

# Life can have true meaning

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Preacher: Rev. George Sinclair

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Father, may your Holy Spirit bring us to your word, and may your Holy Spirit bring your word to us. And as we have prayed earlier, Father, may your Holy Spirit write your word in the very command centers of our lives.

And this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. Amen. So, not this past week, but the week before, I was at a conference for pastors.

Jonathan Kamiri and Daniel Avitan were at it as well. And, you know, part of what the conference, one of the things that happened at the conference, there were two people in particular who spoke about some of the different sociological and senses type of data as what's going on in Canada in terms of religion.

And it was all bad news, just in case you were wondering. In Canada, actually, I was thinking about this. If I was a business person and the church was a business, you wouldn't want to invest in the Christian church because the trend lines are all terrible.

For quite a few years now, the percentage of people in Canada who would self-identify as Christian has been going down and down and down.

[ 1 : 3 0 ] And over the last 10 years in particular, there is a dramatic rise in the percentage of Canadians who would claim on the census that they have no religion whatsoever.

And at the same time, so the Christian, those who identify as Christian is going like this. Those who say they have no religion is going like this. And those who are immigrating into Canada and come from a Muslim or Confucius or like a non-Christian nation, that's going up as well.

So you could see that if you're in the business world and you're investing in churches, this is a bad investment because things are going down, they're going down.

And that's not a good thing. In fact, two other things, just to even cheer you up more. In Ottawa, the trends are even worse, actually. I think it's about eight percentage points higher now in Ottawa, those who identify as no religion compared to those who identify as Protestants, which is a really big basket.

And the no religion is just going up and up and up. The second thing is we identify, we're not part of the Anglican Church of Canada, but we identify as Anglicans. And the trend lines for Anglicans are absolutely horrendous.

[ 2 : 5 1 ] Their precipitous drop, quite a remarkable precipitous drop that's accelerating in the Anglican Church of Canada. So whether we, I mean, on one level, I'm not saying anything that's a big surprise to any of you.

I mean, for some of you who are young, you don't really know any world other than the world we now are in. For some of you who are older, maybe it would be an interesting thing for some of the younger ones to talk to some of the older ones and ask them about what the world was like way back in ancient history of the 60s or the 70s or the 50s or something like that.

And albeit even maybe the 40s or the 30s, in some of our cases we could talk a little bit about. But the trend lines aren't very good. And, you know, it has to affect a little bit things like morale and whether we find meaning in what we do.

At 8 o'clock service, I was going to say that I'd never worked for a company that was going downhill. But then I was part of the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa, which is in fact going downhill in many of the congregations.

But, you know, if you've been in a company and every day, every month, there's maybe one or two extra empty seats in the office and there's rumors in the paper that the business is going to go out of business, it would be very hard to have good morale.

[ 4 : 16 ] Like I can't imagine how it would be easy to have good morale if there are fewer and fewer employees and there's talk, in fact, of the whole business shutting down.

So that's the context. That's the world that we live in. And believe it or not, the scripture text that we look at today has actually some very important and significant things to say to that.

And so it would be a great help to me if you would get out your Bibles and turn in them to John chapter 4. John chapter 4. And what we're going to do is we're going to go back.

Last week we looked at this story of Jesus being led by God to go to a place where there's this 800 years of argument and confrontation and even conflict and violence between Jews and Samaritans. And so Jesus is led by God to go to this place in a minority situation amongst the Samaritans and now the majority. He initiates a conversation and we looked at that conversation, most of that, especially the first half of that conversation last week, and we're going to go back and look at the second half of that conversation.

[ 5 : 24 ] So Jesus begins the conversation. He reveals to the woman that if she asks, a spring of living water that will well up into eternal life can come into her life.

If she asks him, she asks for it. He asks a question which reveals, gives her an opportunity to reveal her sin. And after she has revealed her sin to him, she says, I don't know what to do now with my sin.

Should I do some type of a sacrifice? If I have to do a sacrifice, like where should I go? Do I go to Samaria? Do I go to Jerusalem? Like what on earth is going on? And that's where the conversation picks up in verse 21.

John chapter 4, verse 21. And here's how he responds to her. He says, woman, and this is just a term of respect, by the way. It's not a bad, it's a term of respect.

Woman, believe me. Actually, before we go any further, it's the only place in the Gospels where Jesus says, believe me, in this particular form. So this is important, what he says.

