

John 4 (Part 2):25-42 • Taking Jesus at His Word

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Calvary Chapel Ontario

We're in the book of John, so if you need a Bible to follow along with what we're doing here today, the guys are coming down the aisles. They have some extras. Just wave. Get their attention, put your hand up. They'll get a Bible to you so that you can follow along. John chapter four, John chapter four.

And we are going to be picking it up in verse 25 here this morning. You'll remember just before we start reading, we're going to read through these verses and pray here in just a moment. But we started this chapter last week. It was— it was telling us how Jesus and His disciples began to move northward from Judea in the south to Galilee in the north.

And in order to keep the trip to a minimum of time, they had to pass through Samaria, which was between Judea and Galilee. And we read last week how Jesus and His disciples stopped at a well because Jesus was weary. And the disciples kind of went off to go get some food at a nearby town.

Jesus sat there and while He was waiting for them, a woman from Samaria, from the nearby town came to the well to draw water. It was about noon. And eventually Jesus asked her for a drink which started an entire conversation between He and the lady, the last of which we dealt— we talked about that conversation, the various nuances and things that they talked about.

The last of which was true worship and the definition of true worship and that sort of thing. But the essence of what Jesus was trying to speak to this woman about was what— her needs that drove her. And this is such an important conversation for us to pay attention to because we are a people, let's just face it, driven by our needs and whatever needs those might be. You know? Whether they're all temporal needs that we have.

And fundamentally they're not wrong in and of themselves. We can make them wrong by the way we try to satisfy them. But we are all driven by need. We all have an insatiable need, you know, within us for various things. And He began to speak to this woman, this Samaritan woman, about her own needs, the things

that had dominated her life, and to speak to her about something that He had to offer that the world could not.

And we'll get into that here today, but we're going to pick up the conversation in verse 25. Follow along with me as we're going to read down through about 43 or 42, something like that. Here we go.

²⁵ The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ). When He comes, He will tell us all things." ²⁶ Jesus said to her, "I Who speak to you am He."

²⁷ Just then His disciples came back. They marveled that He was talking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why are you talking with her?" ²⁸ So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, ²⁹ "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" ³⁰ They went out of the town and were coming to Him.

³¹ Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." ³² But He said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." ³³ So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him something to eat?" ³⁴ Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him Who sent Me and to accomplish His work.

³⁵ Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. ³⁶ Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. ³⁷ For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' ³⁸ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

³⁹ Many Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to Him, they asked Him to stay with them, and He stayed there two days. ⁴¹ And many more believed because of His word. ⁴² 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 this is indeed the Savior of the world."

Stop there. Let's pray.

Father, as we get into this section of Scripture today, as we talk about these verses, as we unpack what they are saying to us, we just really need Your Holy Spirit to guide us.

We need You to open our hearts. We need You to open our ears. We want to hear from You today, LORD. We want to hear Your voice. We want to hear Your instruction, Your insight. We ask You to guide us. We ask You to fill our hearts. We ask You to create a receptivity in our hearts, LORD God, for Your Word. Be with us we pray. In Jesus' precious Name we pray, amen. Amen.

You know, I've talked to you guys before about how at the time that Jesus came, He didn't surprise.... Well, I've got to be careful how I say that. Let me just say this, people were expecting a Messiah to show up. And you can see that this woman, this Samaritan woman even expresses that.

She says to Him, "Well, *I know that Messiah is coming.*" And it's like, well she's a Samaritan, you know, she's not even a full Jew, but yet she says, "*I know Messiah is coming.*" And you know, who knows what they expected of Him?" Because the Samaritans didn't embrace the whole of the Jewish Bible. They only accepted a portion of it, just kind of like the Sadducees did.

And so their knowledge, their understanding, was incomplete as it relates to Messiah and His mission and the redemptive program of God and all that, you know, kind of good stuff. But there were some things they believed, and one was that Messiah was coming. And then she goes on to say, "*and when He comes, He's going to tell us all things.*"

I looked up that word 'tell' in my Greek dictionary, and I found out that it means 'to disclose.' Isn't that interesting? Or 'to report.' So this woman believed with all of her heart, and I have to assume this was probably a common Samaritan belief, that when Messiah came, He was going to disclose things to them that were important for them, you know, to know.

Well it is at this point that Jesus does something very unexpected. He tells her who He is. He just kind of comes right out. And He says, you know, because she's talking about the Messiah, "I know the Messiah's coming, and when He comes, He's going to...." And He says, "I am Him. I am Him. I am the Messiah."

