

Speaking Honestly about the Gift of God

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[0 : 00] Okay, so as I mentioned in the prayer, I want you to be thinking concretely this morning about some specific people, some specific conversations you've had, some specific circumstances that you have been in.

I want you to imagine a couple of conversations, maybe two or three conversations in your life, where you tried to speak God's truth to someone.

You decided, I want to be completely honest with this person about something that God has said. Now, was it someone outside the church that you're thinking of? You're thinking maybe of an opportunity to share the gospel with someone who didn't believe in Jesus Christ, and you decide, I want to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth to them from God's word. Was it someone inside the church? Was it a professing Christian who was not living faithfully for Jesus Christ? Someone who needed to be reminded of the gospel message, needed to be reminded of who they are in Christ, and you thought, I need to speak to them the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

[1 : 24] Okay, you got a couple encounters in your mind? Did either of those encounters not go the way you were hoping? Did any of those encounters not exactly go the way you were hoping they would?

Did you leave any of those conversations thinking something like this? I was only being honest, and they got all offended.

How did we end up arguing about politics for half an hour? I got frustrated when they kept changing the subject. I never got around to talking about Jesus Christ.

I think we both ended up feeling discouraged and just beat up. Have you had any experiences like that? After a conversation like that, have you ever felt like just giving up on telling other people about the gift of God?

I mean, just be honest. In the immediate aftermath, have you ever felt that way? Have you ever felt like crawling under a rock and never talking about Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, all that God has done for us?

[2 : 43] I felt that way. I felt that way before. Be honest about how you felt. You know, you can be honest, and I know it hurts to be honest because it feels like honesty is what got you into that mess in the first place.

That's what it feels like. So let's talk about honesty. For a third and final week, we're going to come back to John chapter 4.

We're going to come back to Jesus' dialogue with a Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar. And we've come here for two reasons. The first reason we've come here is to marvel at Jesus Christ, to marvel at his righteous, healthy way of relating to people and communicating the gift of God.

If we leave these three weeks coming away just feeling meh about Jesus, then something's gone horribly wrong. We want to marvel at him.

Number two, we want to learn how we too can walk in Jesus' footsteps, how we can become like him, how we can share this way of righteousness. We've seen how Jesus approaches other people with a humble, unconventional love.

[4 : 00] We've seen how Jesus approaches other people with a wise, unconventional boldness. And today, we're going to see how Jesus speaks with an unconventional honesty.

We're going to learn how to speak the way that he does. And we'll be looking at John chapter 4.

We're going to focus on verses 15 through 42. And I read these at the beginning of the service.

You'll find verses 15 through 42 on page 889. If you're using one of the Blue Bibles or us, just hand it out. Now, here's the big idea.

Here's what we're learning from this encounter with Jesus in John chapter 4. Like Jesus, you are called to reveal the gift of God with an unconventional honesty.

Like Jesus, you are called to reveal the gift of God with an unconventional honesty. We learned last year in Ephesians chapter 4 that those who are truly Christians are people who are speaking the truth in love.

[5 : 04] That's the phrase that the Apostle Paul uses. We're speaking the truth in love. Now, on the one hand, some of you have no trouble speaking the truth.

The truth, the old truth, nothing but the truth. Oh, yeah. I love to hit people with that. But you find it hard to speak it in love. On the other hand, some of you have no trouble, oh, man, just loving and listening and empathy and showing compassion.

But then you're afraid to speak the truth. You'll tell the truth, some of the truth, and maybe a few things that aren't true if it makes the other person feel better.

Either way, whether you struggle to speak the truth or whether you struggle to speak in love, either way, I want to help you out by showing you Jesus.

In John chapter 4, Jesus is going to explode two myths, two myths about speaking honestly. And then he's going to reveal two truths about speaking honestly.

[6 : 11] Two myths, two truths about unconventional honesty. So let's start with myth number one. So honesty myth number one is simply this.

Honesty demands being a jerk. Honesty demands being a jerk. So I just tell it like it is. I'm just being honest.

And then you can't handle the truth. Right? In my experience, when someone says something like those things to me, either they're Jack Nicholson or they're a jerk.

