

#15 – John 14:39-45

Need: To see how Jesus interacted with people in great need and the results of such action.

Aim: To understand how Jesus interacted with people in great need and to witness the result of such action to spur believers to obey God's call to bear witness.

Title: “Desperate Need” – Part IV

Prop: In Jn. 4:1-45, Jesus **I. Avoided Religious Conflict – 4:1-6** and instead chose to have an **II. Encounter With the Unloving – 4:7-26**, followed by a **III. Call to Service – 7:27-38** which was **IV. Manifested in the End Results – Jn. 4:39-45**, showing the power of the message of the Gospel to effect lives and to bring to salvation and eternal life.

Intro: I have attended two Billy Graham Evangelistic campaigns. The first was as a young child in Spokane, Washington, when my mother auditioned and was selected as part of the choir for the meetings. On the day of the audition the four of us were charged to be on our best behavior as we were left to wander around the fairgrounds looking for adventure. I don't remember much about the goings on other than my brother Bernie being able to belch out most the alphabet after drinking an entire bottle of “**Bubble Up.**” I never did hear Billy Graham preach at that time as we stayed home in the evenings with my Dad while my Mom participated and sang in the choir.

The second time I was in high school, when the services were held in Seattle's new “**King Dome.**” I sat enraptured by the testimonies, the music and of course Billy Graham's preaching. When he gave the altar call thousands came forward and I was deeply moved by the spectacle.

There was no loss of awe when I found out later that many of the first wave which came forward were counselors to assist in leading the others to Christ.

We find on a much lesser scale the call of the gospel in a small town; having heard the testimony of this woman of ill-repute the people came out to see for themselves this self-proclaimed Messiah and heard, first hand, the message of the Gospel and responded accordingly. It was the fulfillment of the illustration of verses 34-38 about souls ripe for a spiritual harvest.

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Transition: In the last section of this encounter we see the positive results of the Gospel message as borne out in the witness of the “least of these,” an unlikely witness whose life was changed in an instant.

IV. Manifestation in the End Results – Jn. 4:39-45.

A. Background (1-38)

1. Avoided Religious Conflict (1-6) – As we began chapter four we saw Jesus’ flourishing ministry in the southern region of Judea. The religious authorities viewed Jesus as a much greater threat than John the Baptist because Jesus was presenting Himself as the long awaited Messiah. He was performing miracles to attest to that claim.

But He had neither religious training nor credentials and thus began a 3 ½ yearlong conflict which ended at the cross. Rather than meet these religious leaders head on Jesus moved back north to Galilee. The traditional route was discarded as Jesus headed straight north through the country of the hated Samaritans, He had a divine appointment with a unique woman. Jesus cast aside all barriers, racial, religious and ones of social convention as He met with this woman.

2. Encounter with the Unlovely (7-26) – In verses 7-26, the Apostle John catalogued the encounter with this woman in great detail, which taught new spiritual truth. Jesus used the metaphor of “**living water**” with a never ending source as a picture of eternal life, capitalizing on the woman’s immediate need of drawing water for daily use. Jesus promised eternal life if she would but accept Him as Lord and Savior, “**Living Water.**”

In verses 15-26, Jesus taught new religious truth as He answered the woman's quick question in her attempt to change the subject from the revelation of her personal life to a prickly religious issue. Jesus answered the question and revealed the coming change in temple worship, as it would no longer be the only place to meet God. It was about to be fulfilled. The temple of God, as Paul presented, was to become the believers' body, we have the indwelling of the Spirit of God living within us! Paul called us the **"temple of the Holy Spirit,"** and thus we should treat our bodies as such.

The second revelation was that Messiah had come as Jesus dropped the bombshell in verse 26: **"Jesus said to her, 'I who speak to you am He.'"**

3. Call to Harvest (27-38) – Having heard the words of Jesus, in verse 28, the woman lost all interest in her immediate needs and ran into town, proclaiming the person of Jesus to all who would listen. Jesus took the time factor between the woman leaving and the people coming, in verses 27-38 to teach yet another spiritual truth about the coming harvest of souls. People are in great need and have been prepared by God as workers to reap the harvest, where others had planted and watered the seed of God's Word. Thus people were and still are ready to hear the good news and to receive eternal life.

Transition: With all of this said, the reaction of verse 39-45 was truly remarkable!!

B. Belief (39-42)

1. Woman's Witness (39) – Beginning in verse 39, I can only imagine why the townspeople responded to the woman's witness. She had no social status, no money, no honor; the list was endless. Yet her life had been changed and that must have been somewhat noticeable. She didn't care about her past, because God didn't, it was washed away under the blood of Jesus, and new life had been planted within her.

There is nothing like a new Christian to make us old ones remember the joy of the day of our salvation. Many have commended me for the work done in Carlos's life and the changes wrought. I was just the instrument; as God is doing the work in the heart and life of Carlos. But in a sense Carlos saved me as well; it renewed my faith and purpose in life to watch his transformation and to appreciate that I too have been given eternal life!

Regardless of her station in life, this woman bore witness to the transformation Jesus had wrought within her heart. She loved enough to share her faith with those who had rejected her in the past.

2. Town Response (40) – The entire town came to see and hear Jesus preach His words of life, and they asked Him to stay on and teach them more.

Jesus spent two more days among the townspeople teaching about Himself in relationship to the Old Testament, the truth of the reality of eternal life. These were people who had been rejected and neglected by the Jewish religious system. They were considered unworthy to have any part in knowing about God and His precious gift of Messiah. Jesus was way out of bounds in spending time with the hated Samaritans. He colored outside the lines in speaking to Samaritans. Jesus was not even in the ballpark in considering a **“fallen”** woman as important and having value and worth.

He should have placed Himself under the authority of the religious leaders, received their blessing and given attention to their agenda. Samaritans were not part of anyone’s consideration. They were viewed as unworthy.

3. Witness to Belief (41-42) – The people came because of the woman’s witness, but they believed, in verse 41-42, when they heard the words of Jesus first hand: **“It is no longer because of what you said that we believed, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world!”**

The thrill of it all! To come because of someone’s witness and then to hear God’s call for yourself and then believe. These people were miles ahead of the religious leaders as they recognized their need, heard the call

and believed in Jesus as Savior. They accepted His free offer of release from sin and despair. They, in exchange for their pitiful life, were given the gift of eternal life, and the reality of eternity with God. These people had been prepared; they were ripe for harvest as they heard the witness of one who had been transformed. They heard the call of God and gained entrance into God's family where there were no barriers!!

We, like this woman should be proactive in sharing the good news of forgiveness of sin and the free gift of eternal life! This woman at the well did it with her words and the immediate change in her demeanor. The people were ready; they recognized their desperate need and responded to the words of Jesus. We too need to broaden our focus to the great need around us.

B. Travelogue (43-45)

1. Two Days in Sychar (43a) – In verse 43, I imagine that Jesus was quite comfortable with His stay in the Samaritan village of Sychar, but I wonder how the disciples felt. Jesus had bridged the social barriers and associated with the hated, the outcasts of Jewish society, and a belief that had been part of the disciples' experience. They were raised in the darkness of bigotry. They were reeling as Jesus spanned so many gaps:

(1) Racial barriers – Samaritans were half-breeds, (2) Social convention – Jesus spoke with a woman, a prostitute to boot! (3) and religious barriers. Jesus tore them all down and preached the good news without reservation, proclaiming the truth that all are loved by God no matter what they had done. None are worthy. All can come regardless of personal past or present conditions. All must come through the same door as more worthy than others. Jesus opens His arms to welcome all who believe. There was no standard of behavior, no regard for bad choices, no situation existed which would bar anyone from the offer of salvation from sin and despair, shame and guilt. The offer is to all.

