

# The Time is Now!

**John 4:30-43**

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**Introduction:** Jesus has just been offering this lady some sort of water that will definitively satisfy her thirst. She initially thinks He is speaking of physical water so naturally the offer sounds like nonsense to her. When Jesus says that His water is “living” water or “the water of life,” She responds with skepticism and a touch of mockery saying...”you have nothing to draw with!”.... and then.... “are you greater than our father Jacob?”

Like this woman all of us need to be led in our thinking from the physical, temporary world into the spiritual and eternal world. This insight will help you to understand how Jesus preached. He came from an eternal heaven into a very temporary world. He offered eternal life to men and women who only possess temporary life...in this temporary world.

Here is a key point as we begin this morning. Jesus does not say that this temporary, physical world cannot satisfy our temporary, physical needs. What Jesus reveals is a reality to which most of humanity is blind. This life is temporary. All the things that satisfy our physical life are temporary as is our physical life itself. This is the snare of the world. It promises temporary satisfaction and gives precious little of that because of the broken nature of institutions, religion and the very heart of men. The Bible does not warn you of the world because everything in it is evil. It warns you because everything in it is passing away....running down.....wearing out. As such it is unable to ultimately help you in the inner man and satisfy the longings of your soul.

**1 John 2:15-17** <sup>15</sup> Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup> For all that is in the world- the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions- is not from the Father but is from the world. <sup>17</sup> And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

Again...this is why Jesus made such bold statements about eternity. They have nothing to do whatsoever with religion and morality. They are about your life now not just then!

**Mark 8:35-37** <sup>35</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. <sup>36</sup> For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? <sup>37</sup> For what can a man give in return for his life?

Notice that Jesus does not say “forfeit his eternal life or his spiritual life.” He says “his life.” This is what Jesus knew, because he is God the one who made you.

**Luke 12:15** “one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”

This world's satisfactions are not evil they are just insufficient. They will never satisfy the inner person of the heart and let's face it....that is where we all ultimately live.

**Ecclesiastes 5:19-20** <sup>19</sup> Everyone also to whom God has given **wealth** and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil- this is the gift of God. <sup>20</sup> For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.

Jesus was a master at pressing this vital reality home to the hearts of men. He starts with something everyone can understand. With Nicodemus it was birth. With the crowds he had fed by the shore of Galilee, it was bread and with the woman at the well it was water. What will it be today with His own disciples, the hardworking farmers of Samaria and us. Let's see!

**John 4:30-43** <sup>30</sup> They went out of the city, and were coming to Him. <sup>31</sup> Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." <sup>32</sup> But He said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." <sup>33</sup> So the disciples were saying to one another, "No one brought Him *anything* to eat, did he?" <sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work. <sup>35</sup> "Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and *then* comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. <sup>36</sup> "Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup> "For in this *case* the saying is true, 'One sows and another reaps.' <sup>38</sup> "I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored and you have entered into their labor." <sup>39</sup> From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all the things that I *have* done." <sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. <sup>41</sup> Many more believed because of His word; <sup>42</sup> and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world." <sup>43</sup> After the two days He went forth from there into Galilee.

This is why this part of Scripture is important to you. We are aware of our physical needs and desires because we live in a physical world. We are more or less dead to the spiritual aspect of our being. That is why Christ came. Men try to satisfy the inner man with something that can only satisfy the outer man. In the end men die leaving everything behind, but not before becoming disillusioned with the world and what it has to offer. Love, money status cannot every satisfy the eternal and inner man.

I want you to stand in the crowd of Samaritans with me this morning as we listen to the Master explain these things to His own disciples and us as well. Jesus speaks of:

- The unseen world of the spirit [30-34]
- The present reality of the world of the spirit [35]
- The present rewards of the world of the spirit [36-43]

### ..3..3 The unseen world of the spirit [30-34]

**John 4:30-34** <sup>30</sup> They went out of the town and were coming to him. <sup>31</sup> Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." <sup>32</sup> But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." <sup>33</sup> So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?" <sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.

So...here is the scene. Jesus is out at the well. Just as the disciples arrive the woman sets down her jars and heads into town to testify that she met someone who seems like he could be the Christ. He was offering her "living water" but that is not what she testifies to. She witnesses to WHO Jesus is. "He is a man who knows me to the very depth of my soul. He peered into my heart and told me everything I had ever done." There is not a word about what He would give, but instead about who He is.

It is who Christ is that matters to you. If He is the founder of a religion then you have every right to ask yourself, what good you can receive from religion. But if He is the one who gave you your physical life and eternal soul because wanted to, then that is entirely different. The focus in the Bible is always, always on who Jesus is. What He does at any given time is only done to prove WHO HE IS!

The disciples have bought lunch and brought it out to the Lord. They have been walking all morning, they are very hungry and so they assume Jesus is also hungry. They say "Rabbi, eat!"

This is where religious folk start getting into trouble. Jesus is not saying that there is anything wrong with the food or with wanting to eat it. No doubt Jesus did eat. We have records of Him eating regular food with regular folk. There is nothing wrong with the physical food, but Jesus wants to establish His theme when He says,

**John 4:32** "I have food to eat that you do not know about."

Christ always used the circumstances He was in to teach about God and the unseen world of the spirit. He does not say He doesn't want their food. He does not say there is something wrong with eating. He says...."I have food that you cannot perceive." It is unseen food. You can look for it but you will not perceive it." He is close to saying "I am eating food that you cannot see." They respond by saying to one another..."Has anyone brought him something to eat?"

Like Nicodemus, the crowds He fed, and the woman at this well Jesus is about to take us from the physical world to the world of the spirit. He says to them.....

**John 4:34** "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.

For Jesus' part, He is saying that what satisfies His unseen hunger is a spiritual food that consists of accomplishing the things that God has set out for Him to do. Christ's purpose and yours are very different although they are related.

**Luke 19:10** "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

**Matthew 5:17** "Do not think that **I have come** to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

**John 12:46** **I have come** into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.

Ultimately Jesus came to reveal God...who is spirit to man who is physical. He came to live the sinless life that you could never live, but that you absolutely need to live in order to live eternally in the presence of God. Jesus lived that life on your behalf. He came to pay for your sins that you could never pay for, but that you absolutely needed to pay for in order to live eternally in the presence of God. Christ's unseen spiritual "food" is summed up by this verse:

**2 Corinthians 5:21** For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

But this begs another question that is pressing for us. What is our purpose? What is my unseen spiritual purpose in the world that will satisfy my soul? To answer the unspoken question Jesus does what He does best....

## **The present reality of the world of the spirit [35-37]**

**John 4:35-37** <sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup> For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.'

**Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'?:** This is probably a saying of the day. In all likelihood it refers to the period of time that it takes from planting until the harvest. During which time, there is not much to do. Crops were watered by the rain and they grew on their own. Preparing and sowing was hard work but the rewards came months later at harvest.

This is the reality of the physical world in which we live. But, it is not the same in the unseen world of the spirit according to Jesus. But this reality escapes many believers. They see all the spiritual rewards as almost entirely future. This is why they cannot see the value of serving one another in church or supporting missions and ministries with their money and time.

Tragically for many, they have even deferred Joy and fulfillment for some unspecified time in the future...after they die or after the Lord comes again. It is this human inclination to live only in the physical world that Jesus seeks to change with His disciples and with us when He says...

**John 4:35** Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.

I have never seen white fields myself. I am told that Barley fields have a whitish appearance when the grain is ripe. Some people think Jesus was motioning to the men in white robes coming out of the city toward them.

**Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together:** The clear point however is that the unseen world of the spirit is not future. Its rewards are not only for heaven. Love, joy and peace are not only for when you die.

Yes it is food that you do not perceive...this unseen world of the spirit. We perceive our own physical lives and needs. We have bills to pay and things that need repaired and bought...but we are waiting until some future time to experience the things that satisfy the inner man...but Jesus said the time to receive wages for eternity begins now. Try to process this for a moment. The rewards of the unseen world can be worked for and garnered right now. If we have eyes to see them. Christ Jesus came to open your eyes to the unseen reality of the spirit in your physical life.

**For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps:** I was told that these verses are about doing personal evangelism and that the fruit we take to heaven consists of the number of souls you can win over to Christ. I am hoping you can back your way out of this dead end and look at what Jesus said here.

In the physical world it is the one who reaps the harvest that gets the reward. If you prepare the soil, sow the seed and then are unable to harvest the crop you have done all the work and gotten no reward. Not so in the unseen world that Jesus came to reveal to you today. In the real world of the spirit...one sows and another reaps, but both rejoice together. Both lay up treasure in heaven together. Both share in the harvest. And neither take any credit for what they did not make grow while at the same time being rewarded for their work. This is what Jesus means when He says...

**John 4:38** <sup>38</sup> I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

In this real and yet unseen world of the spirit, what is the labor that leads to a wages and fruit? The closing words of this passage explains.

**The present rewards of the world of the spirit [38-42]**

**John 4:39-42** <sup>39</sup> Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." <sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. <sup>41</sup> And many more believed because of his word. <sup>42</sup> 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."

**Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did.":** It was the testimony of the woman who was not even certain that Jesus was the Christ. But she had something to say about Him...."He knows about the emptiness of my heart....He knows my pain and grief and hopes and needs.....I know He knows because "He told me all that I ever did."

Earlier I said that Jesus was sent to do something different than what we are sent to do. We are sent to testify....like a witness in a courtroom to what we know.

**Acts 1:8** <sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

As soon as I say this I can feel the chill run up your spine. I can't speak in public! I am not good one on one! I am afraid of strangers! Now think about this for a moment and let me explain something about witnesses; THEY ARE ONLY ALLOWED TO TESTIFY TO WHAT THEY ACTUALLY KNOW!

They cannot say, "somebody told me that they saw the defendant steal that purse." They can only testify by saying, "I saw that defendant steal that purse." Now I want to give you a home work assignment this week. I want you to go home and ask yourself what you can testify to about Jesus Christ in a court of law. Witnesses do not need to prove their testimony they only need to give it. What about Christ are you absolutely sure of and can testify to?

**So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word:** The woman was not well trained in the Bible....in fact she only had five of the books of the Bible in Samaria and she did not even know those properly. She did however know something about Jesus and she testified to that. But...when you do remember that you did not sow and you did not make anything grow. If you were to reap something it would be entirely the doing of someone else. DO THIS....invite whoever hears your story to "come meet a man who knows everything you have ever done" and loves you deeply.

When the Samaritans came, the Bible says, "many more believed because of His Word." You and I need to regain our confidence in the truth of the Gospel message. It can soften the hardest heart. It is the life giving word of the life giver. It strips away the façade of the physical, temporal and passing world to reveal what is spiritual and eternal.

**CONCLUSION:** And so...this account ends like it started. It was initiated by Christ. It was always about Christ and it was intended to bring men to faith in Christ and not in the physical and passing world. God engaged this lowly woman. He then used her to testify and then used her testimony to bring men to Christ. In the end the Samaritans themselves...

**John 4:42** <sup>42</sup> ...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."

The grand scheme of eternity is playing out now. It is unseen to our physical eyes because we are of the earth. But there is more to you than physical sight. There are the hidden and unseen things of the heart...the inner man that Christ can satisfy with spiritual water and bread. And this food is eternal not temporal. Christ calls you not to seek heart satisfaction in the world? He pleads with us saying....

**Matthew 6:19-21** <sup>19</sup> "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, <sup>20</sup> but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Neither Sowers nor Reapers create a harvest. The sower takes a seed that he did not make and plants it in the ground. The reaper takes a plant that he did not make grow and gathers its fruit. Neither produce life...one labors in the field at the beginning with no reward. The other labors in that field at the end with no credit. That is the physical world, but in the world of the spirit both share in the reward. Christ has sent us to labor.

Do you have all the spiritual stuff on hold in your life? Are you waiting until you die to do something that has eternal value? Don't do that. There is sowing and reaping to do now. Get involved in doing some of it. Spend some of your time and money and strength on it. Tell what you know....God is powerful to use small things. Become available to God for His purposes and for eternal rewards. Not tomorrow or next month...But NOW!

**Matthew 6:19-30** <sup>19</sup> "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where **moth** and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, <sup>20</sup> but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither **moth** nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.... <sup>25</sup> "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? <sup>27</sup> And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? <sup>28</sup> And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, <sup>29</sup> yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.