

John 4:27-38

Sowing and Reaping

October 8, 2017

Main Point: Evangelism is a process. Allan Dayhoff says, “Evangelism is the process of doing anything with an unbeliever that causes them to move closer to the decision to place their faith in Jesus Christ.” The harvest of souls, the facing of eternity, is always before us. Jesus sends us out into the adventure with his assurance that God has done all the work of planting and preparing the harvest. We just walk with him into it.

SI: Wonderful well known account of the Samaritan woman’s putting her trust in Jesus, the Messiah, and her Messiah.

As we pick up on Jesus’ discussion with His disciples – see here the hope that He is giving them, and all who struggle with understanding and following Jesus into His world.

Intro:

Jesus says the fields are white unto harvest... the people are there, people are right around us, near us, close to us. There are people who do not yet know Christ, but are ready to hear. There are people who do not yet know Christ, but are being prepared to respond.

We just pray for eyes to see, and go with confident expectation. See what you don’t see. Reap what you didn’t sow. And keep on rejoicing as you marvel at the harvest.

Evangelism is not manipulation or a spiel or a presentation in order to get people to a decision.

Evangelism is anything that moves people closer to giving their lives over to Christ.

Jesus shows us how:

1. See what you don’t see. (repent)

Step 1 in the process: Look.

The fields are white for harvest. Full. Ready to be picked. Ready for someone to harvest them. Someone to pay attention and see that they need harvesting.

Evangelism Today seminar > You paid for me to go to an evangelism seminar. Different than any one I have ever been to before. It wasn’t about training, it was about seeing what we have missed. By and large, and there are exceptions, those who don’t yet

believe in Jesus are not coming to church. And the Church, by and large, in general, is not going to them.

Listen to Paul Hahn, our denomination's lead man in church planting: **we are radically ineffective in our evangelism**. As Christians, we rarely get out of the studio into the wild. When our paths do cross, we try listening to those yet to believe in Jesus, but most of us only are getting ready to reply, locking and loading to give the perfect answer, mentally organizing our presentations, rather than stopping, listening, hearing and connecting soul to soul.

So what does "seeing what you don't see" mean? Look up and see what you have missed. Jesus has just spent time with the unseen. He has seen her. He has met her where she is, on her turf, at the well at her time of day. He became approachable, he sat with her.

And when the disciples get back from their trip into town to buy food, they marvel that Jesus is talking to a woman, and a Samaritan woman b/c for Jews, a Samaritan was to be avoided (4:9).

She is coming for water, and Jesus turns the conversation towards talking about living water... not just spring water, for that was living water, but water, if you drink it, will make you never thirst again.

And Jesus, the perfect evangelist, brings salvation to her and to many other Samaritans in her town.

Then we pick up in v. 27. The disciples come back and they are bewildered. What in the world is Jesus doing, talking to a woman, and to a Samaritan woman? They were thinking of all these questions to ask her and to ask him, but they wisely shut up.

And they get back to their agenda – um, Jesus, it's time to eat. (Ok, now I can relate! I am always hungry!)

Jesus has something else in mind than food, at least as they are thinking of food.

They had gone to town to buy food. But they had completely missed seeing what Jesus wanted them to see.

Here they are, in Samaria land, in Samaritan territory, on the wrong side of the tracks, in a scary part of town, in a neglected, unsafe area and Jesus had brought them there so that they could see what they had not seen. So they could see what they did not see.

Many Christians today forget that Christianity started among the unseen, the untouchable, the nobody's, the poor.

Disciples -- I am going to show you what I came to do, and what I have sent you to do: Love who no one else loves. Love who your own tribe rejects. Love your enemies. And you must see them first.

Before moving on, opportunity to repent>
Who is near you that you do not see?
Who is near you that is not worthy of being seen?
Who do you not have time for? Who are you afraid of?

2. Reap what you did not sow. (believe)

Jesus is saying: Follow Me into the harvest field.

How? How do we do it? How do we plant and reap? How do we garden?

God gardens

God plants

We just reap

It is all of God – I did not choose God, He chose me! I did not grow up in the Reformed faith, I grew up Arminian and choosing God was emphasized. Yes, we are called to choose Him, but He chose me first. This makes a lot of difference...b/c it gives us great confidence that saving people is not up to us and our technique or right words...

Reaping, harvesting is a matter of faith. That going out into the harvest field will be fruitful, beneficial, necessary for life. It is by faith that we go out into the harvest field, that we follow Jesus, that we obey His command, that we go.

ILLUS Carnival season – Trusting the maker and operator of the ride in order to have fun – it takes faith to get on one of those rides...

Something happens to us as we get older... We love stability and peace, steadiness and we don't like surprises... but God loves surprises.

Faith means leaning in and trusting the driver of the Tilt a Whirl. Could the disciples have any idea what Jesus meant or where it would take them? Did Abraham have any idea what "Go, leave" meant? When Jesus says Follow Me, do you know what He means?

Not yet Christians want to know if we believe what we say we believe. They want to know what difference it is making in our hearts and lives. Are we really living by faith?

Here, Jesus is speaking to the disciples and the people right around them, the Jews and the Samaritans. ... This should give us great freedom... God does the orchestrating of events and circumstances of people's lives. We just look, listen, cross the street into what God has already planned.

What keeps us from this?

The same things that Jesus' disciples are dealing with here: An over-focus on this world (time, food, cultural mores) which then drives Fear, self-protection, self-preservation, status quo, fear of change.

Evangelism is not a burdensome duty, but a thrilling privilege. An adventure of faith – of going into the harvest fields to discover by looking and listening.

This is actually a bit shocking what Jesus says here. You're really not all that special. In fact, you have just proven that you don't get it at all. Yes, I have called you to follow me, but that doesn't make you some kind of exclusive saint at the expense of other people who will follow me.

You are no one special! It's not b/c of your gifts that I have called you. I sent you, and other people have done the work ahead of you!

God has already planted. He is the Farmer. He sends us out to find the good fruit and bring it in to the storehouse, the Church.

See? God does not call us to performance, training, doing, accomplishing, grading, managing, performing. He calls us to rejoicing, to receiving. To receiving and rejoicing. What is harvesting? It's going out there and picking the crop from the plant.

What did you have to do with the production of that fruit? Did you convince the stem to start budding, the flower to blossom, to bud to produce the fruit? No, it just happens with sunlight, water, soil, and temperature. So, so many things that are out of human control. Farming is good for the soul. (trans to 3)

See what you do not see, reap what you did not sow, and

3. Keep Harvesting and Rejoicing.

ILLUS of sitting in swing together with toddlers and enjoying it together, enjoying each other's smiles and laughs.

We delight in the child – his laughter, his pure joy w/o any regard towards what do I look like, what will people think of me. Giving joy to each other by spending time together, investing in that child to give him playful fun.

v. 36 implies the harvesting is happening and is ongoing. – So the sower (God and His Word through His people) and the Reaper rejoice together. We really do get to partner with God. He really does love us this much that we get to do this with Him, in His power. Childlike faith and trust and joy in doing it together.

Some ways of doing this harvesting and rejoicing: Vision Trips Everyday life

Vision Trips – to go and see what is happening, what God is doing. Jesus is inviting us to go and see! This is doable! (Dave Mayhew and John Peters)

The types of tools used in harvesting, the types of ways you have to bend your hand or your fingers to harvest. Depends on the fruit, the seed, the produce, right. If you're harvesting tomatoes, you don't do it the same way as if you are harvesting corn...

What do I mean here? That harvesting looks different depending on the type of crop being harvested. And you have to see it, know it, explore it before you know how best to harvest it. That means listening. Seeing people. Where they are, what they are, who they are. Moving from a model of listening in order to respond to a model of listening in order to hear.

Apostles – all different gifts – sent into the harvest field. > What are the gifts and hobbies that God has given you, that you are deeply interested in that you could brush up against people different from you

That's you. You are saved, rescued, and sent... why? So that you can rejoice! Thanksgiving, rejoicing, harvest time.

Conc: Avett Brothers –... An example of being yourself and entering into the harvest, being sent... Rick Rubin quote – that he wanted to work with them because it seemed like they would make his life better. He needed virtue from them... Theirs is music for people who have seen a lot of hard things. It's not just about having a good time and self-medicating through life by breaking stuff. It's about family and friendship and place and work and love and where it comes from – a bleeding, dying, resurrected Savior.

Christians are people who have moved from slavery to the fear of death and instead we have hope for life. And this will ooze out of us. Just be yourself, your redeemed self.

Go into the harvest field and reap what you did not sow. So that you can enjoy the harvest of whomever God is rescuing through your seeing and listening and loving them into the kingdom.