[ 6 : 31 ] Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know.

We worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. And just pause. I'm not going to say much about it, but one of the things which is really interesting here is you notice the verse, you worship what you do not know, we worship what we know.

What Jesus is doing here is he's rejecting the study of comparative religion as a way to know God. He's not saying, of course, that it's wrong to know things about other religions, but in terms of as a way to move forward to know God, he rejects the path of the study of comparative religions, which in a sense would be one of the Canadian ways of going.

He rejects, in a sense, to use, like, he rejects sort of a typical Canadian response as a dead end. And then just notice as well, it's a very, very interesting sentence.

You could preach a whole series of sermons just on verse 22. You worship what you do not know. We worship what we know. And notice he says, we worship what we know.

[ 7 : 50 ] He's identifying himself as a Jewish man. This is very, very significant. We, one of the problems we have with talking with our Jewish neighbors and friends is, of course, there is a long history of anti-Semitism.

And as I've said before, and as you know, if you just sort of look, anti-Semitism is on the rise in Canada. And, and it makes it obviously a little bit complicated when we talk to, to Jewish friends and neighbors.

Christians, but no Christian should ever be anti-Semitic. Not when we worship one who says, we worship what we know for salvation is from the Jews. It doesn't mean that salvation is continuing to be from the Jews, but Jesus self-identifies as Jewish.

We know what we're worshiping. And in fact, it's true, salvation did come, not from comparative religions, but from the Jews. Jesus was Jewish. All of, we don't know who wrote the book of Hebrews because it's an anonymously written book.

But, apart from that, all of the rest of the New Testament was written by Jewish people. All of the Old Testament were written by Jewish people. And Jesus, the Savior, comes through the Jewish people. Salvation does not come from a study of comparative religions.

[ 9 : 04 ] It does not come from poetry or science or technology or any ways by which we human beings attempt to master God or reach the heavens. God comes down. He prepared a people who could understand the significance of what Jesus was saying and claiming.

But it is to the Jewish people that the Savior came and salvation is from the Jews. Anyway, let's keep going on. That's a separate sermon. Verse 23, but the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.

Notice it's in spirit and truth, not in spirit and in truth. It's in spirit and truth. It's like one sort of linked idea. For the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

God is spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth. And just go back here for a second. Notice that's a very, very, very revelatory thing here where it says in verse 23, the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

Actually, if you could wrap the first point, Andrew, that would be very helpful. The first point is that in truth, you do not seek God.

[10:25] He seeks you. In truth, you do not seek God. He seeks you. And this has a very, very big consequence for us. Many of us, maybe some of you are here today, are wrestling with the fact that God seems very distant.

your life seems very dry and empty and shriveled. And you wonder why God doesn't do something about it. Why doesn't God show up?

Why doesn't God show up and deal with my loneliness, to deal with my sadness, to deal with my tiredness, to deal with the dryness that I feel inside? Why doesn't God show up and do something about that?

And it's a very, very common question amongst Christians. It's a very common question for non-Christians. Why is God allowing me to, why does God seem so distant to me? Why doesn't he make himself more real?

But if we listen to Jesus here, and look again at verse 23, what it says, is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

[11:29] The fact of the matter is that in truth, you do not seek God, he seeks you. So the real question shouldn't be, God, why are you so distant?

Why aren't you doing something to deal with my emptiness? Why aren't you doing something, Lord, to deal with the shriveled up deadness that I feel inside? The real question should be for me to say, God, how am I hiding from you?

How am I running from you? how am I hiding amidst my idols so that I feel so dead within?

How am I spending my time in the worship of idols so that you feel so distant? It's a radically different set of questions from God, why don't you show up?

Why don't you do something? Why aren't you doing something to saying, Father, show me how I am hiding from you and running from you and have my back to you.

[12:41] Father, show me how I am delighting in idols in such a way that you seem distant. It's a completely different set of questions in terms of a spiritual examination of what's going on in our lives, but it's what Jesus is telling us that we should really be doing.

we do hide amongst our idols and don't recognize that we are hiding amongst our idols while we complain to the living God that he is not real.

But look at this text again. But the hour, verse 23, but the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth for the Father is seeking such people to worship him, God is spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

Just one more thing, sort of a bit of an aside. I don't know. Sometimes I just, I feel like I need to give some asides to this. And I know probably in classic sermon, classic information about how to preach sermons, you shouldn't have asides because people might spend the whole rest of the sermon just listening to the sides.

