



Sermon, Sunday October 17, 2021

“The Disciples who do not understand the words and actions of the Lord”

SCRIPTURE: John 4:27-42 ²⁷Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you want?” or, “Why are you speaking with her?” ²⁸Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, ²⁹“Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?” ³⁰They left the city and were on their way to him. ³¹Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, “Rabbi, eat something.” ³²But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” ³³So the disciples said to one another, “Surely no one has brought him something to eat?” ³⁴Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. ³⁵Do you not say, ‘Four months more, then comes the harvest’? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. ³⁶The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. ³⁷For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ ³⁸I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.” ³⁹Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I have ever done.” ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. ⁴¹And many more believed because of his word. ⁴²They 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 truly the Savior of the world.”

Introduction: Faith without Good Deeds Is Dead

Through the public life of Jesus in the Gospels, we can see how patient and merciful the Lord is. Jesus spoke to people about the Kingdom of God with His powerful words. When people did not understand the words of Jesus, He explained them through easy parables. Jesus also showed us what it means to live according to the will of our Heavenly Father through His own life.

However, the disciples who knew the heart of the Lord best and had to live according to the will of the Lord often did not know the meaning of the Lord's words and actions. Nevertheless, Jesus taught and led His disciples with patience and mercy.

Today's text is what happened in the place called Sychar in Samaria. Jesus left Judea and returned to Galilee. He had to go through Samaria on the way. The Pharisees made it appear to the people that Jesus and John the Baptist were in a rivalry for who baptizes the most people. Jesus wanted to leave Judea and return to Galilee to avoid being at the center of this dispute.

Today's text shows the disciples who do not understand Jesus' words and actions. Through today's text, we learn that it is not easy to apply and do what we know as knowledge in our lives.

Still, the Lord does not give up teaching and leading His disciples. The Holy Spirit also guides us until we realize and do the Lord's will.

Then, through what happened between Jesus and His disciples at the Sychar of Samaria, let's see what we need to fulfill our faith.



Body: Disciples who do not understand words and actions of the Lord

In today's text, there are three scenes where the disciples do not understand the actions and words of the Lord. We can learn what true faith for deed is through the disciples who do not understand the actions and words of Jesus.

1. The disciples were shocked by Jesus talking to the Samaritan woman

While Jesus was meeting a Samaritan woman at a well at Sychar in Samaria, the disciples went to the village to buy food. Later, when the disciples return to Jesus, they are shocked to see the Lord talking with the Samaritan woman.

The reason why the disciples were shocked when they saw Jesus' behavior was because Jews at that time did not talk to women in public places. But Jesus is having a deep conversation with the woman.

In fact, the Gospels show us that Jesus had conversations with many people. But, the disciples of Jesus did not find it strange when the Lord spoke with the rich young man Nicodemus. Also they were not shocked when Jesus talked with the centurion Gentile who asked Jesus to heal his son.

However, the disciples were shocked to find Jesus talking to a Samaritan woman. Jews were not seen to share things in common with Samaritans. Also, Jews regarded Samaritans as worse than slaves. The disciples could not overcome their walls of experience, tradition, and prejudice. On the contrary, Jesus was free from it.

John 1:16 says, **“From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another.”** As in this verse, the grace of the Lord does not discriminate against people based on gender, race, social status, money, or power. It treats everyone equally.

That's why Ephesians 2:15 says, **"His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace."** This means that Jesus reconciled Jews and Gentiles through the love of the cross. It means that there is no discrimination and no distinction between all people. And the grace of the Lord brings those who have been separated to the Lord together in the Holy Spirit. **So Ephesians 2:18** says, **“For through Him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.”**

If we know with our hearts, not knowledge, that the Lord's grace is fair to all people in the world without discrimination, we will be able to treat our neighbors with a warmer and more open heart. So, what is the second thing we need for faith in action, not just words and thoughts?

2. The disciples wonder if Jesus had ‘another food’.

The conversation in the following text, the disciples returned from the village with food.

Then Jesus said to disciples, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.”(John 4:32) The disciples wonder who brought food to Jesus. **Then Jesus explained: “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work.”(John 4:34)**

In this way, Jesus regarded Himself as a perfect doer of God's will. **That's why Jesus says in John 14:31, “the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.”** And to accomplish this, Jesus always has fellowship with God.

It is very important for us to receive the strength we need from the Lord to do God's will. **That's why Jesus said, “man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.” (Deuteronomy 8:3)**

The disciples had priority to find food and fill their hungry bodies, but the Lord had priority to maintain a deep relationship with God. The Lord has made a clear promise to us. **“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”(Matthew 6:33)**



We also pray that God will have grace to fill our souls through the time of in-depth prayer with the Lord and the words of the Bible to escape from the hustle and bustle of our daily lives. So, what is the third thing we need for faith in action, not just words and thoughts?

3. The disciples did not understand what Jesus meant when he said that the harvest time had come.

Let's look at today's text John 4:35: "Four months more, then comes the harvest"? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting."

Disciples of Jesus say that they have to wait four more months for the harvest. But, Jesus tells us it is already time for the harvest. This verse means that preaching the gospel of Christ is very urgent and most important.

Helping and serving our neighbors is the Lord's delight. However, there are many social groups that do a better job of giving or serving than the church. The biggest reason the church exists on this earth is to preach Jesus Christ.

It is to testify what the Lord has done for us and for the world, and the richness of the results of that work. And for that we must work together.

Jesus says in Matthew 9:37: "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few."

Jesus is sorry that it is the harvest time and there are few who labor for it. Because for Jesus, it is the most urgent and important thing for all creatures in the world to enjoy the riches of the Kingdom of God. I pray that we too have a heart of love for the soul like Jesus.

Conclusion: Let's imitate the changed disciples.

Now let's summarize today's sermon. After the resurrection and ascension, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to the disciples as promised. The disciples who experienced the resurrection and ascension of Jesus and the descent of the Holy Spirit are no longer those who did not understand the words and actions of Jesus.

Now, the disciples do not discriminate against people, carry out their missions with the power of deep fellowship with the Lord, and do their best to save souls.

Like the changed disciples, I hope that we love our neighbors with great generosity, carry out our missions with the power of the Lord, and have a passion for soul salvation.

