

"From Guilty to Glory" - Kole Smith

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Preacher: Kole Smith

[0 : 00] Well, good morning, church. If I've not had the pleasure yet to meet you, my name is Cole Smith, and I have the pleasure of serving as the youth and young adult pastor here at Fourth Memorial.

If you're new with us this morning, I just want to say, hey, thank you for joining us. We're glad that you're here. One thing that I find as I get older is that my perception of time seems to get quicker and quicker. The fact that we're already at the end of 2024 seems actually pretty crazy to me because it feels like actually just yesterday we were here in the same spot coming up with our resolutions for next year, this year. What's interesting though, I did a little bit of research on this, and they actually say that as you get older, your perception of time actually does increase. We're not crazy. Now, I know most of you, you're not as old as me yet.

You'll get there one day, okay? But for me, man, time is just flying by. And the reason that they say that it tends to get faster and faster is because our minds tend to be more and more and more preoccupied. We're always thinking about things. We're always ruminating on things rather than living in the moment. We're always thinking about the past, what was, or the future of what lies ahead of planning. And it's interesting because in our youth and young adult groups, for the past few months now, we've been working our way through the book of Matthew. And right now, we're at the point in Matthew chapter 6 is where the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus has gone up to a mountain. And the whole Sermon on the Mount, if you're familiar with it, Jesus is just kind of sharing.

He's saying, hey, this is what the kingdom of God looks like. It has come, and I want to invite you into it. And so all of chapter 5, Jesus is focusing on inviting us into the kingdom, laying out the law and saying, hey, here's how things are now different, and I want to invite you into my kingdom.

But chapter 6, Jesus shifts a bit. And he begins to look, and he begins to say, if you've accepted that offer that I just gave you, if you want to live in my kingdom, here's what your life now ought to look like. And what he challenges us with in chapter 6 is he says, I want you to lay up treasures in heaven, not earthly ones. Something that many of us in here have heard before. We're familiar with that passage. In fact, in chapter 6, verse 21 and 22, this is what Jesus says.

[2 : 39] He says, for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. In our young adults group, as we read this passage, many of us were actually pretty shocked by this. Because notice here what Jesus is saying here. And this is in the passage of talking about laying up treasures in heaven. He says that the eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light.

In other words, Jesus is saying, if you say that I am your priority or that my kingdom is what you want to live in, a good diagnostic test, a good way to test whether you are living in my kingdom or whether I am your priority is to see where you spend your time. Where are you directing your attention towards?

Because I think for a lot of us, right, we're saying, okay, hey, yeah, God, like you are the priority in my life. You're up here. You're number one. But then at the same time, what we find is, oh, but God, I'm not really spending much time with you. Hey, these other things, actually, they take precedence. I got other priorities that have to come first.

And Jesus here is challenging this very idea and saying, actually, then I'm not the priority in your life. And I want to be. And so this got me thinking and got me interested in how we use our time.

And in fact, I won't have us do it here. In our youth and young adults, what we did is we pulled out our phones and we went to our screen time and we looked at how much time we, on average, we spend on our phones a day. And fun fact, the average was four and a half hours per day. Just on our phone.

[4 : 32] That's nothing else. Just the phone, not the TV, not the computer. But I did a little bit of research on how the average American spends their time. And I found some wild statistics. And I just want to share a couple of them with you because all of us have a 24-hour day, right? None of us have more or less time in a day than each other. And yet, there's a lot of things that we tend to do that are similar.

So here's some of them for us. On average, the American will spend six hours a day between work and school. On average, an American will spend eight and a half hours sleeping. That sounds pretty good to me. I don't know. I'm not quite there yet. Sounds pretty good, though. But eight and a half hours sleeping, we spend roughly, in a day, one and a half hours doing unpaid work. This would include driving to work, volunteering here at church, coming to church, things like this. We, on average, spend one and a half hours a day. We spend roughly two hours a day doing housework or shopping.

Interestingly enough, we only spend 45 minutes a day doing personal care. So showering, getting ready for the day, things like that. The one that really stood out to me, and this is actually unique to America, on average, we only spend one hour a day preparing and eating food. This is almost one-third of what the average is across other countries. And I think, in part, this is probably because of our fast food culture, right? The fast pace. We just got to go get and eat, right? And then lastly, we spend roughly 45 minutes a day socializing, spending time with friends and family. If you were to add all of this up, what we find is that over 20 and a half hours of our day, of our 24-hour day, are completely booked.