2. Moving onto Galilee (43b) – After His two day stay, Jesus moved on to His original intent, which was to go into the region of Galilee.

The church in Beaver City, Nebraska was my first church. I had just six weeks of pastoral training through an internship and found myself cast into the deep end of the pool with only basic instructions on how to swim, without a life preserver! One of my earliest duties was to set the agenda for our monthly board meetings. It was my goal to hand out the agenda to the Board on Sunday before the actual meeting. One time I didn't get around to it so when I had set the agenda, I went around town to give the Board members the outline. One member, the vice-moderator lived a good

distance out of town. I didn't mind the drive as I was always looking for legitimate reasons to get out of the office. When I got to the house, he was in the field, but his wife was at home. She invited me into the house for ice-tea. I apologetically declined and headed back to the office. Later on in the week, her husband mentioned that Sue, his wife had invited me in to talk because she had just heard about the death of a close relative and needed guidance and comfort. It would have been nice if she had told me up front what was going on and I would have stayed. But I should have recognized her situation. If only I had my focus in the right frame of mind as I remember her concern written all over her face, puffy eyes and tears streaks on her face. I lost the opportunity to minister where I was sent and needed. My mind was focused on the minuscule rather than the greater need. Jesus paused where the need was obvious, then moved on to less pressing matters. We need to be in tune with the Holy Spirit who will give us the ability to see the need and to act accordingly to people's need instead of being so focused upon ourselves and our own agenda.

C. No Honor (44-45)

1. Personal Bias (44) – When Jesus went back to His home town He was not treated with much respect. He had grown up with the town's people and they had known Him from an early age – **“Who is He to tells what to do?”**

I remember somewhat the same situation when with great fanfare the church I grew up in sent a man off to Dallas Seminary. He would come home and work in the church over the summer and head back to school in the fall. Three years later he graduated and was hired as an associate pastor. He had been raised in the church from the cradle to his hiring. During one of my Christmas breaks, he and some other guys used a rented gym for pickup basketball games. The open gym was an outreach program instituted by this pastor. During one of the pauses between games, he and I sat and talked about pastoring and stuff. He was unhappy because he had not received any respect for his position; because the same people he was working with still treated him as a kid. Some of the older adults remembered changing his diaper in nursery – **“who are you to tell me what to do?”** He lasted a couple of years there before moving to become a senior pastor in another church.

Jesus was in the same boat here – **“no respect.”**

2. No Denial – The Galileans didn't respect Jesus but they had seen evidence of His power which had been on display in Jerusalem, where His healing ability was in full view. There nothing here about belief in His message. as their understanding about Jesus was getting what they could for their own personal need without any lasting commitment. I liken this to

those who attend church with no commitment as they flit from church to church. It is likened to “**Consumer Christianity,**” a smorgasbord of takers but never givers or servers. Jesus served but as a whole there was no real commitment from the general population. They were there to get what they could and what they needed with no reciprocation, no acts of service.

In chapter 4 Jesus avoided religious conflict. In my first church, the Presbyterian pastor wanted to get together to discuss pertinent theological issues. The main problem was that to him the Bible contained the Word of God, but was not the Word of God. It was left up to the rational mind to determine what was God’s Word and what wasn’t. I didn’t need the exercise.

Secondly Jesus reached out to the unlovely, those in desperate need without regard for His reputation.

Thirdly the harvest is ready, ripe and souls. Will we be reapers in our own circle of influence? Will we be looking for the opportunity to share Christ with those who are hurting and looking for rhyme and reason in life? Or maybe you are here today not knowing Jesus, wondering if His Word and offer is for you? You have spent a great deal of energy trying to work out the situations and challenges in your life, but it never works. Jesus says

“Come to Me and I will give you rest. I will give you a reason for life, purpose and meaning. I will give you eternal life.”

“Desperate Need” –Pt. 4 – Jn. 4:39-45

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