

Revival: The Word + Repentance + Worship = Revival
Week 7: Laying Down Your Water Pot (John 4:1-42 NIV)

Summary: We are called to go into the harvest fields

I. Opening: Over the past few weeks we have been in a sermon series called Revival.

What is revival?? The Word + Repentance + Worship = Equals Revival.

Last week Pastor Craig challenged us to prioritize and sacrifice for worship.

A. If you have your bibles with you, I want us to turn to the book of John chapter 4. We are going to look at how revival started in a community when one woman had a Divine encounter with Jesus while she was retrieving water from a well. This is one of the more popular stories in the Bible so maybe you have heard it before.

Scripture Reading — John 4:1-42 (NIV)

- 1. It appears to that to avoid political and religious conflict with the religious leaders, Jesus departs to Galilee. Note verse 4 says he had to pass through Samaria. This passing statement has great significance. This was the shortest route, but most Jews took a longer route just to avoid Samaria because of an ongoing feud between the Jews and the Samaritans. This feud was a result of the defeat of the northern country of Israel and the captivity of the land. The land was repopulated by the Samaritans and they were despised and considered un-pure. So it became customary that the Jews would take an alternate route through the river Jordan to get to Galilee.**
- 2. But here we see Jesus takes the direct route. Not just for geographical reasons but Jesus is on a mission. There is woman he is to meet in Samaria.**
 - a. I believe this is a similar statement made to Zacchaeus when Jesus tells him to “ come down from the tree, I must go to your house”**

John 4:4-6: 4 Now he had to go through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

- 3. Before we get into the conversation with Jesus and the woman, I think it is important to consider the humanity of Jesus. The point of John’s gospel is to make the reader know that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, but here as he sets up this story, John gives us a glimpse of the humanity of Jesus by telling us that as a result of his journey Jesus was tired or weary as he sat at this well.**
 - a. It is a reminder of what we are told in Hebrews 4:15 “we do not have a high priest we cannot sympathize with us in our weakness, but one who has been tempted in every respect as we, yet he is without sin.”**
 - b. Jesus, God in the flesh, sits at this well and is tired and thirsty as a result of the heat of the day.**
- 4. This Well was like the Starbucks of Sychar. People gathered there each morning not only to retrieve water, but to talk, laugh, and probably gossip about the people who lived in their village. Maybe you can think of a busy atmosphere like the break room at your work office, or the cafeteria at school. But at noon it is hot, and Jesus sits alone. Typically, only middle class and poor folks came to the Well. People with means usually had servants do this task.**
- 5. This conversation with Jesus and the woman at the well stands out for many reasons.**
 - a. For one we are not told this woman’s name. I find it interesting as I studied the text that it appears that she has the longest conversation with Jesus of any person in the Bible including his disciples. Yet, we don’t know her name. The highlight of her story is her immoral past.**
 - b. I think it is important to note the contrast in John 3. Just prior to this encounter Jesus has a discussion with a man. The man is named in the story, Nicodemus. He is a religious man. He is a moral man. He is an influential man.**
 - c. The tension between these two stories reminds us, as we begin to study the conversation with the woman at the well, that Jesus came to reach the up and in, and the down and out.**
 - (1) The story of Nicodemus in John 3 teaches us that there is no one beyond the need of Grace.**
 - (2) And here in John 4 we learn there is no one beyond the reach of Grace.**
- 6. Question: So, who was the Samaritan Woman at the Well? What can we learn from her encounter and conversation with Christ?**
 - a. The Woman**

- (1) I have heard her described as the worst woman from the worst town in the worst country. But I am not convinced this is true.
- (2) Throughout the years she has often been maligned or maybe misunderstood because of her marital and perceived sexual history. This history often shapes our reading and telling of her story, so before diving into the rest of her conversation with Jesus, let's look at this more closely.
 - (a) Certainly, five marriages is a high number. But in this time period, it was not unreasonable. Widowhood was a common experience in a culture where women were married very young. Divorce in order to gain a more socially advantageous marriage was also not uncommon for men to do. So, it seems most likely that her many marriages were not a result of her choice, as women were not legally allowed to file for divorce.
 - (b) Her current situation, living with a man who is not her husband, could be the result of several possible scenarios. She could be a concubine, which was a legal arrangement, but with lesser status than marriage. If the two partners in the relationship were not of equal social status or the man wanted to avoid inheritance issues, they might choose this option. She could also be a second wife, a role which was also socially acceptable but not considered of the same status as the first wife.

