

<b>Series:</b> Hard Conversations	<b>Reference:</b> <i>John 4:23</i>	<b>Title:</b> Already/Not Yet	<b>Date:</b> 02.02.2019
<b>Website Writeup:</b> We live in the already & not yet of the kingdom of God. Jesus has left us with answers & direction. Living out of solid truth in an unsure world brings us hope & joy! A message we're called to proclaim to all peoples!			

## COLOR CHANGES IN TEXT INDICATE SLIDE CHANGES

We're addressing our last of 5 affirmations today in order to learn how to have hard conversations in love, not compromising our beliefs, convictions & values as Bible-believing Christians, but communicating them well.

We've asked, **are we reflecting, or overcoming division?** Remembering Jesus prayed for our Unity, recognizing that THOUGHT is the defining factor of UNITY with Jesus, and His Body, the Church.

Our first affirmation was, **God has all truth, but we don't have a perfect understanding of it.** We shouldn't be afraid of having strong convictions, beliefs & values, but must couple them with the humbling knowledge, we can be wrong in the murky waters of personal opinion, especially in the area of hot topics.

Secondly we said, **being loving is as important as being right.** We love truthfully & truthfully love. Love without truth lies, truth without love kills.

Our third affirmation was, **the Spirit can create unity where it once seemed impossible.**

Our fourth was- **we find our identity in Christ, not in clutter, culture & cause.**

And we end the series today with our final affirmation, **we choose to accept that we live in the already & not yet.** The in-between time of the Kingdom of God. The kingdom has come, but not yet fully been established.

We're looking at John 4:23 today, please turn to p726 in your church bibles to the story of Jesus meeting the Samaritan woman at the well. If you remember the story, she's a Samaritan woman drawing water in the middle of the day by herself. Jesus asks her for a drink & they have a conversation about water, worship & her relationship status on Tinder. Then it ends with Jesus revealing Himself as the Messiah to her.

Towards the end of their conversation in v4:23 He says, *...a time is coming & has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit & in truth.*

It's necessary for us to understand some things about Samaritans to begin. Samaritan belief demonstrated both affinity & divergency from Judaism. Like Judaism they had a

strong monotheistic belief in the God of Abraham, Isaac & Jacob. However they elevated Mt Gerizim in the north as the only holy place for sacrifice, based on several divergent passages in Deuteronomy & Exodus in the Samaritan text. Mt Gerizim came to be the center of many errant beliefs as a result.

The Samaritans held, only the first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Pentateuch, were inspired by God. They based dogma & practice exclusively on these 5. This truncated list of Scripture determined the direction of Samaritan theology & separated them from contemporary Jewish thought; remember, *thought is the defining factor of unity*. The messianic hope of Samaritan theology reflected their limited view of Scripture. A Messiah from the house of David couldn't be anticipated, as no evidence could be found in the Pentateuch for it. Rather, Samaritans awaited a prophet like Moses, based on Deuteronomy 18:15–18, designated the Restorer, because they believed in the last days he'd restore proper worship on Mt Gerizim.<sup>1</sup>

So the Samaritans were a sect with roots in Judaism, but were divergent due to Israel's defeat by Assyria in 722bc. At the time they'd been mixed with foreign peoples & subsequently foreign religious practice & thought which made their worship of God a veneer for underlying idolatry. So to be clear, they had a limited view of Scripture & had taken on errant beliefs from the surrounding culture. They're a living image of what we see now in some Christians who truncate the Scriptures to accommodate a cultural narrative contradictory to what God calls His Church - picking & choosing what they only believe to be Truth, disregarding the whole counsel of God's Word.

This was her world. One of limited Scriptural knowledge, where religion was a mask for errant beliefs & practices. Which is evidenced by her deviant sexual lifestyle, since when we're no longer governed by God's full counsel, His Word, Spirit & Faith Community, that's one of the first things to be twisted, our sexuality. Jesus challenged both her understanding of Scriptural Truth & her lifestyle as a result in this conversation.

Warren W. Wiersbe said, that among other things in this passage, Jesus gently reveals this woman's *'spiritual ignorance: she did not know who to worship, where to worship, or how to worship! Jesus made clear to her that all religions are not equally acceptable before God, that some worshipers act in ignorance & unbelief.'*<sup>2</sup> Jesus was leading her to the understanding that knowledge of God & salvation originates with the Jews, and He was the fulfillment of the Hebrew Scriptures in their entirety. The Messiah who's the living water of life for the world. That Truth & Spirit are paramount for anyone desiring to know & follow God, and this makes a difference in how we live & the choices we make, especially in our sexual relationships. So, that's our background...

---

<sup>1</sup> Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, "[Samaritans](#)," *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1887–1888.

