

## Text— John 4:31-42

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

We all enjoy food, right? I mean, who doesn't like to eat? We all have favorite foods when it comes to main courses, side dishes, beverages, deserts, and snacks. Accordingly, we Christians are thankful to the Lord God since it's a fact that it is He, "Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever," as Psalm 136:25 relates. Nevertheless, the term "food" can and does refer to things other than physical items for consumption. For example, we've all heard the expression "food-for-thought" in reference to something we mentally mull over and weigh in our minds.

Well, our Lord Jesus certainly supplies us with some important food-for-thought in our Scripture selection as He teaches us about:

### "THE MEAT THAT MATTERS MOST"

With that as our theme, may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) What it is not
- 2) What it is and why it matters most

-1-

Prior to our Scripture selection we are informed in John 4:3-9 that Jesus had "left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings

with the Samaritans."

Hence, Jesus was resting near Jacob's well around the noon hour while His disciples went into the city to purchase some food for lunch. A Samaritan woman came to the well and Jesus conversed with her; and, we learn in verses 10-18 of John chapter 4, as Jesus spoke with her, she became impressed by Him since He told her of the water of everlasting life which He supplies, and He knew her entire history of having had five husbands and then presently shacking-up with a man. Thus, we observe that Jesus is truly concerned about EVERY SOUL, for He did not shun the Samaritan woman even though the Jews generally despised Samaritans as a half-breed race.

Subsequently, we read in John 4:19-24, "The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

Oh, Jesus' words made quite a positive impression on that woman, for we read in John 4:25-30, "The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he. And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto him." Hence, the woman testified to others that

Jesus is indeed the Christ of God, the promised Messiah foretold of old. At that point, the events recorded in our sermon text took place.

So, let's look at verse 31, ----- (John 4:31)

The disciples had returned from the city with the food they went to purchase. The woman had left her waterpot and gone back into the city; *In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.*

Jesus is true man in addition to being true God. Consequently, Jesus needed bodily nourishment and rest like all other human beings. Accordingly, the disciples desired that the Lord Jesus would eat some food to strengthen Himself. The disciples knew Jesus as their Master, so they cared about Him.

Verses 32 & 33, ----- (John 4:32-33)

The disciples were focused on physical food for the body, but Jesus was not, *for he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?* Thus, the disciples did not understand what Jesus was talking about.

My friends, it's obvious from our text that Jesus had no physical food in hand, but He did *have meat to eat that* His disciples knew *not of*. Hence, it is NOT physical foods which matter most. It is NOT the meat which satisfies mere bodily needs that matters most. It is NOT the meat which satisfies physical hunger that matters most. It is NOT the meat which satisfies temporal desires that matters most.

Indeed, the meat that matters most is NOT mere physical food which only sustains and satisfies physical life, for much more important is spiritual life and everlasting life, because Holy Writ plainly states, "there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not. [And] the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Ecclesiastes 7:20;

Romans 6:23) We are ALL SINNERS in need of the Savior! So, I repeat, the meat that matters most is NOT mere physical food which only sustains and satisfies physical life.

-2-

As we continue to ponder our text to its conclusion, let us see – concerning the meat that matters most – what it is and why it matters most.

Verse 34, ----- (John 4:34)

Think about Jesus' words which indicate what satisfied Him the most, *for Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*

My friends, Jesus informed His disciples that His meat – His most satisfying food – was to do His heavenly Father's will and to finish His work. Thus, Jesus valued our spiritual and eternal needs much more than His own physical temporal needs. Jesus knew that He was sent by God the Father to earth for a purpose: to save sinners. Yes, it's as the apostle Paul declares in 1 Timothy 1:15, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

Jesus once confessed in John 12:46-50, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." Accordingly, Jesus came to speak the full truth of God's Word, for when tempted of the devil, Jesus said, as Matthew 4:4 reports, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word

that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

Furthermore, it was also God the Father’s will that His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, would keep the Law perfectly for all people and that He would pay for all the sins of all people. Jesus did just that, for Holy Writ relates, “when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (Galatians 4:4-5; John 3:16-18) Hence, Jesus’ love for you, me, and all other sinners is amazing! So, the meat that matters most is that which satisfies the troubled soul— the forgiveness of sins and salvation which Jesus Christ supplies by His work and Word.

Take it to heart that Jesus’ Word is the means by which the benefits of His atoning redemptive work are transmitted to individual sinners, for we read in Romans 1:16-17 followed by Romans 10:17 and John 3:36, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” Thus, the meat that matters most is the soul-food of Christ’s Word, His Gospel in particular, which is based upon His atoning redemptive work. Thanks and praise be to Jesus!

Verses 35-38, ----- (John 4:35-38)

Jesus’ meat to do the will of His heavenly Father and finish His work included the harvesting of souls for heaven, for Jesus said to His disciples: *Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.* Yes, Jesus’ disciples were to preach and to teach people that the promised Messiah and Savior had indeed come and fulfilled all righteousness, for Jesus Christ of Nazareth was then right there among them. John the Baptist and the prophets before him had prepared people for the coming of the Christ; but, Jesus’ disciples were subsequently to reap those souls for the kingdom of heaven.

Hence, the preaching and teaching of God’s Word – Law and Gospel – is vital since Christ’s Word is the only meat that satisfies souls which hunger and thirst after righteousness. Jesus Christ alone can supply sinners with the righteousness needed to enter heaven, as Romans 3:22-26 remarks, “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Oh, the meat that matters most is indeed that which satisfies the vital needs of our soul and body: the meat of Christ’s redemptive work and Christ’s Word which transmits His benefits – the forgiveness of sins and salvation – to us personally.

Verse 39, ----- (John 4:39)

Here we have a case in point regarding the effectiveness of the Gospel of Christ upon the souls of some Samaritans, for we are informed that *many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.* Indeed, the woman's witnessing for Jesus moved many in that city to believe on Him as the promised Messiah, the Christ who is the Savior of the world. Thus, in hearing the Gospel of Christ those people partook of the meat that matters most—the food for the soul by which the forgiveness of sins and salvation earned by Jesus is personally received.

Verse 40, ----- (John 4:40)

Some of the Samaritans went out to Jacob's well to see Jesus personally, and *when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.*

Those folks wanted to hear Jesus' Word from His own lips: they desired more food for the soul—they desired the meat that matters most. God grant that you and I desire the meat that matters most, that we truly value regularly feeding on Jesus' Word, "the holy scriptures, which are able to make [us] wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. [For] All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Timothy 3:15-17)

Verses 41 & 42, ----- (John 4:41-42)

Christ's Word has power! Christ's Word is real soul food! Christ's Word is the meat that matters most for us sinful human beings!, for we just read concerning the Samaritans: *many more believed because of his own word; And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*

It is wonderful that many more people came to faith as they heard God's Word from God's own lips in the Person of Jesus Christ who is indeed the Savior of the world. Yes, it's as 1 John 4:9-10 relates, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Those Words of God are meat which satisfies our souls because without Jesus Christ and His redemptive work we would all be lost and damned.

Let us never forget what the Lord Jesus Christ in our sermon text has taught us concerning the meat that matters most. Let us daily and sincerely repent of our sins. And, let us cling to Christ Jesus in heart-deep faith as our personal Savior and Lord, for Holy Writ clearly states, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Mark 16:16; Ephesians 2:8-9) All thanks and praise be to the Lord for giving us the meat that matters most. Amen.

m.e.l.