I'm not going to say that's always true, but in my experience, by and large, that tends to be true.

How do you know if you're a jerk? So I, you know, looked it up a little.

Like how do you, it's fun Googling things like, how can I tell if I'm a jerk? You know? I was helped a little bit by a definition from the philosopher Eric Schwitzgebel.

[7 : 13] That's probably how it's pronounced. He seemed to be an expert on jerks. And so here's what he said. He said, the jerk culpably fails to appreciate the perspectives of others around him, treating them as tools to be manipulated or idiots to be dealt with, rather than as moral and epistemic peers.

Okay, so here's what he's saying. I'll translate it into English. The jerk is someone who doesn't listen to, someone who doesn't appreciate other people's perspectives.

The jerk treats other people as tools to be manipulated or as idiots to be dealt with. The jerk automatically assumes he is morally superior and just so much more knowledgeable than others.

He walks into a room and immediately that's what he assumes. And Schwitzgebel then goes on to argue that, and here's the fun part, you actually can't know whether you're a jerk by asking yourself, you know, self, am I a jerk?

You can't question yourself and find out. The jerk is self-deceived. So you have to ask, if you want to know if you're a jerk, you have to ask other people who know you well, who are wise and who are honest and who know you well.

[8 : 31] You have to ask them. So, we've got a good conversation starter after service today, right? You can turn to the, you know, when we're done and we say, give the benediction and the music's playing, you can turn to the person next to you.

So, am I a jerk? Be honest with me, right? A lot of wives are like, oh boy, I hope my husband asked that one now. And you know what? The good part is they have to be honest with you because their pastor just told them that they have to be honest, right?

And they're paying such close attention to the sermon. Here's the thing about Jesus. Jesus is honest. Jesus is not a jerk.

He is honest and he isn't a jerk. He's honest with this woman, but he doesn't manipulate her for his own ends. He doesn't speak to her like she's an idiot. He treats her as another human being.

Let me show you what I mean. You might remember from last week that in verse 12, where we more or less left off, the woman is basically telling Jesus that she is doing just fine with the water she has.

[9 : 39] Thank you very much. She's just good. She's fine with Jacob's well. And so in verses 16 through 18, Jesus sees right through this smoke screen she's putting up, the whole I'm doing fine.

Jesus has supernatural insight that only a man from God would have. And Jesus tells this woman in verse 18, you have had five husbands and the one you now have is not your husband.

So all is not well in her world. Now, he's got some real dirt on her, doesn't he? And he just sort of tips his hat that like, hey, I've got a bit of dirt on you here.

With that sort of information, Jesus really could have been a jerk about this whole situation. Jesus could have used this to, the woman's been trying to put him in his place throughout the conversation.

He could have turned the tables on her, put her in her place, tell her what a screwed up, immoral person she is. You're a mess.

[10 : 39] How sad. But Jesus knows that honesty does not demand being a jerk. Notice what Jesus does instead.

Notice the way Jesus speaks honestly to her. So she tells him very briefly in verse 17, I have no husband. She doesn't really elaborate on that point, doesn't want to elaborate, so Jesus does it for her.

But notice the way he does it. Jesus uses a technique that we might call an honesty sandwich.

Now, I've heard much ruder names for this technique, so we'll stick with honesty sandwich.

Notice in verse 17 how Jesus starts. You are right in saying, I have no husband. And then notice in verse 18 how he ends.

What you have said is true. Jesus starts by praising the woman for how well she described her situation. At the end, Jesus praises her for speaking the truth.

[11 : 52] And he sandwiches the hard, honest reality in between those two statements of affirmation. Right?

It's an honesty sandwich. The hard truth sandwiched between two sincere compliments. He's not flattering her. He really means it. You're right.

What you have said is true. You've spoken well. I don't know about you, but my tendency would be to focus on what the woman isn't saying, how she's not telling the whole truth.

I want to be really critical of her. I just, I can look at this and just see what's bad, what's screwed up about her. But Jesus actually, he looks at her.

And as he looks, he's finding good in what she is saying. Because think about it. This woman could lie. She could lie about the sixth man.

