

HOW TO RECEIVE ETERNAL LIFE

John 4:1-30

By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. There are a lot of important things to talk about in 2020. The Coronavirus. The economy. The presidential election. But this morning we are going to talk about the most important issue of all – eternal life.
2. Scientists are working non-stop to try to find out how to help people beat death. Archeologists have been searching for years for the fountain of youth. But the reality is that their searches will come up empty. Death comes to us all. But death is not the end, it is the beginning of eternity. You will live forever after you die – either in heaven or hell. Today we are going to learn how to receive eternal life.
3. The purpose of the Gospel of John is that you might believe and have eternal life.
John 20:31 “But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God,, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” In this passage we’re going to get a detailed look at the subject.

II. TEXT: John 4:1-26

III. SET UP

1. Jesus and His disciples were ministering in Judea, and because of the rivalry with John’s disciples, Jesus decided to go back north to Galilee. The region of Palestine was about 120 miles from north to south. Galilee was in the north, Judea was in the south, and in the middle was place called Samaria. The Jews and the Samaritans hated each other, and many Jews would often travel twice as far to avoid going through Samaria.
2. On the way to Galilee, they stop in a Samaritan village, and Jesus sat by a well because he was tired. After sending the disciples into town to buy food, a Samaritan woman comes along to get water.
3. Jesus asked the woman for water. This surprised her for two reasons. Jewish men did not publicly speak to women, even their own wives. As well, Jews and Samaritans did not associate with each other; they hated each other.
4. The woman asked Jesus why He was speaking with her, and He tells her that if she knew who He was, she would be asking Him for living water, i.e. eternal life.
5. Then they have a spiritual discussion in which Jesus exposes her sin – she had five husbands – five failed marriages, and was living with a man who was not her husband.
6. The woman then admits her sin and decides to seek God’s forgiveness. But this is where it gets tricky, because where was she supposed to pray to God – at the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, or the Samaritan temple in Gerazim? Jesus told her that it didn’t matter where you worshiped, it mattered how you worship – in spirit, with a

heart of love, and obedience; and who you worship – in truth, the true God through His Son Jesus Christ.

7. The woman then says that one day the Messiah will come and explain everything, and Jesus revealed His identity as the Messiah.
8. The woman then hurries into town and invites everyone to come and meet Jesus, which they do.
9. This story reveals ten secrets about eternal life.

IV. 9 SECRETS ABOUT ETERNAL LIFE

1. Eternal life is available to everyone.

- i. The key verse in this story is **John 4:10** “If you knew the gift of God, and who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would ask him, and he would give you living water.”
- ii. Jesus offered eternal life to the Samaritan woman even though she wasn’t a Jew; even though she followed a different religion; and even though she was a sinner.
- iii. Eternal life is available to everyone. It doesn’t matter how bad you’ve been. It doesn’t matter where you’re from. It doesn’t matter who your parents are. It doesn’t matter how old you are. It doesn’t matter what you look like. It doesn’t matter what your religion is. It doesn’t matter who you voted for. He offers eternal life everyone.
- iv. **John 3:16** “For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”
- v. **Romans 10:13** “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
- vi. There is several things that all human beings have in common:
 1. Everyone was created by God and is infinitely valuable.
 2. Everyone is a sinner deserving hell.
 3. Everyone is loved unconditionally by God.
 4. Everyone can receive eternal life.
- vii. The best example of God’s love for us has to be the love of a mother. I read the story of a young man who had a terrible disease. It was so horrible and disgusting that he couldn’t go out in public. But he wasn’t neglected. Every morning his mother bathed his wounds and massaged his arms and legs, and every evening she did the same thing. Why? Because she loved her son so much, in spite of his disease. We have a disease worse than any physical disease; the disease of sin; yet God still loves us and offers us eternal life.

2. Eternal life is something you would want if you knew what it was.

- i. **John 4:10** Jesus answered, “If you knew the gift of God, and who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would ask him, and he would give you living water.”

