

# Soul Satisfying Labor

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Date: 22 March 2026

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[0:00] Amen. You may be seated. Kiddos, you are excused to your King's Kids class.! And if you would open up your Bibles to John chapter 4. Wirt's family, we had people who were greeting people, welcoming them in.

We had people who were preparing food and serving food. We had people who were setting up chairs, taking down chairs, directing people where they could sit.

It was such a joy to be serving with you yesterday. And so I just want to say thank you for serving this family as you did.

It was a kindness. Where do you find joy? Children? Oh, children bring joy. Grandchildren? Grandchildren bring joy.

Maybe you've recently set a new PR, personal record in something. There's some joy in that. Have you seen the Grand Canyon? There's joy in the Grand Canyon. Maybe you find joy working with your hands.

[1:29] Maybe you find joy in a variety of different things. But did you know that there is a soul-satisfying joy? A deep joy.

Where do you find this deep joy? There is a source of deep joy that sadly many Christians, they don't experience.

It's joy in Jesus. And I'm not just talking about your personal joy in Jesus for what He has done for you, for the joy it is to be in a relationship with Him.

I'm talking about this cascading joy. A multiplied joy. When you start delighting in others treasuring Jesus.

When my joy is not only in the Christ I treasure, but my joy exponentially multiplies when more and more people are treasuring Jesus too.

[2:36] It's that kind of joy that is remarkable. It's the joy of helping other people find their greatest treasure in Jesus.

Now you may have a question right now. I'm not sure how many of you may be asking this, but you might be asking this question. Pastor Mike, are you tone deaf?

Are you not reading the room? We had a memorial service yesterday for a man that would have been 44 last week. He widowed his wife.

He's left behind five children. And you're talking about joy. Friends, I am reading the room.

Because people, Christians and non-Christians, struggle with hopelessness, aimlessness, joylessness, despair.

[3:44] And so this passage that we're looking at, John 4, 27-42, is incredibly timely. Because one of our greatest joys is helping others treasure Christ above all else.

How many people do you know who aren't experiencing fullness of joy? Last week, Jesus, while standing next to Jacob's well, he offers living water to a Samaritan adulteress.

He offered her soul-satisfying water. And today we're looking at another conversation that Jesus has at Jacob's well. And it takes place in between.

So Jesus has been talking to this Samaritan woman. And then she gets it in her mind, I've got to go tell my townsfolk back in Sychar.

So she leaves her water jug and she takes off. And we see this in 27, 28, and 29, and 30. She goes to the town and she tells her townspeople, who knew she was an adulteress, she goes, this guy knows everything about me.

[4:57] Is this the Christ? And then we're told in verse 30 that these people start moving out. They start coming to Jesus. And in between,

they're leaving the town to get to Jacob's well and Jesus.

Jesus has a conversation with his disciples. Let me read it. Starting in 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? Or, why are you talking with her? So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, come and see a man who told me everything I ever did.

Can this be the Christ? They went out of the town 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 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.

[6:06] 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. Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together.

For here the saying holds true, one sows and another reaps. I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor. 39, many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony.

He told me all that I ever did. Verse 40, so when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there for two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, it's no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.

We're going to look at three things this morning. Mission shock. Mission labor. Mission joy. This is all about soul-satisfying labor in Christ's mission.

[7:23] Mission shock. In verses 27 through 30, we have this transition where the disciples come back from buying food, and then the Samaritan woman leaves, so there's this kind of transition going on.

She goes and tells the people in Sychar, could this be the Christ? Remember last week, we were looking at the beginning of John chapter 4, and this woman shows up to Jacob's well at noon by herself, which is weird, and there's Jesus waiting for her.

And Jesus starts a conversation with her, which is a huge cultural no-no. He offers her salvation, living water, the Holy Spirit springing up within her unto eternal life.

I'll take some of that. Somehow she's convinced of what Jesus says, and so she leaves her water jug, and she goes and goes, sows gospel seeds into her townsfolk friends.

In verse 30, those townsfolk start to come back. Verse 40, they arrive. And in verse 20, though, we read that these disciples return while the Samaritan woman was still there.