And for many of us, this isn't even everything, right? Think about your own life, about the other obligations that you have or the things that you do in your life. And if we just take it at this, all we're left with is three and a half hours. In other words, 85 percent of our lives are taken up by obligations. And we wonder, why does time seem to go by faster and faster every single day?

As we looked at this in our youth and young adult group, we related it back then to Matthew chapter 6, where Jesus is asking us, where are your treasures?

[7 : 15] Where are you laying them up? And man, some of us, yeah, we're saying, hey, but like God, I got that time for you, right? I got that 30 minutes I carve out for you in the morning. And that's good. That's great. And all these things on here are good things. But we live in a society today that we value very much this idea of being busy. We're a busy culture. And we value that. We say, that's a good thing. You look at the people that we look up to in our society, and it's those that work 50, 60 hours a week, right? Those that are relentless in their pursuit of whether it be wealth, possessions, power.

But I just recently got done reading a book called The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry by John Mark Comer. And in this book, he talks about how this is the complete opposite of what Jesus calls us to do in his kingdom. Because what we find is that the busier we get, the less we have time to dwell with the Lord.

The less we have time to ask him, God, what do you have for me today? Because we have our programming, our schedule. And in his book, I find this very poignant. He says this.

He says, if the devil can't make you sin, he'll make you busy. He says there's truth in that. Both sin and busyness have the exact same effect.

They cut you, they cut off your connection to God, to other people, and even to your very own soul. You see, I think sometimes what we do is we have all of these things in our lives that we fill it with.

[9 : 05] And for many of us, these things actually start to become our very identity, the very thing of who we are. In fact, if you didn't know me and I didn't know you, and if I were to come up to you and just say, hey, who are you?

Tell me about yourself. What are the things generally that we're going to say? And I would say this as well. I'd say, well, my name's Cole. I'm married. Right? I teach and I pastor a church.

Right? All of the things, the things that I do, right? The things that I have, the ways that I spend my time. But where on that list do we say, man, I'm a kingdom builder.

Right? My identity truly is found in Christ. Well, today, I want us to explore this idea a little bit more. And I want to leave you with the question of, where are you laying up your treasures?

Not just where, and notice here, there's a difference here. Not where do you want your treasures to be laid up, but actually where are they? Because what we're going to find, what we're going to see, is that if we look at the way that we live our lives, that's the indication to where our treasures are.

[10 : 24] And so if you'll turn with me, today we're actually going to take some time to look at John chapter four. And this is the famous passage where Jesus travels into Samaria and meets a woman at a well.

And I think he's going to challenge her with this very same idea of asking, where are your treasures?

And so in John chapter four, this is what the word of the Lord says. It says, now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John, although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples, he left Judea and departed again for Galilee.

And he had to pass through Samaria. So he came to a town of Samaria called Sicar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well.

It was about the sixth hour. A woman from Samaria came to draw water and Jesus said to her, give me a drink. For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

[11 : 41] The Samaritan woman said to him, how is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria? For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

I'm going to pause this here for a second before we go any further, because I want to lay just a little bit of the setting for us as to what's actually going on here. You see, Jesus, just prior to this, was down in Jerusalem.

He had traveled down from Galilee to Jerusalem for some of the holy days, some of the high feasts. You see, it was quite common during that time that Jews, a couple days a year, would make a pilgrimage down to Jerusalem to go to the temple to make sacrifices and to participate in the feasts that were going on there.

But both the way down to Jerusalem and both the way back up to Galilee, there's very particular routes that one would take to get there.

In fact, I think we have an image here, here, if you can kind of see it, of the routes that you could take. We have Jerusalem down here in the south, Galilee up here in the north of where Jesus is heading.

[12 : 47] But what we got to realize here is that we have two people groups here. We have the Jews and the Samaritans. And both of these groups hate each other. In fact, there's probably not any more hatred that they could have for each other.

For you see, both the Jews and Samaritans at one time were united. But over the course of disagreement, what we saw is a schism happen in two different religious groups propped up the Jews and the Samaritans.