<sup>2</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#), vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 300.

But notice the tension in the first line of Jesus' statement - *a time is coming & has now come*. Questions for us are...When will all be put right? When will worship be full-throated, in spirit & truth? When will all be as it should be?

The answer is a *both/and* statement. Things will be made right in the *future*, on the day when God makes all things new. *As Hebrews 9:28 states, <sup>28</sup>so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. Amen to that!*

Turn to p848 in your church Bibles. Here we see greater clarity in this renewal in *Re 21:1-5...Then I saw "a new heaven & a new earth," for the first heaven & the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup>I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. (notice - marital language, proper sexuality, imaged in Scripture)*

*<sup>3</sup>And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them & be their God. <sup>4</sup>He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." <sup>5</sup>He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy & true."*

Trustworthy true hopeful words concerning the future of all creation. All wrongs righted, justice reigning, death a memory & salvation to all who receive Jesus!

And this future hope begins *now!* It's beginning to happen, in & through the ministry of Jesus by way of His people. We're all aware, the world isn't fully right as of now. But things are happening across the globe as a result of the ministry of Jesus. Tears are being wiped away. Pain's being alleviated. Mourning's being silenced. Death's being overcome. In Luke 7 Jesus instructed the disciples of John the Baptist, *Go back & report to John what you have seen & heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor!*

It not only began before the cross, but more so after the resurrection. Turn to p722 in your church bibles to Luke 24 where two men are confronted with the resurrected Jesus on the road to Emmaus. They were confused about the events surrounding Him & expressed hopelessness at His death. All their dreams of the Messiah died when Jesus died. He gives them hope in the now by revealing Himself as resurrected. Then it says in v27, *<sup>27</sup>And beginning with Moses & all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.* Notice...Jesus proclaims Truth from *all* the Scriptures concerning Himself & the result is, they're overjoyed as their hearts burn in their chests upon speaking with him.

He reveals Himself to the Disciples & they're taken aback. So in Luke 24:44–49, <sup>44</sup> *He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets & the Psalms."* <sup>45</sup> *Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.* <sup>46</sup> *He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer & rise from the dead on the third day,* <sup>47</sup> *and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.* <sup>48</sup> *You are witnesses of these things.* <sup>49</sup> *I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."*

*John's gospel tells us the purpose of all this in chapter 20:30-31, <sup>30</sup> Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. <sup>31</sup> But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

We know the promised Holy Spirit came at Pentecost from the book of Acts & all the resulting miraculous signs. Acts outlines people coming to Christ in droves & the Disciples willingly giving their lives for the Gospel message. In Acts 8 we have the story of the Eunuch from Ethiopia converted by Philip, again sharing from the Scriptures. He goes away rejoicing. As history has it, he went home & became a leader in the church leading others to Christ for years to come! And ever since, hearts have been finding freedom & the world's being changed by the Gospel! Good news! Hope! Happening now & moving to future fulfillment. As Philippians 1:6 states, Christ is carrying us onto completion until that final day of His return.

Sometimes we're tempted, in moments of despair, to *only* hold on to the first part Jesus statement...*A time is coming.* We may say, "I give up hope for unity, peace or justice. Jesus will just have to come back & fix everything." And we throw up our hands in despair, because it might seem none of that's being achieved now.

But that's not where the Christian lives. We choose *NOT* to live in despair. As 2 Corinthians 4:8-10 tells us... <sup>8</sup> *We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; <sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. <sup>10</sup> We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.* There's something extremely resilient about the Christian due to the hope of Christ in us! We've profound reason for suffering. Evil doesn't have the last word. Despair doesn't completely overcome us. We know the end of the story, as well as the possibilities of the in-breaking kingdom now!

I was watching a documentary recently where a Christian woman's son had been murdered. She was pained, but expressed both forgiveness & a future hope as a result of Christ even when she didn't receive the justice she sought, since the murderer was never really brought to justice. But she knew, from her solid faith in Christ & knowledge of the Scriptures, this wasn't the end of the story! She chose to believe & it made all the difference. The simple concept of hope can overcome even the worst of circumstances.

We don't always understand the spiritual battle we find ourselves in, but we wage it in hope nonetheless. We don't always understand God's reasons for not answering something in the moment & hindsight's often 20/20. We may see His reasoning 10 years down the road for a difficulty we're experiencing now, or maybe not until that final day of Christ - but we trust God's intentions & promises to us.

At other times, both in moments of triumph & in moments of particular frustration, we're tempted to only hold on to the second part of Jesus' statement...*has now come!* In our humanistic reasoning, it all has to happen *now*. If it doesn't, we fight harder, growing angry & bitter. We rage in frustration that all isn't as it should be & that the church isn't unified as we wish it to be. Some of us allow ourselves to be taken away in anger or bitterness because not all injustice seems to be achieved now. We begin to blame God while we have nothing close to His understanding of the world. We're willing to take the blessings, but not the suffering for His glory & mission.

