

The Samaritan Woman

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- [0:00] Well, it's a pleasure for me to be here this morning. The introduction was interesting. I'm the invisible man. Actually at City City we prize invisibility.
- We actually prefer to kind of work behind the scenes and to help churches, plant churches, and ultimately, of course, the glory go to Christ, not to any earthly institution of any sort.
- But Corey asked me if I would just share a little bit about what I do and what we're doing and then I'll try to get us as quickly into the text as possible. In fact, you may want to keep John chapter 4 open either in your Bibles or on your phones as the case may be.
- So many of us no longer carry books, but we actually have them in a different form. But 1989, Tim and Kathy Keller moved to New York City to plant a church. Our denomination had tried to plant a church in New York City which had failed terribly.
- A lot of waste of resources and such, but good-hearted leader tried to do the best job he could but just couldn't break through the rough atmosphere that New York was at the time.
- [1:09] So Tim and Kathy came very humbly to New York City, hoping that if they worked very hard they might be able to plant a church that would become a church of 300 or 400 and maybe over the course of 25 years help plant three or four other churches in the city.
- And had they been able to do that, that would have been job well done actually. Instead, the Lord pours out a blessing in the first three years of Redeemer's ministry.
- And I think it was a result of both the work that Tim did in preparing himself and them for ministry in New York City and what we would say was an extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
- And they saw about a thousand people come to Christ in three years in New York. I mean that was unheard of. As far as we know, that hadn't happened since 1857-58, the Wall Street revival that took place.
- So this was an unexpected result. By 95, there were three of us, I was one of them, that began planting daughter churches of Redeemer in New York.
- [2:13] I was actually just outside the city, but we were trying to figure out how do you plant a church in a city like this? A city that tends to be fairly dominated by secularism, by any number of other religions, pretty hostile to Christ and his gospel, those kinds of things.
- And at that point, Tim didn't even really know how they had done, what they had done. So as we're talking together and trying to figure it out, white papers begin to be written about how do you preach to a secular audience, how do you do ministry in a city like this, what do you deal with, how do you deal with the homosexual issue, what about this issue or that issue, it was challenging.
- But probably by 1997, we began to wonder if what we were learning in New York City might have application in some of the other kind of globalized cities across the world.
- We were already relating to individual guys in a number of North American cities, Montreal and Toronto, Seattle, San Francisco, D.C., Boston, those kinds of places, kind of bicoastal for the most part.

But we had kind of a hope maybe that what we were learning in New York might have application in London, Paris, Frankfurt, Singapore, Hong Kong, kind of the world financial centers that were highly globalized.

[3:36] We weren't sure if it would. But the more that we were doing things in New York, the more we found people coming to us and saying, hey, we would love to learn from you and take what we can learn here back to our own cities.

By year 2000, we created an institution in New York City called the Redeemer Church Planning Center that would eventually become the institution that is now Redeemer City to City or as we call it, simply City to City.

But as we formed that institution primarily to plant churches in our own city in New York, and we had a dream, which sounds audacious whenever I speak in Europe, and I know that you guys realize you're part of Europe, but sometimes you think about Europe as somewhere else.

But as we think about Europe, including the British Isles and Ireland and such, we had a dream to plant or help plant 1,000 churches in New York City, 1,000.

We'd actually done a pretty good analysis of it, and there were about 7,200 churches in New York City at the time, early 2000s. And as we were trying to figure out what would it take in order to see 10% of people living in New York in all five boroughs to actually become real believers in Christ, real followers of Jesus Christ.

[5:02] And I don't know how scientific this was, but we came to the conclusion that New York probably needed more than 5,000 new churches to be planted, and perhaps at least 2,000 of the 7,000 to be revitalized and become really gospel oriented.

That seemed to be pretty impossible to us. So why don't we just think about 1,000? And maybe we can plant some, and we can help others plant, and maybe together we can see something happen in New York City.

