

John 4: 27-39; “My Food – To Do the Will of God”, Sermon # 28 in the series – “That All May Honor the Son”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on March 30th, 2014 in the Afternoon Worship Service.

We now are entering a little subset of the greater story which is being related to us here, of the woman at the well. Jesus had just revealed to her, in verse 26 that He was the promised Messiah. She has left her waterpot; I am not even sure that Jesus got a drink. And she went her way back into the city, and said to the men at the gate, “Come and see a Man who told me all things that I ever did.” “Could this be the Christ?” This question set these men in motion. Immediately they proceeded, en masse, to go out and meet Jesus for themselves. But even before the woman had left Jesus at the well, His disciples had come back from the city. And they marveled that He had been speaking to a woman, but they didn’t say anything about it. They didn’t understand what a significant conversation over spiritual things had been going on between them, but they soon would. Jesus had a great lesson to teach them at this point, and He would use this incident of their bringing food to Him to do it. Having gone into town and obtained the food that they needed, they had now brought it back, and they urged Him to eat some. He says to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.” Now, here was a saying indeed. Jesus has His own food which they know nothing about. They look at each other, and they say to each other, “Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?” They don’t understand that Jesus is speaking to them about what nourished His soul, and brought strength to His heart. His food was to do the will of God. As we approach the Lord’s Table this morning I want to remind you that all of your salvation from sin, and all of your being able to inherit eternal life, rests squarely upon Jesus’ having fully done the will of God, on your behalf. This Supper which is before us is a remembrance feast; a feast which we will celebrate in a few minutes. You may have brought food with you to eat today at our shared meal which will satisfy the body. But I, dear Christian, would have you to partake with me now of spiritual realities which have been purchased for you by your Savior. I would like us to look together 1st, at Jesus’ love of spiritual food. And 2nd – Jesus’ love of labors in the spiritual harvest. And 3rd, as we gather down front – Your love of spiritual food, as well.

1st of all – Let’s look at Jesus’ spiritual food. (verse 34)

“My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and finish His work.” It was the will of the Father that His Son come into this fallen world of sinful people, so that He would become their Savior. The way that He would become the Savior of all of God’s chosen people, was to do the will of God on their behalf. It was not only that the Lord Jesus would do the will of God as His duty, He would make the doing of His Father’s will His delight. Even as you and I love to eat food as a delightful duty, even so would Jesus take into His holy heart the will of God as revealed in the Scriptures of the Old Testament law, in order to do it. Turn with me over to Psalm 40, verse 6. “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened.” “Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.” “Then I said, ‘Behold I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me, I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is in My heart.’” Now, let us ask ourselves how the law of God came to be in the heart of our Lord Jesus Christ. Well, certainly we can say that since He was, and He is fully God, that that law was already there in the Person of the Divine Son. But even though His Personhood was one, and Divine, still when He came into the world, as a little babe, He had human mind as a part of His human nature which would take in knowledge. And as he grew up, He would often pray for wisdom, and He would meditate on the Scriptures. This holy inclination to grow in wisdom and knowledge was placed there by the Holy Spirit of God in His inmost being, when He was formed in the womb of the virgin Mary. The Lord Jesus was unique among all the men who have ever lived in that He was born into this

world both God and man, and He had no sin. And it was not only that He had no sin, but that He was perfectly and positively righteous in all that He said and did. I would like you to look with me at how willing our Lord Jesus was, to do and keep all of God's commandments. Turn with me over to Hebrews 10, verse 8. The Apostle Paul, after he quotes from Psalm 40 the verses which we just looked at, says, "Previously saying, 'Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them' (which are offered according to the law), then He said, 'Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.'" "He takes away the first that He may establish the second." "By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." In other words, since Jesus delighted in all of the will of God, and learned obedience through the things which He suffered, He has become the author of eternal salvation to all who will obey Him by believing in Him, as it says over in Hebrews 5: 8 and 9. We, it says here, are "sanctified" by this will of His, which was perfect toward God. What the Lord Jesus purposed to do in righteousness, in all of His thoughts and intentions, was then actually followed up with a perfect obedience to God's holy law in regard to God and men. This is what He calls here, "Finishing the Father's work" which He had given Him to do. You who believe are sanctified; you are set apart by God, on the basis of the finished and perfect work of Christ on your behalf, to receive all the blessings of salvation; initial or definitive sanctification, justification, adoption, progressive sanctification, and glorification. You are not sanctified by your will dear Christian. You are sanctified by His will.