But you'll notice that God, that it says the Father is seeking such to worship him. It doesn't say the mother. This is a, this is a whole other sermon.

[14:13] It's a, you know, it's a very, very difficult passage in Canada for us that think that our natural inclination is it should be democratic. It should mention father and mother equally.

And it just seems, and in a, in a culture like ours, which is confused about gender, and I'm sorry, if you're here as a guest, I might have just insulted you. You'd, you'd say, I'm not confused about gender, George.

I'm, I'm very conscious of gender being merely a, a purely a social construct. You're the one who's confused. And, um, I guess what I'm just signaling here is there's something very powerful here,

which Jesus is saying.

And it's a, it's a, it's a whole point of conversation that we have to have with our non-Christian friends and neighbors who have a hard time understanding why Jesus would even use language like that because it's so off putting.

But what I want to just say for those of us who are here as Christians, it's a very precious thing that he said. Um, we, we can't say that we trust Jesus as savior and Lord and say, Oh, by the way, Jesus, you're way behind the times and wrong on this.

[15:26] Um, and if, if you're in a church that calls itself Christian and they refer to God as mother or the Holy spirit as she or her, it definitely means it's not a congregation of the worshipers that the father is seeking.

And that's not me being judgmental. That's just what Jesus is saying. Like that's just what the Bible is saying.

So what does it mean? Like on one level, to be honest, doesn't this sound a bit boring, but the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the father and spirit and truth for the father is seeking such people to worship.

God is spirit. And those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth. I mean, on one level, it sounds a little bit boring if we don't understand what worship is. So here, if you could put up the next slide, that would be great. Oh, sorry, not the picture slide.

The, um, that the point, um, worship is not mere singing or church services. It's a very common thing nowadays to say, uh, we're going to, uh, now we're going to stand in worship when what we really are saying is we're going to stand and sing.

[16:39] Now, hopefully singing is worship, but it's actually, uh, it's not helpful to equate worship with singing as if when you sing, you worship. And when you're not singing, it's not worship.

It's as if like in some services, okay, you have the singing, which is the worship. Now we're going to sit down and we're going to stop worshiping, but we're still stuck in church. And when we sing again, we're going to stand and, and, and worship.

No, that's not actually very helpful. Uh, worship isn't mere singing and worship isn't being in a church service. If worship is just singing or church services, then what Jesus is saying would be really pretty boring.

And it would sort of imply that we have to go around singing all day, or maybe just spend all of our time in church. But what worship is, it is living life in God's presence, acknowledging him, acclaiming him, assenting to his will, acting for his glory.

You could add in there, loving him, fearing him, adoring him, being available to him, living life of gratitude. You could add to that. I, I tried to stay with four things that all began with the letter A.

[17:41] Uh, worship is not mere singing or church services. It is living life in God's presence, acknowledging him, acclaiming him, assenting to his will, acting for his glory. In other words, it's 24 seven, 365 days a year.

That what the father is seeking is, you see, when Jesus say, we put our faith and trust in Jesus and he saves us, he redeems us, we're reconciled to God.

Then he doesn't invite us to say, okay, when you get together for your Bible study midweek, or when you do your devotions, or when you come to church, now you're in my time.

And once you finish the church service, well, now you're in the world's time. It's inviting us to understand that when we're in our cubicles at work, those of us who are retired, as we do the different things we do as retired people, maybe, you know, working in the garden, helping with our neighbors, volunteering with different things.

For the stay-at-home moms and dads, the caring of the children. Like, all of the time we are in God's presence, at all of the time, God is inviting us to live in such a way that we acknowledge that God exists, that he is real, that he is God.

[18:56] God, in all that we do, whether we're doing some type of complicated statistic at our job, it's not that we stop doing it, but we do it knowing that we're trying to figure out how the world really is.

It's God's world. It can be figured, certain things can be figured out. There are certain limits that we live in a world created by God. We live for God. We are created for God.

He is present with us. We are present with him. And he is to get the glory. And there is a whole series of attitudes and habits that Jesus is inviting us to enter into, to understand that we're always

worshipping.

I'll give you just one other example. This week, I had one of my friends come up to me. He wanted to ask me a question about a particular thing. And he said to me, George, I want to ask you a particular thing because you're a man of faith.

