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John 4:27-42 – *The Life of Peter: Off to School*

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We're continuing to look at discipleship...

Through the life of Peter and Jesus' other disciples.

Right now we're grouping Peter with the other disciples...

He hasn't been singled out yet...

So we're considering him with the group.

What is a disciple of Christ?

2 weeks ago we said that a disciple is someone in a growing process:

Growing in love for God...

And growing in love for others. (Matt 22:37)

It's not so much about what stage you're at in the process...

As it is, are you growing?

We started by looking at Jesus' invitation to the disciples:

"Come and see." (1:39)

"You aren't sure about me...I get it..."

"Come and check me out though."

The disciples *have* checked out Jesus:

They've spent some time with him;

They've witnessed a miracle (John 2);

And they've put their trust in him (2:11);

A relationship has been formed.

What's next in the discipleship growth process?

After a relationship with Jesus is started—

After they put their faith in him—

What is the next step?

The disciples begin following Jesus.

They work on what it means to get to know him.

They are no longer on the periphery of Christianity—

Just checking out Jesus—

Now they're getting to know him.

Jesus is no longer a stranger...

But he's not a *good* friend yet.

They're getting to know Jesus...

Growing in him.

This is exactly what we see in our passage this morning.

John 4:27-42

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 Messiah?" ³⁰ They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

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. ³⁵ Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. ³⁶ Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a 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."

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.”

The Word of the Lord. (**Thanks be to God**)

Jesus and his disciples are heading north from Judea to Galilee...

And on the way they pass through Samaria.

The disciples leave Jesus at a well to get some food...

And when they come back...

He's talking to a woman.

As readers, we are privy to the conversation and what's going on.

All the disciples know is that they come back to find Jesus talking with a Samaritan woman.

The woman leaves shortly after the disciples show up...

And we're left with an opportune teaching moment...

A chance for the disciples to learn a little about this man they're following now...

A chance for Jesus to “take them to school.”

Let's spend some time looking at what they learn.

First, they learn to adjust their expectations of Jesus.

The disciples are amazed, shocked, and surprised by what they see:

Jesus is talking to a Samaritan woman.

There are a few pieces to this scene that the disciples could put together:

First, this woman is coming out to the well alone in the heat of the day.

It's typical for groups of women to draw water together...

Later in the day when the heat isn't as intense.

This woman must have done something...

That makes her an outcast in her town.

As readers we know that she has had 5 husbands...

And the man she's with now is not her husband.

The disciples are probably picking up on this situation...

Strike 1.

Second, she is a Samaritan.

Jews and Samaritans don't associate...

They mix like oil and water.

Jews and Samaritans are bitter enemies...

With different ideas of who's right about God.

They have been enemies for hundreds of years...

So this is deeply rooted.

To the Jews, social interactions with Samaritans could defile them in a religious sense...

So they kept their distance.

Strike 2.

Finally, she is a woman.

This, is what we're told, astonished the disciples.

Private conversations between unmarried men and women were discouraged.

Jewish men were encouraged to avoid unnecessary conversations with women.

Especially for Jesus, who was a rabbi/teacher...

This could send wrong message to his followers.

Any onlooker could get the impression that Jesus and this woman are flirting...

And flirting could lead to something else.

Just her being a woman...

And him being a man...

And them being alone...

Is strike 3.

The disciples are shocked!

Any sensible religious teacher would know to avoid *this* kind of interaction.

But Jesus isn't like any religious teacher...

And the disciples begin to learn that here.
They have to adjust their expectations of Jesus.
Jesus is not bothered by gender;
Jesus is not bothered by ethnicity...
Even if it's a supposed enemy;
Jesus does not even flinch at the immoral life this woman seems to be living...
He doesn't scoff and turn away from her.
These externals don't control Jesus' interaction with her.
The disciples expect him to keep his distance—
They expect him to act according to society's standards—
But Jesus looks past all of that...
And he sees right to the person...
Jesus sees right into the individual.
Jesus sees someone whom God is calling back to himself.
Jesus sees that this is someone separated from God...
Someone who has a deep need for connection...
To be reunited with the God who loves her very deeply.
The disciples are absolutely astounded...
But this is who Jesus is.
This is who he is revealing himself to be:
Someone concerned with the individual...
He is a personal Messiah...
A personal God.
Have you learned this about Jesus...
That he's not overly concerned with externals?
He basically says:
"I don't care who you are..."

“I don’t care where you’re from...”

“I don’t care what you did...”

“Just love me.”

“Follow me.”

“I am the way to life.”

“I will refresh your soul.”

Has this made it into your heart?

Or do you still have trouble believing that Jesus could accept you...