And you know, this is really kind of— it takes us aback a little bit because normally we don't see Jesus doing this. In His own homeland, in His own area among the Jews, you know He had to actually be very careful about revealing His identity because there were these people called zealots. And you might know something about them: but the zealots, it comes from the word 'zeal.'

They were very zealous for their nation and their national security, and they were very upset by the fact that the Romans had come in and conquered them essentially, and set up a martial law and they were in charge. And the Jews were very upset about that. And they were just looking for opportunities, you know, to do some kind of a political revolution, you know.

And so Jesus had to be very careful about the things that He shared or the way He revealed Himself because that was a tinderbox that He had to be careful not to throw a match toward. In fact, when we get here in the next couple of weeks, when we get into John chapter six, we're going to see Jesus faced with this very issue. Let me put this on the screen for you so you can see it.

John 6:14-15 (ESV)

When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!" Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

John six 14 says, "*When the people saw the sign,*" and that's key "*that He had done, they said, 'This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!'*" And then look what it says, "*Perceiving then that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by Himself.*"

So you know, when people started to get all lathered up and ready to do something, "We're going to...[raging grumbling]." He had to just kind of back away and just give it some space and let these people kind of cool down a little bit, because you see Jesus was always concerned about the Father's timing.

This was an issue of timing you guys. And so He was always thinking about that. And besides, like I said, it was never His intention to start a political revolution. That wasn't what He came to do. He didn't come to overthrow the Romans, you know. So— but here in Samaria there's no threat of political.... What do I want to call it? 'Upheaval,' or something like that. So He's able to say to this woman, "*I am He. I am the Messiah.*"

Now in verse 27, if you look with me in your Bible, we're told that, "*Just then Jesus' disciples came back and they were marveling at the fact that He was talking to a woman.*" Because you see back then, it was inappropriate culturally for a woman to speak to a man in public without her husband. And so that was an odd thing, off the get go. And then on top of it, she was a Samaritan and

Jews just didn't talk to Samaritans. They just, you just ignored them. You know? So we go on to, it says in the rest of that verse that they didn't ask Him what was going on or what He was doing, but then we're told something very interesting in verse 28.

It says, *“The woman left her water jar and went away into the town, and she told all the people,²⁹ “Come and see the man who told me all that I ever did.”* And she even asked the question, “Is this the guy? Could this, could this be the Messiah? It's, let's— let's go see.”

Now, this is an interesting— I want to pause here for just a moment as we're looking at this picture, because this is an interesting picture of this woman leaving her water jar. Now practically speaking, we know why she left her water jar. She got excited about talking to Jesus. She wanted to go tell the people and carrying the water jar back down the hill was going to be a problem because it would slow her down. So for very, very practical reasons, she just left it and made her way, you know, to the city.

But there's some symbolism here that we've got to be careful not to miss. Because remember in this conversation that we looked at last week, that the woman had with Jesus concerning water and the things of this world that we try to quench with, the things of this world— the needs, the urges, the desires and so forth.

He (Jesus) was bringing it all down to this symbolic sort of an idea of water and the fact that, you know, you drink water and it quenches your thirst, but then in a little while you're thirsty again. And so He was talking to the woman about the fact that He had something to offer that would quench a need in her in such a way that she would never have a need in that area again.

And He was talking about salvation. Once you get saved, you know, that need is met and you don't long for it again after that because you're saved, you're born again. Well, so you know, this is— that was the whole point of their conversation: all the things that drive you. And He had to even kind of pinpoint it with her and He had to say, “You know, why don't you go home, go back and get your husband and bring him here and we'll talk.”

“Well, I don't have a husband.”

“Yeah, I know. You've had five husbands and the guy you have now isn't even your husband.” What is He doing? He's not being mean. He's encouraging her to

look into her life and to see what— just where her need has driven her all these years.

She obviously was looking for something in marriage that she just wasn't getting. You know? And anybody who's ever been married for any length of time knows that the person that you're married to is not going to meet all your needs. And if you look to that person to meet all of your needs, you're going to be sorely disappointed. And this woman went from man to man to man because she was looking for something to be quenched that they— these men couldn't do. They couldn't provide it. You know? So she just kept going from....

Isn't that funny? We do that. We don't learn our lesson the first time. We just keep going, “Well, the next one will be better, you know. Grass is greener, you know, with the next husband.” And that [doesn't] work. And pretty soon she's tired of getting married and says, “Well I'll just live with a guy this time. I won't go through the process anymore.”