Where the Jews said, hey, the temple ought to be in Jerusalem. That's the place where we ought to worship. The Samaritans disagreed. They said, no, no, no. It's actually in Samaria where we ought to worship at Mount Gerizim.

The place where God revealed himself. And so about 100 years prior to this taking place, the Samaritans had built a temple to rival the one in Jerusalem, the place where they would worship.

But the Jews, in response to this, partnered up with the Romans. The very people that were oppressing them went and burned down their temple. And so in response to that then, the Samaritans in the following years on Passover, the most holy day of the year, went to the temple and scattered desecrated bones throughout the temple, desecrating the whole temple in Jerusalem.

[14 : 17] In fact, one historian back then said that the Samaritans were viewed as vermin, as mere dogs, not even human. There was such a hatred.

It was quite common that if you were to pass through Samaria, if you were Jewish, it's quite dangerous. You could expect violence. You could expect them to be attacked, to be robbed, possibly even murdered.

Just a few years prior to this, the Pharisees had made a decree saying, hey, to even socialize with a Samaritan puts you at risk of becoming ritually unclean. That even before God, you would not be clean.

To even socialize with them. And so what was common back then, you'll notice here from Jerusalem up to Galilee, there's that white line.

It's the most direct route. It goes right through, right through the middle. It's a three-day journey. Pretty quick. And it's an easy journey. There's a road the whole way. But there was such a hatred here during this time that it was actually quite common that a Jew, instead of going just north, they would immediately cut east over the mountains, across the Jordan River, go all the way up to Peia, and then cut back in over the Jordan once they're past Samaria, back into Galilee.

[15 : 37] Turning that three-day journey into at least a seven-day journey, a week journey. All because they said, I don't even want to socialize with these people. And I find it interesting here, Jesus here, in his foreknowledge, he knows exactly what he's doing.

And right off the bat, what we see is that he says, I'm going to go through Galilee. And so Jesus goes directly north. And about two days into his journey, he would have got to hear where we find ourselves today.

And what we're told is that as Jesus arrives at this well, he is weary from his travels, and he sits down, and here is a Samaritan woman. And the text tells us it's about the sixth hour of the day to translate that for us, that would be about noon.

So it's one of the hottest parts of the day. And here Jesus arrives at this well, and he has nothing to draw water with, and so he's sitting there, and all of a sudden this woman comes forward, and she brings her water jar, and she's coming for water here.

And this is quite unusual, actually. You see, we've got to pay attention to the text here because most women would have gone early in the morning. Either as the sun was rising, or even just slightly before.

[17:03] That way they could get the water before it's hot. They're set up for the day. They already have it. They made their trip. They're set up. But here this woman is going in the midday. And what we're going to find out here in just a little bit is that she has good reason to do this.

But for right now, what we know is that she's going because she's trying to avoid people. She doesn't want to talk to anyone. She doesn't want to see anyone. So here she is and Jesus comes and immediately he just says, give me a drink.

And the woman is perplexed at this. She says, how is it that you, a Jew, ask me for a drink? For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

You see, not only was it incredibly inappropriate for Jesus to be talking to a Samaritan, but it was also incredibly inappropriate for Jesus to be talking to a woman who also happens to be from Samaria and a woman who is by herself without her husband.

You see, but Jesus here right off the bat, what he is showing us here by making this journey, Jesus is coming for a very particular reason and it's for this woman.

[18:26] Jesus is breaking down right off the bat every type of social, cultural boundary that is present during this time. And what we're going to see here, Jesus is going to introduce her to the gospel because right after this woman questions him and says, why are you asking me for a drink?

I just came here to get water for myself. Can you leave me alone? But Jesus doesn't back down. In fact, what does Jesus say? Verse 10, it says, Jesus answered her, if you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, give me a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.

The woman said to him, sir, you have nothing to draw water with and the well is deep. Where do you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself as did his sons and his livestock.

And Jesus said to her, everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

And the woman said to him, sir, give me this water so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water. It's interesting.

[19:54] Immediately, what does Jesus do when he gets to this well when this woman arrives? He asks a question. He makes a request. He says, give me a drink. All along, what's going to become evident to us, this was not Jesus' intention.

Jesus' intention here is not to satiate his need but rather to meet the need of this woman because immediately after this woman questions saying, why are you even talking to me? What does he say?

You should have asked me for a drink of water and I would have given you living water. And the woman is completely perplexed. She doesn't get it. Right? Because here she's thinking, you just asked me for a drink, you have nothing to draw water with and now you're offering me a drink of living water so that I'll never be thirsty again.

You see, what's interesting here is that the Samaritans, they only held to the Torah the first five books of the Old Testament.

That was their only holy literature that they had. They didn't hold to the rest of the Old Testament because if they had and if she was aware of that, what she would have known is what Jesus was really offering her.

[21 : 11] You see in Jeremiah 2.13 and this is where Jesus is pulling from with this imagery of living water. It says this, it says, and this is God speaking, for my people have committed two evils.

they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water and they have hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

You see the reality is this woman came to fill her water jar and what she doesn't realize is that Jesus is challenging her not for her physical needs but for her spiritual needs.

He's saying everything that you are and the very reason that you're here you've allowed yourself to be identified with but that's not who you are. when Jesus offers her living water what he's offering her is salvation itself.

And he says if you will come to me even though you be a Samaritan even though you be a woman I will offer you everlasting life. And Jesus goes on.

[22 : 23] Because again what she doesn't understand is what he means by this living water. again she's so focused on her physical needs. Her routine the thing that lies right before her and the immediate need that she has to fill.

I need to quench my thirst. But it goes on.

She says sir give me this water so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water but Jesus doesn't back down from her because again she's so thick headed at this point she just doesn't get it she's so focused.

And so Jesus switches his tactics here to begin to engage her and he says this he says go call your husband and come here. and it's here I think where the weight on this woman just begins to weigh her down because it's this very reason why she's coming at noon midday here to the well.

It's this very reason why she's trying to avoid all of the people because what we see here she says this she says I have no husband and Jesus said to her you are right in saying that you have no husband for you have had five husbands and the one you now have is not your husband and what you have said is true and at this she says sir I perceive that you're a prophet.

[24 : 06] See the first time I read this I remember thinking man Jesus that seems really harsh. Here he is and he's pointing out the sin of this woman the very reason why she's son the very thing the very reason why she's so fed up with people while she's trying to get away because I imagine probably back in Samaria she's probably shunned by all of them too even among her own people.

So now she's here in front of a Jew who first asked her for water then is offering her something but then now it feels like it's shaming her saying no you haven't had one husband you've had five and the man you're with now is not even your husband.

You see Jesus here though he's not here to shame the woman I think rather what he's doing is he's challenging her of where she's identified herself where she's put her very identity in.

You see for this woman that jar that she came with that water that she was drawing ultimately I think it's all symbolic. It's symbolic of actually everything that she tried to fill her jar with right and for her it was shame and guilt hatred of self the inability to be loved and here God is coming before her God himself and he's saying you filled up broken cisterns that can hold no water it can't hold anything the very identity of what you've identified yourself as that's not who you are and I think for a lot of us we do this exact same thing we're getting ready for the new year and a lot of us in here we're thinking ahead of our new year's resolutions of the things that we want to do the things that we want to change and for some of us right we have all of our things in our jar all of our commitments all of our priorities right

I got time with my family I want to work hard enough to where I can supply for my family I want to fix my sleep schedule I want to spend more time doing leisurely things I want to spend more time with my kids whatever it is that's in your jar right we fill our jars up so they're completely full and then we come before God and we say okay God you can have the rest but what we find is that our jars are overflowing with just dead things Jesus here he's coming before this woman and he's challenging her everything that you've put your worth in is not who I made you to be and it's here that the woman finally starts to get it because she says sir

[27 : 25] I perceive you to be a prophet she's uncertain but she's kind of testing the water a bit here because you see again the Samaritans they believe that when the Messiah would come he would be a prophet like Moses Moses was the archetype they only had the Torah and so the one that's going to come is going to be like Moses in fact they believe that Moses was the only prophet and that the next one to come would be the Messiah so here really the woman's testing the water and essentially asking Jesus are you the one I perceive that you are a prophet am I correct are you the one that was promised and then she goes on she says our fathers worshipped on this mountain but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship and he said 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 but we worship what we know for salvation is from the Jews but the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipper will worship the father in spirit and truth for the father is seeking the people to worship him

