

Mountain View 18 — Open your Eyes and Look

Sermon File Type	Sermon
Passages	John 4:31-38
Sermon Series	Mountain View
Topics	Missions; Harvest
Tags	
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Introduction (Connection):

[Invite to John 4]

Tension:

What a week this has been, hasn't it?

On Tuesday we worked with the Tusten Youth Commission for a few hours to figure out the best course of action for Light the Night, came to the conclusion it'd be best to have it here.

We worked like crazy with so many of you partnering in this mission over the course of 24 hours to make it happen here.

And for an event that lasted 1.5 hours, we were able to serve over 700 souls from our community, which is a conservative estimate.

[Give thanks to volunteers]

All this week having my parents in town, which was really helpful for my wife and I to serve well, but not in the sense of getting to spend much time with them, though I am grateful for what we did get.

You may have heard they were planning to be here this morning, but my mother got the phone call in the middle of yesterday that her dad wasn't doing well and was in transition from this world to the next so they left for home to hopefully see him before that happens.

[Insert results]

So I'm going to be honest with you, this has been a really tough week on several different levels, and I've only had about four hours to sit with this text, but in no way will that stop God from sanctifying his Church and washing us in his word this morning.

So let me recall the context from where we've been the last two Sundays and then we'll dive right in to the text.

Exposition:

Jesus leaves a multiplying ministry in the wilderness to pursue after one Samaritan woman marked by scandal, immorality, shame, and isolation.

Jesus speaks with her, shows her that she isn't just thirsty for physical water and that her attempts to satisfy her soul with multiple relationships or social isolation won't work; she needs living water, which shows us that God's greatest works are in satisfying our greatest thirsts.

Jesus tells the woman he is the Messiah, and the disciples walk in on this, and it's so awkward.

This woman leaves, not because it's awkward, but because Jesus has moved her soul from marginalized to missionary, from wounded to witness, and Jesus is using her wound as the word to reach people with the good news that the messiah is here, because in God's kingdom and mission, he uses the marginalized, wounded, broken people, not the popular, healthy, put-together people.

Right after John tells us this woman ran into the town, we seem to get an interruption in the story, because after today's text, the people from the town come out to Jesus and believe in him, and so many are saved.

But what may seem like an interruption to the story is really Jesus giving a deeper explanation of what is happening in the town as the woman is preaching.

John 4:31-38 — "In the meantime the disciples kept urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." ³² But he said, "I have food to eat that you don't know about." ³³ The disciples said to one another, "Could someone have brought him something to eat?" ³⁴ "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work," Jesus told them. ³⁵ "Don't you say, 'There are still four more months, and then comes the harvest'? Listen to what I'm telling you: Open your eyes and look at the fields, because they are ready for harvest. ³⁶ The reaper is already receiving pay and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together. ³⁷ For in this case the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' ³⁸ I sent you to reap what you didn't labor for; others have labored, and you have benefited from their labor."¹

The disciples have come back from the town where they were getting food, they stumble across Jesus talking to a woman, she leaves, and they're urging Jesus to get some grub.

And Jesus says something that throws them totally off: ***"I have food to eat that you don't know about."***

The disciples think, "Did someone else bring him something to eat?"

¹ [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Jn 4:31–38.

But they don't get it, do they? They don't see that Jesus is talking about something else entirely... they're blind to the spiritual meaning.

What Jesus says goes right over their heads... and is this the first time that happens in the book of John? No.

Back in John 2, Jesus, in talking with the Jews about destroying the temple and rebuilding it in three days, they think, "It took 46 years to build this temple, and he's going to rebuild it in three days?"

Then in John 3, Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born again to see and enter the kingdom of God, and what does Nicodemus think? "How can a man go back in his mother's womb and be born again?"

Then, in John 4, Jesus offers the scandalous Samaritan woman living water to satisfy her soul forever, and she says what? "You don't have a bucket and the well is deep. Where do you get this living water?"

And here, again in John 4, Jesus says he has food to eat that they don't know about, and even the disciples don't get it... "who brought him something to eat?"

Can I just say something that I think needs to be said? **No matter who we are, we are more blind that we realize.**

That's what hit me when I first studied this.

From the religious elite in the temple, to the well-educated and popular Nicodemus, to the immoral and marginalized woman at the well, AND even those who are close to Jesus and follow him...

