

“Picnic or People Priority?”

I. **INTRO:**

- A. During **WWI** there was a great *wheat harvest* in **Australia** that *rotted in the fields*. Because so many men had responded to the call of the colors, nobody was left to gather in the grain harvest. It was a case of “*reap or rot*”.
1. This is exactly the situation we face in **our churches today**: a plentiful harvest, and few reapers. The **vast needs of the world** stand as a **fresh call to prayer**.
 2. Christians have been commissioned to the high task of being **co-laborers with God** in His harvest. In so many nations, it is **ripe** to be gathered. It is a harvest for which God gave heaven’s best. **He is not about to let it rot in the fields**.

II. **SOUL WINNING IN SYCHAR!** (31-42)

- A. **PICNIC!** (31-33)
- B. (31-34) **Meantime the disciples** have their minds in a more pressing matter...**food!**
1. While they’re passing the falafel’s & pita Jesus teaches them a vital lesson about **another kind of food**.
 2. Jesus is saying, “you should concentrate *not on our picnic*, but on those **people** coming across the fields of Sychar, led by the woman I was talking to.
- C. **PEOPLE!** (34,35)
- D. (34) The **Samaritan woman** needed **water**. The **disciples**, already quenched from **water**, needed **food**.
1. The **sinners** greatest need it the free gift of **salvation**.
The **believers** greatest need is to **understand & do & finish** the will of God.
- E. (35) **Lift up your eyes** - **What would have they seen?** A whole group of Samaritans coming across the fields! (w/white headdress?)
1. **Note: vs.31-38 is sandwiched between vs.29,20 & vs.39.**
- F. **PARTNERSHIP!** (36-38)
- G. Evangelism is a **partnership**. Each role is **essential**. We must be ready to **fulfill** either.
1. **What did Jesus mean, “I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored”?**
 - a) He meant, **He** had been witnessing to the Samaritan woman, **& she** had been witnessing to her friends & neighbors **& now** they were coming to the well.
 - b) It would be the **disciples** privileged to **reap** them (i.e. **teach them** more about Jesus **& establish them** in the kingdom & family of God)

H. No ministry competition!

1. Jesus gives us the grace to **receive Him**, **but also** the opportunity of **serving with Him** in ripened fields.
2. Whether you **dig, plant, water, or pick** the crop, there should never be a **competition**. **All** will share in the **joy** of seeing the kingdom of God advanced!
3. **Des** always uses the **Lighthouse** analogy: No matter how many **lighthouses** you have protecting a coast line, they are **never in competition** w/one another. Each simply **warns & protects** a different piece of the coastline for travelers.

I. **PICKING!** (39-42)

J. (39) Like a **stone** dropped into water, Jesus' words of life **fall into** the Samaritan woman's heart & then **ripple** through the city.

1. **A solitary seed** has been **planted**, & w/in the time it takes to eat lunch, **an entire field of humanity** becomes **ripe** for harvest, for the kingdom of God.¹

K. (42) The term "**Savior of the world**" often was used of the Roman emperor [LKGNT; pg228]

L. Jesus was clearly on a mission, one that was, **God informed & God directed**.

1. That mission was to: **confront people with the truth of Himself!**
2. **All people, even Samaritan's.**

III. **SOUL WINNING IN CANA!** (43-54)

A. **Back to Galilee!** (43-45)

B. **HARVESTING IN A DIFFERENT FIELD!** (46-54)

C. This is the **2nd miracle**(54). (1st was *water to wine*) [7 in John]

1. 1st, salvation is through **the Word**; the 2nd, salvation is **by faith**.

D. **The Physical restoration of the boy!** (51-53a)

E. (46) **Nobleman**/Royal Official - *Basilikos* ("King's man"). A person of prestigious rank. Probably one of Herod's trusted officers.

1. But his **rank** means nothing to him now. His **son's life** is at stake.
2. He doesn't go to **Herod**; He goes to **Jesus**, the very source of life.
 - a) **Infirmity** often draws people to Christ faster than **prosperity** does!

F. (47) We can't help but **empathize** with this troubled father.

1. I'm sure he tried the **best physicians** money could buy.

¹ Chuck Swindoll; John; pg.57

2. Every **exotic medicine** recommended by the professionals, & every **folk remedy** suggested by the servants.
 3. But all his wealth, rank, privilege means nothing now.
- G. **Implored**/requesting - verb is the *imperfect tense*, continuous action.
1. Paraphrase, “*He kept on begging Him over & over*”.
 2. Something *uncharacteristic* for a man of his position.
- H. (47) Let’s not overlook 2 things:
1. Don’t tell Christ **how** to handle a situation (**come down** - simply lay His **problem** at His feet & allow Jesus to handle it His way!)
 2. Present **yourself** before presenting **the need** (simply lay **himself** at His feet)
- I. (48) Now it seems Jesus came down pretty hard on this desperate father.
1. But understand that a “**circus**” atmosphere was developing around Christ.
 2. He was fast becoming a *traveling sideshow*. “**Come one, come all! See the Galilean Miracle Worker!**” (Swindoll; pg.62)
- J. Jesus laments the fact the people demand He perform miracles **before** believing him.
1. The contrast is that he **Samaritans** believed **because of His own word**(41); The **Jews** believed because of seeing “**miraculous signs & wonders**”
 2. Jesus would later say, “**blessed are those who have not seen & yet believe.**”
- K. (49) His **persistence** wins him a hearing before the **true King**.
- L. (50) Why didn’t Jesus go to Capernaum Himself?
1. Maybe to **stretch the faith** of this official. Standing by & watching as another brings healing requires little faith.
 2. But to believe **w/o being there, w/o seeing for yourself**...that takes **faith!**
 3. If your salvation is based on *feelings, dreams, visions, voices*, or any other *fleshly evidence*, then you are on dangerous ground. **It is faith in the Word alone that gives us assurance of eternal life.**
 - a) 1 Jn.5:9 **We accept man’s testimony**, but **God’s testimony** is greater because it is the testimony of **God**, which **He** has given about **His Son**.
- M. **Faith is not a sense**, nor *sight*, nor *reason*, but simply **taking God at His word**.²
1. The beginning of **anxiety** is the end of **faith**, and the beginning of **true faith** is the end of **anxiety**. George Mueller

² Streams in the Desert; Jan.4th; by Christmas Evans

- N. (51) **Saying** - indicates continual action. Apparently the servants were jumping up & down w/joy, repeating over & over, “*your son’s alive...he’s living...he’s well!*”
- O. (52) **7th hour**(1pm) - You might think when **he went his way**(50) that he headed immediately home. **Nope!** He left Jesus’ presence absolutely assured that His words formed a promise. And in that promise he rested.
1. Looks like he stayed in Cana for the night.
 2. The healing was at **1pm “yesterday”**. Cana is 17-20 miles from Capernaum. Easily done in a day, only 4/5 hours for a man in a hurry. He could have been home by dark.
 3. **Such faith in Jesus’ promise that he didn’t return home until the next day... That’s Faith!**
- P. Miracle, healing at a distance. He is the Master of distance & space.
1. We should be comforted, He **doesn’t** need to be physically standing right next to you, to heal you.
- Q. We will never learn **faith** in *comfortable surroundings!*
1. God gives us promises in quiet hours, seals our covenants with great & gracious words, & **then** steps back, waiting to see how much we believe.
 2. He then allows **the Tempter** to come, & the **ensuing test** seems to contradict all that He has spoken. **This is when faith wins its crown!**
 3. **This is the time to look up through the storm, like the trembling frightened sailors** that were with Paul on that ship in Acts 27:25 & declare, “**I have faith in God that it will be as He told me.**”
- R. **The Spiritual redemption of the household!** (53b,54)
- S. He father, **heard** (47); **believed** (50); & **knew** (53) [the normal Christian experience]
1. **The son** he now held in his **arms...& the Savior** he now held in his **heart!**
- T. **Application for fathers:**
1. **A father isn’t too independent to admit his needs!**
 - a) How **vulnerable** are you? How **honest** are you about your needs?...*with yourself? With God? With your wife? With others?*
 2. **A father isn’t too busy to know his children!**
 - a) He didn’t send his wife, “*Honey, you take care of it, I have a lot of work stacked up at the royal office!*” He went himself. He was involved in his home.
 - b) **Men, do you delegate too much responsibility to your wife?** [If so, she may find it hard to believe you really care]

3. A father **isn't too proud to believe God's Word!**
 - a) Maybe, at this very moment, you are separated by distance from a situation you are concerned about. **Will you trust God to be there? Will you take Him at His Word?**
 - b) Maybe, God has you waiting *flat on your back* **or** *away from home*..forcing you to believe him. {I'm speaking to those listening in on **radio, podcast**; on the **web** overseas}
 4. A father **isn't too logical to walk by faith!**
 - a) Father's are you a pacesetter in spiritual things? When members of the family need counsel, do they turn to you? Do you promote Christian activities or are you a barrier to them?
 5. A father **isn't too serious to enjoy life with his family!**
 - a) **Is this you?** "You kids shut up!...Turn off those lights...Get that room cleaned up...It costs too much. You think money grows on trees?"
 - b) God **didn't** create you to be a **sergeant**, or the home to be **boot camp**, or your children to be **Marine Corps recruits**. He gave you a **family to nurture...as a gardener nurtures his plants**. And not only to **nurture**, but to **enjoy** as well!
 6. Ps.128:1-4 **How joyful** are those who fear the Lord - all who follow his ways!
You will enjoy the fruit of your labor. **How joyful and prosperous** you will be!
Your wife will be like a fruitful grapevine, flourishing within your home.
Your children will be like vigorous young olive trees as they sit around your table.
That is the Lord's blessing for those who fear him.
 7. **Fathers will your children remember their childhood as being fun or frantic?**
The world outside your front door is cold enough! Warm up your house!
- U. **Jesus won** the woman at the well; the woman **won many Samaritans**; the father **won his whole household**. **Are you busy with the harvest? He won't let it Rot in the field!**
1. I pray we can present **Christ** in an **appealing, enthusiastic & attractive** way, that will result in others wanting Him also.
- V. **Adversity** are **not** stones thrown to *hurt me* **but** stones that serve to *get my attention* (to tap on the window of my comfortable estate & remind me that this is not my home!)³
1. **Prayer:** Lord, use these **rocks** in my life, to **pave a road** directly to **YOU!**

³ Ken Gire; Incredible Moments.