



Part Three

Here are the main points we covered last Sunday. As I read the passage again, listen for these principles and our main idea.

1. Trust God to put you in the right place.
2. Pray for divine appointments.
3. Engage in spiritual conversations,
4. Meet them on their turf.
5. Move from the natural to the supernatural.
6. Don't worry if your listener gets lost.
7. Remember that the fields are white for harvest

Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John 2 (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), 3 he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. 4 And he had to pass through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.

7 A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." 8 (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) 9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered her, "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." 11 The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us

the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.” 13 Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 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 welling up to eternal life.” 15 The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”

16 Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” 17 The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.” 19 The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” 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. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” 25 The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” 26 Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”

27 Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you seek?” or, “Why are you talking with her?” 28 So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, 29 “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” 30 They went out of the town and were coming to him. 31 Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” 32 But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” 33 So the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought him something to eat?” 34 Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. 35 Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, then comes the harvest’? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.

36 Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. 37 For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ 38 I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”

39 Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.” 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of his word. 42 They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.”

43 After the two days he departed for Galilee.

8. We need sowers and reapers.

The fields are white for harvest. Last week we talked about the dire need for reapers of this gospel harvest. But Jesus also mentioned the necessity of those who sow the seed.

36 Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. 37 For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ 38 I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”

The picture of a sower and reaper rejoicing together is pictured beautifully in Amos 9.

“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD,
“when the plowman shall overtake the reaper
and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed. (Amos 9:13)

Think about this illustration for a moment. In just a few months, whether it is planting rows of corn for your herd or just a garden of goodies for yourself and your family, many of you will be sowing seed of all kinds. Part of the fun of gardening is watching the fruit of your labor sprout and ripen. Whether you love gardening or tolerate it, we all know that many months separate the sowing from the reaping. But picture yourself in Amos 9. Imagine that as soon as you pick a carrot from the ground, someone comes behind you and plants more carrots. As soon as your combine scoops up the ripe, dry corn the corn planter is a few feet behind sowing more seeds. This is a picture of bounty and plenty and it's very close to the rejoicing that Jesus spoke about.

Some have special ability in sowing the seed of eternal life. These are the spiritual conversations we have been talking about. Others seem to be better at reaping. There are just some people who clearly have the gift of evangelism. Dave Hart told me about a guy he knows who seemingly can talk to someone, give them a hug and then they immediately pray to receive Christ. But that doesn't seem to be my experience and it may not be yours either. This is why we need both sowers and reapers. Jesus told his disciples that they were reaping on the shoulders of others who had sowed. He may have been referring to the prophets of old and he was probably also referring to himself. So if you don't seem to have the gift of reaping you can at least be a sower of the seed of the gospel.

Right about now some of you may be thinking, “But I don't have the gift of evangelism. Aren't we supposed to work in our areas of giftedness? You don't need me to do evangelism because I'm not good at it anyway.” Let's think about that for a moment. Does everyone in this room have the gift of mercy? Husbands, if you could only see many of your wives roll their eyes right then! Not everyone has the gift of mercy but is every believer commanded to be merciful? Yes. Not everyone has the gift of service but every believer is commanded to do works of service. As I have said many times, you cannot grow in your Christian life if you are not engaged in regular service to your fellow believers. In the same way, even if you have don't the gift of evangelism, we are still commanded to do it.

Those with the gift of evangelism can count the number of conversions that the Lord blesses them with. I don't mean to say that they count them like notches on a belt (though some may do so), but their gift allows them to have wonderful success in reaping souls for the kingdom. But the rest of us who do not have this gift can't count conversions, can we? It would be like a salesman who worked hard every day but only had one sale every four or five years. That would be pretty depressing. So if reapers can count conversions I recommend that sowers count conversations. You may almost never be involved with reaping but you can be constantly involved with sowing and Jesus himself said that both are needed.