And I said, actually, I almost said his name, actually, Bob, we're both men of faith. Every human being is a person of faith. I said, you know, one of the things I tease him about is that he buys lottery tickets.

[ 20 : 01 ] I tell him that three or four times a week, he bows his knee and worships the goddess Fortuna, serving her with his money. And he has lots of different things he says to me.

But anyway, I say to him, you're a man of faith as well. I mean, you, you, you, you trust in, you trust in something, you, you give something, you give value to things.

Like, it's not just that I have faith and you don't. Every human being is a person of faith. We all worship. We all motivate our lives by things that give us meaning and significance and, and give us direction and orient our lives.

That's how every human being, every human being lives. And what Jesus is saying here is that when we come to know that he is the Messiah, when we come to know that he is the savior of the world, then in light of his revelation and who he is and what the gospel teaches us, that's to be how we start to understand and view the world and how we work and, and how we parent and how we're in our marriages and how we are in our neighborhoods.

And, and what does it mean by saying that it's in spirit and truth? Does it mean it's the Holy Spirit? Does it mean that it has to be spirited? Or even worse, is it just talking about something internal and private?

[ 21 : 17 ] Just this week, I had somebody ask me, uh, if we were going to be applying for a summer student through the, the government grant. And I said, um, no, we weren't going to apply.

I, I said, it's a very interesting thing, isn't it? That cabinet ministers would say, go ahead and tick off the box, even though it's not true. Like cabinet minister says, go ahead and tick off the box, even though you're a sense lying, like they're telling us to lie on the form.

It's like, just, that's a bit of a side. Like it's a weird, it's a very weird thing for a cabinet minister to say, I think anyway. But then again, I, I want to worship the father and spirit and the truth.

I don't know. But, um, I said, no, we weren't going to, you know, because it's, we can't tick off that box. One of the things that was very puzzling, at least as it's reported in the press, and maybe it isn't accurate and fair, but was very puzzling is they'd say, well, like, I mean, basically the, the understanding is, is that what we worship in spirit and in truth, it just means it's true for us.

It's not true. It's just true for us. And spirit means private and personal. So it's all right to ask for all of this for money, but as long as you understand that it's not to actually affect social policy, it's not to challenge what the government wants, but as long as your religion is private and personal, and it's just true for you, that's fine.

[ 22 : 52 ] But that's not what Jesus means when he says in spirit and in truth. If you could put up the next slide, that would be great. Worship in spirit and truth means that what I say to God and do for God comes honestly from my depths, the command center of my mind, will, emotions, and desires.

Worship in spirit and truth means that what I say to God and do for God comes honestly from my depths, the command center of my mind, my will, my emotions, my desires.

You put in there your memory, your imagination, your fears, longings, yearnings. You can, you can add a variety of words in there. Spirit doesn't mean private.

And the Old Testament context, those of you who know the Old Testament, what's one of the regular themes in the Old Testament is God says to the people, they worship me with my, their lips, but their heart is far from me.

They go through the motions. They offer sacrifices, but while they're offering sacrifices, they're not doing it because they think they really need a sacrifice. Their heart is far from God. But spirit here is talking about the fact that, you know, where my mind comes from, where my will comes from, where my emotions come from, where my memory comes from, where my imagination comes from, where my desires and where my fears come from.

[ 24 : 25 ] That all comes from something which is fundamentally interior. And it's talking directly about the command center of our life. The other key text for this is it's in Psalm 51, where it says, a broken and a contrite spirit, O God.

It says, sacrifices and offerings you do not desire, but a broken and contrite spirit, O Lord. That's what you desire. In other words, from the very command center of where emotions and mind and memory and, and will comes from, the gospel, when we receive the gospel, when we recognize that there's nothing that we can do to make ourselves right with God, that we are completely and utterly dependent upon God to do what only God can do to make us right with him.

And that when we recognize that Jesus is God's provision for our great need to be restored to a proper relationship with God, that he comes and walked amongst us and took upon himself that which would have caused our doom, our doom, my doom, he takes upon himself when he dies upon the cross.

And his righteous life, his perfect life is given to me when I put my, my faith and trust in him. When I put my, when I put my hand in his, my doom goes on him and his righteousness comes to me.

And I am born again, born from above. I am, I am granted a title, the passport, a ticket to the new heaven and the new earth.