For instance, although Jesus said, *The poor you will always have with you* in Mt 26:11, we think it's our job to eradicate poverty right now - if it's goes unresolved we vilify others even though it's sin which is the true culprit, not just people or faulty systems. Poverty will always be an issue because sin hasn't been fully dealt with since people still live in sin. We expect godliness from those who don't know Christ, rich & poor alike - which isn't an expectation we can demand from the non-believer. Our job's to proclaim Jesus, while endeavoring to help in practical ways. God's glory - God's mission.

Maturity lives with both halves of Jesus' statement. There's a day coming of new creation, perfect unity, peace, justice, forgiveness & wholeness. Through Jesus, that day has begun. Mature Christians know their limits, and unlike the woman at the well, we know who, where & how we worship! We stand on Truth, as Jesus & the Disciples did. We understand, our culture & our own hearts, can't be trusted to lead us well - we need the Scriptures, Holy Spirit & Church, if we're to live maturely, with proper concern for others, with a great sense of hope, joy & even humor.

The dawn's hinting on the horizon. That first light, doesn't lead us to despair because it's not yet fully daytime. Rather, it encourages us to journey on in the knowledge, that day will emerge in full through light of Christ. So, do we give up? Do we just let evil win & hope for the best in the end?

**Firstly, of course not.** Kingdom people are hopeful. Even in the most difficult situations. For instance, the crucifixion of Jesus! How did the disciples feel when He was crucified? Hopeless at first, but they'd not been listening fully to Jesus. If they had, they would've heard Him say in John 2:19-22...*"Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."* <sup>20</sup> *They replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?"* <sup>21</sup> *But the temple he had spoken of was his body.* <sup>22</sup> *After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.*

Our God shows power & faithfulness to win the day. We persevere, we work for the Kingdom & never give up. You *can* choose to be hopeful despite your circumstances & feelings! You *can* make the decision to believe God, despite how you feel, and it makes all the difference. Which is why it's important to be in the Word on a regular basis, receiving it with an open heart - being the good soil, letting God's Word flower in you. So abandon your skepticisms, pray for a soft open heart to receive & believe Truth!

**Second, we can ask God for eyes to see this struggle in a new way.** So many times people asked Jesus to choose *for* or *against* when it came to social, political, or religious issues, whether in regard to Jewish law or Roman taxation. But Jesus seemed to have an ability to perceive situations in ways nobody had previously thought.

In Christ we've been gifted the Holy Spirit as Guide & Counselor. We're promised a steady flow of wisdom as a result of this indwelling of God - we need only ask. So develop the spiritual habit of daily Bible study & interaction with the Spirit of God to navigate all the issues thrown at you! Get more deeply connected in fellowship with others to explore these things.

**Third, believe in the actual power of prayer!** Prayer isn't merely a last-ditch effort when we can't think of anything else to do. Jesus knew how hard unity would be. It's why He prayed for us to have it. Avoid the habit of foxhole prayers praying only when it seems rough but ignore God the rest of the time. 1 Th. 5:16-18 urges us to...<sup>16</sup> *Rejoice always,* <sup>17</sup> *pray continually,* <sup>18</sup> *give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.* Make this your 'go to habit' & see what God will do!

**Fourthly, realize we have answers of hope.** Answers for ourselves & others. These hard conversations are hard. Take every thought captive to Christ, trusting & standing on Truth. It'd be irresponsible for us as Christians to lead people into more confusion, doubt, or hopelessness. Our culture elevates doubt & skepticisms to the level of value, which isn't healthy to mirror. We can't leave people in unresolved tension when they need & we have answers bringing hope in Christ!

We want people to wrestle with Jesus & what He means to them. He calls us to proclaim the Gospel clearly to all nations. We need also give answers, as He & the Disciples did, which is necessary for a soul to grasp hold of Gospel Truth for them. Romans 10:17 tells us, *faith comes from hearing the message & the message is heard through the word about Christ.* Solid foundational Truth derived from Scripture is the steering wheel in our hands to steer the car of our spiritual formation in Christ.

He'd revealed to the Samaritan woman, she didn't know who, where, or how to worship! Then Himself as the answer to those questions - *a time is coming & has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit & in truth.* So, we endeavor to be full-throated now in our worship in Spirit & Truth! Hoping for that future day when He'll have wiped every tear from our eyes. When there'll be no more death, mourning, crying, or pain, since the old order of things will have passed away! AMEN!