God is spirit and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth Jesus here is presenting the gospel to her and notice here what he says because again the woman switches the focus and she's really asking the question okay if you're the Messiah well who's right in this debate is it the Jews or the Samaritans and Jesus corrects her and he says well it is the Jews who were correct but ultimately all of this is changing because those that worship me that worship God it's not a physical place that you have to go but rather what you will worship me in what spirit and truth spirit being all that you are your very identity the very core of who you are but also in truth of who God is we have to worship in the right way and worship the right God the only God and he offers it to her that's what worship is because again this woman not quite fully getting it focusing on the wrong thing she doesn't realize she's so bent on okay well where's the right place to worship not yet realizing that in her life she has never been closer to God himself that God has just come to meet her in the most unlikely way in the most unlikely place in the most unlikely circumstances to invite her into the kingdom and he offers her living water and it's here that the woman finally connects all the dots and she says in verse 25

I know that the Messiah is coming he who is called the Christ and when he comes he will tell us all things and Jesus says you're I who speak to you am he it says just then his disciples came back and they marveled that he was talking with a woman but no one said to him why what do you see or why are you talking with her in verse 28 it's such a beautiful verse and I think it's easy to miss here but take your time here it says so the woman left her water jar and went away into the town and said to the people come see a man who told me all that I ever did could this be the Christ John here makes a point to record what the woman does and what she does is that jar that she came with that thing that represented everything in her life that she identified with her shame her guilt her pain here at this point when she encounters the very living God the God who just offered her salvation what are we told that she immediately does it says that she leaves the jar she leaves and she goes back to the village because finally what she recognizes is that jar offered her nothing that life that she had was nothing as Jeremiah said it was a broken cistern that could hold no water when I'm not here at fourth memorial

I'm often teaching at a couple local Christian universities and one of the classes I teach at both of them is what's called spiritual formation in other words it's a class just all about well how do we walk in relationship with the Lord how do we foster that relationship right we're always focused on physical health mental health but what about spiritual health and when I proposed this class be taught here at GNU Great Northern University the reason I wanted to bring it here was because when I went through seminary what I found in my life is that I was really good at doing the walk and talking the talk right my whole degree all of my time doing homework spent doing what reading the Bible and writing papers about it writing sermons and yet what I found over the course of my seven years in seminary is that I was probably no further from God in my life than I had ever been I had no relationship with him for me my relationship with God boiled down to how much do I know about God what information do I have and it took me years after seminary until God finally broke me down and I realized this is not it see just as Jesus did here with this woman he comes to walk in relationship with her but he comes to walk in relationship with us as well it's interesting one of the questions

I always ask my students when we talk about right one of the defining things about Christianity what do we say it's about relationship with God I ask him okay I want you to think in your life the person the physical person that you're closest with that you have the deepest relationship with for me it's going to be my wife for you it might be a parent it might be a child it might be a friend and I want you to characterize well what is that what does it mean to be in relationship with them what do you value in that is it the time you spend is it the jokes you share the sense of humor what is it but then I ask him okay now whatever it is that you like in that person and usually it's something like oh we spend time together things like this I say okay well what if I just created an AI that could do that exact same thing you know it's an AI it's a robot would you feel like you're in relationship with it and all of my students unanimously say well no that doesn't seem right that's not relationship in fact what's really interesting you can go today to chat

[35 : 39] GPT the AI that's really popular right now and they have what's called therapist bot and it's where you can have therapy from a robot right but the idea there is just well if it's just science right if it's just anything can do it but there's zero relationship there and actually some studies have just recently been released on the effects of this and they found that there's actually zero good that comes out of those kind of therapeutic relationships but I think sometimes that's how we view God sometimes we view him as this distant far off thing we lift up prayers to him but our prayers are much like voicemails hey God here's my request for the day I hope you hear me I hope you get back to me thanks bye let me hang up we never hear anything we go about our day this wreaked such havoc in my life that now as I teach this course one of the books that we go through it's by

