

**The Gospel of John**  
**Week Six**  
**John 4:27-54**

**Day One**

27 Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?" 28 Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 29 "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" 30 They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

v. 27 – Jesus disciples were surprised when they found Him conversing with a woman. This didn't happen in Israel with Jewish women and there He was talking to a despised Samaritan woman. Jesus was the champion of and for women. How I wish the church could say the same.

We have often tried to achieve the church's mission with one arm tied behind our back, because we often refuse to incorporate women into the life and ministry of the Church. I was just reading a book on worship that quoted extensively from Exodus 15. The author, however, conveniently passed over two verses because they did not fit with his theology or thoughts where women in ministry were concerned:

Then Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women followed her, with tambourines and dancing. Miriam sang to them: "Sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea" (Exodus 15:20-22).

Those who forbid women to teach men also pass over this passage in Acts:

Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately (Acts 18:24-26).

**Was Priscilla “guilty” of teaching a man named Apollos? I would think so! What is your philosophy of ministry where women are concerned?**

vs. 28&29 – The woman left her jar, indicating that she would return, and went home to tell her neighbors that she had met a man. No one was surprised that she had met a man; she had spent her whole adult life “meeting men.” Yet her report intrigued them because this Jewish man had told her everything she ever did (an exaggeration). The woman indicated that Jesus could have been the Christ. So the Samaritans came out because they were looking for Messiah's coming, just like the Jews.

v. 30 – This woman became an instant evangelist who began leading people to Jesus. The people came at her recommendation to hear and see Jesus for themselves. These Samaritans would have been as biased against Jews as the woman had been, but Jesus attracted them to Himself. He still draws people to Himself today, from every part of the globe.

## Day Two

31 Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something." 32 But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." 33 Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?" 34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."

v. 31 – When the disciples had left Jesus, He was hungry and tired, so they went to get something to eat while He stayed behind to rest. When they returned, He didn't seem interested in eating. They tried to urge Him to eat, not realizing that some other dynamic had overruled His hunger.

v. 32 – Jesus said that He had food to eat that the disciples knew something about. That food was to do the will of Him who sent Him. Jesus was so enthused by His encounter with the woman that He was no longer hungry. That is an indication of the power of purpose in your life. I often ask crowds and individuals, "What do you do that when you do it, you lose track of time and put off eating?" The answer to that question is a strong indication of what your purpose is.

Remember, Jesus had quoted Deuteronomy 8:3 to the devil when He was being tempted in the wilderness:

The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:3-4).

There is nourishment for our souls and bodies when we do God's will. **Are you "feeding" on your purpose? Do you have activities that exhilarate you in the will and purpose of God?** I hope you do, for there is no better feeling in the world than to be doing what God wants you to do where and when He wants you to do it.

v. 33 – Jesus had and has a way of confusing people, especially those who are limited or restricted in their thinking. First it was Nicodemus who was confused, then the woman at the well and now the disciples. It seemed like Jesus spoke in riddles, yet from our perspective 2000 years later, He made perfect sense.

**Is your limited thinking causing you to think too small or incorrectly where God and His word are concerned? Where do you think you are limiting yourself? What can you do to change? Why don't you ask the Lord to show you?**

v. 34 – Jesus responded quickly to their misconception, explaining that His food was to do the will of His Father. That should be our will, too. Notice that Jesus’ objective was not just to engage the work of the Father, but *finish* the work of the Father. **Are you a good starter, a good finisher or both? What is hindering you from being better in either area?**

### Day Three

35 Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. 36 Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. 37 Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. 38 I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor."

v. 35 – Jesus saw opportunity to advance God’s Kingdom everywhere He went. He was in Samaria and the fields were ripe for harvest! People both need and want the Lord, so, if your heart is to meet the need, there will be no lack of opportunities. **Are you out in the fields? Where are “the fields” for you? the poor? The rich? The down-trodden? A foreign land?** When I think of a purpose field, I think of the proverb that states:

He who works his land will have abundant food, but the one who chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty (Proverbs 28:19).

#### **Are you working your purpose fields? If not, why not?**

v. 36 – The Kingdom requires people who sow and those who reap, realizing that they are part of the same team. Sometimes you will start something and sometimes you will finish what someone else started. Yet if the team wins, we all win and you win, so the Kingdom isn’t a place where you protect what you perceive to be “yours.” There is no “yours” in the Kingdom, for it’s all His and ours.

Someone once said that God is looking for a people who don’t care who gets the credit when the work is done. **Is who gets the credit an issue for you? Are you happy when the team wins, or do you want to win regardless of whether or not the team wins? Don’t answer too quickly. How do you feel when work you have done is slighted, ignored or credit for that work is assigned to or taken by someone else?**

v. 37 – I am not sure where Jesus got this saying. It was probably a popular saying in circulation at the time Jesus ministered. The proverb simply restates the truth that everyone on the team has something to do, some role to perform, and they are all equal though different. I believe Paul was saying the same thing when he wrote:

I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow (1 Corinthians 3:6).