[ 25 : 56 ] God begins to put his eternal life in me. I, I, I am sealed by the Holy Spirit. I am adopted by God. I have made his child. He becomes my father. All of these great things come to us when we put our faith and trust in Jesus.

And as, as the story of what God has done and, and his word explaining who Jesus is and Jesus's own explaining of who he is and what he did for us on the cross, as that grips us, it begins to shape us.

It should begin to shape us at the very center of who we are. And part of that shaping should be an increasing desire that we worship in spirit and in truth, an honest congruence between what we say and what's really going on in our depths, what we do and what's really going on in our depths, to be in his presence and acknowledging him.

And, and just one more thing in terms of this truth thing. Uh, next point, Andrew, in the Bible, to know the truth is to know what is real, independent of my desires and my imagination.

In the Bible, to know the truth is to know what is real, independent of my desires and my imagination. Um, it's not just that I have a truth and you have a truth.

[ 27 : 17 ] It's not that, uh, truth is what I make the truth, uh, what I can convince you all of as the truth. That part of the, the purpose of the, of the God's word coming and being written on our hearts and of the Holy Spirit coming into our lives and of following Jesus, is that we begin to be freed up to actually know what is real.

To know what is real. And by the way, you see, all of this is extremely important in terms of how we live our lives.

you know, one of the greatest gifts you can give an employer, knowing what's real. One of the great gifts you can give an employer is acting with honesty and integrity.

One of the greatest gifts, I mean, what, what this text is saying us is those that some of you here, you work in the civil service, some of you work in private industry, some of you, uh, are students or you don't have jobs right now, or you're on disability or you're retired, you're looking for work.

But if you're in the workforce, you have a boss, but you ultimately have a greater boss. And you want to worship that greater boss and spirit and in truth.

[ 28 : 50 ] And part of that worshiping that greater boss and spirit and in truth is you want to know what's real. And, and you want to have a congruence and an honesty and integrity. And that should mean that you are a great employee or a great employer or boss.

Because every employee hates it when they have a boss who's living in a fantasy world. Or is just pursuing foolishness and vanity.

It is a hard thing to serve a boss who doesn't give a hoot about what the business is for, but is only seeking their own advancement. That's a very hard person to work for.

We all complain about it. This text is not just then about how we sing and how we do church and how we do Bible studies.

It's how we live. And it's something that the world always needs. It's one of the reasons I think while the Bible describes Christians as being salt and light in the world.

[ 30 : 00 ] There's all sorts of chaos enveloping our country. And as chaos overwhelms our country, some of us might feel very, very hard done by and maybe even lament and wonder where we're going.

So to have people say, no, no, this is real. That's not real. This is, this is true. That's not true. Say it humbly, graciously, kindly, gently, compassionately.

Maybe not know how to say it to a person who's completely and utterly enveloped in idols and lies and delusions and vanity. And all you can do is wonder what to say, maybe just pray.

Because I go to a lot of coffee shops, I have a lot of contact with people who suffer from gender dysphoria. They think they're in, they're a man in a woman's body or a woman in a man's body, or they think there's some other thing that's not even man or woman that can be characterized as they.

And I'm not going to try to document all of those things. And one of the coffee shops, I go in, they see me open my Bible. I try to be friendly. I always tip them.

[ 31 : 21 ] And in the cases, especially, and if you're here and you're suffering from that, I have great, it must be a very, very, very, very hard thing to feel so completely and utterly out of home in your body.

It must be a very, very hard thing. I have to confess I haven't experienced that hard thing. But I can just imagine it must be a very, very hard thing to be biologically one thing and think that you are actually really something else.

But what I want to tell you is that what you need in your pain and confusion is to come to Jesus. And one of the things that Jesus will do is start to bring some type of healing and clarity to that. Help you know what's real and what's true. And comfort you in your afflictions and your sadness. And I'm very careful when I talk to people, like at the coffee shop, who suffer from gender dysphoria.

This one particular one, they put right on their name tags that they want to be referred to as him, she or he, but they or them, for instance. And all I can do is love them.

[ 32 : 35 ] I just, you know, I pray that when the time finally comes, if the time ever comes, I know two things about being there. This is a bit of a long aside on it, but I sort of feel I need to say it. One of the things it's really conscious of is it might be, I might be the only person in the world praying for them.

Like I want to really encourage you that if you're in your workplace, you have an obligation to pray for your coworkers. You might be the only person praying for them.

