

A DISCIPLE GLORIFIES GOD IN ALL OF LIFE

Well, good morning everyone! My name is Ben, I'm one of the pastors here at Summit. Really glad to be with you here again this morning. *A couple of announcements?*

Why don't you grab your Bibles and keep them open to John chapter 4 for since we're going to go ahead and dive straight into our text this morning because we've got a lot of ground to cover.

Now if you grew up in the church, or grew up going to Sunday School, then chances are you have seen this episode here in John 4 played out by a little flannel Jesus and a little flannel Samaritan woman a felt board that's long since been crammed in a church attic somewhere, right? And so, as difficult as it may be, I want you to work hard this morning to get that scene out of your head. Because there is really nothing cute, or cozy, or soft about John 4. In a lot of ways, I think this is one of the grittiest, most down-to-earth, authentic encounters with Jesus that we see in any of the gospels.

We meet Jesus on his way traveling north toward Galilee. So far in John's gospel, John the Baptist has announced Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the world's sin, Jesus gets baptized, he saves a local wedding from an epic fail by restocking the wine, he overthrows the commerce that's going on in the temple in Jerusalem, I'd say it's been a pretty action packed three chapters - in fact, as John records it, Jesus has already traveled twice from his home area in northern Israel, to Judea, where Jerusalem is in the south, and now Jesus is returning again to Galilee.

And along the way he passes through Samaria, something a good, God-fearing, Jewish boy, would never do. You see, the Jews viewed the Samaritans as essentially half-breed, religious heretics. 700 years before Jesus, the Assyrians had come in and taken over the Northern Kingdom of Israel and brought into exile all the chiefs and nobles. The unwanted, the lower classes, were left to fend for themselves in sort of this post-apocalyptic free for all without any leadership, I'm imagining scenes from Mad Max right now, and they ended up intermarrying with all their idol-worshipping neighbors around them. And they blended worship of Yahweh with these other beliefs to make kind of this home-grown folk religion. They threw out half of the Old Testament, and they set up their own temple and their own priesthood to worship with. These were people that the Jews did everything they could to avoid.

And yet as we saw last week, Jesus' mission is all about intentionally pursuing people and inviting them into God's story, right? And so in the middle of the desert, during the hottest part of this dusty, sweltering Middle-Eastern day, we find Jesus deep in Samaritan country, resting from his journey at the town well. And, as if this scene couldn't get any more scandalous for a young, God-fearing, Jewish man, a Samaritan woman arrives at the well to draw water.

And the fact that she arrives at the sixth hour, which in Hebrew time telling means 12 noon, instantly tells us something about her. Because in cultures like this, in the Mediterranean, people do not do work in the heat of the day. And so the women of the village would likely come at dawn and at dusk to draw water, and the fact that we find *this* woman coming by

herself at high-noon tells us that she's an outsider to that group. Within this community of despised Samaritans, she's despised.

And it isn't long into the story before we find out why. She's unmarried. And that might not have been so bad in and of itself, but the fact is she's currently sleeping with a man who isn't her husband. And that man is just the sixth in a long string of men that this woman has been in relationship with.

I mean, this is as raw and as era as it gets folks. Even in our sexually charged culture of friends with benefits, and Tinder, and Ashley Madison, and freedom of sexual expression, even here this woman would be seen at the very best as a desperate and cheap, and at the worst as a whore. And yet it's through this encounter with a needy, broken, outcast Samaritan woman that Jesus wants to teach us something incredibly significant about the heart of what it means to be his disciple.

This morning we're wrapping up a series that we've been in for the last month talking about what it means to follow Jesus, really what it looks like to live as his disciple. And the reason that we're zooming in on this for these 5 weeks, is that this identity of being a disciple is really central to what it means to be a Christian.

And a huge part of what we've been talking about is that discipleship isn't about us asking God to join into and play a role in our story. When Jesus says "follow me", he's telling us that there is a bigger and quite honestly better story that we're invited to be a part of.

You see, God is moving his creation toward this great end, which the Bible reveals from Genesis to Revelation, is to make known his glory in the world. God is putting on display in all of creation the beauty, and worth, and magnificence of who he is, supremely in the person and work of Jesus. And as disciples this is the story we're a part of. We've been called to follow Jesus in order to glorify him. And so we're meant to live these radically God-centered lives that make him know in the world.