So we created the Church Planning Center for that purpose, but there was this openness to work elsewhere in the world. And as I came on staff to recruit and train and coach guys for New York City, I had an open remit to be able to work in Europe.

And we'd been interacting a little bit in Budapest, Hungary, and we found real receptivity there. But no sooner than we had created this institution, then we got an invitation from London.

We got an invitation from Amsterdam. We got an invitation from Berlin. We were going to plant Belgium, Moscow, all asking us if we would come and help them. And we weren't sure that we could, but we began to engage.

[6:06] But here was the basic idea, is that maybe we could come alongside of other churches and leaders to help them plant churches in their cities and do in their cities what we were hoping to do in New York.

So that was kind of the premise. We weren't a sending agency. We weren't sending North Americans elsewhere, but we were rather coming alongside of the existing church and seeing if we could help them figure out how to do ministry in a place like Edinburgh or in a place like Central London or in Central Paris or that sort of thing.

That's kind of the backdrop. So at this point, we've in one way or another helped plant a couple hundred churches in Europe. So we've been active in, I think, 53 cities at this point.

Those churches are rapidly planting many daughter churches, granddaughter churches. We're fully expecting that there'll be between four and 500 more churches planted in the next four to five years in Europe as a result of the Europeans really becoming active in a number of ways.

And personally, I work in the cities of North America, Europe, Middle East and Africa. That's kind of my remit. And then I have a colleague that takes the other half of the world, Jay Kyle.

[7:15] So he does all of Asia or the rest of Asia, if you will, and Latin America. But obviously, we're working through all kinds of other people. So that's a very brief description of what we're doing.

And it's been incredibly exciting to watch churches plant churches and even to watch in Edinburgh like-minded leaders come together and begin having a vision not only for their city but for the rest of Scotland and linking hands with leaders in England, leaders in Ireland, leaders across the channel in the rest of Europe.

It's really amazing what God is doing. And I think that it's a new day in Europe in many ways. The nadir of Christianity, I think, was probably reached in Europe probably in 1998.

And since then, they're seeing a huge uptick in new churches being formed, people being one to Christ. And I have every reason to think that the Lord is going to do an amazing thing throughout all of these nations and cities.

But it'll be a result of faithful believers who are simply trying to proclaim Christ, kind of one beggar, telling another beggar where to find bread. I mean, that's kind of the backdrop of it.

[8:28] So I'm happy to talk about that later if you want. I'll be standing at the back at the end of the service. But let me, if I can, turn your attention to Scripture this morning to John chapter 4, this story about the woman to well.

And I'm going to start by making an assumption, which is often dangerous, but I don't think it's too dangerous to this context. So my assumption is that most of you, if not all of you, are probably pretty familiar with this story, with this text.

There literally have been countless sermons preached on this text. There have been seminars on evangelism taught from this. Many of you may know this text better than I do, even though I think I've preached on it probably 60 or 70 times myself.

But so I'm not going to deal with many of the details of the text. I'm not going to go down in the side roads. What I want to do is basically focus on answering essentially three questions.

Who was this woman? What was driving her life? And what actually happened at the well? But before that, if I can, let me lead us in prayer once again.

[9:35] Father, we thank you that you love people like us. And that as we gather, we come not as the righteous, but we actually come as those who are often painfully aware of our sinfulness and are falling short.

Oftentimes, Lord, there is shame in our lives that we don't reveal to others. And yet as we come before you, we confess and we receive that reassurance that you really do love us and you love us unconditionally because of what Christ has done.

And Father, this morning in these few minutes that we have together to look at your word, I pray, Lord, that you would open our hearts and our minds to what you have to say.

And anything that, Lord, that is not of you, we pray that those words would merely fall to the ground. Lord, we pray that your spirit would work among us. Give us a greater glimpse of you and your glory and your love and your grace.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. So, three questions, who was she and what was driving her life and what really happened at the well.