[8:40] So, and they marveled. Did you see that? They came back. They marveled. Usually when you see that language used of the disciples with Jesus, usually means Jesus has done something phenomenal, something amazing.

And they marveled. That's not the kind of marveling going on here. They're aghast. They are like, what is he doing? They're astounded.

Because in their minds, what he's doing, talking to this woman, is culturally, socially, religiously improper.

So they were marveling at the impropriety of what was going on. And by the way, that Samaritan woman, she was amazed by this conversation too. Remember in verse 9, the Samaritan woman said to him after he says, give me a drink, how is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me?

A Samaritan woman. This is just culturally odd. Jesus kind of pushing the envelope of a cultural line. And the disciples knew enough not to say anything.

[9:57] But John records what they were thinking. They didn't ask, what do you seek? That would have been a question put to the woman. In other words, are you, ma'am, are you propositioning my rabbi?

Are you, are you trying to hook up with my pastor? That's what they're thinking. Like, what are you doing here? And what are you talking to him for?

And Jesus, they were thinking, why are you talking with her? She's a tramp. She's a Samaritan. Rabbi, this does not look good.

So what we're being shown here is how the disciples are reading the situation. They see the Samaritan woman.

They see her as someone to avoid tainted goods. It's not something you want. It's someone you want to be around. She's an outsider. And so you stay away from her.

[11:01] Not someone that is hopeless, aimless, joyless. Someone in need of the eternal life Jesus alone has to offer.

So the summary here is that the disciples were shocked. They were culturally shocked because Jesus is stepping over a cultural boundary.

They couldn't get around their cultural prejudice of this woman. She was a stumbling block to them. Here is this harvest in front of them.

And they couldn't see it. They couldn't see what Jesus was really doing. He was sowing a gospel seed into the heart of this Samaritan woman.

We all know what it feels like to be seen but not seen. To be seen but demeaned.

[12:10] To be seen but written off. Pushed to the periphery. Avoided. Belittled.

Not thought as an equal. We've all experienced that in some context or another. Jesus never demeaned anyone.

He dignified all. Because Jesus saw people as image bearers and potential worshipers. I mean that's why God had sent him to seek true worshipers who would worship God in spirit and in truth. How do you see people? How do you see people who are like you and how do you see people who are unlike you?

What if you stopped looking past people? What if you stopped seeing people as stumbling blocks people to avoid?

[13:22] You pay more attention to their appearance and their background than whether they're a worshiper or not. What if you stopped looking at people like that and started seeing people as worshipers of God or not?

I have a 30 second dignity theory. Here it goes. This is what it does. I have this theory that within 30 seconds of you meeting someone that someone will know intuitively whether or not you're treating them as an equal.

Whether or not that you're dignifying them. Whether or not you're treating them as a fellow image bearer. Someone with a story. Jesus always dignified people.

He always treated them with the respect due another image bearer. Jesus had a reputation. If you don't know this you need to know this about Jesus because if you become a follower of Jesus you're going to get this reputation too. Here's Jesus' reputation. Not only did he hang out with religious insiders he hung out with religious outsiders.

[14:32] Jesus had a reputation of spending time with sinners and tax collectors and prostitutes. Shameful people. Now if Jesus was raising eyebrows with his disciples in the first century at Jacob's well he's going to raise eyebrows in the 21st century here in Kenosha.

So you've got to prepare yourself brothers and sisters if we're going to be about what God is doing in our city we are going to push some cultural boundaries because Jesus pushes cultural boundaries.

He sees people as worshipers. This mission shock that I'm talking about this is a culture shock of sorts. It'll make you uncomfortable.

It will stretch you. It's not a bad thing though because when you get stretched God works and when you stretch to move towards other people who are unlike you you get to start you start to see God's heart for all people.

It's beautiful. Why is Jesus at this well? Some people would say you know what he was in southern Judea and he needed to get to northern Israel to Galilee he didn't want to go around Samaria he got to get there really quick so he went through Samaria that's not why he's in Samaria.

[16:09] He's in Samaria because he's on mission. He is wanting to bless the nations of the earth with salvation. and he has this evangelistic appointment with this woman at the well.

