcast?

But I want you to notice their reaction in verse 27. "Yet none of them said, 'What do You seek, or why do You speak with her?'" What are You seeking from her? Why are You talking to her? They didn't say that. They kept silent. Why did they keep silent? Well, though they are new disciples, though they haven't been with Jesus very long, they're beginning to learn what all disciples need to learn and that is trust. Here's how your discipleship goes. When you're new in Christ, you question everything. When you're mature in Christ, you question nothing. And in the process you go from questioning everything to questioning nothing.

What is the mark of a really mature believer? Complete trust, complete trust. What is the mark of an immature believer? Endless questions. Why this? Why that? Why does it have to be this way? They're in the process. They have taken some giant steps in mature discipleship, because what they're essentially admitting is it's not for us to question. We have learned to trust. He controls everything. Things don't just happen. He's in charge. My prejudices, my ideas—-not important. Something supernatural is going on here. And so while the questions are human, they're restrained from asking. So they arrive with the questions. Why is He talking to that woman? And the woman leaves. It says, "So the woman left her water pot."

I don’t know why John put that in there that she left the water pot. People say, “Why did she leave the water pot?” I have absolutely no idea. I don’t know the lady. The Bible doesn’t say anything. Can I make a few guesses? Yeah, the word for “water pot” is the same word used in John 2 of the water pots that they used at the wedding at Cana, and they were huge. So if you’re in a hurry, you’d probably leave your water pot. This would be the kind of water pot that she might have carried over her shoulder on a piece of wood with a rope, a substantial water pot, not a cup. And she wanted to get to town as fast as she could.

There’s another possibility. Originally Jesus had told her He was thirsty and wanted something to drink and the well was a 100 feet deep, so maybe she left the water pot so He could continue to have the water. She was in a hurry. She left. She headed for town, and she went into the city and said to the men....This is amazing; this isn’t the kind of women that rushes up to men without having those men back off for fear their wives would be looking. Why does it say she went to the men? Because typically at the gate of every village the men sat and adjudicated the issues of the town; met there. She ran into the men and she says, “Come see,” “come see.”

Why does she say that? Well, the rabbis used to say--and maybe this filtered over to Samaria--the rabbis used to say, “The man who teaches his daughter the Law is a fool.” That was the attitude they had toward women. And I’m sure it existed in Samaria. She wouldn’t be so bold as to say, “Okay, guys, get together, I’ve got something to tell you.” Not in that culture.

She says, “I defer to your judgment, I’m just telling you, come and see.” That’s a very wise response. You come and you see. And she poses the question with a negative answer. “Come see a man who told me all the things that I have done.” Can you imagine how they...they knew all the things she had done. This is a small village; married five times, living in adultery. I met a man who told me my whole history, my whole ugly history.

“Hey, lady, what happened to your shame?” I’ll tell you what happened to her shame, Hebrews calls it “a cleansed conscience.” That’s what happens when you’re regenerated; the conscience was cleansed; she had been purged. Her sin, which was once her shame, was now part of her testimony. This man told me everything I’d done, exposed my sin. She was compelled to face herself. She lost her shame. She wanted to share her discovery. She couldn’t wait.

Let me tell you, that’s a mark of true salvation. That’s a mark of true salvation. If you think you lead someone to Christ, ask yourself the question, “Is that person eager to get to the people that that person loves and cares about as fast as possible to share the joy?” People do that when they get a new car. People do that for a lot of events. People do that when their elementary kid is the student of the week. They put a bumper sticker so the whole world knows.

Somebody who comes to Christ and is totally transformed and forgiven and converted from hell to heaven; she can't get there fast enough to tell them. You know, this is exactly what we see in Luke 15, when the woman found the coin. What did she do? Called all her neighbors together and had a celebration. When the man found the sheep, what did he do? Called his neighbors and had a celebration. When the father found the prodigal who came back, what did he do? Killed the fatted calf, called the whole village. And more importantly, what happens in heaven when a sinner repents? Heaven has a celebration. The angels of God rejoice. The angels around the throne rejoice because God rejoices, 'cause this is the great work that gives God joy. God is a God of joy and His joy is bound up in the salvation of sinners.

So she says, "Come and see," "come and see." And she defers to them as men; she's gracious about that, and she's open about the fact that everything that I've lived, all the wretchedness of my life. He knew; He knew it all. Come see this...this...Is this the Messiah? And she poses it negatively because she wants them to make the discovery. She doesn't want to force that on them. And so they responded.

Verse 30, "They went out of the city and were coming to Him." How could anybody know the whole history of that woman? How could any stranger know that? And she would have told them, "This is a man I don't know. This is a Jew. This is a man who is not from here." And so they move in that direction. See how God orchestrates all the details of everything, even the way the woman asks the question, poses the question. If she had said to them, "I've got to tell you, I just met the Messiah." Ha! "Yeah, the Messiah just revealed Himself to me." They would have mocked her. Every detail evidenced that God is in this whole situation, working through His Son; providence gives evidence that Jesus is in fact the Messiah, the Savior of the world, evidence from providence.