[12 : 50] She could say that he is her husband when he isn't. She says, I have no husband. Not an easy thing to admit. Or she could make up some excuse about, oh, my husband can't come.

But the woman doesn't tell the easy lie. She tells the hard truth, even if it isn't the full truth. And Jesus loves that about her. That she actually said something that wasn't easy to say.

And he tells her so. That she's spoken well and she's spoken rightly. You can be honest without being a jerk. Look for the grace of God at work.

Look, this common grace that's at work even among people who don't yet know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Look for good. Praise it.

Sandwich the honest truth with kind words. It is absolutely a myth that honesty demands being a jerk. That's honesty myth number one. Then there's honesty myth number two.

[13 : 52] Honesty demands stirring up quarrels. Honesty demands stirring up quarrels. Now, honesty can lead to a rather colorful conversation if you are not careful.

You start talking about God. How, wow, you know, I've been saved from my sin by grace through faith. And then all of a sudden the person you're talking with just says, well, what about Donald Trump? Right?

Next thing you know, you're arguing about impeachment and climate change and gun control, international trade agreements. And boy, whoa, what happened? You think about it later and you're like, whoa, something went horribly wrong.

How could I have gotten sucked into that? Sometimes you want to speak about the gift of God. The other person then just like tosses in a live grenade into the conversation.

What do you do? Well, we can see what Jesus does. Look at verse 19. The tone of the conversation has changed. So for the first time, the woman is now taking Jesus very seriously.

[14 : 55] He's got her attention. She tells him, sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.

Oh boy. This woman brings up the big point of contention between Samaritans and Jews. It is an important issue, by the way, as Jesus is going to make clear.

He doesn't think it's a small thing. It is an important issue. But it's become a poisonous, toxic quarrel that has led to bad blood between Jews and Samaritans for centuries. They hate each other. And this is the central point that they argue over.

There are two possible reasons why this woman might toss that grenade into the conversation at this point. The first reason is she might just want to change the subject, you know.

Let's stop talking about my shameful relationship status history. Let's argue religion. That sounds better. She wouldn't be the first person I've seen who, you know, they just like a good old theological dispute.

[16:07] It's a nice smokescreen, right? You start up these arguments in order to cover up major problems in your relationship with God, with other people. Some people, that becomes their standard way of coping with the screwed up relationships in their life.

All they ever do is talk theology. If that's you, man. Time to start being honest. Maybe this woman is not asking this question in good faith.

But there is a second reason. And the second reason is that maybe she genuinely wants to know the answer. Throughout the dialogue, this woman has been referencing her identity, that she's a Samaritan.

She's been referencing the honor of drinking from Jacob's well. And now she's encountering a man that she perceives to be not only a Jewish rabbi, someone who would disagree with her, but apparently he's a prophet from God too.

So, of course, the burning question in her mind is, oh, huh, who's right about where to worship? So this grenade, it could be a heartfelt question asked in good faith.

[17:13] Or it could be an attempt to destroy the conversation. How is Jesus going to respond to this? How can Jesus be honest without stirring up a fruitless quarrel?

And I think what Jesus senses is that this question is important to the woman. I don't know which of those motives she was after.

I kind of suspect probably maybe a little of both. Often we have multiple motives for doing the things we do. But Jesus senses that this question is important to the woman.

You see, when a question is lobbed at you like a grenade and it is loaded with emotion, we tend to think of that immediately as, oh, this is an enemy of an honest conversation. Actually, that question, that grenade might be the way in to a conversation.

That is more honest than what you've had before. It might be the way in to a more honest conversation. Sometimes that grenade blows a hole in the barrier that has been standing between the two of you.

[18:20] And now you can talk person to person, heart to heart. Jesus responds to the grenade in verse 21. And Jesus says something that would have just absolutely gobsnacked her.

She doesn't even have a category for this. Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.

Just an aside that he begins with the word woman in our culture that's almost like confrontational. In that culture, that was just a normal, respectful way of talking to a man, talking with a woman. But Jesus takes her out, takes this woman out of the tribalism, out of the rage of the present.

Jesus presents this woman a vision of the future that is to come. A vision in which she will worship the Father in a better way than she is now. In fact, he's about to say that she's not really worshipping the Father now.