That's mission shock. Mission labor is in verses 31 through 38. Verses 31 through 38 his disciples start a conversation with Jesus and this conversation goes from talking about food food in verses 31 through 34 to talking about harvest in 35 through 38.

So let's take a look at this food talk in 31 through 34. We see in verse 31 meanwhile the disciples were urging him saying Rabbi eat eat something.

Now what I'm about to share with you is strictly speculation. Everybody understand that? now Jesus had been traveling all morning long it's noon it's hot dirty maybe his disciples were a little hangry but they just watched him talking to for all they knew a prostitute.

Could it be that they're kind of like oh he's not thinking straight Jesus would you please eat something? Jesus your blood sugar is obviously low you're not thinking well why are you talking to this floozy?

[17:47] You need to get something to eat. Rabbi needs something to eat eat. Jesus says to their surprise verse 32 I have food to eat that you do not know about.

Guys I've got a stash of food come on. Verse 33 they say has anyone brought him something to eat?

Obviously there was not DoorDash in the first century but are like did he order DoorDash? Like what do you mean he's got other food? Like I do you see food on him? Like where's the food? Now this this picks up on a pattern. Do you remember the conversation that Jesus had with Nicodemus? And he started talking about born again and Nicodemus was like how am I supposed to get back into my mother?

He's thinking literally. And Jesus is like I'm not talking about that kind of born again. And then when Jesus is having the conversation with the women at the well he's like hey if you asked the guy talking to you I'd give you living water.

[18:57] And she's like but you don't have a bucket or string what well are you talking about? She was taking him literally too. She didn't understand what he was talking about. And now here is Jesus talking to his disciples and he's like I've got this food and they're like food?

What food? What are you talking about? They don't get it. There's this string of people not getting it.

And so Jesus in verse 34 I again it's kind of like oh guys come on.

my food guys my food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.

That's what satisfies my soul. That's what satiates me is to do the will of my father. That gives me strength it presses me on.

What Jesus is talking about is the strength that comes from being on mission on God's mission on the mission of God. And God's mission is his this is displayed throughout the entire Bible.

[20:16] God's mission is to bring glory to his name by blessing all the nations of the earth through Jesus Christ to gather a multi-ethnic multi-national group of people to worship him.

By comparing this work to food Jesus is saying hey this is this is what gives me strength this is this is soul satisfying labor and we're just been given an example of that because he just was speaking about the gospel to this Samaritan woman he's like I've I got food to bless all the nations of the earth that was a promise that God made to Abraham that God would bless all the nations of the earth through an offspring of Abraham and according to Paul in the book of Galatians that offspring is Jesus to bless all the nations with salvation including Jews including Samaritans including Gentiles this work to accomplish the work the pinnacle of the work that Jesus came to do was his death on the cross as we get into

John more and more we'll see that the day that Jesus died on the cross is the day of glorification where God is exalted! Because at that moment Jesus has made a way for all the nations of the earth to be blessed Jesus took great satisfaction in accomplishing the work of his father have you tasted that?

Have you tasted of the goodness of being about our father's business about doing his will of expanding his kingdom of advancing the saving reign of God this is about bringing people to Jesus it's about sowing and reaping and in verses 35 through 38 we have a shift in the topic the subject we go from talking about food to talking about harvest and we're not talking about a harvest of wheat we're not talking about laboring in the fields of barley Jesus is talking about a different kind of harvest in verses 35 through 38 now I just want to remind you of where Jesus and his disciples are

at this moment they are in

Samaria many Jews would not even have stepped foot in Samaria because they considered Samaritans they resented them they considered them moral half breeds they wouldn't have anything to do with them Jesus intentionally goes through Samaria because he's on mission Jesus isn't in Samaria to make good time he is he is in Samaria to speak of the gospel that changes lives if you look at verse 35 Jesus asks a question do you not say there are yet four months then comes the harvest do you know what he's talking about he's putting a time frame on something in that day if you're going to grow wheat you're going to plant wheat seed and then four months later you reap it so there's this gap between sowing and reaping it's a four month gap who likes sweet corn oh yeah summertime sweet corn do you know the time gap in terms of planting and reaping sweet corn is about three months oh it's so good and when sweet corn is ready to be harvested the silk in the ear of the cob becomes brown and dry and brittle and so you know when to harvest that you poke a kernel with your thumb or your fingernail and this white fluidy stuff comes out it just tells you it's ready it's ready to be harvested in