Number two, from priority--How do we know He's the Savior of the world? Because of His priority, verse 31. Go back, "Meanwhile, back at the well, the men and the people from the town are coming, meanwhile the disciples are back at the well and they're saying to Jesus, 'Rabbi, eat. You need to eat.'" This again is a note regarding the humanity of Jesus. They were used to Him eating. They had been with Him for months and months and He ate like they did. And He just as a normal human would eat, and so they say, "Rabbi, eat." And He said to them, "I have food to eat that you don't know about." And so the disciples were saying to one another, "No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?" Looking around, there's nobody here. Where would He get any food? They think He's talking about food. Jesus had spoken many times in these kind of analogical statements, these kind of illustrative statements, these kind of parabolic statements, even the conversation with the woman started about water, didn't it? And ended up being a spiritual thing. And this is about food, but it ends up being a spiritual thing.

And so our Lord responds in verse 34, “Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and accomplish His work.’” “My food is to do the will of Him that sent Me and accomplish His work.”

What is God’s work? What is God’s work in human history? What is it? Redemption, salvation. That’s why Christ came. Luke 19:10, “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” That’s God’s work. What did we read in Isaiah? That God called Himself the Redeemer--the Redeemer--the Redeemer of Israel and the ends of the earth. That’s God’s work. God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. God who is not willing that any should perish but all should come to salvation. God is by nature a Savior, our God and Savior. He is so called many, many times by the apostle Paul in particular and especially in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus—-“God our Savior,” “God our Savior,” “God our Savior,” “God our Savior.”

That is an Old Testament title for God. He is by nature a saving God--God who is the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe. He’s the Savior of all men in the sense that He even temporally and physically doesn’t give sinners what they deserve when they deserve it. If He did, they would all perish, we would all be dead the first time we sinned. God by nature is a Savior, is patient and gracious, and merciful and kind, hoping that His mercy leads us to repentance. And so He’s even in a temporal sense demonstrating that He’s a Savior by nature. In a spiritual sense, He does it eternally and spiritually when He brings us to true salvation.

And so, our Lord is saying what satisfies Me, what satisfies Me? What delights Me is salvation, the work of salvation. In fact, “He went to the cross,” the writer of Hebrews says, “for the joy set before Him,” “for the joy.” You see that joy again in Luke 15--the joy of the celebration of the finding of the lost coin, the joy of the celebration of the finding of the lost sheep, the joy in the celebration of finding the lost son. In each case it says heaven’s rejoicing over the salvation of one sinner. God and all the holy angels and inhabitants of heaven are having a party all the time; it’s non-stop as sinners are coming to salvation. Jesus says, “That’s My food.” “That’s My food.”

You know, hunger disappears in times of intense prayer. That’s called fasting. When you’re praying intensely, deeply burdened about something, you’re pouring out your heart to God, you pray and fast. You have no appetite. But appetite also goes away in times of unbounded, exhilarating joy. There’s no interest in eating. Jesus lets His disciples know that He’s been laboring in the Father’s work, and the joy of the labor has revived Him. It’s revived Him.

They need to know that because they’re going to be sent as well. They’re going to get the Great Commission. They need to remember the words of Psalm 126:6 about the blessing that comes to those who are witnesses. They need to remember Daniel 12:3 how that those people who are faithful to proclaim the truth, end up shining like the stars. And Jesus said, “You didn’t choose Me, but I chose you and ordained that you would go forth and bear fruit,” John 15:16. His joy, His exhilaration,

His delight was in the work of the Father in saving sinners. That's His joy. That caused His heart to be so uplifted that He had no thought of physical hunger. There is evidence then of who He is from providence. There is evidence from priority, the focus of His life. He came to seek and save the lost.

Thirdly, there's evidence from prophecy. There's evidence from prophecy. Again, we know He knew the past; He knew the woman's history. We know He knew what people think, John 2, "He knew what was in the heart of man." So this is His omniscience. Now in this story, He knew the past of this woman. Now He shows He knows the future, He knows the future. Look at verse 35. "Do you not say there are yet four months and then comes the harvest?" Some people think that's just a proverbial statement, that the form of this means that, you know, it's common for people to say there's four months until the harvest, that's the time from the planting to the harvest. You can't really prove that's proverbial. It's better to understand this as simply a reference to the fact that harvest was four months away. Harvest is four months away. And the better way to understand it would be that there was some grain there, there was something coming up out of the ground, but harvest was still four months away.

So He's looking out over the fields between the well and the village, and He says, "Don't say there are four months and then comes the harvest. Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, they are white for harvest."

What's that referring to? That's a beautiful moment. Here come the villagers with their typically Middle Eastern, ancient white robes and when the harvest is white, it means that the tops of the grain have turned white and the harvest is ready. The green grain is still there but here come the white Samaritans and they're like grain ready to be harvested. "Don't say four months. I'm telling you, lift up your eyes, the harvest is now."