[10:43] So, let me start by saying that the first thing we learn about her is that she was a despised person from a despised race and of a despised gender.

We didn't really read the whole text, but if you look at verse 6 of the passage there, it says there that she came at noon and there's a bit of a description of where she was.

She was at Jacob's well and she was a Samaritan. But she came at noon. What we read into that, and maybe it is reading into it, so we're surmising a bit, but she comes at the sixth hour in the heat of the day.

That was not the normal time that women would go to the well, and by the way, women were the ones that carried water for the days, activities and such. But she comes at noon not when the other women are coming.

She comes alone. What we read into that is that the reason she comes at that time and rather than at the other times is because she was despised by the people. Later on in the text you'll see that she had been married five times and that at present she's living with another man that she's not even married to.

[11:59] She was in one sense kind of a woman of disrepute. I'm sure not a prostitute, but she was not highly regarded by the other people in the village. You kind of see that later on in the text in part of it that wasn't read.

The villagers kind of make a distinction when they say, now we believe not because of what you told us, but because we've heard it from him. If there's this kind of interesting interplay about her, but she was a woman that was not highly regarded.

Secondly, she was from a despised race. She was a Samaritan. Again, I won't go into all the details, but Samaritans were considered to be unclean by the Jews. And it's really interesting, and she draws attention to this idea in verse seven and nine there, that she is surprised that Jesus, a man in essence a rabbi, would speak to her and even ask her for a drink of water.

Jews would not normally receive either food or drink from a Samaritan. It would be considered to be unclean. And so why is he even kind of spending time with her, let alone asking her for something?

And then she was of a despised gender. Men were, although they were appreciated, they were not held in high regard in Jewish society at that time. And there was a prayer prayed by many Jews back then that is still actually prayed by some Orthodox or ultra-Orthodox Jewish men today.

[13:29] And the prayer essentially goes like this, oh Lord, thank you that I'm not a slave, that I'm not a Gentile, and that I'm not a woman.

And those were actually gradations getting worse. The worst thing would be to a woman. Now obviously Jesus' view of women was radically different.

And we see Jesus interacting with women in a very different way than that, and they figure very prominently in the ministry of Jesus Christ. And I really think that we, it's Jesus who has altered the view of women in our society and continues to alter it so that women and men are really seen as being equal, of equal value, of equal worth, and perhaps sometimes even better than the men.

But the second thing we learned about her is that she was a very proud, skeptical, and intelligent woman. If you look at verse nine, let me read it again to you.

The Samaritan woman said to him, how is it that you would ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria, for Jews have no dealings with Samaritans, and Jesus asked her if you knew the gift of God, who is it that is saying to you, give me a drink?

[14:43] You would have asked him and would have given you living water. And the woman immediately then, just after that, begins to question him. You don't have anything to draw with.

Who are you, this kind of thing? But I read resentment in the woman's response to Jesus. In effect, at one point she's saying, do you think you're better than our father, Jacob?

Maybe I can change a little bit. I won't say it quite, maybe as roughly as I could, but who the heck do you think you are? I mean, she's really challenging him in a very, very significant way.

In response to that mild rebuke, his assertion that he could give her living water, she points out that she doesn't believe, she's skeptical, she doesn't believe he can actually give her, you have nothing to draw with.

How in the world are you going to draw water if you don't have anything to draw? Are you so senseless that you think you can draw without having even something? So she's pushing back at him again and again and again.

[15:45] But you can also see how intelligent she is. Once Jesus begins to bore in, do you see what she does? She tries to take him off track. You Jews worship in one place, we worship in another, she's introducing theological controversy.

She's actually fairly well versed. She's trying to get him off point, off target, away from penetrating into our life. So she's not an ignorant person.

She may have been uneducated in certain ways, but she's very proud, very resistant to him, very skeptical and also very intelligent all at the same time.