- ii. In other words, if you knew what eternal life was, then you would ask Jesus to give it to you.
- iii. Many people reject Jesus Christ and Christianity because they are afraid that if they give up their sin and become religion, they will be unhappy. Nothing could be further from the truth. When you turn to Jesus Christ and receive eternal life, it will be the best thing that ever happened to you.
- iv. Eternal life will not ruin your life; it will bring you to life. It will not restrict you; it will set you free.
- v. **John 10:10 (AMP)** “I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance [to the full, till it overflows].”
- vi. My son Reiton is a very picky eater. And he is committed to his pickiness. He will go hungry rather than eat food that tastes bad. And a lot of times he won’t even try it. He makes up his mind just by the look of it, or just by the ingredients, that he’s not going to like it. And I hate that because he doesn’t know what he’s missing out on. If he only knew how delicious some of these dishes were, he would not only partake, he would ask for them. If you knew what eternal life was, then you wouldn’t reject it; you would ask Jesus to give it to you.
- vii. What is eternal life?
 - 1. It is a transformed life. When you get saved, Jesus changes you from the inside out, giving you the desire and the power to please God (2 Cor 5:17; Phil 2:13). He gives you the power to overcome destructive sins and addictions.
 - 2. It is an improved life. It is higher quality of life. Eternal life is the infusion of inner peace, and joy, and hope (Gal 5:22-23). It gives you purpose. It gives you perspective. It gives you a new family. It gives you courage. It improves your relationships.
 - 3. It is an extended life. It is a longer duration of life. When you receive eternal life, you get the guarantee of heaven rather than hell.
 - a. “If you have eternal life, then you will die once but live twice. Without eternal life you will live once but die twice. You will experience physical death and spiritual death.”

3. Eternal life is a free gift.

- i. **John 4:10** Jesus answered, “If you knew the gift of God, and who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would ask him, and he would give you living water.”
- ii. Jesus called eternal life “the gift of God.” He said that it is something that He gives.
- iii. **Romans 6:23** “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

- iv. Why is eternal life a free gift? Because we don't deserve it, and we can't earn it. The Bible says that we are all sinners, and the wages of sin is death – spiritual death, or eternal separation from God. That's what we deserve. And there is nothing you can do to earn eternal life. No matter how much good you try to do from this point on, you are still a sinner and you must be punished. That's why God sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for your sins. Christ was punished so you don't have to be.

4. Eternal life will not be forced upon you.

- i. **John 4:10** Jesus answered, "If you knew the gift of God, and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would ask him, and he would give you living water."
- ii. Jesus told the Samaritan woman that if she wanted the living water, she would have to ask Him. She would have to request it. She would have to desire it. Because God doesn't force eternal life upon anyone.
- iii. This is why some people go to hell. Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the whole world, and eternal life is offered to everyone, but it is not forced on anyone. Each person has to decide to accept the gift of eternal life by repentance and faith in Christ, or reject it. And many people choose to hold on to their sin rather than reach out for eternal life.
- iv. Calvinists claim that God's grace is irresistible, but it's not. They claim that if you are one of the elect, then when you hear the gospel, the Holy Spirit changes your heart so that you cannot reject Christ. That's not biblical. We are freed to believe, but not forced to believe. The Spirit gives us the ability to accept Christ without removing our ability to reject Christ. God's grace is available, but it is not irresistible. It is remarkable, but it is not irresistible. It is inimitable, but it is not irresistible. It is desirable, but it is not irresistible. It is inconceivable, but it is not irresistible. It incommensurable, but it is not irresistible. It is nonquantifiable, but it is not irresistible. It is indispensable, but it is not irresistible. It is irreplaceable, but it is not irresistible. It is nonreturnable, but it is not irresistible. It is nonperishable, but it is not irresistible. It is unearnable, but it is not irresistible. You must decide to receive it by repenting of your sins and trusting in Jesus Christ as God's payment for your sins.

5. Eternal life is soul satisfaction.

- i. **John 4:13-14** Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks from this water will get thirsty again. 14 But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty again. In fact, the water I will give him will become a well, of water springing up in him for eternal life."
- ii. Jesus goes on to describe eternal life as that which satisfies our thirst. He says that if you drink the water He offers, eternal life, then you will never thirst again. What does He mean?