And the same thing with your neighbors, even if you don't know them very well, you might be the only person in the world praying for them. So anyway, with these baristas, because I go into this coffee shop on a regular basis, I pray for them.

And I have to confess, I don't know how I would witness to Jesus to them. I just trust that when that time comes, I'll be able to speak truth, listen, and speak truth in a way which is compassionate and gentle, but also clear.

And, but that, that time hasn't happened yet specifically about those in this particular case. And I, I just pray, you know what, by the way, if it ends up coming and I mess it up, it's no big deal.

[ 33 : 46 ] Why is it no, I mean, on one level, it's a big deal. You don't want to just say, I'm just going to mess up as much as I can in my life. That's fine. What I mean is, you know what, God is sovereign. And if all of us, any one of us have to wait until we, we won't say anything until we can speak perfectly, we'll never speak.

But God is sovereign. It's a very, very comforting idea to know that it's God's world, that he's sovereign. And you just show up, you don't back down, you just show up, you show love, and God is sovereign.

So, let's sort of wrap this up a little bit.

One of the things, this all connects to whether, remember, the whole thing began with how our Canada is going, in terms of Christianity, is going down like this. Now, why is that a good thing to know?

Why? Well, because Christians want to know what's real. As a Christian, I want to know what's real. It might not make me happy, but I want to know what's real. But the other thing is, that it's so easy to try to get meaning and significance, from things like numbers and statistics and trend lines.

[ 34 : 57 ] But this text is calling me to understand, that Jesus really is the Savior. He really is the Savior of the world. He really is God's Messiah, the Anointed One.

He really is this. And that God is calling me, even if it's in a sense in a declining world, even if it's in a context of diminishment, that my worth, my significance, and the meaning of my life comes in

worship, in spirit, and in truth.

And it, and it, and that's, that's what's being communicated here by Jesus, which is so important for us.

And he's going to say a couple of other things here, just as it, it comes to a close. So if you just keep reading, look at verse 27, oh, sorry, verse 25.

The woman said to him, I know the Messiah, the Messiah is coming, he who is called Christ. When he comes, he will tell us all things. Jesus said to her, I who speak to you am he.

[ 36 : 03 ] He's acknowledging he's the Messiah. Verse 27, just then his disciples came back, they marveled that he was talking with a woman. But no one said, what do you seek?

In other words, to her, like, what are you seeking? Like, why are you here? What are you doing here? That's what they wanted to say. What they wanted to say to Jesus was, why are you talking with her? Just pause.

Everybody who has Down syndrome should do a little dance when they see this passage. Everyone who's poor, everyone who's so, who feels very old and forgotten or young and forgotten, because here's a person who socially speaking is powerless and insignificant, and Jesus is talking with her. You see, for Jesus, there are no little people. For Jesus, there is no little, there are no little people who are insignificant. In the world, the world has all sorts of little people, and different philosophies and ideologies create little people, but for Jesus, there are no little people.

Verse 28, so the woman left her water jar. She was sort of, I guess she felt the abuse from the disciples, and she was so overcome with Jesus, she forgets about her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, come and see a man who told me all that I ever did.

[ 37 : 30 ] In other words, he knew, he saw the very secrets of her heart. Can this be the Christ? And they, that is the Samaritans, went out of the town and were coming to him.

Meanwhile, verse 31, the disciples were urging him, saying, Rabbi, eat. But Jesus said to them, I have food to eat that you do not know about. So the disciples said to one another, has anyone brought him something to eat?

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, then comes the harvest?

Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes and see that the fields are white for harvest. Now, just sort of pause here for a couple of points in closing. One of the things that the Nazis did and totalitarians always do when they want to break you, I mean, they do many things.

The Nazis would do many things. They would give people numbers rather than names to dehumanize them. They would beat them. They would just do things that were random. But one of the things that they would also do, I mean, sometimes they had to get meaningful work done by the inmates in the death camps or the labor camps because they just needed something done.

[ 38 : 49 ] But one of the ways to really break a person is to give them meaningless work.

Completely and utterly meaningless work. You fill in, you dig a ditch, and then after you've dug the ditch, you fill the ditch back in.

Then the next day you dig a ditch somewhere else and then you dig another ditch and then you fill both of the ditches back in. In other words, it's completely and utterly meaningless. And what Jesus is saying here is that his life is not meaningless.