And it's likely by the way that she had probably at one time been beautiful. In many ways she's what Americans at US people would say, she was street smart.

Somehow or another she'd gotten five men to marry her. That takes some doing. And now she's living with a guy that she's not married to, I think because she didn't want to get married to him.

[16:48] So this is actually a very capable person. The third thing we learn about her though is about her disappointment in life.

She seems pretty weary at one point, sir, give me this water so that I don't have to keep coming. That's that present tense. So I don't have to keep coming again and again and again to get water.

If you can give me that water, give it to me. And we can probably only imagine what her life might have been like, scorned and rejected. And in essence, physically alone and probably worse, emotionally alone.

Because when he puts the point, he kind of puts his finger on the problem, go call your husband and she responds, I have no husband. And then obviously he responds, you're right in that sort of thing.

But that's an interesting statement, I have no husband. She had a man, but it appears to me that she had been constantly disappointed by the men in her life.

[17:54] And that the guy that she was living with at that point, she wasn't even willing to be married to. Over and over again, she had come back hoping that she would find this man that would make her life work.

In essence, I'd need no husband. How much has been made by preachers about the dissimilarities between this woman and us living in the present day?

We often, as we read scripture, we tend to think about, oh, it's that person. And that I have very little in common with her. But I want to suggest this morning that actually she is probably more like us, let me flip it around.

We may be actually more like her than what we're willing to think. We may be of a different class, maybe of a different race, maybe of a different time.

But in essence, in many ways, we are just like her. I think as we read the text, we ought to be identifying with her in her need.

[18:54] Over the past, I guess 42 years of ministry now, it took my first sabbatical, by the way, last spring, in 41 years. It was my first three months sabbatical. Wasn't nearly long enough.

But I was grateful for that. But for over 40 years of ministry, throughout, in different parts of the United States and across the world, I've found that people are essentially the same wherever you are.

They may have a different language, they may have different, you know, food or different cultural traditions or whatever. But people are basically the same everywhere. And that's why warfare is so nonsensical to me.

You often have individuals literally killing each other because some powers that be want them to be in conflict, but really, they're men and women just like us.

They want the same things. They want to be happy. They want to find somebody that'll love them, that they can love. They want to raise their kids in relative security. They'd love to have their kids have a better life than what they do.

[19:52] They want a sense of meaning and purpose. Those are the things we share. And I think that's what she wanted as well. But the problem is, the next question, what was driving her life?

So you think with me, even as I try to talk through these things. So this second question, what was it that she thought would make her life work?

In one sense, I've given away the answer already. But I think she thought that if I could only find the right man, if I could find the right spouse, that'll make my life work.

That will give me the love and the security and all that I really want.

Most of us are this way in one sense or another. New Yorkers are particularly this way. Many people are driven by, if I can just find the right man or the right woman, I'll live happily ever after. I believed in that when I was in college.

[20:54] I thought if I could make enough money and marry a beautiful woman, I would live happily ever after. That was the American gospel to me. I did marry a beautiful woman, but I never made that money.

I'm not sure what happened in that process. But in the course of the conversation, I think it really becomes painfully obvious what was driving her.

And I think it was obvious to Jesus even before he had the conversation. Because it's so quick that he says, go call your husband, and then it comes out.

In essence, the pain begins to be revealed there. But in essence, finding that right man had been her gospel. It was a gospel that essentially she had almost given up on.

But that was her gospel. It may sound a little strange to talk about being her gospel, but in essence, the gospel is to a person whatever you think is actually going to put your whole life together.

[21:52] Now, that's not the gospel of Jesus Christ, obviously. But those things do become the things that make our lives work. With New Yorkers, and I suspect it's somewhat similar to many people living in Edinburgh, there's a variety of different gospels that are believed.

One was if I can only find the right mate, if I can only make enough money, if I can only earn the PhD, if I can only get the Broadway part, if I can only make it in the music industry, and there's a host of other ones.