Now for a lot of you, maybe you consider what it means to live this God-centered life as a follower of Jesus, and there's a disconnect. And the disconnect is between, on the one hand, what it seems living for God's glory is all about, and on the other, what you do with the majority of your time from Monday to Saturday. Quite honestly, glorifying God to you maybe feels like something you just moonlight at, something that you do on Sunday mornings and maybe some evenings, but that doesn't connect with real life. It seems like, in the words of one pastor, a "mythical interlude in a week of reality." What feels tangible, and gritty, and down-to-earth, and authentic in your life is the everyday grind. Your job, your family, your house repairs. Living to glorify Jesus feels like this spiritual ideal that is great for pastors and people that are paid for it, but not for normal people.

Well Jesus is about to blow up our thinking on what it means to glorify God. To glorify God is to worship him, and Jesus is going to broaden our categories of what we think worship is really all about. You see, if you are a disciple here this morning, nothing is more important to you than glorifying God in your life. I know most of you, and I know you've been captivated by

Jesus. You want to live for his glory. But if you're like me, you struggle with what that looks like in the everyday stuff of life.

Well, brothers and sisters, listen to Jesus this morning because through this gritty, real life encounter at a Samaritan well, Jesus is about to teach us about what it means to glorify him. He's about to teach us about worship. And there's a ton here, but I want to focus on three things, captured in a statement that I want to unpack, and here's the statement, church.

God's plan to make his glory known is to create worshippers, who are filled with his joy, and glorify him in the everyday reality of life.

Alright, let's start to unpack that. Turn back with me to John chapter 4, and let's dive in together.

And we're going to kind of be working backwards a bit in the text, so you're going to need to track with me, but I want to begin with this first thing that we learn about worship.

Namely, that God does all that he does as we saw last week, for his name's sake, for his own glory, and his plan to make his glory known in this world is to create worshippers. The central thrust of God's plan to glorify himself in the world is to create people who love and worship and glorify him.

Let's jump into the text. And we're going to start a little bit in to Jesus' encounter with this woman and see how it plays out.

Jesus asks the woman to go get her husband. v. 16 "Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come here.'" Now the woman answered him, "I have no husband." And Jesus said to her, "You're right in saying you have no husband, for you've had five husbands, and the one you have now isn't your husband."

Jesus just really has a way of quickly exposing our inner mess, doesn't he. I mean, Jesus doesn't let us just hide our brokenness away in these tidy little corners of our heart, if we're going to be his disciples, he draws our junk out, but not to embarrass us or shame us, he does it for our good and his glory.

But look what she says to him. And this is just pure comedy, isn't it? She looks at him and says, "Sir, I perceive that you're a prophet." This is like the most straight faced way of saying, how did you just know everything about me? But then, in her discomfort, she turns the conversation from being personal, to being intellectual. And she makes this statement, v. 20: "Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship."

Do you see the juke that she makes here? She moves from a personal conversation to a sociological and theological one. If there's ever a way to deflect from actually talking about your own issues, it's to start talk about society's issues.

And she says, you know, we Samaritans have set up our temple here, and you have your temple in Jerusalem, and you say that that's the only place that we're supposed to worship - that worship here, in our temple on Mt. Gerizim isn't pleasing to God.

Now we're going to blaze through Jesus' answer, because I want to get to the end of it and what Jesus says in verse 23. OK? So verse 21 - "Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the father.'" And skip to v. 23 - "But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for (and pay attention to this) the Father is seeking such people to worship him." The Father is on a mission, seeking worshippers.

What God is doing in his plan for all of human history is coming after broken, messed up, idol-worshipping, sinners and sufferers, like this Samaritan woman, like you and me. And he transforms us into Jesus-loving Jesus-worshipping disciples. And he does this in order to demonstrate his glory and greatness in the world through our worship of Him. And if you were here last week you're saying, "Ben, you're saying the same thing you said last week except in a different way," and I going to say, "yes, I am", because we can't hear this enough. This is what living as a disciple is all about.

The Westminster Catechism, which was written in 17th century to train the church in life and doctrine, begins with this question: What is the chief end of man? And its answer is this: Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God.