So we try, we try, we try. We try to satisfy these needs that we have, and we fail miserably. You know? And this woman is the poster child, you know, for trying to fix it. Make it better, quench the need, quench the thirst. And so isn't it interesting that she leaves her water jar?

“I don't need this anymore.”

This is almost like a picture of saying, “I've met the One, and this water jar isn't the driving need in my life anymore.” And so she leaves it there and just books down the hill or whatever, you know, to the town and so forth. And she tells them you know, “There's this guy, you've got to come see Him!” And apparently she's fairly effective in her ability to spread the news because verse 30 tells us that all the people went out of the town and they were actually making their way toward Jesus and His disciples there at the well.

So, as all these people are coming out of the city, now Jesus is going to have a conversation with His disciples. And it says in verse 31 that they were urging Him to eat something because they'd brought food, you know. So they said, “*Rabbi, eat.*” And He said something very interesting. And again, this is another thing we need to be careful not to skip over too quickly. He says, “*I have food to eat that you do not know about.*” So the disciples are like, “Somebody bring Him a burger, or something? What? We didn't see this while we were gone....”

But Jesus makes an important statement in verse 34. Please take note of this. He says, *“My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.”* And that short statement right there, that's worthy of our attention.

Because you see fundamentally what the disciples went to go do, getting food in the nearby town, there was nothing wrong with that. There's nothing wrong with your urge to eat. I mean, like any of your urges, they can be blown out of proportion and become trouble for you. You know? But fundamentally, there's nothing wrong with being hungry and satisfying that hunger.

And Jesus didn't discourage them from going to the town and getting food. But you've got to remember this whole chapter, this whole chapter up to this point has been about the things we run after. This whole chapter has been about the things that we—the hunger that we have, the needs that are in us, that we try desperately to resolve and fill and satisfy and so forth.

And as we've already said, the Samaritan woman was this picture you know, of this. And now another need comes into view here. This, of hunger. Man, hungry—you think about just being hungry. But we don't—we spend a lot of time and money working on satisfying this need. You know?

I mean all the things you have to buy, you don't have to just buy groceries, then you've got to buy stuff to cook food in. And then you got to have the—now I need this food chopper thingy and I've got to get a new knife set and now I need to get a new frying pan because the old one's worn out.... And we spend all this money and all this time.... And you know, there can even be some enjoyment in cooking. I've never found it, but I've heard that you know, some people enjoy cooking. And that's cool and that's fine. Problem is, you know, you need to keep doing it.

I remember as a teenager.... Isn't it funny the things you remember when you were young? I remember when I was 13 years old, we went out to lunch with a family friend and we got done eating lunch out at a restaurant and I remember him kind of patting his tummy and saying, “It's a good feeling to feel full.”

“And I've remembered that. That was a long time ago.” (Pastor makes a ‘so what?’ gesture)

And now I'm thinking about this all in perspective with what Jesus is saying. And I'm thinking, “Yeah, but in a few hours you're going to be hungry again, you know.” And therein kind of lies the issue.

And along comes Jesus, you know. And He says, *“I’ve got food to eat that you don’t know anything about.”* Wow. I mean, our curiosity has been peaked here a little bit. He says, *“In fact, My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish the work that He’s given to Me.”*

In other words, Jesus is making you and me aware of a kind of satisfaction that we’ve never experienced before. And that’s what He was trying to communicate to the woman at the well as, as well. And that’s what this chapter largely is about: God’s satisfying you and me, supernaturally, in ways that this world can’t satisfy us.

We have all these needs and we’re trying desperately to get them met. And sometimes we even turn to illegitimate means of meeting those needs, don’t we? And God comes along and He says, *“I can meet those needs in ways that you haven’t even dreamed yet.”* So we’re going to, we’re going to talk about this.

But it goes on here and Jesus speaks to them (the disciples) about, now these people from the Samaritan town who are on their way to the well. And He says in verse 35, look there in your Bible with me. He says, *“Do you not say there are yet four months, then comes the harvest”?* And that was apparently a common saying at the time. And the farmers would say that there was about four months between planting the seed and when they would go to harvest the crop.

And the whole implication of that statement, *“four months and then the harvest,”* is the idea that you plant the seed and then there’s not a whole lot you can do. I mean, there’s some watering elements and this and that and the other thing, but you have to just wait for the crop to come up and you’ve got to wait to harvest it. Right? Until it comes up. All right.