We must not look down on such conversations simply because they do not lead to conversions. Tell me—who is in the conversion business? Conversions are 100% God’s domain. Man does not convert anyone. Even the most gifted evangelist has never once converted anyone. So if conversions are not your responsibility, we need not be worried about them. But conversations are our domain—the kind of conversations we have been talking about and the kind modeled so perfectly by Jesus. This entire series of messages on the woman at the well are nothing more than breaking down Jesus’ method into principles that we can use in our daily lives.

9. Experience joy in sowing and reaping is joyful.

Wanna know a secret? Do you want to know a secret that will revolutionize Grace Church and your personal life? Doing ministry is awesome. Serving the Lord in some form of active ministry is one of life’s greatest joys. Many of you know this secret because you have experienced it repeatedly. But many of you have rarely felt the joy that comes back to you in meaningful service.

This truth was hammered home again at the Valentine’s banquet. I didn’t talk about it enough last Sunday so I need to milk a few more illustrations out of it! Seriously, this was very cool. I was talking with several of the young ladies and you would not believe how excited they were. Now understand—they worked really hard on this event. Some of them spent the entire afternoon finishing the intricate details of the decorating. It wasn’t just that they enjoyed the event itself—that was great—but what they really enjoyed was the hard work before the event. Now of course the girls were working within the area of their giftedness and interest. Teenage boys would not have told me it was one of their favorite nights ever had they been asked to make pretty decorations for the holiday of love. It’s just not gonna fly! But that’s just it—the girls found a niche and scooped all of the joy out of that they could. And of course the boys also did an awesome job in their serving roles as well.

So the secret of all ministry is that it is meant to be joyful. God intends that joy return to us as a reward for ministry service. And nowhere is this more true than in the ministry of sowing and reaping. This is what Jesus told his disciples. *36-Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together.*

Let me paint some word pictures for you. Let’s assume you are walking through the woods on a hot afternoon and you find a spring coming out of the hillside. It is tricking pure, ice cold water so you kneel down, cup your hands and take a long, refreshing drink. The next week you have a doctor’s appointment for your prostate cancer you have been dealing with and to your shock and delight, the doctor tells you that you are suddenly cancer free. You thank the Lord for this wonderful gift but you start to wonder how it happened. Was it a straight up miracle or was there something different that you did. Then you remember the spring water. So you go there again and bottle up a gallon of it and take it to your friend who was recently diagnosed with stage four colon cancer. Sure enough, they drink the water and their next appointment they are declared completely cancer free. What are the chances that you are going to tell others about this spring water? Listen, I don’t care if you have financial motives in mind or not. Maybe you are thinking that you will make millions of dollars from this supernatural spring water but the point is that there is no way you would keep the news to yourself. It’s just too good not to share with the world. Am I right?

But instead of sharing your miracle with the world, you keep this to yourself and maybe a few friends, who have also mysteriously sworn themselves to secrecy. You didn't even tell them to keep it among your small group, they just instinctively do it. One day you are sitting in the lunchroom at work eating a turkey sandwich with tomato and Dijon mustard and washing it down with sips water. During lunch, your co-worker tells you about her mother who had just been transferred to hospice because cancer had spread all throughout her body. She starts to get choked up when she tells you her mother will probably be gone within a week. You listen carefully and compassionately and offer a few words of encouragement. She thanks you for being a good listener. During this entire conversation, the water you were sipping on was *that* water, the spring water, the miraculous water that heals the cancer from everyone who has ever drank from it. While your co-worker spilled her heart to you about her dying mother, you sat there and sipped on your miracle water. "It's just so hard, my mom is only 63 years old." Sip. "Dad just retired and mom planned to retire next year—they had all these great plans to travel together." Sip. "But the worst part is watching her suffer, seeing her wince at the pain that the morphine doesn't take away." Sip.

This is an unimaginable scene, isn't it? I don't think anyone in this room is so cruel as to do such a thing. But isn't this how we treat the miracle of salvation? We are content to sip on it every day while people are dying all around us. One would think we would treat it like a cancer curing miracle drug and proclaim it to the whole world but instead, we have created this small group of friends we call the church and just pass it around among ourselves. And what is greater—water that cures cancer or living water that cures eternal death?