But all those things become the gospels that drive New Yorkers' life. The problem though with all those gospels is they're empty.

Because even when you make it, even when you marry the most beautiful woman or the most powerful man, or when you get the position at the company, when you get to the top, it's empty.

Those things actually don't make life really work at all. A year ago, maybe two years ago, now I guess, I was sitting in a service in a new church in Brussels.

[23:03] There was a woman there that morning. It was the first time she'd come to church, I think ever, maybe in her life. But her husband had died prematurely.

Her husband was really what her life was about. After six months of trying to deal with that reality, she attempted to kill herself. She threw herself out of a window.

She literally, as she hit the ground, the pavement, she ended up being severely damaged but wasn't successful in taking her own life.

That deep desire for her husband, that husband filling up her life, when that was taken away, there was nothing left. She comes that morning, and actually she heard the gospel that morning, and she turned to Christ.

But a husband, even if you find the right one, or the wife, even if you find the right one, they can be so easily taken away, either by death or by any number of other instances.

[24:03] Anything that you believe is your gospel in this world can be taken away. Death can be taken away overnight. Security can be taken away overnight. The 9-11 event had a huge effect on New York City, although it was a horrible, tragic event.

Actually one of the really positive effects of that is that it burst the bubble of security that so many New Yorkers lived in, that they felt we cannot be touched. When that happened, all of a sudden they realized they were vulnerable.

It was the first time in actually several decades that New Yorkers actually felt free to talk about God, about eternal things, what's it all about? That sort of thing.

So we actually had a baby explosion post 9-11, but we've also seen an explosion of church planting and development in New York City. An interesting thing about this woman at the well is that her primary concern was not life in the hereafter.

Her primary concern was now, give me this water so I don't have to keep on coming back to this well. That's really what she wanted. Her concern was not what's going to happen to me after I die.

[25:13] And actually as we talk to people in our society, very few people actually have much real thought about what happens in the next chapter, in the next life. They actually want to make a difference in their lives now.

And what I want to say is that the gospel, the gospel of Jesus Christ, is not merely about life in the hereafter, although it is about that. It actually is about changing the journey we're on in this life, and that Christ can come into a person's life and literally change their experience.

All these things of earth that we talk about that are actually good things, they can add to the happiness of life. They can reduce the difficulties of life, but ultimately they don't have the power to actually meet our deepest needs.

Just Monday I got a call just before I was leaving home from my brother. My brother is not a, he's one of my brothers, he's not a Christian. And he's 55 years old and his wife is leaving him.

And it was terribly sad to hear my brother in the pain that he's in. But I thought they had a good marriage. She was a good woman, he's a good man, relatively speaking, but it's taken away.

[26:31] And I actually think that this may be the time at which the Lord will break through in his life and that he'll see that it's not finding a mate that's actually going to make it all work, but it'll actually be finding Christ.

For this woman there was no man that could make her life work. That could make her feel loved, that could give her the security that she so desperately wanted, she'd never found that person.

But there was somebody that actually could make it work. So what happened at the well? How did this interaction with Jesus affect her?

There's an interesting statement in verses 39 through 41 that we didn't read. So let me read it to you in case you don't have a Bible in front of you. But it says there at the end of this passage, many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony.

He told me all that I ever did. And so when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with him and he stayed there two days and many more believed because of his word.

[27:35] And many more believed because of his word. I think we can draw from that that this woman came to real belief in Christ that morning.

She was changed as a result of this encounter with Jesus. Personally, I don't really like brief summaries of the gospel very much.

Although I think the four laws of the Capsic Crusade used to use ended up playing an instrumental role in my coming to Christ years and years ago. Brief summaries often don't say enough.

But many times you have to use a brief summary in order to talk intelligibly with people about the gospel. The one that we use in New York, which I'm fairly happy with, is basically you are more sinful and flawed than what you've ever dared to believe.