But here’s what Jesus is saying. He goes on in that verse to say— He says, *“Look I tell you, lift up your eyes and see that the fields are white.”* In other words, *“ready for harvest.”* Now remember, this whole town of people is making their way toward the well, and He’s literally telling them (the disciples) to look up. It’s like, *“Guys, did you happen to notice the crowd on their way? They’re coming. Look up, the field is ready. It’s ripe and so forth. And so it’s time to, we’re going to be involved in this harvest process. We’re going to bring in the crop.”*

And that’s an exciting thing. But you know, in the midst of all that excitement I need to remind you of something. Not every town was ready like this one. Not every town was ready to be harvested, if you will, for eternal life.

In fact you remember some towns, there was one particular place, one particular region where they asked Jesus to leave. You remember that? [He] cast a demon out of a guy, or in fact, several demons. And the people kind of freaked out. Well, they freaked out for a lot of reasons, not the least of which is, all those demons went into their pigs, ran down a hill, [and] drowned. But either way they saw this incredible thing and they came to Him and they said, "Please leave."

See, that's very different from this Samaritan town. Is it not? Right? And so we have to remember that there's a time when people are ready and there's a time when people are not ready. And we forget that.

And some of you might be farmers or you plant things and stuff like that, maybe you have a green thumb, but let me ask you a question. What happens when you try to plant seed in ground that hasn't been prepared? It doesn't go very well, does it? In fact, you know what? Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think Jesus even told a parable about that.

Something about a sower went out to sow seed. Some of it fell on the path, the hard path. What happened to that seed? "Oh, it just took a few rains for it to soften up the soil there and eventually the seed went into the ground." No, it didn't do anything. The birds came and ate it and flew off. Jesus said in the interpretation of that parable that's what Satan does when the seed of the Word is sown on land that has not been properly prepared. He steals it away.

And I've heard people, you know, share the LORD with others. And they say, "Well you know, I don't know. They didn't respond, but at least we sowed some good seed."

"Did you? Are you sure about that?" What happens when you sow seed and the soil hasn't been prepared? Sometimes you can waste your time. And that was the point of the parable, you know, that Jesus was telling.

What happens also when you try to bring the harvest in before it's full grown and ready to be harvested? Well that kind of ruins the whole point, doesn't it? If I go out to the wheat field before the wheat is ready to be brought in, I've ruined my work. You know?

What's the point I'm making here? The point I'm making is that there's a time to these things. Timing is involved in these issues of evangelism. And I bring this up because I hear from Christians *a lot* who want to reach their family

members. For whatever reason, you know they're— some people just have family who've rejected the LORD.

Some people, I mean, I'll get a note from somebody, they'll write me and say, “My son has gotten involved in a lifestyle that I know is ungodly and dangerous and destructive. And I want to reach this [son].” So they'll say, “Pastor Paul, give me a scripture, you know, that I can go, and I can... or tell me how I can talk to this person.”

And I always have to remind them, “Listen, you have to start by preparing the soil.” And I remind people, if you go talk to somebody before the soil's been prepared, it's not going to do any good. They're going to reject what you say. Because Jesus, that's what Jesus told us in the parable of the sower. If the heart is hard and they're not ready to listen, then you're going to go and you might even shut them down further. And you have to consider that as a possibility.

“Well then what am I supposed to do?” (Throwing ‘their’ hands up in the air in futility.)

“You pray. You start with prayer. ‘LORD prepare the ground, prepare the soil.’ Do you know that only God can do that? And He will use circumstances in their life and He will bring people across their path and He will do this or do that... and *He will bring them to a place of softening.*”

And it is up to *you* to be watching for that, the sign of that softening to take place. And you have to pay attention and look for that open door and you— and it might come in conversation or something, you know that they.... Who knows how it might be?

But you've got to be watching and you've got to be discerning. And you have to know when is the season for planting. And then it might take a long time between the time when you plant and when there's a reaping, a harvest— when that person, you know, comes to the LORD. You know it could take a long time, Guys. It can take decades. When I say a long time, some of you're going, “Yeah, yeah. A few weeks.”