No matter how well-versed, popular, or intelligent, no matter how broken and wounded, no matter how close to Jesus we are, we are more blind than we realize...

- Blind to what God may be doing behind the scenes
- Blind to what God may be blatantly doing in front of us
- Blind to what God may be doing in us
- Blind to what is going on around us
- Blind to our own actions
- Blind to the hardships of those around us
- Blind to the things that we don't even know we're blind to

Think about it: there are millions of truths about the very character and nature of God that you don't see and know right now, that you have yet to experience.

And the only time we'll ever see fully with no hindrance is when we see Jesus' face... here we know in part, there we will know fully.

Brothers and sisters, we are more blind than we realize...

The best mindset you can have in life is one that says, "I'm not seeing everything; I should be more gracious and compassionate, slower to judge, quicker to mercy."

The disciples are blind to what Jesus means... and praise God that Jesus doesn't leave us blind.

Jesus says, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."

Friends, this is so good!

Jesus says here, "I am strengthened to do what God has given me to do by doing what God has given me to do. My source of energy for doing God's will is doing God's will."

Jesus is the only one who can even talk like this. We aren't self-sufficient; we die of starvation if we don't eat.

But God gets his source of power from within himself.

Sure, Jesus got tired and hungry and thirsty as a man and needed food like the rest of us, but as God, Jesus' power to act was to act!

Now, Jesus gets very specific here and says two things are his singular food: **(1) to do God's will** and **(2) to finish God's work**.

Circle the word "will" and circle the word "work" in your bibles.

There are two passages of scripture that I want you to write in your bibles next to each.

Next to "will" write John 6:39 and next to "work" write John 6:29.

Because if you're asking, "What is God's will for Jesus?"

[John 6:39](#) — "This is the will of him who sent me: that I should lose none of those he has given me but should raise them up on the last day."²

In other words, Jesus' food is to give eternal life!

Jesus is saying, "I give life because I am life. I am the way, the truth, and the life. My food is to be what I am!"

And then, to finish God's work is explained in...

² [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Jn 6:39.

John 6:29 — “Jesus replied, ‘This is the work of God—that you believe in the one he has sent.’”³

God is working in us belief in His Son, the very thing that is needed for eternal life!

What satisfies Jesus’ hunger is when people believe in Jesus and receive eternal life.

Does that satisfy your hunger? Or are you even hungry for people to believe and be saved?

Brothers and sisters, there is nothing more satisfying in life than to be on this mission.

The last time I got to be a part of someone placing their faith in Jesus, I couldn’t sleep that night I was so excited.

I laid awake in bed begging God for more people to be saved because it was so satisfying to my soul to see people turn to Jesus.

Do you hunger for that?

Because that is exactly where Jesus goes next in his conversation with the disciples.

He says, “Don’t you say, ‘There are still four more months, and then comes the harvest’?”

In other words, he’s saying there’s a time period between when you plant a seed and when you harvest it.

³ [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Jn 6:29.

I remember back in elementary school science class we planted our own flowers one day in school, and I came in the next day thinking I'd have a flower in full bloom, only to find nothing changed, thinking my seed was broken.

It takes time from when you plant and when you harvest; remember this because he's going to flip that upside down in just a minute.

But Jesus says something where he invites us to listen very intently to what he's saying...

"Open your eyes and look... look at the fields, because they are ready for harvest. The reaper is already receiving pay and gathering [crop] for eternal life..."

The harvest is the gathering in of those who have been spiritually prepared to receive the eternal life that Jesus gives through belief.

Did you notice how Jesus said this though? Circle the word "ready."

He said, right now, these people are ready to be harvested; they are ready to be saved and brought into eternal life!

Any time is harvest time! Kind of like, any time is taco time!

Yet, why is that so hard to believe? Why does it seem like never in history have the fields been in worse conditions for harvesting?

Brothers and sisters, that's because Jesus is the one who truly sees the condition of the harvest... remember, we're blind, right?

Which is why Jesus tells us to open our eyes and look; millions of people are ready to be saved, and God has so few laborers willing to go work in the harvest.

We get so overwhelmed at this point with guilt and shame because we know we're unengaged in the mission of the harvest, and so we think we need a fuller love or greater passion or a stronger will in order to see and work in the harvest.