Sky Jathani it's called With and it's called and it's titled Reimagining the Way You Relate to God and in this book Sky offers four attitudes that we often four postures that we often have towards God and our relationship towards him he says often times we view relationship as over God under God for God or hopefully with God and really quickly I just want to walk us through these four postures because I think some of us as we look at the vessels of our lives our jars and what we're filling them with I think sometimes we find that we're living in one of these attitudes towards God the first one is to live over God in this attitude one views relationship with God as a means to an end and that end is how can I maximize my own pleasure happiness wants and desires these are the kind of people that only go to

God in those times where life is hard and they want something they need something easy it's in these times it's in the times where life is easy that these people say you know what God I don't really need you right now I can take the reins for these people oftentimes what they're filling their jars with is all that this world has to offer money power prestige and for them that's what they value that's what they identify themselves as that's their jar that they're carrying some of us maybe it's not a relationship over God but it might be a relationship under God in fact I think this is what this woman the woman at the well this was her posture towards God God is this angry God who is in heaven who I just have to appease so that he doesn't pour out his wrath on me someone had lived a life of sin she knew it everyone knew it and she was stuck there and she thought man as long as I just don't do anything to upset

God maybe at least he won't be angry at me anymore maybe his wrath won't come these are the kind of people that they live their life trying to do good things but yet when they do good and then bad things happen they say God what the heck I held up my end of the bargain but you didn't hold up yours I followed you and yet here I am suffering these people tend to fill their jars with guilt and shame it's not good things that are in their jars the things that they identify themselves with are not things that make them happy but rather it's often the shame of the past I'm not worthy I'm not good enough yeah I know God loves all but when it comes to me it's a little different if only you knew these are the kind of people that maybe even some of you here right you're sitting in the pew and you feel like when you come here on a

Sunday I gotta put on a mask I gotta put on a face because if only the people around me knew actually who I was they wouldn't want anything to do with me and then we have those people that live for God and this is where I was in seminary and you see those that live for God share a lot of similarities of those over and under God but the difference is that they are doing it with the right motive and the motive is to glorify God but this is where the busyness of life comes in right we tend to feel every single moment we're always doing things even if it's for God that's what I did in seminary I was constantly pursuing God and doing everything for him but yet I never took a moment to step back and take a moment and to walk actually in relationship with God see I viewed

[41 : 18] Christianity as a race but a race as to where there was a goal and if I don't do it if I don't drag my own boots across that goal line then I failed I teach at Moody Bible Institute and I mostly teach freshmen and every year these freshmen when they come in I ask them why are you here and the most common response I get is because God called me told me I was going to be here that's what God called me to be a missionary and yet statistically only one one out of three students actually graduate from Moody it's a rigorous program it costs a lot five years of intense training that's very hard so out of that freshman class that I have on average only one out of every three of them will actually graduate and what I find happens is that these students as they drop out whether it be because they had bad grades because life happens something else came up a different priority oftentimes what I find is that they come to me and say

Cole I failed God that calling that I had it's gone I don't have it anymore what do I do and they're kind of left like this woman just living now the monotony of life saying well I missed out on my calling if only if only but you see here Sky what he invites us to in this book and I think what Jesus is doing here this woman he invites us to walk with him to walk in relationship side by side not ahead of him not behind him not over him not under him but hand in hand in relationship because he says today I will give you grace for the stressors for today are enough so don't even worry yet about tomorrow and so as you look at your life and at your jar the question is what are you filling it with what are you putting in here because the woman here when she encountered the living

God she couldn't help but leave that jar to leave all that defined her behind and the offer and the invitation is the same for us today and so as we're getting ready to head into a new year I invite you yes focus on the physical the mental but above all I encourage you pursue your walk with the Lord because the beautiful thing about the gospel Jesus says I will fill it with living water not you not your work he says I'll do it but just as he did with this woman he's not going to force it on you she had a choice to make and she made it she left the jar and she went and noticed what she does right after she leaves she said to the people come see a man who told me all that I ever did can this be the

Christ and John here takes just a little bit of a breather here there's a little bit of an aside here as the woman goes off and does this it says the disciples come back and essentially they offer him food and Jesus says I have food to eat that you do not know about and Jesus says this in verse 34 he says my food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to accomplish his work do you not say that there are 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 the sower and reaper may rejoice together for there 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 and notice here and then it goes back after Jesus says he's saying here I've called you I've called you to go and reap what you did not sow the harvest is ripe in other words you are to be bearers of the gospel that is what sustains you because when he says I will give you living water it's not just