b. Jesus

- (1) But whatever her status, I think what is most important, is that Jesus does not condemn her status, but simply acknowledges "what you have said is true" (4:18). He then continues to engage her in theological dialogue.
 - (a) The Samaritan woman listens with open attentiveness to Jesus as she asks him questions about her faith and hope.
- (2) Jesus meets this Samaritan woman at Jacob's well after a morning's journey and disregards social custom by asking her for a drink.
- (3) Jesus promises living water that gives eternal life and invites her to bring the rest of her household—to receive the goodness he is offering.
- (4) Jesus affirms that what she has said is true and indicates that he has seen and knows her more fully than she might have guessed. Without judgment, he relays the fuller story of her past, and she immediately understands that he is a prophet who knows and speaks the truth.

7. Jesus shows up right on time. This divine encounter changed everything as revival began to take root in her heart.

a. The longer she talks with him, the more her understanding grows until she sees the full truth: Jesus is the Messiah. Throughout this conversation she demonstrates a posture of discipleship, learning from Jesus, and now she is called as an evangelist.

8. The message of this story is that Jesus is the Son of God who came to save sinners. Here we meet a woman who believes that Jesus is the Christ. She receives eternal life.

B. She leaves her water pot behind—just as the disciples left their fishing nets—

1. She was there to gather water to quench her thirst and she left her water pot behind. This is a sign of her complete embrace of her calling to follow Jesus. She left her water pot.
2. Her water pot is symbolic of her old life. She had carried that thing around. Every day it hindered her. Every day it defined her!
3. But now she had a new definition! Her definition was no longer this water bucket.

C. Some of us are being defined by different things.

1. Lay down your water pot:
What is it we are carrying that defines us?
2. It does not matter. We can trade our water pot in for a new definition!
3. So today I want to ask you what are the water pots of life that you and I need to leave behind? What heavy burdens or fleshly distractions are you being held up or defined by?
4. Maybe you are like the woman at the well?

- a. She had found herself time after time heartbroken. Experiencing break up after break up, divorce after divorce after divorce. Maybe like her you feel like you are trapped in an uncontrollable vicious cycle that just seems to keep repeating itself.
- b. Maybe life for you is steady and things have never looked better for you, but there is a person, a family member or a place that the Lord has placed on your heart or on your mind to pray for or reach out to.
- c. Maybe people have let you down over and over just like this Samaritan woman.
- d. People will bring up every mistake you have ever made and use it on you! It is time to do what this Samaritan woman did at the well that day.

5. Her eyes for a few moments of time were not on man or people or circumstances, but right now they were on Jesus!

D. Activation:

- 1. When you entered the sanctuary today you were given a small index card with a picture of a water pot/jug on it.
- 2. Today I want to ask you to write down anything that you have carried around or held onto that you need to leave at the well. You don't have to write your name on this. We didn't know the name of the woman at the well.
- 3. Today as we are concluding our message, I am going to ask you to respond by bringing this card to the alter and leaving it there. This upcoming week the pastors and leaders will gather and pray.
- 4. I promise you today, if we will just have that encounter with Him everything will begin to look different, feel different, sound different, because everything in heaven and earth has been given to him by the Father! And that includes what you may be experiencing in life right now.

The bible says Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 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."

- 5. Through the conversation with the woman at the well, Jesus introduced us to new appetites, because our appetites will determine our destiny.
 - a. Money, Success, Prosperity, Pleasure, Popularity, Security – they are all dry wells. How many times have I lowered my cup into these wells and how many times have I brought it up empty? We all need to be saved from ourselves.
 - b. Hope is seeing Jesus in our future. One encounter with Jesus caused her to lay her burdens down. When she looked at Jesus, she saw love. When she looked upon Jesus, she saw something she had never laid her eyes on, hope!
 - c. The story doesn't stop with her laying down her burden. The Bible says she returns to her town and effectively shares her experience with Jesus, inviting the villagers to come and see if they will reach the same conclusion about him.
 - d. Your Story is God's Glory! Share your Testimony!