Because of who you are and what you’ve done?

Or maybe you still think that Jesus is looking for perfect people...

Who look, act, and think in certain ways.

All of those categories we use to elevate certain people in society (church?):

How they dress;

How thin or fit they are;

What side of town they live on;

What their moral life looks like;

What color their skin is;

Are they a man or woman or confused about their gender?

Jesus looks at the individual...

And beckons them into relationship.

God is intensely personal...

And we see this through Jesus Christ.

Second, what the disciples learn is that they’re called to harvest.

There is an expectation that his disciples will not just follow...

But that they will join him in his work.

Jesus recites this saying—

“Still 4 months until the harvest”—

Meaning, you plant and then you wait to gather.

Jesus is saying, “The time for waiting is over.”

“The harvest is here.”

He’s saying:

“I hope you’re not following me because you have nothing better to do.”

“I hope you’re not thinking I’m training you for no purpose.”

“I’m sending you out to harvest a crop...”

“And not just any crop...”

“But people God is calling to himself.”

The OT prophets have already come.

John the Baptist has already preached a baptism of repentance...

The ground has been tilled;

The seeds have been planted;

The crops have grown;

It’s time to gather.

There are people ready to be drawn back to God.

Are there people right under your nose who are ready?

There was a whole town in Samaria...

Ready to receive Christ.

But the disciples didn’t consider it because the town was *Samaritans*.

Men didn’t consider it because this was a *woman*.

But this Samaritan woman becomes *thee* witness to the whole town.

Because of her testimony the town is drawn out to Christ.

And after they spend time with Jesus...

They too believe in him.

John the Gospel writer is holding this woman up as a model...

Do what she does!

Have an interaction with Jesus and share your story.

Jesus is calling the disciples to work at the harvest...

This is their purpose and mission...

This is why he's schooling them right now.

Who are the people God has placed in your life—

Maybe those you'd least expect—

That are ready to hear your story?

What relationships do you have right now that are open doors...

Where people are ready to hear that Jesus has come to give life.

Did you know this about Jesus...

That as followers he expects us to share the work of harvesting?

To share with others that we know where to go to find real life.

This is something that his disciples are beginning to learn.

Finally, what these disciples learn of Jesus...

Is that he has a one-track mind.

It's not girls...

It's not sports...

It's not cars...

It's not even himself or his family...

Jesus' focus—

His top priority—

Is always, always always...to do the Father's will. (5:30; 6:38; 8:50; 9:4)

Talking to this Samaritan woman—

Revealing the Messiah to her—

This was his food.

The Father sent him to gather all those the Father had given him...

Jew, Gentile, man, woman...

It didn't matter.

Jesus was sent to bring people eternal life. (6:38-40)

This is what nourished Jesus:

“My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.” (4:34)

There was more sustenance and satisfaction in this interaction with the Samaritan woman than any food the disciples could offer Jesus. (DA Carson)

His single focus is to do the Father's will.

So, what feeds you?

What satisfies you?

I know there are a lot of hungry people in Trinity.

You are hungry for growth:

You want to grow deeper in love with God;

You want to grow deeper in love for those around you.

You are hungry for intimacy with Christ.

You've found satisfaction in following the Lord...

And now you want more.

One way—

Maybe the most proven way—

To grow deeper in your relationship as you get to know Christ...

Is through spiritual practices.

This week I'm going to invite you to check one out.

I'm inviting you to fast with me this Thursday...

Just for lunch.

We'll give up something good that God is giving to us...

For something better.

We'll take that time to spend getting to know the Lord...

Feeding not on food but on the word of God.

Discipleship is a growing process:

Growing in love for God;
And growing in love for others.

The disciples—

Peter included in this group—
Are learning about Jesus.

They are experiencing him...

And their lives are changing.

As we engage with Jesus—

Learning about him and experiencing him—
We too grow in our relationship and our lives are transformed.
One place we are assured of Christ's presence is in this meal.

[LORD'S SUPPER]

The disciples show up and tell Jesus, "Eat something."

He says, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about."

"I have something that sustains me beyond this material substance."

"My food is to do the will of him who sent me."

Jesus was human.

He needed to eat.

We are human.

We need to eat.

But, like Jesus...

We *crave* more than food.

We *need* more than food.

We need the Father.

We need the Son.

We need the Holy Spirit to sustain and nourish us.

“We do not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (Deut 8:3)

In this meal we are united to the Savior of the world.

We are spiritually united to the Messiah...

The one who saves us from our sins and gives us new life.

When we receive this bread and this cup in faith...

We are receiving into our souls the true body and blood of Christ (Belgic Conf. Art 35)