

Open My Eyes to See

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[0 : 00] Well, I want to wish God's grace and peace upon you wherever you are today as you watch or listen. And even though we can't be together in person today, I'm thankful for technology, which allows us to open God's word together in some measure.

And God's word is powerful. He speaks through his word and we are changed. It's amazing. And I hope that that's what God does again in our hearts as we listen to his word today.

So let's pray and ask that the Lord would speak to us again through his word. Father in heaven, we thank you for your word. It is amazing.

Your words are beautiful, radiant, pure, powerful. They're precious.

And we ask in these moments ahead that you would open the eyes of our hearts to see what you have said here. That we would be changed by these words.

[1 : 06] That we would not be the same afterwards. Please do this good work in us. In your son's name. Amen. Well, we're continuing on with the story of Jesus as told by John.

If you have a Bible with you, I encourage you to open it up to the Gospel of John. Last Sunday, we heard the first part of the story of the woman at the well, the Samaritan woman at the well.

It's a fairly well-known story. We're going to continue on with that story today. So just to remind us of what was going on in the story, Jesus is on his way from the Judean countryside up north to Galilee.

And he and his disciples are passing through Samaria. And tired from the journey, they stop around noon near this town called Sychar.

There's a well there and Jesus sits down at the well. His disciples go into the town to buy food. And Jesus meets this Samaritan woman who comes out to the well.

[2 : 13] And they have a bit of a conversation. The last thing that Jesus says to this woman is, I who speak to you am he. She had made a comment about the Messiah.

And he said, I who speak to you am he. I am the Messiah. Right as Jesus is speaking these things in the midst of this conversation with her, the disciples return.

And we read this in John 4 verse 27. John chapter 4 verse 27. Just then Jesus' disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman.

But no one asked, what do you want? Or why are you talking with her? So Jesus' disciples, they arrive back at the well.

They've just come from the town to buy some food. And the thing that John tells us here is that they were surprised. They marveled. Jesus is talking with a woman.

[3 : 21] Now, in that culture and day, this is something that you just didn't do. It was considered inappropriate to have a one-on-one sit down with a woman in public.

And especially here, in this case, this woman is a stranger. And so the disciples are surprised. And they have questions in their minds, John tells us.

But they didn't ask them. He says no one asked these two specific questions. But obviously they were thinking, what do you want? Or why are you talking with her?

Or was there something that you needed that you had to have this conversation with her? Why are you talking with her? And even though the disciples don't ask these questions and Jesus doesn't answer them, I think it's good for us to just reflect for a moment on what the answer to these questions is.

What does Jesus want from this woman? Why is he talking to her? If we remember back to last Sunday, initially the conversation started with Jesus asking the woman for a drink of water from her bucket.

[4 : 35] And so if there was anything that he wanted in the conversation, it was that. But as things went on in the conversation, it soon became apparent that getting a drink of water was not the most important thing to Jesus.

In fact, he wasn't just talking to her because he had to. He actually wanted to talk to her. He was very intentional and used his words to steer the conversation and keep it going and drive the conversation deeper.

Why? Not to get something from this woman, but because he cared about this woman. Even though he had just met her and didn't know her personally, he cared deeply about her.

He didn't want to get something from her, but wanted to give something to her. He saw the deeper need of her soul. The deeper need for the gift of God.

Living water is what he wanted to offer her. Eternal life. He wanted her to become a true worshiper of his father.

[5 : 47] And this all because he is full of grace, full of kindness, full of love. Even for this Samaritan woman who he has never met before.

And so that's why Jesus is talking to her. As soon as the disciples arrive, it seems, the woman leaves. In verse 28, we read this.

Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did.

Could this be the Messiah? Yeah. They came out of the town and made their way toward him. So, as the disciples arrive, the Samaritan woman at the well leaves.

She goes back to the town. And I love the note that John makes here. That she left her water jar there at the well. And I think that that's significant. The whole reason that she had come out to the well in the first place was to draw water from Jacob's well.

[6 : 56] And there was the whole conversation over this water or better water that Jesus had to offer. Living water. And I think it tells a lot that the woman leaves the jar.

She's got something more important to do right now. That can wait till later. I'll come back for that. And she leaves and goes back into the town to tell of what has just happened to her.

To tell what she has found about Jesus and him being the Messiah. And so she does that. She comes to the town.

And these are her words. She says, Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah? I love her words there.

These are not just the words of someone who is impressed. I mean, it's not like she just came into the town, knocked on a couple doors. Oh, hey, guess what? Today I was out at the well and I ran into a guy, a Jew, and he said that he's the Messiah.

[8 : 03] Oh, wow. That sounds a little bit crazy. Well, actually, I mean, maybe he was. He told me a few things about myself that I don't know how else he could have known.

No, this is not how the conversation goes. Do you hear the excitement in her words? The urgency. Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did.

As in, drop what you're doing right now and come with me. Come on, let's go right now out to the well. He's still there. Come and see him.

This man told me everything I ever did. And of course, in these words, the woman is exaggerating a little bit. She's probably speaking out of her emotion and feeling.

If we remember back to last Sunday and to earlier in this story, Jesus told her some things about herself that there was no other way he could know unless he had divine revelation, unless he knew what God knows.

[9 : 16] He told her that she had had five husbands in the past and that the man that she was currently with was not her husband. And so if you think about that, that's a good chunk probably of this woman's life.

You can imagine how she must have felt. He knows about all of that. This is how she says it to the people.

A man who told me everything I ever did. Like if he knows that, then nothing in my past is a secret from him. Her conclusion at the well was this.

She said, Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. You're a man who speaks from God. How else could you know these things? But now as she tells the news of what has just happened in the town, she says, Could this be the Messiah?

That's what Jesus said to her. I am he. I am the Messiah. And she took what Jesus was able to say about her past as a sign, as confirmation that he was.

[10:30] Could this be the Messiah? Come on, let's go. This is your chance to see him, to meet him. So the people, they came out of the town, says John in verse 30.

And they were coming toward him. At this point, John flips to Jesus and the disciples who are at the well.

The Samaritans, they're coming. They're on the way. But meanwhile, at the same time, this is what's happening with Jesus and his disciples at the well.

Verse 31. Meanwhile, his disciples urged him, Rabbi, eat something. But he said to them, I have food to eat that you know nothing about.

Then his disciples were saying to each other, could someone have brought him food? This is a funny moment between Jesus and his disciples. They've just gone to town to buy food, and now they're back.

[11:36] And they're offering some to Jesus. They're probably sitting down and having a little lunch themselves. And they're urging him, eat something. Come on, you need to eat something.

You need something to keep you going. Jesus says, I have food to eat that you don't know about. And the disciples, just like the woman, take Jesus very literally.

But of course, Jesus was speaking in metaphor. He was using food as a metaphor. So the disciples, they start asking each other, well, where could he have got this food from?

He didn't have it when we left. He doesn't seem to have any now. Could someone have come by and given him some? At this point, Jesus interjects and says, to make things clear, verse 34, my food, said Jesus, is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

Don't you have a saying? It's still four months until harvest? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields.

[12:50] They are ripe for harvest. Even now, the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life.

So the disciples, they're trying to get Jesus to eat something. Come on, have some food. Grab a bite to eat.

You need something to keep you going. Jesus says, what keeps me going, my food, is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

There's work to be done. Listen, we don't have time to sit down and have a meal here. God, my father, the one who has sent me, has given me a job to do and it's work time.

I must do his work. I must do his will. He gives him a bit of analogy, an analogy from farming.

[13:55] He says, don't you have a saying? It's still four months until harvest. In other words, harvest is still a long way off. And then he jolts them with this statement.

I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields. They are ripe for the harvest. And I imagine Jesus' disciples are looking around at the fields and wondering what Jesus is talking about.

I don't know if there were people out in the fields or not at the moment or what season it was. But of course, Jesus was talking in metaphor again. And he wasn't talking about literal farming.

He was using it as an analogy. And the biggest clue to that comes in verse 36. Even now, the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life.

Jesus is talking about eternal life. And up until this point, whenever he's talking about eternal life, he's talking to people.

[15:02] He's offering it to people. It's not grain that he's concerned about. It's people. Don't you see? Open your eyes.

Look at the fields. There's grain standing up, ready to be harvested. There's people that are ready to receive God's good gift. To enter into and receive that gift of eternal life, of salvation.

There's no time to sit down and have a meal. There's work to do. Verse 39.

Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony. So John flips back again to the Samaritans who are right now on the way out.

And he tells us that many of them already believed that he was the Messiah from what the woman said. From the woman's testimony. He told me everything I ever did. So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them.

[16:09] And he stayed two days. And because of his words, many more became believers. So the Samaritans, some of them, many of them believed just on the woman's testimony.

But then they came out to see Jesus at the well. And we assume that there was probably more of a conversation that happened with Jesus there.

We don't know. But at the end of it all, they urged Jesus to come and stay with them. Come on into town. Be our guest. Stay with us.

And Jesus accepts their invitation. He stays with them two days. Now let's just remember for a moment who these people are.

Jesus and his disciples are Jews. And the townspeople are Samaritans. As we heard last week, these people are not on friendly terms.

[17:08] There's animosity. There's tension. There's history. There's suspicion between them. The Jews looked down on the Samaritans.

They saw them as half-breeds, as those who were unclean. They would not eat at the same table or drink from the same cup as a Samaritan for fear that it would defile them and make them unclean.

And of course, the Samaritans, we can only imagine, resented them for that. And yet here, these Samaritan people, they obviously believe that Jesus is someone special sent from God because they invite him to come to their town and stay with them.

So Jesus accepts the invitation of the Samaritans. He goes into town and he stays with them for two days.

And John tells us that because of Jesus' words, many more became believers. So they were having conversations. He was speaking to them, teaching them.

[18:15] And we have to know these would have been riveting conversations. There were some big differences between the Samaritans and the Jews. Jesus himself said to the woman at the well in verse 22, You Samaritans worship what you do not know.

You worship in ignorance. And so you have to know there were some conversations about their differences. And at the end of it all, the result, because of Jesus' words, many more became believers.

Verse 42, they said to the woman, We no longer believe just because of what you said. Now we have heard for ourselves and we have come to know that this man truly is the Savior of the world. So at first, many of them believed secondhand because of what the woman had said. But now we've heard him for ourselves.

We've seen him for ourselves. And we have come to know, they say, that this man truly is the Savior of the world.

[19:29] Now we don't know exactly what they were thinking to say that word Savior, that name Savior. Perhaps Jesus was talking to them about how they needed salvation because of their sins.

How they needed to repent and turn to God. We don't know. Perhaps they just latched on to Jesus' name. Jesus' name means the Lord saves.

Whatever the case, they came to say this, that we know that truly he is the Savior. Not just of the Jews, but of the world.

He is the one who all people need in order to be rescued, to be delivered. This was a wonderful day, a wonderful couple days for them.

Now, what is there for us in this story? The first thing that I hope that we see is the glory of Christ in this passage.

[20:40] This is why John has written the gospel, so that we might see it and believe that he is the Messiah. That he is the Son of God. Last Sunday, we saw how Jesus was full of grace and truth to the woman at the well.

Today, we see how Jesus is full of that same kind of grace and truth. Not just to the woman at the well, but to all the Samaritan townspeople who come out to him and who he meets as he goes into the town.

He treats them with kindness, with compassion. He cares about them. He cares about their souls. The Jews, some of them would have likely looked down on them, thought of them as those filthy Samaritans.

Jesus saw them as people made in the image of God, and he loved them. He wanted to give them the same as he offered to the woman. Living water. Eternal life.

It's harvest time. He crosses the cultural divide, the ethnic boundary, the dividing wall of hostility and animosity between the two.

[22 : 00] Doesn't matter what they think. He cares about these people. He goes, he spends time with them. And no doubt, he speaks the truth of God to them so that they might be saved and received the gift of God.

So we see that Jesus is full of grace and truth. And we also see it against the backdrop of his having to lay aside his own needs and desires.

Here Jesus is, tired from the journey, John has told us. He's thirsty. He's no doubt hungry. And yet, no, we're not going to stop for lunch now.

There's people that we need to serve. God has given us work to do. We want to take time with them. Rather than just merely looking to our own needs in this moment.

So we see that Jesus is full of grace. Full of truth towards the Samaritan people. The second thing that we see of the glory of Christ comes in his discussion about food with the disciples.

[23 : 15] We see how Jesus lives to do his father's will. I love that little conversation that he has with the disciples. You know, what keeps me going, what sustains me, just as food sustains the body, is doing the will of the one who sent me, my father.

Is finishing his work. That's the most important thing. You see how deeply committed Jesus is to doing what God has given him to do.

Anything else that gets in the way, that competes with that, that conflicts with that, that takes a back seat. Lunch, that can wait till later.

We've got work to do. I love how committed he is to doing the father's work, to doing the father's will. It shows just how Jesus loves God, his father, with all his heart.

And how he loves and cares about these people. Way before he even looks to his own needs and desires and wants in this situation.

[24 : 33] And in contrast to that, we see the disciples. The disciples, they kind of probably, I think, feel rebuked here. You guys are just worried about filling your stomachs.

Open your eyes and see. Look at, look at the fields. It's time to work. Not to eat. Jesus stands in contrast to them.

And I think he, you know, as I put myself into the story, he stands in contrast to us as well. I mean, I see myself in the disciples.

How easily do we get just focused in on our own selves and what we need and want and want to do and earthly things.

Jesus, he's not distracted by anything. He's focused on the eternal. This harvest, the people, the work that God has given him to do.

[25 : 33] Jesus just shines like a diamond that's flawless. And in comparison to him, we're kind of, you know, like these dim stones with all kinds of flaws and cracks because of our sinfulness and our selfishness.

I love what we see of how Jesus is just absolutely committed to live to do the Father's will.

And nothing else is going to get in the way. There's priorities here. He has his priorities straight. And the disciples, they don't get it.

Later on, we'll see how Jesus will not only live to do the Father's will, but he will die to do the Father's will. It's in this that we see the glory of the Lord Jesus.

Finally, I can't help but see a challenge from Jesus to his disciples. And I think ultimately to all of us.

[26 : 47] What is that lesson that Jesus was trying to teach his disciples that day? What did he hope for them to learn in that moment as they had the back and forth over the food and the harvest?

We might capture the lesson in verse 35 with what Jesus says. The analogy of farming. I tell you, he says, open your eyes and look at the fields.

They are ripe for harvest. The picture we get of the disciples is they're just thinking about themselves. They're thinking about food, the earthly stuff.

Meanwhile, the Samaritans are on their way out. That's the harvest that Jesus is referring to. There are people that are going to receive the gift of God.

They're on their way. Look up. Can't you see it? They're coming. It's time to work. I don't think that Jesus would just say this to the disciples here and now.

[28 : 05] I think he would say this to all of his followers, to all of his disciples. Open your eyes and look at the fields. Now, we may not see a bunch of people coming towards us at the moment saying, how can I be saved?

But what do we see? Open your eyes and look at the fields. So often, I think we're like the disciples. We're just thinking about ourselves. We're just thinking about what we desire, what we want, what we crave. Meanwhile, here we are, surrounded by a world of need.

Do we have our priorities straight? If there's been one blessing to this coronavirus, it's that it's given us the opportunity to re-evaluate whether or not we have our priorities straight.

We've had to change all of our routines and things around us. What's most important to us? I know for myself, I find it all too easy to have my head down as the disciples did.

[29 : 27] To be watching another YouTube video. Or scrolling through another Facebook post. Or watching another episode of something on TV.

Meanwhile, here we are, in the middle of a world of need. And it's so apparent right now with this pandemic that's going on.

This has touched everybody worldwide. Not everybody has contracted the virus. Not everybody has died.

Not everybody has lost loved ones. But it has affected us all in all kinds of ways. Whether it's simply even just because of the social distancing and the measures that are being asked of us by the government.

It's affected our relationships with one another. For some of us, it's affected us financially. Jobs have been lost. Or our industries that we're involved in have been affected.

[30 : 31] It's affected us emotionally. It's got us, a lot of us, panicked or anxious or worried about even just how do we do life differently in the middle of all this.

There's so many different ways that it's affected not just us, but everybody in our world. And that's just the surface level needs.

There's the deeper spiritual need. The people in our world need this living water. This gift of God, which Jesus has been talking about with the woman at the well.

They need eternal life. They need salvation. They need a savior. They need to know him. And so often I think here we are. We're caught up in our own little worlds, just like the disciples.

And Jesus is saying to us, open your eyes. Look and see the fields. There's work to be done.

[31 : 36] Do we have our priorities straight? I want to leave us with a question. Who do you know?

I mean, we could talk about the need of the world being great right now. But God's not calling us to meet the needs of the whole world. That's something that he alone can do.

But he uses us, his disciples, his followers, to meet the needs of some. As he will later say to his own disciples.

Or actually, he'll pray it to God about his disciples. As you have sent me, he'll say to his father, so I have sent them into the world. And so we have work to do.

We have a mission given to us from God. Do we have our priorities straight? God's not calling us to meet the needs of everyone.

[32 : 41] We can't. He's simply calling us to meet the needs of those that we're able to. Of those near us. Of those around us. Of our neighbors.

And so I want to challenge you to really take time to think about this simple question. Who is near me? Who's around me that doesn't know Jesus?

But needs to. Who can I show the grace and truth of Jesus to in the weeks ahead?

What can I do to initiate relationship and conversation with them? Just like Jesus did with the woman at the well. Could be something as simple as writing a note to them.

On a text message. Or giving them a phone call. Asking how they're doing. Ask them how this virus is affecting them.

[33 : 44] And if they're well. Ask if you can pray for them. Is there anything we can be praying for you as a church? Ask how this has affected their families.

There's most of all I think we could just simply ask the Lord. Lord what would you have me do with that person.

Or those few people that are near me. That I have the ability to reach out to in the middle of all this. We're in the midst of a world of need.

A community in need. And I think Jesus is saying to us. Open your eyes. And look at the fields.

There's work to be done.

And so what will you do this week to connect with someone? I encourage you to pray about that.

And think over what God would have you do.

[34 : 43] How he would have you reach out. And do his will. Do his work. For those who don't know him. And who need to.

Let's pray. Father in heaven. We thank you for your word. Lord. We ask that you would. That you would cause it to sink deep.

Into our hearts. And that you would enable us to respond. Lord we thank you that for every way. In which we fall short. And we are not like Jesus.

In every way that we are selfish. And just ugly. Because of sin. That you have cleansed and forgiven us.

Because of Christ. And what he has done. For us. We thank you that you move towards people. Like the Samaritans.

[35 : 38] Like us. People with issues. People with sin. People with struggles. We ask that you would use us.

That you would. Allow us to participate. As you've decided that we should. That you would give us creativity. Give us inspiration.

And show us. Just who to reach out to. In the weeks ahead. We ask this in Jesus name. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.