Let us understand that there was no one else but the Lord Jesus who was willing, or who could actually come and do this wonderful work of redeeming our souls to God. The Lord Jesus was not only willing to humble Himself in His Incarnation, in undertaking to fulfill the law on our behalf, but He made His obedience to God a matter of His whole heart. He undertook the fulfilling of the law of God by fulfilling the first and greatest commandment. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and soul, and mind, and strength." (Mark 12: 30) He also undertook to fulfill the second table of God's law in loving his neighbor as himself." He said that there is no other commandment (singular) greater than these. (Mark 12: 31) His love was to do God's will in every particular, knowing what His Father's purposes were. Turn with me over to Psalm 119, verse 1. "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord!" "Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart!" "They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways." The only way that God could convey saving grace to you, dear believer, when you were a sinner, was to find a Man who could perfectly keep His holy law. As the Father looked over all of humanity, He saw no one living the undefiled life. He saw no one seeking God with their whole heart. And so He sent Jesus. And as the Lord Jesus grew up, even though He was sinless and spotless in His nature, He still needed to learn obedience as a man, in order to do what God would have Him to do, which was to keep His law fully and perfectly. In order to do this, Jesus needed to learn, from the standpoint of His humanity, the word of God. He could truly say as the prophet Jeremiah said, "Your words were found, and I did eat them, and they became the joy and rejoicing of My heart." He truly with joy received the commandment of Joshua 1: 8 - "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it." "For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." "Have I not commanded you?" "Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Now let's compare the obedience of the Lord Jesus with those for whom He came to die, and we shall see why each of us is so indebted to our Lord Jesus for grace. Listen to what Isaiah the prophet saw in regard to what the wickedness of Judah was like in his day, and can we not apply it to our own day? Isaiah 59: 14 - "Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter." "So truth fails, and he who departs from

evil makes himself a prey.” “Then the Lord saw it, and it displeased Him that there was no justice.” “He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him; and His own righteousness, it sustained Him.” You see, the Lord Jesus was, and is the Father’s only answer to man’s inability to bring forth a perfect obedience. What you and I could not do, Jesus was not only willing to do, but He delighted to do it. The Father saw that there was none that was righteous, no not one. He saw that there was no man who could render to Him a perfect obedience. Therefore His own arm brought salvation to Him. He sent Jesus to obey His law in our place. Jesus’ willingness to do the Father’s will at every point was His spiritual food. Jesus knew that the sacrificial offering of bulls and goats would not satisfy His Father’s justice. So He Himself would become the sacrificial offering. This began with His Incarnation, continued with His daily obedience and culminated in His laying down His life for our sins. On your behalf, O sinner, He was continually delighting Himself in thinking and doing what He knew would please His Father. On your behalf, dear saint, He suffered, bled, and died.

What did the everyday obedience of Jesus look like in its particulars? Well, He would not allow Himself to spiritually taste of evil things, but He always pursued and did the good things and the righteous things. This is something which every believer must learn by Christ’s grace as well. Look at Job Chapter 23, verse 11, and you will see, in the words of Job, what our Lord Jesus was perfect at doing. “My foot has held fast to his steps; I have kept His way and not turned aside.” “I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.” Now certainly Job was a man of integrity, but he only became this by grace and by meditating upon the word. He had treasured the words of God’s mouth, but he did not do so perfectly, or he would have never had to say at the end of the book, “Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer You?” “Once I have spoken, but I will not answer; yes twice, but I will proceed no further.” But in the case of the Lord Jesus we know that He learned obedience through the things that He suffered, and He was the Perfect Learner. Hebrews 5: 7 says: ... “In the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, He was heard because of His godly fear.” “And though a Son He learned obedience by the things which He suffered, and having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.” He went all the way to the cross, keeping the words of God’s mouth perfectly, and He treasured them more than His necessary food. He was 40 days and 40 nights in the wilderness without food, and then the Devil came to tempt Him. “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread.” “But He answered and said, ‘It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” You see, He had food which the Devil knew nothing of.