- iii. God made the human heart in such a way that it cannot be truly happy without God.
 - 1. **Augustine** said, “Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You.”
 - 2. This world does not satisfy. It can pleasure us, but it cannot satisfy us. It can entertain us, but it cannot satisfy us. It can impress us, but it cannot satisfy us.
 - 3. You have a God-shaped hole in your heart that nothing can fill. This is why a man can have everything and yet feel totally empty on the inside. This is why someone can have the whole world, but kill himself with drugs because he is trying to fill the void. This is why you can finally get the thing that you’ve always wanted, but then you find that you still want something else.
 - 4. This world cannot satisfy. It is never enough.
 - 5. This is why so many people fall for the Myth of More. They think if only they had more of this, or more of that, then they would be happy. But it’s not true.
 - 6. All people are on a happiness quest because our hearts are empty until they find God. We will live unsatisfied until we find God.
 - 7. And Jesus is saying here that He has the answer. He offers it to us freely. It is eternal life. It is Jesus – the way, the truth, and the life.
- iv. Eternal life is the one and only thing that can satisfy your soul. It is a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

6. Eternal life requires the acknowledgement of sin.

- i. Next, the story takes an interesting twist. Upon hearing about the living water, the Samaritan woman says she wants it. But Jesus changes the subject and tells her to go get her husband. She says, “I don’t have a husband.” Jesus replies, “You’re right. You’ve had five husbands, and you’re currently living with a man out of wedlock.”
- ii. Why did Jesus go there? That’s quite embarrassing. Jesus needed the woman to see and admit her sin. You cannot receive eternal life until you perceive your life of sin. You’re not ready for a Savior until you see that you need saving.
- iii. The real reason we need eternal life is not to solve our happiness problem. That’s what the Samaritan woman wanted. She wanted her soul-thirst to be forever and finally quenched. This is a benefit of eternal life. But the real reason we need eternal life is to solve our sin problem. Sin separates us from God, which is why we are unhappy, unfulfilled, and unsatisfied, and headed for eternal destruction. Ultimately what we need is to be reconciled to God, but the only way that can happen is if we first see and acknowledge our sin.

We must see that we are in need of a Savior or we will forever be unfulfilled and separated from God.

- iv. **JC Ryle** "The plain truth is that a proper knowledge of sin lies at the root of all saving Christianity. Without it, such doctrines as justification, conversion, and sanctification are only words and names that convey no meaning to the mind. The first thing, therefore, that God does when He makes anyone a new creation in Christ is to send light into his heart and show him that he is a guilty sinner."
- v. Imagine that you are on an airplane, and the flight attendant gives you a parachute to put on and tells you it will improve your flight. So you give it a try, but you find that it is heavy, and you can't sit up straight. Eventually you notice the other passengers are laughing at you, so you finally decide to unstrap it and take it off. That was a ridiculous idea! Now imagine a different scenario. Imagine that the flight attendant gave you a parachute to put on and said that at any moment you will be jumping out of the airplane at 25,000 feet. This time you put it on quickly; you don't care how uncomfortable it is; and you don't care if you look silly, because you see your need for a parachute. This is why Jesus brought up the woman's sin.
- vi. Let me explain your need:
 - 1. You are a sinner. Rm 3:23
 - 2. The wages of sin is death eternal separation from God. Rm 6:23
 - a. Do all who go to hell get the same punishment? No. There are differing degrees of punishment in hell, depending on your sinfulness.
 - b. Do sinners really deserve hell? The severity of the punishment depends on the victim of the crime. If you tore the legs off a cricket, nobody would care. If you tore the legs off a frog, still, no one would likely take notice. If you tore the legs off a puppy, that would land you in jail. If you tore the legs off a small child, that would get you the death penalty. When you sin against an infinite God, the penalty is infinite.
 - 3. You cannot earn your way to heaven. A murderer must pay for his crime, even if he spends the rest of his life doing good deeds. A sinner must pay for his sin, even if he spends the rest of his life doing good deeds.
 - 4. The only way to be saved is to repent and trust in Christ, who died in your place for your sins. John 14:6; Acts 4:12

7. Eternal life requires repentance.

- i. Notice what happens after Jesus exposes her sin.