His life has a purpose. In fact, look here again in verse 34, my food is to do the will of him who sent me and accomplish his work. that what really, you see, if we have meaning in our life, we can put up with an awful lot.

We can put up with poverty. You know, ask a mom who has maybe a two-year-old and then a two-month-old and both of them are sick and both of them are screaming or something like that. It's really hard. But because there's some meaning to it, it's easier to endure. But when you lose meaning, even prosperity is like ashes.

[ 40 : 08 ] And Jesus is saying that like for the, this is another really important thing, for the Christian life, it's not just so much that we avoid sin, although we should try to avoid sin, but the Christian life is also a matter of doing God's will and accomplishing God's will.

And God has a will for our lives. In fact, if you could put up the next point, Andrew, that would be very good. When I receive the gospel, Jesus saves me and I enter into the way where my life will have true meaning and significance.

Because all of us have a will that God calls us to. It's not just that I have a vocation because I'm a minister. every Christian has a vocation.

Your life starts to take on significance and meaning. You can ask God, not just, Father, today, how will I not, help me not to go into sin. You know, maybe you have a besetting sin and you pray into it, whatever that is.

Help me not to lie so much today or help me not to envy my neighbors so much because those are my besetting sins or help me not to be so picky about food because that's one of my besetting sins, the sin of gluttony.

[ 41 : 28 ] A sin of gluttony often doesn't just mean eating too much, it can be being too picky as well, part of the sin of gluttony. But at the same time, Father, what is it you would have me do today? And that's what gives our lives meaning.

You know, one of the things here, if you look at the word accomplish, look at that verse again, 34, my food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. The same word, different verb tense, but the same verb, same word, is the very last word that Jesus says before he dies. On the cross, he says, it is finished. And that can be translated as it is accomplished. Even death and diminishment can be something that is God's will for us.

Because in a secular point of view, it can only be a will, something meaningful, if it is success and the exaltation of the self.

But from a Christian point of view, because we live for God's glory, even things which, in a sense, from a worldly perspective, diminish us, can in fact be us accomplishing God's will.

[ 42 : 53 ] Just one final, if you could just put up the final thing. Verse 35, it's 42 minutes, it's time for me to wrap it up. He talks about the harvest. And this is a congruent verse with Luke 10, 2 and Matthew 9, 37 and 38.

And just what I just wanted to close with is that our offices in the gay village, different groups and movements claim land and claim this place, but God has never relinquished sovereignty over the earth.

God has never relinquished his sovereignty over the world. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. and what we do is we live right now in the field of the Lord.

And in the field of the Lord there is a harvest. And in the field of the Lord there is a harvest that he has created. And the Lord is looking for people who will be his laborers to work in his field to bring in his harvest for his glory.

And when we do his will in his field for his glory it is also for the true good of his world because he is sovereign over all of the earth.

[ 44 : 15 ] And the Lord is calling us and inviting us and healing us to understand that we are his laborers to work in his field. bringing in his harvest for his glory which is also for the true good of all people.

Please stand. I invite you to bow your heads in prayer. Father, just in wrapping up our prayers if there are people here Father and there might very well be who are struggling with a big disconnect between the biology and how they understand and identify themselves.

Father, we ask that they would know your love that your Holy Spirit would move mightily in their lives. That you would guide them Father to people who can love them and can speak truth to them and encourage them and support them as they deal with this hard thing.

And Father if there are any here who have not put their hands in the hands of Jesus to trust him as their savior and Lord, we ask that your Holy Spirit would move in a powerful way that you would help them Father to stop running and turn to you, stop hiding and turn to you and put their hands in the hands of Jesus Jesus, that he might be their savior and their Lord, that it might happen today.

And Father for those of us who are struggling with dryness in our lives, who are hiding amidst our idols and serving our idols and so you seem so distant from us, we ask Father that your Holy Spirit would move and work in our lives, that you would help us, Father, to leave hiding in our idols and running from you and to turn and face you and say, Father, thank you that you never stopped seeking me or loving me, and I am yours.

[ 46 : 11 ] I am yours. Help me to leave my idols and no longer hide from you. And Father, for all of us, help us to know ourselves, Father, to be so gripped by the gospel that we are disciples of Jesus who are learning to live as your laborers in your field, bringing in your harvest for your glory and for the great good of people.

And we ask all of this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen.