

Living In the Light of the Gospel of John #2

John 4—John 6

We live at a time when many that call themselves Christians are betraying Jesus with their actions. Evangelical theologian Michael Horton states, “Gallup and Barna hand us survey after survey demonstrating that evangelical Christians are as likely to embrace lifestyles every bit as hedonistic, materialistic, self-centered, and sexually immoral as the world in general”. George Barna declares, “Everyday, the church is becoming more like the world it allegedly seeks to change”. If we are going to change the world through the power of God rather than be changed by the world, we must experience life in the light of the Word of God. In John 1 we saw that Jesus is the Word which became flesh and dwelt among us. In John 2 we experience Jesus cleansing the temple illustrating how He desires to cleanse the temple of our body. John 3 showed us that we must be born again becoming a people who are alive in the presence of the Living God. Now in John 4 we see Jesus showing us how to be instruments of change in a hurting world.

To witness means to share an experience, an event or other news with someone else in hopes it will help to change their life for the better. In John 4:1-26 Jesus shows how to do this as He interacts with the woman at the Well. The first thing He does is to begin talking to her about something she is thinking about. In verses 7-9 we see that this is water. Jesus takes this discussion about the physical element of water and proceeds to share with her the truth about the waters of spiritual life. “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life”(John

4:13,14). Jesus knew that just as the body hungers and thirst so does the soul. In this case the woman's thirst for love had caused her to not only have 5 husbands but to now be living with a man she was not even married to. Jesus wasn't judging this woman but instead was communicating to her that He had something much better to offer than another disappointing human relationship that was not centered in the love of God. He was sharing with her that true love and fulfillment came from worship, that was not limited to a geographical location. Jesus made this possible through His death and resurrection and now is declaring, "But the time is coming—it has, in fact, come—when what you're called will not matter and where you go to worship will not matter. It's who you are and the way you live that count before God. Your worship must engage your spirit in the pursuit of truth. That's the kind of people the Father is out looking for: those who are simple and honestly themselves before Him in their worship. God is sheer being itself—Spirit. Those who worship Him must do it out of their very being, their spirits, their true selves in adoration"(John 4:23,24 The Message Bible). This fulfilling worship, power and life is now possible through Jesus Christ who declares in John 14:6, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me".

In John 4 not only does Jesus speak of water that can quench our thirsty spirit, but He also speaks of the food that can truly nourish us. In John 4:34 He declares, "My nourishment comes from doing the will of God who sent Me, and from finishing His work"(The Living Bible). What do you think Jesus meant by these words? Now He tells us, "Look around you! Vast fields of human souls are ripening all around us, and are ready now for reaping. The reapers will be paid good wages and will be gathering eternal souls into the granaries of heaven! What joy awaits the sower and the reaper, both together"(John 4:35, 36 The Living Bible). How do these verses indicate how really important sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ is in our daily lives?

Jesus has entrusted the truth of eternal life to each of us to share with others. The woman at the Well hears this truth. She believed Him when He said, “The water I give them becomes a perpetual spring within them, watering them forever with eternal life”(John 4:14 TLB). As a result of her belief this woman went and told everyone she met about Jesus. “Many of the Samaritans from that village committed themselves to Him because of the woman’s witness: ‘He knew all about the things I did. He knows Me inside and out!’ They asked Him to stay on, so Jesus stayed two days. A lot more people entrusted their lives to Him when they heard what He had to say. They said to the woman, ‘We’re no longer taking this on your say-so. We heard it for ourselves and know it for sure. He’s the Savior of the world”(John 4:39-42 The Message Bible). These people had experienced truth.

Experiencing this truth involves faith. When the official asked Jesus to heal his son, Jesus responds, “You may go. Your son will live”. “The man took Jesus at His word and departed. While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living”(John4:50,51 NIV). The key to victorious living involves taking Jesus at His word. That is the secret for being an overcomer in this world. Taking Jesus at His Word and then living in that Word enables us to be as Paul declares, “more than conquerors through Christ Jesus who strengthens us”.

Remember in the book of Numbers we saw the children of Israel wandering for an extra 38 years in the wilderness because they insisted on not believing the Word of God and entering the Promised Land. Unbelief paralyzes, immobilizes and keeps us from being all God wants us to be. In John 5:5,6 we read, “one who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, He asked him, ‘Do you want to get well’”(NIV). Now He is asking you and me, “do you want to get well”? If so we must receive and dare to believe for Jesus is saying, “whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed,

the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life”(John 4:14 NIV). How does John 3:16-18 make it absolutely clear that belief is essential if one is to drink the water of life that Christ is giving? As we believe and let Christ, the Hope of Glory come and live within every part of our lives, we are able to share with everyone that “we know this Man (Jesus) really is the Savior of the World”(John 4:42 NIV).