No, a lot longer. You know, I was sharing with the men on Friday. I kind of jumped in on the men's group, crashed their group. But I was sharing how there was a— I got a note— a letter, a few years back from a gal. I've told some of you this, who was involved in a lesbian relationship, and you know she couldn't, they couldn't go to church, so they went online. Started hearing the Word. And

they got hooked and they started listening, not just on Sundays, they listened every day.

She said, “Every day we'd listen. Every day we'd, as we were getting ready to go to work, turn on, you know, YouTube and listen to teachings through the Bible.” And they just— they happened to find Calvary Chapel Ontario. I think she's from down south somewhere. Two years, two years of hearing the word every single day. *Two years*, until these two women finally looked at each other and said, “We can't do this anymore. We have to change our life.”

And you know, that just reminded me... when I got that letter I remember being just kind of taken aback. Because I mean, these are women who've been hearing the Word now every single day *for two years*. And they— after two years, they finally said, “Something has to change.”

“And I want it to happen in two minutes, you know,” [says the impatient witness]. I want to get on an airplane and in the time it takes me to forget from, you know, Boise to Minneapolis, I want to witness to somebody and have them praying to receive Jesus by the time we land in Minneapolis. And if they don't, something is wrong.” No! There's a season here, People.

Now Jesus is getting his disciples to recognize the one that they're in right now. Here's all these people coming from the Samaritan Town, “Guys, look up. This is harvest time. There's going to be other times when we're just going to be planting, but this is harvest time! Get ready, get out your sickle. We're going to be doing some work here and it's going to be fun.” You know?

So I tell people, again, when you've got loved ones, here's the deal: when you have loved ones in your life that you want to come to Jesus, you're emotionally connected to those people. Do you know that that can be a problem? Your emotional connection to people can actually be a problem because you want it to happen *now*. (Pastor snaps his fingers) Right? And so you end up doing things and saying things that maybe— and trying to break open the door when it's not open.

Or you try to plant seed on soil that just hadn't been prepared. Because you want them desperately to come to know Jesus as their Savior. But you have to be aware of the seasons and the times, and you have to do what you can do.

And I tell 'em, I tell people over and over, “Pray. Keep praying. Don't stop praying. Pray that God would do that work of preparing their hearts. Pray that God would prepare the soil of their heart to hear. Pray that they'd be open.”

And people write to me and they say, “Pastor Paul, my son is just violently opposed to the Word of God.” *Well then you've got a lot of praying to do.* And don't give up and don't stop.

Jesus goes on here. You know, as I'm looking at verse 36, He says, “*Already the one who reaps is receiving wages.*” I thought, wow, that is pretty cool. These guys, and He goes on to tell them here that, “You're basically going to be involved in a harvest process and you didn't have anything to do with the planting or anything else. You're just going to— you're just here to harvest. And you're going to get paid. You're going to, you're going to receive your wages.”

Now that's a very interesting thought, isn't it? Sometimes we get to be involved in bringing people to Jesus, and I had nothing to do with getting them to the place of making that confession of faith. But I get to be there. And not only do I get to be there, I get rewarded for it. Isn't— doesn't that just blow your mind?

Have you ever had an opportunity to pray with somebody to receive the LORD? And you know that somebody else did the praying, did the hard, the heavy lifting. But you got to be there and it was so ripe, but just fell into your lap.

And I've had that happen several times in my life, where I've prayed with somebody to receive the LORD and I've only known him for five minutes and they got saved. It is cool, but somebody did the work, somebody labored, somebody prepared. And who knows how long it took?

Yeah, I had a brother— and again, I was sharing this with the men of the fellowship. I had a brother that used to attend here before he moved away, and he told me one time how he was discouraged because he'd never prayed with anybody to receive Christ. He said, I've never gotten, never once been able to pray with someone to receive the LORD. But I know that brother was a man that often shared his faith with people.

So it's like, “Hey Dude, you're a planter. Okay? You're a planter and I know that you love to share your faith with people, so you're out there planting. Well just be faithful and plant. You may never, you may— you may go through this whole life and never pray with anybody. You may never be a ‘finisher’ like they like to say. That's okay. Somebody else will come along and do it for you. That's fine. You'll both get paid. You'll both get your wages, you know? *Just be faithful.* Just be faithful. Right? And just do what the LORD has given you to do.”

You know, we talk about planting, we talk about harvesting. The apostle Paul gives us an insight into another element of the whole evangelistic process in

First Corinthians. Now, let me put this on the screen. First Corinthians chapter three, look at this.

1 Corinthians 3:6-8 (ESV)

I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor.