- ii. **John 4:19-20** 19 “Sir,” the woman replied, “I see that you are a prophet. 20 Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem.”
- iii. First, she admits her sin. “Sir, I see that you are a prophet.”
- iv. Second, she seeks to repent and get right with God. This is why she brings up the location of worship. She wanted to know where to go to seek the Lord.
- v. Look Christ’s answer. **John 4:23-24** “23 But an hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. Yes, the Father wants such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and in truth.”
- vi. Jesus said three things about worshiping or connecting with God:
 - 1. Jesus said it doesn’t matter where you worship. True worship is not confined to a location, because God is not confined to a location. God is everywhere, and He can be worshiped everywhere.
 - 2. We must worship God in spirit. Worship is not about the location of the body, but the state of the heart. We must worship God with hearts of love and obedience.
 - 3. We must worship God in truth – the true God. It’s not only important that you worship, but whom you worship. Truth is associated with Jesus Christ. We must worship God through trust and devotion to Jesus Christ – the way, the truth, and the life (Jn 14:6).
- vii. The Samaritan woman displayed an essential step to eternal life – repentance. To receive eternal life, you must turn from your sins. You must make a commitment to hand over the steering wheel of your life to Jesus. To place Him in complete control of your life.
- viii. **John MacArthur** “Scripture knows nothing of a salvation without repentance, and that always involves turning from sin (Acts 26:19–20; 1 Thess. 1:9). Jesus did not come to grant sinners perfection in the next life while leaving them to continue in sin in this one (cf. Jer. 7:9–10; Rom. 3:5–8; 6:1–2). On the contrary, He “gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds” (Titus 2:14; cf. Acts 3:26; Eph. 5:25–27; Col. 1:20–23). As a result, those who come to Him and truly receive the living water of eternal salvation have “been freed from sin, [and become] slaves of righteousness ... and enslaved to God” (Rom. 6:18, 22; cf. Eph. 6:6; Col. 3:24; 1 Peter 2:16).”

8. Eternal life requires faith in Jesus Christ.

- i. At the end of their conversation Jesus does something astonishing.
- ii. **John 4:25-26** 25 The woman said to him, “I know that the Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” 26 Jesus told her, “I, the one speaking to you, am he.”

- iii. Jesus explained to her about true worship, but she wasn't sure, so she said, "I guess we'll just have to wait until the Messiah comes and explains everything to us." And then Jesus revealed to her that He was the Messiah. This is the first time Jesus openly confessed to be the Messiah – and it was to a woman, a Samaritan, and a notorious sinner. That should be convincing that Jesus loves you and offers eternal life to you, regardless of who you are.
- iv. Why did Jesus reveal His identity to her? Because that was the last thing she needed for eternal life. She needed to trust in Jesus.
- v. This passage displays three essential conditions for eternal life:
 - 1. Admit your sin.
 - 2. Repent.
 - 3. Trust in Jesus.
- vi. **Romans 6:23** "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- vii. **John 3:16** "For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."
- viii. **John 17:3** "This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and the one you have sent—Jesus Christ."

9. Eternal life results in Christian service.

- i. Notice how the woman responds after she learn who Jesus is.
- ii. **John 4:28-30** 28 Then the woman left her water jar, went into town, and told the people, 29 "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" 30 They left the town and made their way to him.
- iii. There are a number of evidences that a person has passed from death to life. One of them is Christian service.
- iv. When a person receives eternal life, they change from being self-centered to God-centered; self-focused to God-focused; self-serving to God-serving. they become passionate about serving Jesus.
- v. After Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law, she immediately got up and began serving Him and His disciples (Mk 1:29-31). As soon as Paul was saved in Damascus, he immediately began preaching in the synagogues (Acts 9:20). After Lydia was baptized, she immediately invited the apostles to stay at her house (Acts 16:15). After the Philippian jailer got saved, he immediately took them home, washed their wounds, and set a meal before them (Acts 16:25-34).

V. CONCLUSION

- 1. Do you have eternal life? Are you sure? You can be. All you have to do is ask for it. To ask you need to A) Admit you are a sinner in need of Christ; B) Believe in Christ as God's payment for your sins; C) Commit your life to Jesus as King.