Now I realize that sharing the gospel is not always so simple as sharing miracle water. If we were giving away miracle water that cured cancer everyone would want it. But since we are giving away living water, many will hate us for even suggesting that they need such a thing. I get that, I really do. But it doesn't change the fact that what we have—what we keep to ourselves—is infinitely greater and more precious than water that cures cancer.

Jesus said that the sower and the reaper rejoice together. All ministry is meant to be joyful and the ministry of sharing living water should be the most joyful of all. Do you see—God has built this joy into the process itself? Do you get joy from the gospel? Now when I ask this question, make sure you hone in on that word joy. My question is not, "Are you excited about the gospel?" But rather "Does the gospel bring you joy?" But even that question needs to be teased out a bit.

When you think about your own death, do you take full assurance that the blood of Christ has sealed your relationship with God and your eternal future? When you suffer through trials, are you comforted by the knowledge that God is sovereignly in control of every last one of your circumstances? Is your life characterized by a general attitude of gratefulness rather than a general attitude of complaining? When you worship together as a congregation of believers or mediate on God's Word in the quiet of your home, more often than not, is it deeply satisfying? Over the years, are you able to see that God has chipped away at your character and is slowly transforming you into his image and likeness?

If you can answer yes to these questions, then you are gaining joy from the gospel, or more accurately, you are gaining joy from God himself. Therefore, if you have joy in God, why would you not want others to enter into that same joy? Not to mention the fact that joy is compounded in the ministry of sharing your joy in the Lord. First, you gain joy from God himself. Then you gain more joy by sharing the good news. Even if it is a frightening process you are glad when you have the opportunity to do so. Finally, if the Lord allows you to help lead someone to saving faith in Christ, that is the crown jewel of joyful moments. So there is joy all along that entire journey and God means for us to enter into it.

On the other hand, if you can't answer yes to most of the questions I gave you a moment ago, then we have a different problem altogether. If you do not have joy in God on a regular basis—even if you don't feel it every moment of every day—then it makes sense that you are not motivated to share in the mission of the Father—to seek out future worshippers. It makes sense because you simply cannot share what you don't have. You will never want to share this joy if you don't experience it yourself.

10. Depend on the Holy Spirit—Jesus did.

As I have been saying, Jesus' entire encounter with the woman at the well is one long model of how to share the mission. We will have almost twenty principles on this before we are done. But we always have a problem when we use Jesus as a model for ministry—we are not Jesus. Jesus walked on water. Jesus turned water into wine. Jesus healed leprosy. Jesus raised the dead. Jesus did all those things but you and I are not Jesus, so what chance do we have.

This is why verse six is so important. *Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well.* Jesus was wearied. Did you catch that? Jesus had just walked about 20 miles through the desert and he was worn out. He was obviously thirsty and no doubt hungry as well. Jesus was a man and his body wore out like yours and mine.

A few weeks ago I gave presented these three options regarding Jesus' dependence on the Holy Spirit.

1. Jesus lived entirely in the power of his own divine nature, with no dependence on the Spirit.
2. Jesus lived mostly in the power of his divine nature, with a little dependence on the Spirit.
3. Half and half.
4. Jesus lived predominantly in the power of the Spirit, though sometimes he exercised divine power in a way that demonstrates his deity.
5. Jesus never used the power of his divine essence, but always only worked as a human empowered by the Holy Spirit.

The feedback you gave me—and I strongly agreed—is that option #4 best represents the Biblical record. And this is seen quite clearly in his long journey from Jerusalem to Samaria. He was depending on the Holy Spirit for protection and sustenance. But he also depended on the Holy Spirit in his conversation with the woman. One thing we see all over the gospels is Jesus praying to His Father. Jesus said to his disciples, “Apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5) but of

himself he said, “And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him” (John 8:29).