But Jesus tells us right here **our failure in mission isn't a matter of vigor, it is a matter of vision.**

Its closed eyes, not dull passions. What we need is for God to open our eyes and help us see the condition of those around us, to be able to assess what stage people are at.

Right behind our church is a field owned by the Avery's and they grow hay in the field every year.

As the year goes along, how are they going to know that field is ready for the hay to be harvested and therefore go out and harvest it?

Not because they love the field more!

Not because they care more about the field!

Not because they hear that there are at least 3.19 billion stalks of hay needing to be harvested...

They'll know it's ready for harvest because they're watching that field, they see its condition, and when it's ready they go!

If I don't see the field is ready for harvesting, I won't go harvest, will I? I'll sit on my back porch chewing straw waiting.

What we need is for God to open our eyes to the harvest, because the Lord of the harvest has said, "The fields are ready for harvesting!"

And did you see what he does with the growth timeline between when the gospel seed is planted and when it is harvested? He collapses it to a single moment!

v. 36 — “The reaper is already receiving pay and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together.”

Only God can do this sort of thing! He promised he would! Many years before this, God promised there would be an age when the Messiah came where the sower overtakes the reaper.

Write in your bible...

Amos 9:13 — “Look, the days are coming—this is the Lord’s declaration—when the plowman will overtake the reaper and the one who treads grapes, the sower of seed. The mountains will drip with sweet wine, and all the hills will flow with it.”⁴

In other words, there would be an age when the sowing and the reaping can happen in the same moment.

Do you believe that you can cast the seed of the gospel for the first time into someones life, no matter how calloused that ground may seem, no matter how scorched that dirt may be, and in that second of casting the seed, and in that same moment, that person be harvested into eternal life?

Do you believe that you can meet some random stranger on some random day in some random place, cast the seed of the gospel, and a second later they be ready for harvesting into eternal life through faith in Jesus?

With the gospel, there is no waiting!

No matter how many seeds are cast, no matter how many times in the past the seed didn’t seem to take, no matter how far from God someone may seem, one seed cast today can lead to enternal joy that same moment!

⁴ [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Am 9:13.

We need our eyes opened.

Conclusion (Cast Vision):

I know so many of us have distanced ourself from the mission of God in the saving of souls for whatever reason:

Fear

Self-doubt

Inadequacy

I know some of you have been laboring in the harvest field for some time, and you're weary.

Today I am praying for all of us this passage from...

Psalm 126:5-6 — "Those who sow in tears will reap with shouts of joy.
6 Though one goes along weeping, carrying the bag of seed, he will surely come back with shouts of joy, carrying his sheaves."⁵

I am praying this for each of you,
for your husband who refuses to follow Jesus,
for your wife who has a bitter heart,
for your son who has rebelled from more than just you,
for your daughter who got caught up in too much,
for your mom who only thinks this is a joke,
for your dad who says Christianity is a crutch,
for your coworkers who only seem to judge,
for your friends who have never gotten serious...

God, we know the harvest is ready!

God, open our eyes! We need to see what you see!

⁵ [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Ps 126:5–6.

God, let us sow seeds of the gospel, whatever the cost.

God, please, let us reap with shouts of joy!

Please, let us come back from the field with many lives harvested into eternal life!

May we not believe the lie that the fields aren't ready.

You see what we don't. Let us walk in faith in you.

In Jesus' name, amen!

Communion:

Let us remind ourselves of this amazing gospel by taking communion together.

Communion is an ordinance established by Jesus Christ as a way to perpetually affirm the new covenant that He purchased for us with His body and blood symbolized by the bread and drink.

There is nothing mysterious about the bread and drink that we are about to partake; they do not transform into the literal body and blood of Christ.

Taking communion is the affirmation that you have placed all your trust and confidence in Jesus Christ, in his sinless life, in his atoning death and physical resurrection.

1 Corinthians 11 offers a caution to those of you who do not agree with this... he cautions you not come to this table; for in doing so, you drink judgment upon yourself.

And yet Jesus is knocking at the door, ready to raise you up through faith.

We would love for you to join us in the Son and at this table if you'd receive Jesus today; you don't have to wait.

[Finish instructions]