The supreme purpose that we have in this world is to worship God. I don't know if you know the origin of our English word worship, but it is actually just a shortened form of the Old English word, worth ship. This captures the essence of what worship is. To worship God is to acknowledge and respond to and glorify his worth.

For the Father is seeking such people to worship him. Other places in Scripture talk about God pressing us, God urging us, even God demanding that we worship him.

And that can easily rub us the wrong way, can't it? I mean, can you imagine meeting a human being who demanded to be worshipped? A person who was always going around saying, "I'm the most beautiful, the most glorious, the most wonderful person, admire me, think about me, praise me." Some of you are like, yeah, I work for that person. I mean, if you really knew that person you'd hate them, right? Who wants to be around someone like that? So how is it that this isn't utterly arrogant of God? How is it that a God like this isn't the biggest selfish jerk on the planet?

Well, brother and sisters, it's because demanding our worship is the greatest possible thing that God could do for us, because it's in living for God's glory that we find our highest joy.

This is what God has created us for, and the truth is until we start living for for his glory, our experience of life will always have a dull ache to it. Life will always feel, as C.S. Lewis wrote, "like the scent of a flower we have not found, or like the echo of a tune we haven't heard." We will always experience the echoes of joy and satisfaction and fulfillment but never its substance.

So, far from being selfish, pursuing our worship is the most giving and generous thing that God can do for us.

Let's go back to the Westminster Catechism for a moment, because I didn't give you the full answer to that question, "What is the chief end of man?" There's another part there. And it's this, "The chief and highest end of man is to glorify God *and* enjoy him forever." The highest

end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. In other words, God's glory and our joy are inseparably tied together. As we glorify God our joy increases, and when we find joy in God we glorify him.

Brothers and sisters, Christians should be the happiest people on planet earth.

Let's go back to the beginning of Jesus' encounter at the well. Jesus breaks the awkwardness of this meeting by asking for a drink. The woman is shocked that Jesus would make a request like this because using whatever vessel this woman had for drinking would make Jesus run the risk of defilement as a Jew. So she asks him this, v. 9: "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?"

Well, Jesus, as he often does, doesn't exactly answer her question. But look at what he says, v. 10: "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

This term, living water, is sort of special to the gospel of John, but what Jesus is talking about is his provision of refreshing, satisfying, joy-producing life. Look at v. 13 - "Everyone who drinks of this water (the water from the well) will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water well up to eternal life."

Jesus is saying, if you really knew who I was, if you really knew what I offer you, if you actually tasted and drank the water I give, you'd be filled with a joy that nothing else can compare to.

And you know, we need to hear this this morning. Because there are a lot of followers of Jesus that are just curmudgeons. I mean, just grumpy people. And it seems to get worse during election season.

Think of the most crabby, unpleasant, cramped, Debbie-downer that you know. What's the common characteristic of people like that, whether they are a Christian or not? It's that they don't praise anything, and so they don't enjoy anything. Everything always has something wrong with it. Nothing's ever right.

But think of someone you know that's filled with joy. They praise everything. They're constantly praising - they're praising the food, they're praising the book, they're praising their neighbor, they're praising you.

Do you see how tightly praise and joy are linked? I'm indebted to Tim Keller for this insight, but when you think about it, it is the people who worship and behold the beauty of God that can't help but see his beauty everywhere. It's the people who really love God that truly understand how to love his creation. It's the people who magnify God's worth that treat everyone he's created as valuable. It's the people who find in God their greatest joy, that begin to spill out joy everywhere they go.

Can you see why God urges us and presses us to worship him? It's not because he needs it, it's because we need it. Brothers and sisters, we need his joy, and that only comes as we worship him.

So God is about #1 creating worshippers who are (secondly) filled with his joy... and (thirdly) who glorify him in the everyday stuff of life.

Look at this passage again, and let's go back to Jesus' response to this woman's theological turn. She's bringing up this huge divide between Jews and Samaritans. For centuries we've worshipped in our temple, but you say we need to worship in your temple. Look at Jesus' answer: "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know, we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth."

Jesus is saying that with his arrival there is a fundamental change in the way disciples see and approach worship. He's saying that worship is no longer confined to what we see as spiritual rhythms and spiritual places, but that worship will now be something done by a spiritual people.