He's presenting this hope of a better future. And as he does that, he prepares her for a very honest assessment of the present in verse 22. You worship what you do not know.

[19:32] We worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yeah, he's pretty straight. You know, she's asking, well, who's right? And he's like, we are. You're not.

But it's just the way he says it, right? And then he follows that up by returning to the future. Jesus then talks about how the Father is seeking people to worship him in spirit and truth.

Jesus draws her beyond the present controversy, the present division, into a better future. And you can be honest without stirring up quarrels. And here's how you can do it.

You give people perspective. You show there is a hope. There is a future beyond all of the sound and fury, all the fear of the conflict. Of this time and this place.

Draw people out of this crazy present moment. Encourage them to thirst for a better future. A future in which the world is filled with people who have become like Jesus Christ and are worshiping him. [20 : 33] Isn't that what we want? Don't you want people to be like Jesus? Well, yeah, I do. Well, yeah. What if that's what God has planned?

Let's talk about that. It's a myth that honesty demands stirring up quarrels. That's honesty myth number two. Like Jesus, you were called to speak about the gift of God with an unconventional honesty.

We've covered two myths about speaking honestly. So let's now cover two truths. So here's honesty truth number one. Honesty demands a focus on the gift of God.

Honesty demands a focus on the gift of God. So this is the flip side of the second myth. The other side of the coin. Instead of getting sidetracked into quarrels, you are called to keep your focus on what's important.

Picture yourself like you're a dog chasing a scent. You're on the trail. Now, are you the kind of dog that keeps getting pulled off the trail?

[21 : 39] You know, because you're, ooh, smelling all sorts of interesting things. You know, oh, squirrel over there. Rabbits. Oh, fire hydrants. You know, all these things that a dog finds fascinating. Or are you a bloodhound who is trained and focused, able to stay fixed on what is important?

After a moment of tough honesty, Jesus returns to that future hope in verse 23. Here's what Jesus tells the woman.

The hour is coming and is now here. When the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. For the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

God is spirit. And those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. Now, this is good stuff. I'll explain what it means in just a second.

But maybe we can read this and think, wait a minute. This is good. But what about that whole living water conversation that he was having? What happened to that? Are we just changing the subject?

[22 : 47] Is Jesus just letting the woman steer the conversation away from where he was going and just to wherever she wants to talk about? And the answer, of course, is no. The conversation is going exactly where Jesus has been wanting it to go.

Here's what I mean. They are still talking about living water. They are still talking about the gift of God.

They are just using different language. All that's happened is that Jesus is now no longer speaking in metaphor. Jesus has adapted his language to suit the conversation.

But he's still coming back to the same idea. Jesus knows it so well that he can talk about the same thing in a hundred different ways.

He doesn't have like this one stock formula gospel presentation memorized. He can talk about it in a million different ways.

[23 : 53] In so many different ways. And he can keep bringing her back to the same idea. And here's the idea that he is talking about. God has given his son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus is our true access to God. He is our true place of worship. He is the real temple. God has revealed the truth about who he is.

About how he is saving our world. God has revealed it in the person of Jesus Christ. Through his words. Through his work of atonement.

On the cross. His death. His sacrifice for our sins. His resurrection from the dead. The son of God. The truth of his son. This is the gift of God. It is the son who pours out. Who now reigns in heaven. And pours out the Holy Spirit. Who pours out the living water.

[24 : 51] A spring of water welling up to eternal life. Inside of everyone who believes in Jesus Christ. And so it is through the spirit.

Who lives within every believer. It is through the spirit that we now share. And worship the father together.

God is seeking people who know and who believe the truth. Who know and believe in his only son. The gift of God. Who worship by the power of the spirit of God. That is the message that Jesus is communicating. Again and again. In two entirely different ways.

But he is saying the same thing. Jesus knows this message through and through by heart. If you know something so well.

[25 : 52] You can talk about it in a hundred different ways. He can keep bringing the conversation back to the gift of God. No matter what the woman throws at him. He just.

He is just always going to keep bringing it back. Because everything is going to remind him of the gift of God. Everything. He can just talk about it. No matter what she does.

