

Sermon Outline

“LIFE IN HIS NAME”: THE PURSUIT OF WHOLENESS AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

JESUS THE CENTER: JESUS MAKES US WHOLE (JOHN 4:1-54)

I. Introduction

II. Ethnic Conflict as Un-whole Life

- A. Un-wholeness/brokenness is in the *ethnic conflict or racial strife* between Jews and Samaritans.
—“How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?’ (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans)” (v 9).
- B. When we read that “Jews have no dealings with Samaritans,” we are reminded of all the racism and ethnic strife that is out there in the world, in our own hearts. We are reminded that too often...
1. we still judge entire groups of people based on ill-informed opinions, past grievances, and stereotypes.
 2. we judge individuals based on the ethnic or cultural groups from which they come. This was the way between the Jews and the Samaritans of Jesus’ day.
- C. Even if there are legitimate reasons behind the racial discord, ethnic strife is not compatible with the kingdom of wholeness that God desires to bring.
1. God comes in his Son, and goes in search of his lost children to reconcile them to himself and to the rest of his people.
 2. By God’s grace, the Samaritans were able to recognize Jesus as the Savior of the world (v 42).
- D. In order to overcome ethnic conflict, laws are not enough. The racist heart must have a saving encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ.
1. On the cross, the Lamb of God absorbs all the violence that we deserve for our sins against God and one another.
 2. As such, there is no more need for violence for the child of God. In Jesus, God forgives the sins of the world.
 3. God reconciles nations to himself and to one another. Therefore, you and I can put aside our racism and embrace people of other races/cultures as brothers and sisters in the Savior.
 - Ephesians 2:14: “For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility.”
- E. If we desire to be healed of our racism, we must go to *Jesus, Savior of the world* (cf. Eph 2:14).

III. Adultery as Un-whole Life

- A. Un-wholeness/brokenness is in the woman's *adultery*.
—Jesus said to the woman: “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” (vv 17-18).
- B. The problem is not sex. God loves sex. He made it! Sexual intercourse was intended by God to be the unifying, covenant between husband and wife.
 - Genesis 2:24: “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”
- C. When husbands and wives keep their one-flesh covenant to one another, they exemplify—in their marriage—the steadfast, covenant-keeping, unconditional love of God for his people.
- D. Adultery and all the various forms of sexual infidelity are rebellion against the Lord.
 - 1. Infidelity threatens what God loves—one-flesh union between husbands and wives, families, communities, etc.
 - 2. Infidelity defaces the image of God's steadfast love.
- E. That said, Jesus still “had to pass through Samaria” (4:4) in order to have this conversation with a cheap, loose-living, raunchy Samaritan woman.
 - 1. Jesus' movement toward her shows that sexual sin is not unforgiveable.
 - 2. God so loved adulterers/prostitutes/perverts/porn addicts, etc. that he sent his Son to save them.
 - 3. Jesus came for real sinners with real, heart-breaking, scarlet-drenched sins (Isa 1:18).
 - 4. If we recognize our sins and realize how far we are from God, and go to Jesus, he will save us. God will pardon our sins completely and clothe us in the perfect righteousness of his Son.
- F. For people trapped in sexual sin, they need to hear that God loves them (3:16), that God has sent Jesus to save and love them.
- G. If we desire to be free from our sexual sin, we must go to *Jesus, Giver of Living Water*.

IV. Idolatry as Un-whole Life

- A. Un-wholeness in *idolatry*.
- B. While our society thumbs its nose down on sexual sinners, we say nothing about idolatry.
- C. But there is a reason why the First Commandment is what it is.
 - 1. Unless we worship the Lord God alone, we will not obey him in all other areas of life.
 - 2. Every sin stems from idolatry—the sin of false worship; the sin of hoping/trusting/resting in what is not God.
 - Jeremiah 2:13: “for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.”
 - 3. While the un-whole life could look like racist hatred or sexual infidelity, it will always look like a life of misplaced worship.