In the end, the Bible says "Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony" (John 4:39, NRSV).

- e. Twenty-one centuries later Jesus still has no other plan. He's counting on you and me to continue His work of reconciling the world to Himself, to continue the work so many have faithfully carried out before us. The question is will we do so well?

E. You are God's plan!

- 1. You are God's plan for this neighborhood.
- 2. You are God's plan for this community.
- 3. You are God's plan for Norfolk
- 4. You are God's plan for America.
- 5. You are God's plan for the Nations.

F. Now that might intimidate some and frighten others. But don't be frightened or intimidated because God has equipped you with a very powerful tool...your story.

- 1. Do you want to be a part of God's plan?
 - a. Tell Them Your Story

b. Let God Use Your Story

c. Let Them See Jesus

****Bring them to Jesus by welcoming people into your life and being available to visit their lives.**

2. Invite them to church

a. Most people who come to church attend because a friend or family member invited them. Statistics show that only 2% of church attenders extend an invitation once per year. This means that the church misses many opportunities to invite people to join them for church.

b. According to Outreach Magazine "Perhaps one of the most underestimated reasons people return to the church is that someone simply invited them back. 41% of the formerly churchd said they would return to the local church if a friend or acquaintance invited them."

3. But we also have to go. They may not come right away. But we are to make the first move and go!

Luke 10:1-2: 1 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. 2 He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

a. We have been sent to the harvest fields (10:1) Jesus makes it clear that there is an expectation to go out. He appoints 72 to go into the harvest fields to begin the work of reaping. Notice that Jesus sends these 72 out to every town and every place that He was going to go. Before Jesus could work, He sent the disciples out to prepare the soil and to plant seed.

b. Our work this week is similar, we are to go out into our mission fields. North America is the largest English speaking mission field in the world.

c. Where are our mission fields?

*** Workplace * Family * Friends * Neighbors * Activities**

d. We have a responsibility to reach out to those around us. Everywhere we go is part of our mission field.

4. The Harvest is Great

a. There is going to be harvest in the field of souls and Jesus says that it is plentiful. The term in Greek means large, vast or massive. Jesus is telling the disciples and us that there is a great deal of work to be done because there is massive harvest. The harvest is greater than we can imagine.

b. The problem is not the harvest. We have a huge harvest in front of us. Jesus tells us that the problem is the workers. The harvest is massive, but the workers are few. Jesus is looking for people who will go into the fields like the woman at the well and gather the harvest. We must remember that there is a harvest of souls.

John 4:35-38: 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.

5. The need to reach out is urgent.

a. The tendency is to wait for the right time to connect with people. We have a tendency to watch for the moment to reach out to others. Jesus makes it clear that there is no time to waste. He tells the disciples about common thinking about the harvest and the specific time of harvesting. We must never forget that the need of people is urgent.

b. The reality of urgency is twofold.

(1) The first reason we need to be urgent is because we do not know how long we have to make an impact. There are no guarantees in life, and we do not know when our time is going to be up.

(2) The second reason is that we do not know how long other people have before their life ends.

c. Time is of the essence.

6. We need to open our eyes.

a. Jesus tells the disciples to look to the fields because they are ripe. Our problem is that we fail to see things through the eyes of the Kingdom. We need to look at things from the perspective of Jesus. There is no such thing as a lost cause. Every person has value in the eyes of Christ. We have to see people the same way!

b. We have to open our eyes to see what is in front of us. We often complain about how terrible the world has gotten. We gripe about the godlessness of society. When Christians stop seeking to impact the world, this is what we get. Our nation, our state, and our community need revival.

G. We have been commanded to do more than just pray for revival, we need to start working in the field of souls.

How do we do it?

1. Show Love

2. Share what God is doing

3. Serve intentionally

2 Corinthians 5:17 (King James Version): 17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.