He says, “*I planted, Apollos,*” oh, here's a new one. He says, “*Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.*” That's the LORD's business there. So he (Paul) says, “*Neither he who plants nor he who waters is really anything but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and who waters. They're one.*” They're basically doing the same job, although they're doing different functions of that job. And he (Paul) says, “*Each one will receive his wages according to his labor.*” Right? So he's telling us here that there's another element of the this evangelistic process, which is watering.

So you meet somebody. And you weren't, you weren't the one that planted the seed in their life, but you find out that somebody witnessed to them and they've been thinking about it and pondering that, but they haven't yet come to Christ. And so what do you do? You start praying for 'em and you encourage 'em to get into the Word and read more and study more and understand better. And you're watering.

And you may not be the person who's going to come and do the harvest, but you are a waterer. Okay? So we got a planter, we got a waterer, and we have a harvester. Just be faithful. Just be faithful. Do what the LORD gives you to do whenever He gives you to do it. You know? Because we're not all the same thing.

Now in verse 39 (of John 4), we read, “*Many Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me all that I ever did.'*” And this is the first thing that generated a sense of faith in these Samaritan people. The woman gave her testimony. And when you share your testimony that can generate faith to get people moving forward to come and meet Jesus, too.

But check out what happens next. Verse 40, “*So when the Samaritans came to Him, they asked Him to stay with them, and He stayed there two days and many more believed.*” But I want you to check out the reason why they believed, and

you might want to underline or highlight this in your Bible, *“They believed because of His word.”* Did you catch that? Now, that might not grab you by the throat when you read it. But that's a very significant statement, *“They believed because of His word.”*

Did you catch that? He didn't, we don't have any mention here of any miracles that Jesus did while He was there for that two days in that Samaritan village. Apparently [He] didn't heal anybody. So why did these people believe? *“They believed because of His word.”* In other words, they took Him at His word.

Do you know how difficult that is? Do you know how challenging that can be? In fact they repeated again, look at verse 42, *“They said to the woman, ‘It is no longer because of what you said that we believe.’”* In other words, *“We've moved past your testimony, ‘for we have heard for ourselves.’”* Right? *“We've heard for ourselves,”* and this is really truly astounding. I think this is incredible because, *“They believed Him [simply] because of His word.”*

The Jews had a real hard time doing that. You remember what Paul said about the Jews. He said, *“We Jews, we look for signs,”* (1 Corinthians 1:22) looking for miracles. In fact, He's (Jesus) going to say that, we'll talk about that next week. When He gets up into Galilee, there's a man that's going to come to Him to heal his son. And Jesus is going to say, *“Unless you people see signs, you won't believe a thing”* (John 4:48). And so He confronts that characteristic of needing a sign, needing to see something.

But for these people (the Samaritans), they simply believed because Jesus *said it*. Can you imagine? Oh this is pretty incredible because, you know, we know ourselves, we know human nature. Most of us need to see and then believe. We're just like Thomas, aren't we?

Remember Tom, the disciple Thomas? He uh— I don't know what was going on in Thomas' life, but the night of the resurrection, the evening of the resurrection, the Bible tells us that Jesus appeared to His disciples. They were in a room, the door was locked because they were afraid they were going to be next. You know? And so suddenly Jesus is just standing in their midst and He says, *“Hey, peace be with you.”* Which is a good thing to say when you just jump into a room without coming through the door. (laughter) Just keep that in mind if that ever happens. But He, He, you know, He— and they're just thrilled, you know. So what do they do?

They go, they find Thomas, *“Thomas, you're not going to believe this— Jesus is raised from the dead!”* And they were right. Thomas didn't believe it. He said, *“I*

won't believe it until I see it. Until I can touch Him. Nope. No can do." So what happened? Let me put this on the screen. John chapter 20.

John 20:26-29 (ESV)

Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands, and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." 28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

²⁶ Eight days later, His disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷ Then He said to Thomas.... Did you notice that? He goes right to Thomas. "Put your finger here, and see My hands, and put out your hand, and place it in My side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." ²⁸ Thomas answered Him, "My Lord and my God!"

I want you to notice what Jesus says next. This is very important, "*Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have yet believed.'*" Do you see what Jesus is doing here? He's making it very clear to you and me through this whole process, and this story of the Samaritans really underscores this, that we honor the LORD when we take Him at His word. We honor Him.