**What is your role in the work of the Kingdom? Who is on your team? Whose team are you a part of?**

v. 38 – Jesus turned this encounter with the woman into a teaching opportunity for the disciples. This indicates how important teaching is to the purpose and plan of God, and to leadership itself. You must always be mindful of those daily opportunities that you can turn from frustrations into learning opportunities for you and others. That is why I write and blog. I take what happens to me and try to explain what I learned to others.  
**How can you do this more effectively in your own life, work and ministry?**

#### Day Four

39 Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. 41 And because of his words many more became believers. 42 They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

v. 39 – Jesus must have had His own separate meeting with the Samaritans who came out to see Him, or else they listened into His teaching to the disciples (although the teaching in the previous few verses would hardly seem capable of impacting those who had no previous connection with Jesus). The woman obviously exaggerated for effect here, for Jesus did not actually tell her *everything* she had done. He did prove to her, however, that He had the capability of doing that by revealing her current and past marital status.

The woman did not hide from Jesus or try to avoid contact with Him because He had revealed the truth about her. This only caused her to “press in” all the more and go invite her friends to share in the joy of what and whom she had found. **Are you sharing the joy of finding Jesus with anyone else? Whom? How often?**

v. 40 – Jesus was on His way home to Galilee, but this brief stop turned into a two-day stay. **I wonder where Jesus and His disciples stayed? I wonder what and where they ate? I wonder how comfortable or uncomfortable the disciples were being in Samaria amongst people they did not like?** To their credit, these Samaritans prevailed on Jesus to stay around. There was another time when they would not even let Jesus pass through!

As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" But Jesus turned and rebuked them, and they went to another village” (Luke 9:51-56).

When they were refused entry on that occasion, John asked if they should call down fire on the lot of them! I include this to further indicate the disdain that existed between the two people groups and how Jesus came to bridge that gap through His own life and mission. **With whom are you bridging a gap to bring reconciliation and healing?** For me, it is between me and people of color, both in the United States and in Africa. I go to people who don't look like me so that God can do things in all of our lives that He could not do if I wasn't present. I like that.

v. 41 – Jesus stayed two more days while He taught and spoke to the people. They must have all spoken Aramaic so that they could converse with ease. Yet Jesus was not just teaching them, for many came to believe in Him. Jesus was fulfilling His purpose as expressed in Luke 18:

“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10).

Jesus was a man of purpose. **Are you going here and there to fulfill your purpose? If not, why not? If so, how can you be even more effective?**

v. 42 – The Samaritans came to a dramatic conclusion after Jesus' visit: He was and is the Savior of the world. God had opened their eyes to see the truth and they received it, in spite of their bias against Jews. **I wonder if Jesus expanded on what He had said to the woman at the well?** Oh how I wish we had the notes or the transcript from those two-day meetings. I suppose the message wasn't important, however. What was important was the result, and the result was the Samaritans declaring Jesus to be Lord and Savior. This proves that God's Word is not beyond anyone's reach or comprehension, no matter their background or incorrect doctrines.

### Day Five

43 After the two days he left for Galilee. 44 (Now Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his own country.) 45 When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, for they also had been there. 46 Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum.

vs. 43&44 – John reported that Jesus proceeded on His way to Galilee after His two days with the Samaritans. I am sure the disciples were ready to go long before that! John reminded us that Jesus had stated that prophets were not without honor except at home. Once people know you in one capacity, it is difficult for them to accept you in another. They residents of Nazareth knew Jesus as a carpenter's son, so they could not receive him in a new role. That made it necessary for Him to move to Capernaum.

The same dynamic could be true in your own life. It is hard for people to accept you in a new role once they know you as someone else. Those who knew me as a church administrator cannot accept me as a speaker and pastor. They cannot overcome that past

impression that limits me in their minds today. Therefore they cannot receive what I have because they cannot receive me. Is this what Jesus meant when He said:

Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward (Matthew 10:41).

Those who do not receive you as you are don't get the full benefit of what you can do. It's that simple and the same was true for those who lived in Jesus' day.

v. 45 – Keep in mind that the men of Israel were commanded to come to Jerusalem three times a year for three Feasts. Many Galileans had seen Jesus in action when they were in Jerusalem, so they were glad to see Him when He came to His adopted home. **Where are people glad to see you? Why don't you spend more time there? Why are trying to get people to accept you in a place where they cannot do so?** Go where you are celebrated and not just where you are tolerated.

v. 46 – **Who could this royal official have been?** Herod and his sons were considered kings, so perhaps this official was part of Herod's world and court. There were also royal officials who came from Rome and were part of Caesar's world. I would assume that this royal official was part of Herod's local staff and not a Roman official per se. The official's son was sick and dying in Jesus' new home. Jesus had launched His public ministry in Cana and now He had come back to do another good deed.