Now look over with me at Psalm 119, verse 103 – “How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” “Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.” As the Lord Jesus meditated upon the word of God, it was as sweet to Him as honey. It brightened the eyes of his heart. Samuel Eyles Pierce in his commentary on the Psalms says: “All the words of Jehovah concerning Himself, with the account of the glory which would redound unto Him, and the revenue of manifestative glory which would redound to His glorious name, which as essentially considered, is exalted above all blessing and praise, yielded refreshment to the mind of Christ.” “What was recorded in the word by the pen of inspiration, and had been spoken out by the prophets ever since the world began, was the subject of our Lord’s meditation, it was sweet to his spiritual taste; he tasted it, he found sweetness in it; wholly delectable, most heavenly, and divine; yea, it was sweeter than honey, says he, to my mouth!” “He utters it by way of holy admiration of it, before the Lord: “How sweet are Thy words unto My taste!” “Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” “So sweet, that it

seems to convey the idea Jesus Himself could not fully express the same.” (End of quote) As we will approach the Lord’s table in a few minutes, ask yourself now if the word is this way to you; sweeter than honey to your mouth? Do you love the taste of it? Do you relish it more than your necessary food? For this is what it means to be conformed to the image of Christ.

Now 2ndly – I would like us to think together of Jesus’ love of labors in the spiritual harvest.

Verses 35-37: “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest?’ ‘Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!’ ‘And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.’” Once again here, the Lord Jesus uses literal physical things to illustrate spiritual realities. In this case He uses a common saying of the day, “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest?’” I am told that the barley harvest usually began about 4 months from the time that Jesus was there in Samaria. The Passover was in the middle of the month Nisan, which was about the latter end of our March. And if we reckon four months back from that it shows that it was about the latter end of our November, or the beginning of December that Christ was in Samaria, here at the well. (See John Gill’s commentary on this verse) But when Jesus says, “Behold I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!”, He is not speaking literally, for the fields could not be white at such a distance of time from the harvest.” “He is speaking spiritually of a harvest of souls; and He has regard to the large number of Samaritans that were just now coming out of the city, and who were right in sight before them!” “He is saying to His disciples, ‘This is not a time for eating and drinking, but for working.’” “Look at the large number of souls to be gathered in.” When Jesus says: “He who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life,” He is speaking in the first sense of His own sowing of the word with this woman at the well. He was already reaping the good result of spiritual interest in Himself; interest in Himself spiritually as the promised Messiah, which He Himself had sown, in the heart and the mind of this woman at the well. She had taken the words of His sowing of the truth and brought them to the attention of others. Whether He was indeed the Christ, remained to be seen and known and proved in the minds and hearts all of these men coming out from the city, to see Him. But Jesus had reaped this woman’s soul. She now believed.

When she said, “Could this be the Christ?”, it was not because she herself doubted. It was because she herself wanted to create enough curiosity and interest in the minds of the men, that would lead them to go and see for themselves. But Jesus was also, in the second place, trying to show His disciples this great principle of sowing and reaping spiritually only comes from a love for people’s souls. This Jesus had in perfection, and so He would try to awaken His disciples to it. They were only concerned, at that time, with eating a simple meal. Jesus was concerned that they see that there was something more important than physical food; being able to reap a harvest for eternal life! This was what He was calling them to. Ministers of the gospel are here being called sowers and reapers. And we can and should apply it further. Any Christian who desires to see other people come to know the Lord can become a sower of the good seed of the word of God, even as Jesus has given us example here in this passage. This I believe is one of the most effective forms of evangelism; to speak to needy unbelieving sinners and use the illustrations of physical life through water and bread and honey and a thousand other things in physical nature, to show them their need to taste and see that the Lord is good; how blessed is the person who has regard and believes. Jesus has really been conducting a class on how to do evangelism here. He has sown the good word of God to this woman at the well; and now, not only He will reap, but they will reap as well with the coming of these men to ask more questions.