One pastor says, "Jesus was saying that our meeting place with God would no longer be limited to physical structures, geographical locales, or specific times... instead *Jesus* is where and how we meet with God." You see, we don't have time to fully unpack it this morning, but several places in the first chapters of John, Jesus is clearly setting himself up as the new temple. The place of worship for which the physical temple was only a type and shadow.

And so when we are rescued and joined to Jesus we are constantly *in* Jesus, the new temple, the place of worship. And so although worship always should include the gathering of God's people on Sunday mornings to hear his word and respond to him in song and in prayer, this isn't the beginning and end of worship. In Christ, everything becomes worship. Your working, your eating, your drinking, your sleeping, your exercising, your fantasy football are all acts of worship.

This is how Paul can say in 1 Cor. 10:31 - "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

But most of us struggle with what that looks like, don't we? And so I want to give you three brief suggestions this morning to cultivate your worship of God in the everyday reality of life. (Glorify God through enjoyment of his gifts, through gratitude, through dependence). And so the first encouragement is this.

a.) Glorify God by enjoying his gifts.

You know, there's a tension for us between the things of earth and the things of heaven isn't there. We know we're supposed to glorify God and enjoy *him* forever, but how does that connect to the fact that I really, I mean really, enjoy NFL football, my family, a cup of perfectly brewed Ethiopian Yirgacheffe coffee.

We read Scripture like Psalm 73 that says, "Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is *nothing* on earth that I desire besides you." And then we sing hymns like this and we feel this tension even more: "Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely (what?) dim?" So you're saying that the more that I enjoy Jesus, the

more I love and experience the Giver, the less I will enjoy the gifts he gives? Is that right? Is that the way we're supposed to approach life?

But then we come across a text like James 1:17 that says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights."

And I would just say this this morning. That a love for God and a love for his gifts don't need to be separated.

Our affections are not a zero sum game. It's not as if what we love and enjoy are these separate boxes filled with currency, which when we move between categories we lose from the others. Like if I love my family more, I'll love God less, and if I love God more I'll love the Seahawks less. Instead, our love for Jesus should be the all-controlling love that informs and inflames everything else that we are loving.

In fact, it is in the proper enjoyment of God's gifts that we actually glorify him. When we love the everyday stuff of life, not as god, but as gifts. God's gifts are ladders by which we can climb to him. Joe Rigney calls them, "beams of light that we chase back to the source." So when we encounter God's gifts, whether it's a great meal, or a beautiful work of art, or a spectacular sunset, or the calmness of a sleeping newborn, or the vocation that we're in, or a Sunday afternoon nap, we don't stop at the gift, but run through that entryway to worship the giver.

And you're going to say to me, but Ben, aren't we constantly warned about idolatry and don't we have to be careful of that? And I would say yes, but let's not neglect one of the ways that God commands to glorify him because we're afraid.

Are there some checks in your life in these areas? Yes, be accountable to others, have someone that will tell you if you have too much invested in the Seahawks season... my wife does a good job of that. Check your generosity. Are you giving gifts as well as you are receiving them? And ask yourself, if I lost this gift, would I be sad and disappointed? That's natural. Or would I be devastated. These are good checks for our hearts.

This should encourage you brothers and sisters, because as much as I called strongly for you to make God's mission central to your life, to challenge you that God is glorified as we invite others into God's story, the reality is that just obeying Jesus and sharing Jesus are not the sum total of what it means to glorify him. Living in enjoyment of the giver of gifts in the reality of everyday life is huge in what it means to glorify God.

You should leave here and this week your food should taste better. The blue sky should be bluer. Your job, maybe, might be more enjoyable. Because you know that these are God's good gifts to you.

b.) Glorify God by being thankful.

Part of the way we steer this precipice between rejecting God's gifts and idolizing God's gifts is through gratitude.

Tim Chester: Ingratitude was part of our original sin. Gratitude, in contrast, regulates our relationship with the created world by steering us between asceticism (the abstinence from earthly pleasure) and idolatry. Asceticism undervalues God's good creation, while gratitude

acknowledges its value. Idolatry overvalues creation, while gratitude ensures that God remains our central focus."

Gratitude.

c.) Glorify God by being dependent.

Prayer/Sleep

Communion and dependence on God. Like we need sustenance.