And yet you can be more accepted in love than what you ever dared to hope because of what Jesus did for you on the cross. Now that wasn't of Keller, although Keller uses that formulation of gospel.

[28:37] It actually comes from Jack Miller who precedes. He's one of the fathers of many of the key leaders that we look to today. But that is a statement of the gospel.

It's really a statement of the effects of the gospel really. You are more flawed and sinful than what you've ever dared to believe. That's really the reality of us even now.

And yet you can be more loved and accepted than what you've ever dared to hope because of what Jesus Christ has done on the cross.

All of us, probably much more like the woman at the well than what we had dared to admit, we are all fallen. We all are many times running after idols, so to speak.

We are believing in gospels that don't really hold up. And many times it's only when tragedy or bad things happen that those false gospels are revealed and we're almost forced to look to Christ or to despair one way or another.

[29:38] Here's for the most part, no and yet they don't know that they actually believe in false gospels. At one point there was a woman by the name of Mary Ellen who she and her husband were part of a core group and I was trying to help get a church started on the east end of Long Island in a place called Southampton.

We borrowed basically all the names in America from Europe. So when you go to the states you'll find Midlothian, you'll find all kinds of Scottish names, you'll find all kinds of British names. We're not creative enough to create our own I guess.

But Mary Ellen was out in Southampton. They were part of this core group and at one point I was asking Mary Ellen, I know that somehow you came to Christ in New York and through Redeemer's Ministry, but I've never heard your story, would you tell me your story?

And so she said, of course I would. And so she said, you know, I was a bond broker down on Wall Street. I was in an office with about 30 to 35 people there.

And there was one Christian, one believer in the office. His name was Chip. But Chip was one of the nicest guys you'd ever want to meet. So he was a Christian, but he was one of the nicest guys you'd ever want to meet.

[30:47] That kind of betrays the skepticism in New York about believers, okay? Because believers from their perspective are obnoxious, ignorant, bigoted, all these kind of stereotypes that you get with those things.

But Chip was one of the nicest guys you'd ever want to meet. And from time to time when things would slow down the office, we'd talk. We'd talk about the latest film, or we'd talk about a show that you'd go see, or a new concert that was in town, or you might talk about politics.

You might even talk about religion. And Chip, in her words, always had the most interesting take on our discussions. He was never a pushy, but he was always kind of different. So from time to time, I would go to Chip and I would ask him about some of my questions.

She had been baptized in a Roman Catholic church, and by the time, once she made her first communion at age seven, she never had to go to church again. And her family kind of left Catholicism and such.

So she had some acquaintance with church or Christianity, but really didn't understand much. So she would come to Chip asking the typical apologetical questions. How can there be a God if there's all this suffering in the world?

[31:50] You know, all the typical kinds of things. And Chip could answer some of those questions, well, some he couldn't. But at one point, as she's asking more and more questions, Chip says, you know, Mary Ellen, I think you just need to come to this church that I've been going to.

The guy that preaches there answers these kinds of questions all the time. Now, it happened to be Tim Keller and Redeemer. And so Mary Ellen, because she trusted Chip, he wasn't weird.

He was a credible individual. She decided that she would come. So she came this one Sunday evening and she actually brought three girlfriends with her. They were kind of her posse, her protection. You know, she wasn't sure if there was going to be a cult or whatever.

And it was in a university auditorium, so actually it wasn't too intimidating. But she still thought it might be a cult or something quite weird. And I asked her, well, what was it like?

And it happened that Redeemer Services in the evening used kind of a cool jazz sound to their worship, which fit New Yorker at the time. And I think it still does in many ways.

[32:51] But it wasn't weird or odd, but it was nice. I mean, the music was good and that sort of thing. And then when he got up to teach, it was a lot like a lecture, you know, although it was really interesting.

At times it was humorous, but it was also profoundly disturbing. Interesting description of preaching. I wish people would describe my preaching as profoundly disturbing.