Those who truly believe that Jesus is the Savior of the world are a people who are healed from the paralysis of fear which keeps them from being the revolutionary force for good that God is calling forth at this time. Can you hear Him telling you now, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk”(John 5:8 NIV). When this man at the pool of Bethesda heard these words and believed we read in John 5:9, “The man was healed on the spot. He picked up his bedroll and walked off” (TMB). This man had been paralyzed for so long it had become a way of life. Since no one ever helped him into the water he had lost all hope and desire to even help himself, even though the situation looked hopeless Jesus still reached out to him and healed him. If only we will look to Jesus in our time of need we shall also experience His miraculous power in the midst of our hopelessness.

Even after this miracle took place and Jesus healed this man the Jewish leaders still did not accept Him. In fact these Pharisees were more concerned about their petty rules of not working on the Sabbath, which involved carrying your bedroll after you were healed, then they were about the restoration of a fellow human being. As result they not only missed experiencing the miracle that was taking place before them but they also did not honor Jesus the Son of God. In John 5:23,24 Jesus declares, “If you refuse to honor God’s Son, whom He sent to you, then you are certainly not honoring the Father. I say emphatically that anyone who listens to my message and believes in God who sent me has eternal life, and will never be damned for his sins, but has already passed out of death into life”(The Living Bible).

Studying Scripture is important if we let that study point us to Jesus. He states, “You have your head in your Bible constantly because you think you’ll find eternal life there. But you miss the forest for the trees. These Scriptures are all about Me! And here I am standing right before you, and you aren’t willing to receive from Me the life you say you want”(John 5:39,40 TMB). Jesus is the giver of life. John in his book of Scripture chose eight of Christ’s miracles to reveal His divine life-giving mission. These miracles include #1. Turning water to wine (John 2:1-11), #2. Healing the official’s son (4:46-54), #3. Healing the man who is unable to walk (5:1-9), #4. Feeding the 5,000 with just a few loaves and fish (6:1-14), #5. Walking on the water (6:15-21), #6. Restoring sight to the blind man (9:1-4), #7. Raising Lazarus from the dead (11:1-44) and after the miracle of the resurrection #8. Giving the disciples an overwhelming catch of fish (21:1-14). Every chapter of John reveals the divinity of Jesus Christ.

After feeding the 5000 Jesus withdrew by Himself to a mountain. The disciples proceed to get into a boat and go across the lake for Capernaum. Three and half miles across the lake they encounter a strong wind and rough waters. As Jesus approaches them on the water they were terrified. They didn't expect Jesus to come to them in their time of need. If we expect His presence we won't be surprised or terrified when the storms of life arise. Instead we will hear Him say, “It is I, don't be afraid”(John 6:20 NIV). Believing and holding on to the teaching of Jesus gives us freedom from fear. Living in the realization of God's love day-by-day, moment-by moment enables us to believe that He is there at all times. Yet, Jesus says, “But you shouldn't be so concerned about perishable things like food. No, spend your energy seeking the eternal life that I, the Messiah, can give you. For God the Father has sent Me for this very purposes”(John 6:27 The Living Bible). He is saying this in response to those who saw Him multiply the fishes and loaves. Jesus goes on and says, “I am the Bread of Life, He who comes to Me will never go thirsty”(John 6:35 NIV). Jesus is telling us that He alone can meet our inner longings. Feasting on His Word of the

Scriptures, beholding the wonders of His creation and drinking in the depth of His Spirit fill us like nothing else can. This fulfillment and freedom that only the resurrected Christ can provide applies not only to the emptiness and boredom of this life, but also for all eternity. “For My Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise Him up on the last day” (John 6:40 NIV).

Those enslaved in sin don’t believe that Jesus can give them eternal life. Yet the reality remains, “The Spirit gives life, but the flesh counts for nothing”(John 6:63 NIV). Peter believing this, declares to Jesus, “You have the words to eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God”(John 6:68,68 NIV). Do you agree with Peter? If so, how is Jesus making a difference in your life?

Please join me this week in reading John 7-9. As we read together let us pray that the Holy Spirit will lead us into a fuller revelation of who Jesus is and how His presence can revolutionize our lives.

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