

Lesson 3 Lecture John 3:22-4:42

Welcome everyone. Carol covered Chapter 1, which John gave his introduction to who Jesus is, an introduction to John the Baptist, and an introduction to some of the disciples – all testimonies that Jesus is the Son of God. Last week, Laurel spoke about Jesus' first miracle at the wedding and His conversation with Nicodemus introducing the notion that in order to be right with the Father, we must be born again. Today's lesson is entitled, "Two Testimonies". Before we get into the Scriptures, let's talk about the notion of a testimony.

Webster's on-line definition of the word testimony is, "A firsthand authentication of a fact; a solemn declaration usually made orally by a witness under oath in response to interrogation by a lawyer or authorized public official." A testimony's purpose is to present evidence to what is believed to be true. There are typically two components of a testimony.

1. Establishment of the credibility of the person giving the testimony
2. The actual presentation of the testimony or the explanation of the facts as he/she understands them

In a traditional courtroom setting the testimonies are given on behalf of the prosecution and/or the defense to help determine the verdict. In the spiritual world, the verdict is already in:

- Jesus is the only begotten Son of the Father, and He is a co-member of the triune Godhead – John 1:1
- He came to earth and dwelt among us – John 1:14
- Out of the love the Father has for us, He sent His Son to be a sacrifice for our sins, and to those who believe in Him will have eternal life – John 3:16

So, if the verdict is in, why give the testimony? Because a lot of people don't know the verdict. Sadly, many don't even know there's an issue to which to testify. Aside from growing our relationship with God, Jesus tells that we are to continuously give our testimonies for the purpose of obeying His Great Commission for us as stated in Matthew 28:19-20, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

So, if the verdict is already in, then the only thing we need to focus on is our testimony to those who haven't yet learned the verdict. As I mentioned earlier, the first step in giving a testimony is to determine our credibility. In other words, are we believable? People will not believe the testimony of someone who isn't being honest about himself/herself or disingenuous. Before we attempt to establish credibility with others, we first need to perform a sincere self-examination. This step begins with an inquiry of God to reveal the truth of who you are before Him. David did this in Psalm 139:23, "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts." This can be a scary thing, but it's not like He doesn't already know – look what David says earlier in Psalm 139:1-3, "You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways." We'll learn in this lesson the truth that trying to hide your sin or who you are before Him is futile.

Our credibility is essential in our testimony. For example, if I were to stand up here and proclaim myself as some holy man, the first sound you would hear is my wife Vickie laughing hysterically. After you calmed her down, the next thing many of you would do is start thinking to yourselves, 'Really? I'll bet there are a few things he's not too proud of.' Right? If there were only a few! The fact is I'm every bit, and highly likely more, a mess just like each of you. We've all fallen short of the glory of God. There is no one righteous – no not one.

Two things happen when we're honest with who we are in our witness. First, the suspicion of the authenticity of the witness is diminished. In other words, by me confessing to you that I'm anything but perfect, you're much less likely to suspect that I'm not being real with you because I'm not being real with myself – much less being real with God. It's like poking more holes in a wedge of Swiss cheese. The second thing that happens when we're honest in our witness is we become relatable. We are far more effective and credible as witnesses when we present ourselves truthfully and in humility – people will relate to us if they see we're pretty much just like them in their struggles. Ok – our reading today deals with two testimonies, let's take a look at the first one – John the Baptist.

Our reading begins with Jesus and his disciples in the Judean countryside baptizing. The parallel verse comes from our reading in the first two verses from Chapter 4, "Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John— although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples." One interpretation of the parallel verse was that Jesus did not baptize anyone but the disciples. Another is that He did not baptize anyone with water. If the correct interpretation is the latter, why wouldn't Jesus baptize people in water? John the Baptist told us in John 1:33, "And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom

you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.” Jesus’ baptism wouldn’t be of water, it would be of the Holy Spirit. This is what happened at Pentecost with the disciples.

John the Baptist is also baptizing, but before we get to his testimony, John the Apostle felt it important for us to remember that John the Baptist paid a heavy price for his testimony. Verse 24 reminds us that John the Baptist would be put into prison and ultimately killed. While Herod didn’t kill John the Baptist specifically for his testimony about Jesus, he was killed because he chose to stand up and call out sin. Don’t we need more people like John the Baptist who are unafraid to say things for what they are in the eyes of the Kingdom of God?