I think it's a good thing. But I said, okay. And so then what happened? Well, we went out to a bar afterwards to get a drink, as New Yorkers normally would. And we couldn't help but talk about what this guy at the service had talked about.

I said, okay, then what? Well, we ended up coming back the next Sunday night. And actually, there was a whole group of us that began coming every Sunday evening. There were about nine of us that attended every Sunday evening for about three months.

And every night we'd go out to a bar and we couldn't help, although there was never an intention this way, but we couldn't help but talk about what Tim had talked about in his sermon. And she said, and sometimes we really argued about it.

[33 : 59] And I said, you argued about it? And she said, actually, one time we actually almost got kicked out of a bar that we were in. I said, what do you mean? And she said, well, there was one guy there and he was furious at what Tim had said.

And so then we were all arguing about it. Well, what was it that Tim had said? And what Tim had basically done was he said, here is what New Yorkers believe. And he'd argued from what they were pursuing back to then that means here's what New Yorkers believe, here's what your real values are.

Here's what you think is going to make your life work. Here's why you're overworking to become that journalist or whatever that thing might be. And he was angry because he said, that's not what I believe.

So here eight non-Christians were doing apologetics with another non-Christian, convincing him that Tim was right and that he was wrong. And it got to the point where they were literally yelling at each other.

That's why they almost got kicked out of the bar. And so I said, okay, so what's the conclusion of it? And she said, well, after three months of going, I felt like Tim had either answered many of the objections that I had to Christianity or he had set them aside so I could no longer kind of hold on to them.

[35 : 12] And I felt like I was standing face to face with Jesus. And I needed to make a decision about him. He either really was the Lord, the Messiah, or he really was some sort of a liar or a lunatic or something along those lines.

But she said, the evidence was so compelling, I had to bend the knee to Christ. But there was one last problem that I had with becoming a Christian. And I said, well, what was that? And she said, well, I knew at that point that in order for me to become a Christian, it meant that I had to consider to be a brother or sister in Christ, people like Pat Robertson, Benny Hinn, James Dobson, and she mentioned somebody else, and then even George Bush.

And she said, I felt all those people were cultural terrorists. And so that was kind of the last impediment. But she bent the knee to Christ and literally her life was changed.

In this text, there's no formulation of the gospel at the end, is there? At least I don't see it there. There's no pray this prayer, believe these things, any of that.

What's the gospel that he offers? Did you see it? It's basically, I'm he. Messiah that you seek, that's who I am.

[36 : 38] I'm the true husband. I'm the one who can actually meet your deepest needs. I'm the only one who can. And she goes away, she goes to the village, come meet this man who told me everything in my life.

Now he hadn't told her everything, he just said a couple of things. But could this be the Messiah? But she comes to believe because he is the answer to the gospel.

The reality of so many of us, even as Christians, is we're often seeking another gospel. We're actually living as if we don't believe the gospel of the scripture, we believe some other gospel.

And if the money was taken away, or if the position was taken away, or the looks were taken away, or God forbid the Lord allow your child to die, or something along those lines, would our life still be able to hang together?

Well the reality is that Christ is the only real answer because all those things could be taken away. We'll all end up dying at some point. We can't take it into the next life.

[37 : 48] But this woman believed in the true husband, and that is Christ. And he's the answer to all of our needs. Let's pray together.

Our Father and our God, we thank you that you have loved us. You love us still. You care about us as human beings.

We are, Lord, so errant in so many ways, so many times. Lord, I pray that you would speak to anyone here this morning who actually doesn't know you yet, and that you would draw him or her to yourself.

But I pray, Lord, that you speak to those of us who have known you, and that do know you, and do believe in this gospel, that you would renew that understanding that you are the one, you are the one that can meet our deepest needs.

You are the Messiah, and you have chosen to love us and to forgive us of all of our sins. In Jesus Christ, amen.