- D. After the woman is confronted with her sin, she engages Jesus in a discussion on proper worship (v 20).
- E. But the Lord points out the problem of Samaritan worship: “You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews” (v 22).
- F. What is the solution to defective, misguided, or even false worship?
—“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. ²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth” (vv 23, 24).
- G. To worship “in spirit and truth” is to worship not with tangible objects but through the power of the Holy Spirit, formed by the Truth, who is Messiah Jesus himself (cf. Jn 14:16).
- H. Since God himself is Spirit and Truth, to worship “*in spirit and truth*” is ultimately to worship in God himself. The new place to worship God is in God!
- I. The solution to idolatry is the salvation that Jesus brings.
 1. In John 4, salvation is spoken of in terms of Living Water.
 2. But in John 7:37-39, we see that the Living Water is the Holy Spirit.
 3. When Jesus talks about worshiping in spirit and in truth, he is still talking about the Living Water, because the Living Water is the Holy Spirit.
 4. Jesus is talking about worship that has been perfected in the Holy Spirit.
- J. What must we do if we desire to worship God truly? What must we do if we desire to be perfected in our devotion to God? We must seek out Jesus, the *Giver of the Living Water*.
 1. By washing us with the Living Water, Jesus fulfills Ezekiel 36:25: “I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.”
 2. When Jesus fulfills that word, he makes us children of the Father, who worship God, no longer by our own righteousness or wisdom; but in Spirit and in Truth.

V. **Sickness as Un-whole Life**

- A. Un-wholeness in *sickness and mortality*: “...And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill” (v 46)
- B. We fall sick because we are part of a sick universe. Every form of sickness from the common cold to leukemia comes from the death-curse that rests upon all the descendants of Adam.
- C. Many of us have entered the dark night of sickness, in ourselves or in someone dear to us—someone like this official’s darling little boy (v 49).
- D. Jesus the Living Word healed the sick boy with a word: “Go; your son will live” (v 50).
- E. In that little benediction we have the promise that one day everything will be made whole once again.
—If *Jesus* is our Lord, it’s just not possible for death and failure to have the final word over our lives.

VI. Our Wholeness in Jesus

- A. But that's the point is it not? *It all hinges on Jesus.*
- B. Before Jesus granted the official's request, he rebuked the people for their unbelief (in Jesus) (v 48).
- C. John tells us that the healing itself was but a *sign* (v 54).
—Signs, by nature, do not point to themselves. They point to something *beyond* themselves. So what was the sign of healing pointing to? It was pointing to *Jesus* himself.

If ethnic conflict, sexual sin, sickness, and idolatry are all manifestations of the broken life, the life that is estranged from God's *shalom*, then the life of eternal wholeness is in Jesus alone. Jesus is the Point of John 4, as he is the Point of the entire Gospel of John, as he is the Point of the entire Bible. Jesus is *the Giver of the Living Water* that washes away all sin and turns adulterers into evangelists, and idolaters into priests. Jesus is *the Savior of the World* who will unite all nations under one Household of God. Jesus is *the Healer* who will raise the dead with a word: "Go; your son will live" (v 50) or "Lazarus, come out" (11:43). If we seek the wholeness that is in God, we must seek all of it in Jesus. So let us go to Jesus. Let us bring to him our brokenness. And let us ask him to save us. And he will.

Questions for Reflection

1. Was there anything in particular about today's sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
2. Was there anything that you disagree with or found difficult to accept?
3. Un-wholeness/brokenness is in the *ethnic conflict or racial strife* between Jews and Samaritans (v 9). (a) How do you see this brokenness in your own life? (b) Do you see that it is incompatible with God's Kingdom? (c) How is Jesus God's salvation from this brokenness? (d) Will you go to Jesus to be set free from this brokenness?
4. Un-wholeness/brokenness is in the woman's *adultery* (vv 17-18). (a) What is God's intention for sex and why is adultery a violation of this intention? (b) How do you see this brokenness in your own life? (c) How is Jesus God's salvation from this brokenness? (d) Will you go to Jesus to be set free from this brokenness?
5. Un-wholeness in *idolatry and false worship* (4:22). (a) How do you see this brokenness in your own life? (b) Do you see that it is incompatible with God's Kingdom? (c) How is Jesus God's salvation from idolatry? (d) Will you go to Jesus to be set free from idolatry?
6. Un-wholeness in *sickness and mortality* (v 46). (a) How do you see this brokenness in your own life? (b) Do you see that sickness and mortality are incompatible with God's eternal Kingdom? (c) How is Jesus God's salvation from sickness and mortality? (d) Will you go to Jesus to be set free from sickness and mortality?
7. In what sense was the healing of the official's son a *sign*? Signs are not ends in themselves. They point to something else. To whom is the sign of healing pointing to?