People were affected whenever and wherever Jesus appeared. You should have that same affect on people and places. **Do you? Are people glad to see you? Do you help meet the needs of people with whom you come in contact? What can you do to be more of a vessel carrying God's blessing to the people around you in need?** That is truly the mission that Jesus has assigned us while we are here:

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers (Galatians 6:10).

### Day Six

47 When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death. 48 "Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders," Jesus told him, "you will never believe." 49 The royal official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies." 50 Jesus replied, "You may go. Your son will live." The man took Jesus at his word and departed.

v. 47 – The royal official heard that Jesus had come. I wonder if this man had been in Jerusalem or if Jesus' fame had preceded Him to Galilee, so that the man was waiting for Him when He arrived. The man seemed to have easy access to Jesus. I marvel at how many modern church leaders work to make themselves inaccessible to the people with

whom they come in contact. The people are greeted by closed doors, administrative assistants and “armor bearing ushers.”

It wasn't so with Jesus and I try not to make it so with me. I make myself accessible, available to meet with people or for them to at least touch me. I feel that if I have something that someone needs to do their job or to help them function, I must serve them by making myself available to give that to them as quickly as possible. When I am offered an “armor bearer” when I am in Africa, my standard response is, “I don't have any armor to bear.” If I am in my office, my door is always open.

The royal official was not impressed with his own stature or position. He knew that he needed help, or rather that his son needed help. He was not too proud to beg God to do what he and his royal connections could not do. **Are you begging the King to do for you what you cannot do for yourself?**

v. 48 – Jesus' response seems a bit curt and harsh. Yet, we know that Jesus knew the hearts of men, so He was obviously seeing something here that no one else saw. The issue wasn't just the healing of the boy; the issue was faith in Him. And Jesus knew that unless He did signs and wonders, the people, or at least some of them, would not believe. **Do you need God to do great things before you will put your trust in Him?**

v. 49 – The man persisted in begging Jesus, knowing that Jesus was the only hope for his son. He assumed that Jesus would have to be present for the son to be healed. Like with the water-to-wine miracle, however, Jesus did not have to speak or in this case even be present. He willed the boy healed and the boy was healed. What's more, the man assumed that Jesus had to touch his boy while he lived; he could not even conceive of the fact that Jesus could raise him from the dead.

**Where are you assuming you know what God must do for you to be helped or healed? Where are your assumptions holding you back?**

v. 50 – Jesus spoke the word and the boy was healed. What's more, the man believed what Jesus said and went on his way, confident that he had received the answer to his plea. There is an image here of prayer and it is that you pray until you get an answer and, when you do, you are done praying. You can go on your way. There is also a picture here of how God works. He sends His word and His word is capable of achieving what it is that He wants it to achieve:

So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it (Isaiah 55:11).

### Day Seven

51 While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. 52 When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, "The fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour." 53 Then the father realized that this was the

exact time at which Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." So he and all his household believed. 54 This was the second miraculous sign that Jesus performed, having come from Judea to Galilee.

vs. 51&52 – The man's servants were so excited about the boy that they set out to find the man and inform him. The official never even made it home before he learned of the answer to his petition. Jesus was faithful to His word and the boy was healed. The man must have come from Jerusalem or some other place far away, for he met with Jesus one day and wasn't able to get home until the next day.

The servants were so excited that they set out on the road, confident they could find their master on the way home. These verses don't tell us that the servants loved their master, but it seems that they did to set out as they did to let him know the good news. They didn't have to do that. If that's true, then this man was a noble man whom people loved. Yet that had nothing to do with what Jesus did. He does not answer payer based on our merit, but on His perfect will and mercy.

v. 53 – The man did not just inquire as to the time of the healing out of curiosity, but he wanted to establish that the healing took place because of Jesus' word. When he proved to himself that it was, he believed in Jesus' mission and person, as did all his household. So we see that what Jesus said was true: some would not believe unless they saw signs and wonders. Jesus was willing to provide those faith proofs. **Has Jesus proved Himself to you and, therefore, do you believe? Do you remember what He has done for you so you can have faith at other times? What do you do to help you remember?**

v. 52 – The first miraculous sign was the water to wine. Then Jesus healed the official's boy, even though the boy was some distance away from Jesus and his father. Water to wine or healing a sick boy on his deathbed at home – both signs prove that Jesus was sent from God. While a prophet could have performed such a miracle, the miracles took place so people could put their trust in what Jesus was saying. He was saying that He was the Son of God.

**Have you put your faith in Him as the Son of God? Do you believe that Jesus was a good man or that Jesus was a righteous and holy God?** I urge you if you have not already, to put your faith and trust in Him. He is worthy!