What's He talking about? He prophesies that those people are going to be saved that day. He not only knows the past of the woman, He knows the future of the village. And then He says this to His disciples, "Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal." Right now, you're here and right now you are going to have the joy of reaping and receiving the benefit, the wages, the blessing that comes to those that gather fruit for life eternal. You're going to be part of a revival right here. "And he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together, for in this case the saying is true. One sows and another reaps."

What does He mean by that? You're going to reap what you didn't sow. Who...who sowed? Who sowed into these Samaritans, Moses? They had the Pentateuch. Some of the prophets from which had developed their Messianic ideas; is it possible John the Baptist? There's one other sower, the woman. She went and she told them what had happened to her. Something from Moses, something from the prophets, and something maybe had drifted from John the Baptist's extensive ministry. Remember, he had moved north for the last number of months. And this is how it is. Some sow, some

reap, and God...What?...gives the increase. So He's teaching His disciples a lesson. And He's saying, "I sent you to reap that for which you haven't labored, others have labored and you've entered into their labor." You've come at the end of the labor to reap the harvest, and you're going to reap it today. What an amazing day, amazing day.

How does He know this? Because He not only knows what people think--He not only knows the past, He knows the future. He knows they're going to be saved that day. After all, He's the Savior; He's the one who gives life. He's the one who determines salvation. So evidence comes from prophecy.

You know, it says in verse 39, "That...from that city, many of the Samaritans believed." Verse 41, "More believed." The prophecy became true. Do you know that never happened in a village in Israel? In fact, the disciples were getting so tired of going into villages and proclaiming Christ and having Christ come in and being rejected and mistreated, that James and John came to Jesus and said, "Do You want us to call down fire from heaven and incinerate the town?" Jesus said, "Back off, guys." This never happened. This never happened in Judea. He went to His own village in Galilee--the village of Nazareth--to preach one sermon; they tried to stone Him to death. This is a very significant event. The only time a town is converted and this is to tell us that He is the Savior of the world. And His people have rejected Him; He will go to the world. He tells the disciples what Paul says in 2 Timothy 2, "The hard-working farmer does what he does because he gets to taste the fruit." Today you're going to have a great experience.

Now remember, eventually they're going to get the Great Commission. They're going to go to the Judea, Samaria, the uttermost part of the earth. They need to know that when they go there will be fruit there. They need to know that they'll taste the fruit. They'll go, they'll plant, they'll water, they'll labor--God will give the increase. They'll enjoy the fruit. So this is a preview of things to come, after His ascension when the Holy Spirit came upon them and they were sent to the world. You're going to find joy and rejoicing in the fact that God will honor your efforts.

One final element, we have to add this, evidence that this is indeed the Savior of the world from providence, priority, and prophecy--and then from His proclamation. Let's call it, just for another "p", His proclamation. "Many believed," verse 39, "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 finally arrived at the well, they came to Jesus; they were asking Him to stay with them. You know, it was wonderful that they received her testimony, but it was much more important that they heard from Him, agreed?

So He stayed there two days. I don't know what those two days were like, but that must have been incredible. It's the only time in His earthly ministry that ever happened. It's the only time it ever happened where He actually spent two days with a whole town, revealing Himself who He was. And I'm sure He talked about the cross and the resurrection and the kingdom. And "many more believed because of His Word; and they were saying to the woman, 'It's no longer because of what you said

that we believe, for we've heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world.'"

Let me tell you how this works. Your testimony to an unbeliever is good and it may cause one to believe. But what is more important is that they move from your testimony to the testimony of the Lord Himself contained on the pages of Scripture, right? So that's what they're saying. Some of us believe because of your testimony, but many more believed and now we can all say it's no longer because of you that we believe, it's because of Him, because He spoke to us and you know He speaks here, doesn't He?

This is the Savior of the world. This is the Savior of the world. Providence, priority, focusing in on prophecy, the thing He said would happen happened; the whole town believed. And then the final note, they are completely convinced when they hear Him speak. This is the Savior of the world. All religions are not equal. There's only one Savior in the world, and it's Jesus Christ.

Father, we are again grateful, this morning, for the time to look into Your sacred truth, to have it come alive for us, to find our own food, our own satisfaction, our own joy in this. But it's more than just an experience; it has to be something beyond that to satisfy You, to please You. May it be part of sort of a renewing of our commission to go and to sow and to water and to labor, sometimes where others have labored so that we can rejoice whether we reap or whether we sow when You bring in the harvest. Thank You for the declaration that Jesus is the Savior of the world. This church is an evidence of that. We have many from Israel, many Jews among us who love You because Your church is Jew and Gentile, in one body. But we have the world here as well and we all acknowledge that Jesus is the Savior of the world and the world must acknowledge that He is the only Savior. May everyone here acknowledge that this day, may they believe, and in believing have eternal life.

Now, Father, we acknowledge that salvation is a work from heaven, that sinners must be born from above, as You did that day in Samaria as You gave life to the people in that village. Give life to some today and draw them to Christ. May He be revealed clearly to them in a saving way. We give You all the praise and thanks in His name. Amen.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org
COPYRIGHT (C) 2014 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).