So, John the Baptist’s disciples come to him and, you can hear their whiny tone, ‘Everyone is going to Jesus and getting baptized.’ We see the heart of John’s disciples in this statement. Instead of rejoicing over people repenting, coming to God, and being baptized, they’re jealous because they’re no longer the ones getting the glory. The parallel verses to this verse speak of Jesus healing people. Since Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow, He’s still doing that today. Shouldn’t everyone come to Him? Why don’t they? Because they don’t know Him – that is why we must give our testimonies as to tell people about Him.

John the Baptist replied in John 3:27, “A person can receive only what is given them from heaven.” John the Baptist didn’t take their jealousy bait. He knew that any abilities, gifts, or ministry we have come directly from the Father – the areas which we excel aren’t because we’re so awesome but because the One Who *is* so awesome gives us these abilities to excel. That’s why we always should acknowledge Him in all our success and blessings. Jesus reminded us of the source of all that we have in John 6:65, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them.” James 1:17a confirms this, “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights.” What is your ministry? Do you see it as a gift from heaven? To those you are ministering to – do they see that in you? Or do they see the burden that Satan can deceive us into regarding our ministries?

After reminding his disciples where his ministry came from, John begins to confirm exactly who he is in relation to who Jesus is. He begins with stating that He is not the Messiah, but the one mentioned in Malachi 3:1, “I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD Almighty.” Next, he invokes a wedding image identifying himself as the best man. John’s statement implies there is an innate joy in being a friend of Jesus. It’s one of the many blessings of being a follower of Him. If this is true, then we must have a capacity for joy. When was the last time you experienced the joy of being a friend of Jesus? Satan will do everything he can

to rob you of the joy of your relationship with Jesus because He knows if you experience that joy, it will draw you closer to Jesus and make you a bigger threat to his dastardly efforts.

In chapter 3, verse 30, John the Baptist utters one of the simplest but most profound statements in Scripture not spoken directly by God. John recognizes Jesus must get the glory, so in order for that to happen, he needs to step back and allow Jesus to take center stage. This is a statement of a true believer in Jesus. More importantly, it's a statement that demonstrates John's complete understanding that less of him and more of Jesus makes him and everyone else better off. I don't know about you, but I need to remind myself of that more often than I'd like to admit. John then goes in for the heart of his testimony in verses 31-36. Some of the highlights are:

- The one who comes from above is above all
- The one who comes from heaven is above all
- For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.
- Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.

Jesus claimed in Matthew 11:11, that there was no one greater ever born of women than John the Baptist. He made straight the way of the Lord. God help us to do the same.

Jesus leaves Judea because his ministry is causing problems with the Pharisees – people He's not yet ready to deal with. So, we learn he goes through Samaria. In the year 722 B.C. the Assyrians invaded Israel from the north and carried the majority of the People from the ten northern tribes into captivity. The Assyrians then sent some of their people to Israel, where they intermarried with the Jews not taken into captivity. The marriages between the Assyrians and the Jews produced the Samaritans – half-breeds of the Jews. Barred from the temple, the Samaritans built their own temple on Mount Gerizim. They changed the stories of the Pentateuch – the Garden of Eden was on Mt. Gerizim; Noah's ark landed on Mt. Gerizim; Abraham offered Isaac on Mt. Gerizim. This is why there is such a stigmatism with Samaritans.

In the KJV and NKJV of John 4:3, Jesus said, "He had to go through Samaria." 'Had' is replaced by 'must'. This word should bring joy to our hearts. Jesus viewed His upcoming meeting with a sinner as a 'must'. For each one of us in this room, there was a point where the Lord orchestrated a 'must' appointment. Does that sound like an uninterested or passive Savior?

The well-known Jewish historian, Josephus, said that the Jews intentionally avoided going through Samaria because of the issues they had with the Samaritans. Apparently, Jesus didn't have these issues.

Moving in to verses 7-9, we also see Jesus' humanity – He was tired and He was thirsty. We now get to the second testimony – the woman at the well. “When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)” Women typically drew water in the morning or in the evening. We're about to learn why she has a reason to come out at noon when most people are resting or eating. She's ashamed.