[25:29] Jesus day when they were sowing and reaping wheat when the wheat when the grain was ready it it would become a palish yellowish gold you look at it from afar it had a white hue to it and so when Jesus says at the end of verse 35 look look I tell you lift up your eyes and see the fields are white for harvest what he's talking about is talking about this field ready to be reaped what field is he talking about what are they looking at are they looking at Samaritan wheat fields at the moment look guys they're ready to be harvested he's not do you remember what's happening the

Samaritan woman has left the well and she's gone to the town of Sychar and she's told everybody hey is this the Christ and they leave Sychar and they're coming back to the well where Jesus is I think there's a real possibility that when he says lift up your eyes the fields are white for Samaritan harvest they're actually looking at people coming people if sowing is sharing the gospel with other people reaping is bringing people to faith it's bringing worshippers to God it's sowing and reaping in verse 36 Jesus has just sown the seed of the gospel and now it's time to reap it's only been minutes it's only been minutes so that the sower and the reaper rejoice together you see that in verse 36 so that the sower and reaper may rejoice together that is a very unique kind of harvest when there is sowing and reaping going on simultaneously that's not the four month gap that's happening it's a unique unique kind of harvest it's a twist it's a different kind of harvest it's not wheat it's people it's worshippers it's those people who have heard the gospel and believe the gospel and they've been granted eternal life and now they've been made alive to worship the one and only God so this is a different kind of harvest because the sower and reaper they're working simultaneously and what's being reaped are worshippers there's this great rejoicing! that's happening rejoicing! in this harvest of souls those who believe in Christ this is the most unusual harvest isn't it? this is mission labor sowing and reaping in verse 38 Jesus says I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor others have labored and you have entered into their labor who's he talking about he could be talking about the Old Testament prophets he could be talking about John the Baptist he could be talking about himself he could be talking about the Samaritan! woman! these Samaritans are coming to the well and the disciples had nothing to do with it they're there to start reaping this is this is gospel ministry sowing and reaping I want to help you see a connection because one can think that this conversation is just about food and just about harvest but let me ask you a question when is there a great feast related to the harvest it's the harvest feast it's it's when this fruit is harvested that huge groups of people would come and enjoy that together celebrating God's bounty I think what we've got going on here is harvest feast

[30:26] Jesus delighting in the fruit that God is bearing and that is being reaped already verse 36 the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life so that the sower and reaper may rejoice together this is the soul satisfying labor this is why we do king's kids in king's place this is why we have life groups this is why we have regular moments where we're sharing the gospel in very different ways to be about sowing and reaping one of the joys that we get is to see God work in people's lives and move them from spiritual death to spiritual life to

move them out of spiritual darkness and into spiritual light to go from being dead to being made alive from going from the domain of darkness to being brought into the kingdom of the beloved son that is joy there is great joy when we get to be a part of what

God is doing where does this happen for us wherever you are that's where it's happening wherever you are how are you seeing the people that live next to you do you see them as people to avoid or people to approach because they're worshipers of something this is the soul satisfying labor of being on mission are you a part of that labor we go from mission labor to mission joy this is in verses 39 and 42 but let me just point back to verse 36 already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life so that the sower and reaper may rejoice to gather what are they rejoicing over what's what's the source the cause of their joy it's it's the gathering of the fruit of eternal life and that means those who believe in gathering some people are sowing the gospel while other people are reaping worshippers leading people to

Christ and what we see in verses 39 through 42 what John doesn't tell us he shows us the harvest many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony he told me all that I ever did so when the Samaritans came to him they asked him to stay with them and he stayed there two days and many more believed because of his word they said to the woman it's no longer because of what you said that we believe for we have heard for ourselves and we know that this is indeed the savior of the world so that word belief shows up multiple times in this little section and then it moves from believe to know it's like knowing with confidence in verse 42 we know that this is the Christ who came to rescue us from our sins these are