The key to effective everyday evangelism with people all around you, is your love to see them come to Christ. It is your love to lost sinners which will lead you to say a few words which may

get them thinking about the great spiritual truths and realities of this great salvation which is found in Christ. This is how they might come to know God through their hearing your words about your faith in Him. In speaking of the good things in Christ, you may just create some curiosity, some spiritual interest, some hungering and thirsting to know more, and even to be saved, in your hearers. It is no doubt true that you will have to speak of sin as the greatest problem which all people have. It is the greatest thing that keeps them from knowing God. But this too, their being shown their sin, can even be done in love for the soul of another. Were you not a sinner, before someone showed you the love of Christ? And how were you shown your sin? It was no doubt that at first they simply explained it to you in general terms. And then they also went a step farther and explained it in relation your having broken God's law. This brought conviction of sin. But it also led to their opening the door to speak to you of Christ. This is what our Lord Himself did in this passage of the woman at the well. It appears to me to be the easiest and the most effective form of evangelism; one which the Lord Jesus often did with people. I would say that it is even better even than handing out tracts in most cases, because it is you yourself, speaking in your own words about the Lord Jesus as the Water of life, and the Bread of Life, and His word and grace being sweet like honey, and you could might use many other illustrations. It is because you truly have a love and a desire for Christ to be seen by them spiritually, and known by them as their own personal Savior. That is often how a person comes to know the Lord. I will now ask you to come down front and remember this, the reality that Jesus gave Himself for you; His body to be broken for you as bread, and His blood to be shed for you as wine.

3rd – Before we partake of this Supper, I would like to speak to you of your love of spiritual food, as well.

Verses 37 and 38: "For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.'" "I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered in to their labors." We have seen the love of our Lord Jesus for the spiritual food of doing the will of God and finishing the work which the Father had called Him to do. And we have seen His love in His labors in the spiritual harvest of God's elect. "One sows and another reaps." Christ sowed the word, and the Apostles and other disciples reaped the souls who had been touched by His grace. I trust that each of us has seen that this is the basis of all of our salvation, and all the labors of those who desire to see others come to Christ. This is what we remember now. We remember that it was Christ's will, first of all, to do the will of God which is the basis of our salvation and all the blessings of it. We who have now come to saving faith, and repentance, and we who are now living for God by His grace, are the fruit of His labors in obedience and sufferings. He has sown His life a seed into the ground and He now sees the good effects of His grace in the conversion of all of God's elect people coming to pass in accordance with the will of God the Father. But as we partake of this Supper I want you to be able to see that Lord is looking for a response from each of us who know Him. Jesus sent His disciples to reap that for which they had not labored then, and He has given to all of His disciples in every generation of the Church, the privilege of entering into His labors and the labors of those who have gone before them. As we come to the table, let me ask you whether you are consciously entering in to the labors of Christ and those who have gone before you? If you are, your food will also be, as theirs has been, to do the will of God and finish the work that He has given you to do. We are all called to do the will of God as it is found in the Bible.

This is the food which people outside of Christ, and even many Christians, do not understand, at first. Your joy and delight will be to tell them about it. Perhaps you have entered in to this holy labor. If you have, you already have found that that your joy which consists in laboring by word and deed for the promotion of truth and in praying and laboring for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ. Listen to the words of Jesus in John 20: 19 – "Then the

same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' "When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side." "Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord." "So Jesus said to them again 'Peace to you!' "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." "And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" As you partake of these elements think of how you might respond to what Jesus has done for you. How can you serve Him? The Father sent Jesus to preach and teach and to live the perfect life for you. Now Jesus sends you to share that message of life, and the glory of gospel obedience with others. Will you do this? For if you do, He who sows and He who reaps will be able to rejoice together.