A few notable points:

1. Jesus humbled Himself and asked for a drink – sometimes to reach people, they need to know they are useful and have something of value to offer – even a simple gesture like giving a strange man a glass of water.
2. Also, note that the disciples are out buying the Samaritan's food – they must have got the message that if Jesus didn't have any issues with the Samaritans, neither should they.
3. Finally, she is clearly shocked that a rabbi would talk to a woman – something that wasn't done by them in public in those times.

I'm certain if Jesus were here with us today, He would shock us often at where He would go and who He would talk to.

Now that Jesus has her attention by simply asking for some help, He provokes her curiosity by speaking of a different kind of water – a living water. John 4:10, “Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” Isaiah spoke on God's blessing of Israel in terms of water as well. Isaiah 44:3, “For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.”

In the next few chapters of John, Jesus will reveal the source of this living water. John 7:38, “Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” For those of you who remember our study in Exodus, you'll remember Moses, under the instructions of the Lord, to strike the rock at Horeb and water will come out of it for the people to drink. The Apostle Paul tells us who that rock was in 1 Corinthians 10:4 – the rock was Christ. When was the last time you took in a long, slow drink of living water from your Savior?

So, the exchange continues, and she's not only *not* getting what Jesus is talking about, she's getting kind of snotty with her – not showing Him much respect. But we see the great patience and focus of our Lord – He ignores her attitude and keeps on point. Witnessing opportunities can get caught up in rabbit trails that will take you away from your goal. We need to continually ask for the Lord to keep us focused on the task at hand. John 4:11-12, “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?” Jesus narrows the concept of living water bringing eternal life – He's trying to get her to realize He's speaking of the things of the Spirit.

John 4:15, “The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.” She still doesn't get it – she continues to view this encounter as a discussion about the fleshly needs. We're about to find out this is the issue Jesus is about to expose. Jesus, knowing there is no true conversion until there is true conviction, asks the question which will reveal if she's ready to be honest with Him. In asking her to go get her husband, Jesus rips off her mask. There is no fooling God – I mentioned earlier He already knows what's going on in our hearts and minds. Note the gentleness of His dealing with her. Jesus revealed her sin, but He didn't revel in it.

There was no condemnation in this discussion. Jesus tells us how He handles us in Matthew 11:28-29, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” Romans 2:4 confirms that when we are confronted with His kindness and gentleness, we will be compelled to feel safe enough to confess that which is burdening us – and what He already knows – so we can repent. Jesus knows deep down every person's heart is crying out for God. He's always there – that should be part of every person's witness.

Notice the progression of what the woman calls Jesus as she gets to know Him. First, she calls Him a Jew, then she graduates to “Sir”, and now in verse 19 she calls Him a prophet. She's getting there, but she's not home yet. She speaks about her ancestors, or fathers. Jesus speaks about THE Father. What a provocative line in chapter 4 verse 22 is – ‘You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know’. For a specific reference to this issue with the Samaritans, you can read 2 Kings 17:28-41. How many people do you know have no idea what they're worshipping? It's really sad. Again, we see the heart of the Father – He *seeks* people who will worship Him in Spirit and in truth. God is not sitting idly by while we go about our days. He is actively looking for people to worship Him. This was another reason for Jesus' sacrifice – to allow us to know

the truth and be filled with the Holy Spirit, so we could worship His Father. John 6:63b says, “The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life. As we take in the Word, we grow in the Spirit.” This is one of the great blessings of POW – to help us grow in Spirit and truth by learning His Word.

Now, verse 25, she’s gone from prophet to the Messiah – she’s arrived at where Jesus wanted her to be – to know who He is. Anyone who claims Jesus never confessed He was the Messiah never read this verse. Imagine hearing Jesus say that directly to you – “I am He”? John will throughout this gospel offer several “I Ams” in referencing Jesus – the Good Shepherd, the Door, the Light of the world, etc. But the first “I Am” in the gospel is that He is the Messiah – as it should be.

From verses 27-30, I love the fact that the disciples, though they are shocked to see Jesus talking to the woman, don’t ask Him why. They’re starting to get used to being surprised by His actions. She goes from convert to witness in minutes – you can see the transformation – she immediately goes to the town. The NKJV says that she approached the men. This makes sense because her reputation probably would invalidate her witness to women. As for the men, probably a lot of them knew her, so they probably needed to confess their sins as much as she did. Why did she leave her water pot? 1) it could be a symbol of leaving behind what she thought was important for something better; or, 2) maybe she left it for Him out of appreciation. Once we **receive from God**, we should, out of gratitude, want **to give to God**.