Samaritans confessing a Jewish Messiah as their savior and this is where mission joy is when we hear others confess the name of Jesus as their savior and greatest treasure we rejoice in that we rejoice in being a part of that we get to see first hand people who are being brought into the kingdom this is gospel ministry this is sharing the gospel and that this is reaping worshippers and this is a cascading joy because it's not just us treasuring Jesus in ourselves which is great it's us rejoicing when others treasure Jesus as well and it's a greater joy and so when you have a room full of people who are treasuring

Jesus together it is this multiplied exponential joy in treasuring Christ together there's another name for joy when joy has it's kind of it's runs its course to its full expression and that is worship that's praise that's thanksgiving and when there's a room full of worshippers who treasure Jesus together you know it there's nothing like it do you know this joy not just this personal Jesus joy but this cascading exponential multiplied joy of worshiping Jesus with those you've played a role in sowing and reaping do you know that joy oh it's such a sweet joy mission shock mission labor mission joy here's the point give yourself to

[36:14] Christ's mission and find joy give yourself to Christ's mission and find deep joy Jesus wants you to join him in the harvest so let me apply this in a few ways application number one get used to mission shock we are so grateful that God has located us as a church in this area of the city it's no coincidence we are thankful to God for the regular cross cultural challenges we face as we seek to share the gospel with a variety of different people you will be stretched you will be challenged in order to give yourself to joining Jesus in what he is doing it's not going to be easy don't resist it embrace it embrace the stretch embrace the stretch you will learn of

God's heart for all people you are going to trust God in new ways and your life will become enriched when you start building relationships with people of various backgrounds embrace the stretch step into it you will have certain things challenged you will have prejudices exposed you will have assumptions challenged he is going to love you from fear to faith and you will stop seeing people according to the flesh and start seeing people in their relationship with God whether they are worshippers of him or not so don't be surprised when he gets stretched embrace the stretch and I just want to pause and ask do you have anything to confess are you avoiding a certain kind of person because you view them according to the flesh not according to categories of worship second application is lift up your eyes kenosha is white for the harvest start sowing and reaping there's there's usually raises the questions of well how do

I do that right now I want to give out a shout out to the Carthage row Carthage students yeah okay okay so on Wednesdays these guys and me were going through this Bible study it's called hello my name is Jesus I adapted it from a book it's called one to one Bible reading by David Helm it is outstanding it's basically just walking through the gospel of Mark and you can use this to go walk through someone individually or you can walk through a group of people I've put a stack on the connect desk on your way out you can grab one on your way out but this is extremely helpful what you need to do you want to read about Jesus with me and God's word will get the work done this does sowing and reaping so there's there's there's a way to go about moving towards people and giving them opportunity to hear and believe in Jesus the final application is to rejoice in the harvest rejoice rejoice in the opportunities to sow and reap but especially when we reap rejoice I'm going to give you a place of where to come and rejoice next Sunday 4pm we have three people who are going to be baptized Kira Landre Alex Markiewicz Matt Priby these three are going to be baptized and we're doing it differently there's a reason why we're having a baptism service we want to give them time to share their testimonies with us to tell us how God met them saved them and how he's changing them so we want to give that time but what that means for us who come it's a time to rejoice in the harvest what God is doing and we want to make more time for things like that at family gatherings and in other places give yourself to Christ's mission and find joy what gives you deep joy what what what makes you happy one of the joys that I want us to experience in growing and growing measure is the joy of helping others treasure Christ and experience that cascading joy of more and more people making Jesus the controlling center of their lives give yourself to Christ's mission and give yourself to joy let's pray together God in heaven would you empower us by your spirit to move towards others who are like us and unlike us for the glory of the name of Jesus God would you add to our number as a church through conversions that you would that there would be people who are presently in darkness that you would awaken them and that they would be given new life and they would be given a new song put in their mouth a song of redemption a song of your glory it's in [42:27] Jesus name we pray amen