Now, I'm not saying that, you know if you've seen a miracle in your life and that brought you to come to Christ and eventually give your life to Him.... Great, wonderful, that's not a problem. You're not a second-class citizen in the kingdom of God. All I'm saying is, *there is a higher level of faith.*

And it's funny, every time I mention this, and I've taught this before, I usually get some pushback from Christians. I'll get a letter or a note or [something] and somebody will take issue with it when I say that this is a higher form of faith to believe and to take God simply at His word. But I believe it with all my heart.

In fact, you know what, that was how Abraham was called a righteous man. The Bible says, "And Abraham believed God. And God credited it to him as righteousness." (Romans 4:3, Galatians 3:6 and others) He just believed. He didn't have to see anything. He just believed. He (Abraham) took Him (God) at His word.

And that is so important. And that's what we see these Samaritans doing. They're saying, "We believe. We heard Him, we heard Him speak. It's enough for us. Done. We are done. We got it. We believe."

Now, what did they believe? Look at the end of verse 42. I didn't finish the whole— reading the whole verse. The end of the verse says, "*And we know....*" So they believe Jesus, but he (John) says, "*And we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.*"

Now this is really incredible... because not only did they believe who Jesus was and they believed everything He said about Himself, they believed He was the Savior of the world. Why is that incredible? Because the Jews did not believe that at all. They— most Jews believed that Gentiles were kindling for the fires of Hell, and Gentiles could not be saved.

In fact, even the Jews that got saved in the early Church... you'll remember in the book of Acts when Gentile people started coming to the LORD, they were dubious. They were like, "What? Get out. Gentiles?!?" They had to— remember what happened?

They had to call a meeting. They had to call a meeting. You can read it for yourself. It's in Acts chapter 11. They had to call a meeting and they called Peter and said, "What's going on anyway?" So Peter had to tell them, "Oh, you're not going to believe this Guys, but I was sitting, I was on the roof waiting for lunch to be made, and the LORD gave me a vision."

"And there was this huge sheet let down from heaven and da-da-da, and eventually God started speaking to me about not calling things unclean that He's determined are clean. And then these men showed up. And they were from the house of this Roman guy named Cornelius. And they invited me to come with them and the LORD told me, 'Go with them.' So I did. And I went to the house of Cornelius and I started sharing the gospel with them and they got saved"

And they're (the Jews) like, "Wait. They did not."

"Listen," Peter says, "the Spirit fell on them just like He fell on us on the day of Pentecost. I saw it with my own eyes."

You know how it's funny how Acts Chapter 11 ends? It's like, "Well, I don't believe it. (Pastor throws his hands up in the air.) Even the Gentiles can be saved." They're (the Jews) just like, "What next?!?" You know? They're just like, "This is incredible! Gentiles can be saved."

Isn't it interesting these Samaritans had it dialed in years earlier when they say, "Not only do we believe in Jesus, we believe He is the Savior of the world." Wow. It really is a pretty incredible thing. So Jesus stayed with these people for a couple of days.

I have to wonder, you know, as we get into this next section next week, I have to wonder if Jesus was a little discouraged when He got to Galilee and began to be among His own people again, and that thirst for a sign, you know, that longing for a sign show is going to show itself right away . And we'll deal with that next week.

But I want to just leave you with this, just encourage you that God has given you His Word. Do you believe it? Do you take Him at His word? Or do you question it or push it aside or push it away, or do you just take Him at His word? It takes courage, it takes faith, but there's a blessed condition that Jesus pronounces upon those who believe without seeing, who believe because they understand the character of the Person speaking. And because I know His character, I believe what He says. Amen? Let's stand together.

If you need prayer, we would love to pray for you today. So as you're heading out, come on down front, we'd like to pray.

Heavenly Father, I thank You for Your Word here today. I thank You for the reminders. And I know that there are a lot of people here in this room and there's a bunch who are watching us live online, and some of them are sowers and some of them are waterers and still others are harvesters.

LORD, whatever position You may put us in, or even multiple positions in some cases, we ask in the Name of Jesus, Your Son, that You would make our hearts faithful to serve You and to be diligent with whatever You've given us to do.

And as we walk through this life, LORD, give us a heart of faith that takes You at Your word and believes, needs no further convincing, but understands Him Who has spoken as the eternal God Who cannot lie and Who is faithful in all His ways. Help us LORD, always to believe, to trust, and to put our hope in You. We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ. And all God's people said together, amen.

God bless you. Have a good rest of your day.