Woven throughout all of these principles is dependence on the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus was arrested and Peter had just cut off the ear of the High Priest’s servant, Jesus said to Peter. “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. “Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matthew 26:53)

Jesus had two options before him—depend on human power and pick up the sword against his enemies or else completely depend on the Father. Notice that he could have asked his Father for an army of angels to defend him. He chose not to do so because he knew that was not His Father’s will, but even in that display of power, he would have depended on power outside of himself. Do you see what I mean? Jesus could have said to Peter, “Put your sword back in its place. Do you think that I could not destroy this small group of men bearing swords and clubs with a single word?” Jesus was fully God and had all of the infinite power of deity within him, but that wasn’t even an option for him. Even if doing battle was the Lord’s will—and it wasn’t—even then Jesus would have called on the Father for help instead of acting in his own power. Therefore, if Jesus completely depended on the Holy Spirit to have a spiritual conversation with this woman at the well, how much more do we need the Spirit for every conversation we have.

11. Mission is a spiritual thermometer of our personal worship.

I said a moment ago that if you are not experiencing joy in God then you will have no ability to share your joy with others. It’s not that you don’t want to share that joy, it’s that you cannot share the joy because you don’t have it yourself. That’s another way of saying that mission is a barometer of our personal worship. Remember that we are using the word ‘mission’ very broadly. It could mean going to Uganda where Virginia is or it can mean having a conversation over a cup of coffee. Jesus’ mission—his purpose for coming—was “to seek and to save the lost,” so anytime we enter into Jesus’ mission we are on mission.

Therefore, if you are not on mission, this gives you a strong indication of your spiritual health. This has been a hard winter for illnesses. Most of us have been coughing and run down at some point in the past few months. Since Virginia is gone, I had to play mom and wife to John this week and tell him to make a doctor’s appointment. Like most men he was trying to tough out an illness that had been plaguing him for five weeks.

We are well aware of the signs of poor physical health. Coughing, runny nose and often a fever. You don’t always need a thermometer to tell you that you have a fever, but it is an accurate measure of your body temperature. A thermometer tells you how sick you are at any given moment. In the same way, your mission is a thermometer of your spiritual health. If you are not engaged in mission, that is an indication of your overall spiritual health. You may not even feel like something is wrong. You may not even feel “ill.” You may feel relatively healthy but I am saying that you have a mission fever—and I don’t mean fever in a good sense.

So you may not be well but that doesn't mean you need to be on spiritual life support either. Let's put this into perspective. Mission is not the totality of your Christian life. I have known people who are passionate about sharing their faith but it has been to the neglect of other areas of their life. The mission part of their spiritual life is healthy but they are quite "ill" in other areas. Some of you may be the opposite. Mission is your weak area—as it probably is for most—but you may be healthy in many other areas. That's good. Don't despair. Don't leave here with your heads hanging low but do leave here with the correct diagnosis.

Also, I don't want you to leave discouraged because you need to remember that by your very presence, you are joining in the mission of our church. I want to show you how God sovereignly worked out the timing of this series on John 4 on worship and mission.

March 6	Mission & Worship Part 4
March 13	Mission & Worship Part 5
March 20	Palm Sunday-Ryan Kappel preaching
March 27	Resurrection Service
April 3	Celebration Service—the final combined worship service
April 10	Begin 2 Services

I want you to understand that our transition to 2 worship services is a form of being on mission. With the growth we have been experiencing, we have three possible options.

1. Do nothing. Not to me, that is not even an option.
2. Add an addition, but for that we would need half a million dollars. We already have a decent sized mortgage so we could not borrow any more money so we would need at least half a million dollars to build a sanctuary large enough to accommodate for growth.
3. Transition to 2 services, allowing more people to be engaged in the ministry of Grace.

Moving to 2 services is a form of mission. We believe that God has allowed us to have a healthy and growing ministry. Our goal is not to merely grow a large church. That would be a horrible goal by itself. But doing nothing is simply not an option.

So the Lord worked it out that we would have an extended focus on worship and mission just prior to transitioning to 2 services. The Lord is also working out moving to 2 services occurring at almost the same time our pastor of equipping joins us. On this past Monday, the Kappels received an offer on their house with a closing date of April 29th. So helping us with this transition is a form of mission, and above all, joy is waiting for you.

Rich Maurer
February 28, 2016