His focus never wavers. He is a blood hound. What about you? If you are a Christian. This is what you are called to.

You must know the gospel message. And I don't just mean like. Oh yeah. I have got sort of the. You know. The two laws formulated. Or whatever they are. You know. The two ways to God.

You know. You just have this like little canned formula. That you. I can run through that with anyone. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. You need to know the gospel. Have it in your heart. Working through you. Every muscle.

[26 : 49] Every sinew in your body. Knowing it. It is what you breathe. You can talk about it in a hundred different ways. You must know Jesus so well.

That to weave him into conversation. That takes no effort. That's just natural. Know him so well.

That it's normal. I mean. How could I not go. Thinking and talking about Jesus.

He's everything. His grace is everything I see. You know. You just have a hundred different ways of doing this. And this is why. You know. We're.

You know. We work through such thing as. As a foundations class. As the fundamentals of the faith.

That BK's growth group is doing. Because man. We want you to know it. Through and through.

So you can be a bloodhound. Jesus doesn't view emotionally charged issues as the enemy.

[27 : 49] He views them as an entry point into a person's heart. He views them as an opportunity. An opportunity to speak honestly about the gift of God. But the thing is.

Because he knows the gift of God so well. He can speak. Into every opportunity. In a manner that captures the heart. Of the woman he's speaking to.

If she's come to get water. He'll talk about living water. If she wants to talk about. Where to worship. He'll start talking about how you worship. And he'll just keep bringing it back to the gift of God. I mean.

If she tried to interrupt Jesus by bringing up Donald Trump. I don't know. Somehow she has insight into the future. He would ask you. You know. What do you think a good leader ought to look like? He'd direct the conversation back to himself as king.

If you tried to interrupt Jesus about abortion. He would ask about. You know. What's your experience with that? He would connect it to the need for redemption. And hope. And the value of life. If you tried to interrupt Jesus about climate change.

[28 : 49] He would ask you about. You know. Tell me about your longing for a healed and restored world. Let's talk about how this matches. My father's heart for making all things new. Jesus would just connect.

He just. Every. Opportunity into a person's heart. He takes. And because he knows the gift of God so well. He connects it. To what's on their heart. You can be that way too.

God has called you to be a bloodhound. Zeroed in on the gospel message. Eager to fan. Into flame. The longing for glory. The longing for redemption.

In the heart of the person you're talking to. Honesty demands a focus on the gift of God. That's honesty truth number one. And here's honesty truth number two.

Honesty demands hope. In the gift of God. Honesty demands hope. In the gift of God. Jesus. He has. He has. He has. He has. He has.

[29 : 47] He has. He has tapped into something here. He has found a little candle flame of hope. In the woman's heart. This little tiny spark.

Because her life. Has been a train wreck. Of broken relationships. It's gotten so bad. That she's out. Gathering water.

Getting water from the well. At noon. When all the other women of the town. Would have been there much earlier in the morning. When it was cool out. Social pariah. Her life is a mess.

And she. Apparently. Seems to be dripping with despair. And cynicism. But in verse 25. You just see a little bit of vulnerability here.

For the first time. She lets Jesus in. On a preciously guarded secret. She tells Jesus about the one little hope she has.

[30 : 44] She says. I know that Messiah is coming. When he comes. He will tell us all things.

She believes that God is sending his Messiah. His anointed king. The son of David. She believes that this Messiah. He is the prophet greater than Moses. Who both Jews and Samaritans have been waiting for.

She believes that all of this confusion. All of this despair. It is going to be cleared up. When Messiah comes. Isn't this a beautiful confession?

She opens up her heart. To its vulnerable place. And she tells Jesus about that. That one little hope she has. The one little longing that she has never snuffed out.

And Jesus said to her. I am he. I who speak to you. Am he. What a moment.

[31 : 55] What a moment that must have been. Right? That little flickering spark of hope. It bursts into a sun. A blaze of joy and glory.

Because Jesus speaks the honest truth. And it is living water. For a dry and weary soul. And you know.

There is new hope in her. And she is overwhelmed. That what little hope she had left. Is coming true. She is utterly won over. Because in verse 28.