I'll give you living water but he says it will overflow it will well up inside of you and pour out to those around you that's the natural response to the gospel because what do we see here we then go back to the woman and what happens he says verse 40 so when the Samaritans came to him they asked him to stay with them and he stayed or sorry go back verse 39 many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony he told me all that I ever did what's beautiful here is that woman knew nothing about Jesus or the gospel all she knew is man this man is this messiah he's the one I put my faith in him I leave that behind and she goes and she merely shares her testimony this man told me all that I ever did and as a result it says that the town came out and it says many places are faith because of what because of the woman's testimony man what is so cool about the gospel Jesus is not just content with transforming your life he is not just content with filling your jar with living water but for those of you that are maybe living under God those of you that this has been filled with shame and guilt those of you that are sitting here and saying man if only they knew about my life what

[47 : 20] Jesus says is I want to take that guilt and I want to transform it into glory I want to take your story of what was so that you can then share it with others about what God did in your life Jesus calls all of us here to bear the gospel that is the natural result of being filled with that living water and the easiest way to do that is to use your testimony and what is a testimony testimony says here's what my life was like before Jesus for the woman man I had five husbands I was living in sin but in a testimony it always shifts to and here's what Jesus did in my life here's how he changed that here's how he redeemed that because now that woman can go and share the good news of the gospel and say yeah Jesus did this in my life that's what he did in mine could this be the Messiah could he do that in your life too and so they come out and they see Jesus verse 40 so when the Samaritans came to him they asked him to stay with them and he stayed there two more days and many more believe because of his word 42 and they said to the woman it is 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 it's not me that saves it's not you that saves it's not your testimony that saves but it is us and our testimonies and our stories that can be the means by which then God goes and does it work because just here as with the woman they first come out and they say we believed first because of the woman's testimony but then they shift it and they say we no longer believe actually because of what she said we believe because we encountered the living God so as we conclude today I want to just speak to a couple different groups in here today the first is if you've never accepted the Lord in your heart if your jar is still filled with everything else in this world and you've probably recognized saying man this just isn't fulfilling this isn't enough this isn't it

Jesus is offering you living water he's offering you a spot in his kingdom and he says repent and believe repent is to turn away turn away from that life cling to me pursue me and believe the beautiful thing is he does that not you he knocks all you have to do is answer and welcome him in and so if you find yourself there today salvation is offered today come talk to myself come talk to one of our pastors or honestly anybody else that you find in here most of us would love to share the good news of the gospel walk with you in that journey second group of people I want to talk to in today are those that are living under God those of you that your jars filled with shame beautiful thing is that Jesus offers us that living water in that living water that goes into that into our jars it takes that shame and it turns it into testimony

Jesus broke every social norm to pursue one woman and to offer her the gospel in the same way he does that for us as well if you're living over God the challenge today I encourage you first I'll just slow down ruthlessly eliminate the hurry in your lives so that the so that the waters of Christ can fill your jar sometimes we just fill our jars up too much with everything else in our lives and we say okay God you can have the rest but the reality is there's nothing left there for him if you say I want Jesus to be the priority in my life then something else has to give something else and the best way to see if he's a priority in your life where do you spend your time your time your talent your treasures is Jesus at the top of that not in your desire but in your actions make room for him and slow down and lastly for all of us

I encourage us be intentional Jesus does not call us to create more time for leisure he calls us to create more time to grow the kingdom the natural response to the gospel just as we saw with the woman at the well is to then share the good news of the gospel that is your purpose for being here period he gave us a mission in Matthew 28 go therefore to all nations and make disciples that's not a call just for Cole or Scott or Jay it's a call for every single one of us in here who profess Christ as Lord go and make disciples and it can start with something as simple as can I tell you my story let's pray Lord we come before you today and Lord we invite you God to fill our jars with living water

Lord we recognize that the things that we have filled it with in the past or even up to this point God if it's not you God it does not lead to life Lord will you show us in the areas in our lives where we are not prioritizing you God where we are not making you the king of our life God will you give us the boldness to share the gospel to let that water overflow to those around us Lord God you're good you say that you have good things planned for us Lord the beautiful thing is we know the end of the story Lord so God we give you today we pray this in your name amen amen