In verses 4:34-38, Jesus returns to using the imagery of the material world to help the people understand He’s speaking of the spiritual world. The disciples believe Jesus needs to eat, and He responds with an amazing statement – “My food is to do the will of him who sent me to finish his work.” There is nothing more satisfying than seeing the fruit of our efforts when serving the Lord – no food or any other material source of satisfaction can come close to matching the fulfillment of being a part of accomplishing God’s will and plan.

What is this finished work? The redemptive plan of the Father for His creation. Just before Jesus gave up His spirit on the cross, He cried out – “It is finished”. This must be a part of our testimony – there is no work involved in getting to heaven – the work is finished. We just need to emphasize that people simply, but sincerely, need to believe in Jesus. Jesus talks about the fields, sowing, and reaping. The Apostle Paul said, “One plants, one waters – God gives the increase. The people are out there everywhere. May He give us the faith and the opportunities to participate in whatever stage of the planting/harvesting process He chooses.

From Jew to now Savior of the World – the verdict is in – the woman’s testimony and the Word of God’s testimony have proven to be true – there is only

one logical verdict. Before I conclude, let's take a final quick look at the two witnesses.

<u>John the Baptist</u>	<u>The Woman at the Well</u>
Foretold of in Scripture	Not even named
High moral character	Immoral
Humble	Disrespectful

At this point, these two witnesses had nothing in common. Yet God felt it necessary to show them as both being witnesses who gave powerful testimonies. So, what did they have in common? – The both were convinced Jesus was the Messiah. That's the key issue for every one of us. We're all different, and we all have our different stories to tell. But we have one thing in common – Jesus is the Messiah – the Savior of the world. That is the message we are charged to deliver.

I want to conclude by focusing on the issue of Light vs. Dark. We learned in Chapter 1 John the Baptist's mission he came to bear witness of the Light. Let's think about that for a moment. Is there anything that is more contrasting than total darkness and total light? Darkness and light cannot coexist. If there is light in a room, then it can't be totally dark. Conversely, if it is completely dark in a room, then there must be a total absence of light. Does this make sense? If total darkness and total light can't coexist, then why would someone have to live a life mission of pointing out the Light? Shouldn't the mere presence of light be a sufficient witness to darkness?

Light, though, can only rule over darkness if we can see the light. If someone is totally blind, then regardless of how bright the light is, he/she won't be able to see it. The same principle of blindness applies to our spiritual lives. As sinners from birth, we are born into blindness – or darkness. That spiritual darkness will persist until it is introduced to, or witnessed to, the Light. What we should take from this truth is how incredibly dark our spiritual lives must be that it requires someone having **to point out this** Light.

What we also need to think about when contemplating such darkness is that we are unable to see anything as it is. We cannot comprehend reality until reality is revealed. Until the Light is illuminated, things are hidden – we are not aware of what is in front of us, around us, or behind us. We may see what we can see, but that does not mean that is all there is to see. Psalm 23 talks about walking through the valley of the shadows of death. Shadows cannot exist unless there is light to reveal them, but they are only shadows. Shadows disappear as you cast more light,

and so it goes with being a child of the Light. Satan wants us to stay in the darkness because that's where he lives. The prince of darkness hates the Light, so if we have the Light in us, he hates us. He demonstrates that hatred by trying to bring as much darkness into our lives to bring a blindness to the Light. Anytime light enters darkness, darkness must give way to the light. So, it goes for people who call upon the name of the LORD. Psalm 146:8, "The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; The LORD raises those who are bowed down; The LORD loves the righteous."

Our righteousness is from Jesus Christ, and He is the Light of the world. The fact that we're asked by Him to be witnesses to Him tells us how aware *He* is of the deep darkness of a spiritual life void of the Holy Spirit's presence. The good news? If you point out the Light, He will shine. The closer you get to a light, the brighter it gets. The closer you get to the Light, the darkness in your life will fade away. I said earlier that light will always rule over darkness in the physical world. Thanks be to God for Jesus because it's also true in the spiritual world. This is what **our** testimonies are to be – to do as John the Baptist did – to bear witness to the Light of the world. May God grant us the grace and faith to bear witness to His Light. Let's pray.