She just totally forgets about her jar of water. That's when she came out here in the first place. And she just leaves it by the well. Totally forgotten. And she forgets Jacob's well.

Her source of glory. Because she has received the gift of God. The living water. And she turns. Into the most enthusiastic salesman. You are ever going to see. She runs back to town.

[32 : 52] And says. Come. See a man who told me. All that I ever did. Can he be the Christ? She has people running out to the well.

From the town to see Jesus. They ask him to stay for two more days. And in verse 42. They tell 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 is not this woman's hope. Though. As great as it has become.

It is not this woman's hope. That wins over the whole town. Or at least some of the town. It is.

Fundamentally. The hope. In the heart. Of Jesus himself.

[33 : 52] Jesus. Approaches her with hope. And you know this. He explains to his disciples. In verse 34. He tells them. As they're just muttering about food. And you know. Where's. You know.

Aren't you going to eat something? He says. My food. Is to do the will of him. Who sent me. And to accomplish his work. Oh. It is a joy. It is life to Jesus. To do his father's work.

To speak honestly. About the gift of God. Jesus. He is a man revived. Now. His weariness. His hunger. His hunger. His hunger. His hunger. His hunger. And then he tells.

His disciples. About the hope. That has driven him. All along. Why he's been moving. Toward the woman. In love. And boldness. And honesty.

What moves him. And motivates him. Even in his weariness. Jesus tells him. About this hope. In verse 35. Do you not say. There are yet four months. Then comes the harvest.

[34 : 46] Look. I tell you. Lift up your eyes. And see. That the fields. Are white. For the harvest. Already.

The one who reaps. Is receiving wages. And gathering fruit. For eternal life. So that sower. And reaper. May rejoice together. What kind of a field.

Is this where. You are sowing seeds. And the guy. Who is gathering. In the grain. He's not four months. Behind you. He is right on your heels. Jesus sees.

What his disciples. Aren't seeing. Jesus sees. What you and I. Are not seeing. You. Are summoned. By the living God. By the God.

Who raises the dead. To look. At other people. With eyes. Of hope. With the eyes. Of Christ.

[35 : 42] Look. I tell you. Lift up. Your eyes. And see. That the fields. Are white. For harvest.

And I know. We live in a town. That is hardened. To the gift. Of God. In so many ways. And for so many reasons.

There are many people here. Who have come here. For the good life. And they are falsely convinced. That they have found it. And that they are doing just fine. And it is so easy. To feel discouraged.

And to feel defeated. To begin to wonder. Has the gift. Has the word of God. Lost its power. Do not be discouraged.

Do not be afraid. Look. I tell you. Lift up your eyes. And see. That the fields. Are white. For harvest. You have badly.

[36 : 43] Underestimated. The work that the spirit. Of the living God. Can do. In Squamish. You've badly. Underestimated. You have badly. Underestimated.

The work. The spirit. Of the living God. Can do. Among your family. Among your friends. Among your neighbors. You have badly.

Underestimated. The work. That the spirit. Of God. Can do. In Squamish. Baptist Church. To revive. Us here. To stir us up.

To do the will of God. To approach others. In love. And boldness. And honesty. To love him. And worship him. In spirit. And truth.

To love one another. As Christ. Has loved. Us. You are like. The disciples. Seeing. Only how difficult.

[37 : 38] It is. All the human obstacles. Which are insurmountable. In merely human terms. But you have badly.

Underestimated. How good is the life. Giving water. Of the Holy Spirit. Why are you not always. Honest. About the gift of God. Why do you not always.

Tell the truth. The whole truth. And nothing but the truth. It is because. You are short on hope. You are short on hope. Short.

On longing. For the good. That has promised. That God has promised. Believe this. You know. The best is yet to come. There is real hope.

God is at work. He is doing work. He is not done yet. The story is not over. In fact. There is much redemption. To come. There is a future.

[38 : 33] And a glory. That is waiting for you. And that God is going to work. Through you. By the power of his spirit. May God give you.

The eyes. Of Christ Jesus. The hope that fills. The heart of Christ. The confidence. That you have. The gift of God. like Jesus.

You are called. To speak honestly. About it. Speak honestly. About the gift of God. Father. We. you