

Spiritual Contagion Pt. 3

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, June 14, 2020

Thank you for joining us today. Whether you are here IN-PERSON or watching via the LIVESTREAM, you are most welcome! Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take some notes (John 4). We have much to cover in a relatively short amount of time, as I present the final installment of our three-part series.

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 1

FYI – Last week we addressed three principles to OVERCOME the sinful influences of this world and culture...

1) We Must Recognize the REALITY of Our Sinful Nature

KEY 1 – There will always be a part of us that DESIRES that which is sinful and contrary to God (cf. Gal. 5:17).

KEY 2 – There will always be a part of us that desires to FOLLOW the ways of this world and WICKED culture...

Jeremiah 17:9 (NIV)

9 The heart is deceitful above all things
and beyond cure.
Who can understand it?

Proverbs 4:23

23 Above all else, guard your heart,
for everything you do flows from it.

2) We Must Take MASTERY Over Our Sinful Inclinations

Galatians 5:16–17, 25 (Emphasis Mine)

16 So I say, **walk by the Spirit**, and you will **not** gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. . . . 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

KEY – We must SUBMIT to God and RELY upon His transforming power in order to resist spiritual waywardness.

3) We Must PRACTICE God-Ordained Spiritual Disciples

Philippians 4:4–8 (Emphasis Mine)

4 **Rejoice** in the Lord always. I will say it again: **Rejoice!** 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by **prayer** and petition, with **thanksgiving**, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—**think about such things**.

KEY – These are practical DISCIPLINES that we can employ to OVERCOME the wicked influences of this world.

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 2

FYI – Thus said, this morning I do NOT want to talk about resisting/overcoming the (-) influences of our world and surrounding culture. Feel free to listen to PAST messages (i.e., FB Page and the Website) to go deeper on these topics.

KEY – I want to talk about HOW we can WORK to (+) INFLUENCE this world CHANGE the culture around us.

I believe that God has called us to operate as CHANGE AGENTS and to advance His kingdom and ways...

Matthew 5:13–16 (Emphasis Mine)

13 “You are the **salt** of the earth [i.e., a “PRESERVING” agent that hinders spiritual decay and moral rot]. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

14 “You are the **light** of the world [i.e., that which EXPOSES and DISPELS darkness]. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

SO...

Q. HOW can the Church work to change this world and impact the culture around it?

Q. WHAT can the Church of Jesus Christ do to fulfill its mandate to shape this world?

KEY 1 – These are great Q’s that the Church of Christ must A in SO desperate an hour as this...

KEY 2 – IF we are going to A such Q’s—we should perhaps BEGIN with a more fundamental Q...

Q. How did CHRIST impact the world and influence the culture around Him? EXAMPLE to follow?

FYI – This morning I would like to spend a bit of time ANALYZING the majority of John 4. LET’S DELVE IN...

TO THE WORD

FYI – We are going to READ the text in its entirety and THEN we will step back to offer overarching principles...

John 4:1–42

1 Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John—
2 although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. 3 So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

4 Now he had to go through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” 8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

9 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).

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."

11 "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? 12 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?"

13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

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."

16 He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

17 "I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. 18 The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

19 "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. 20 Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

21 "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

25 The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

26 Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

27 Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

28 Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 29 "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" 30 They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

31 Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something." 32 But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." 33 Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?"

34 “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. 35 Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. 36 Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. 37 Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. 38 I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.”

39 Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. 41 And because of his words many more became believers.

42 They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”

TRANSITIONS

NOTE – This portion of Scripture presents us with an ARRAY of responses to our overarching Q, “HOW did Christ CHANGE the world around Him and INFLUENCE the culture thereof?” Let’s take some time to explore KEY ASPECTS to the world-shaping ministry of Christ...

THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST

1) Jesus Was Willing to Transcend Social Custom and Taboo (GENERAL)

i.e., Jesus was willing to connect with and engage the people of SAMARIA.

John 4:1–5a (Emphasis Mine)

1 Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John— 2 although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. 3 So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

4 Now he had to go through **Samaria**. 5 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar . . .

QUOTE – Jews avoided Samaria and the Samaritan people because there was a long-standing, deep-seated hatred between these people groups. The Samaritans were scorned by the Jews because of their ancestry. The Samaritans were a mixed race, part Jew and part Gentile, that grew out of the Assyrian Captivity of the ten northern tribes in 727 B.C. Rejected by the Jews because they could not prove their genealogy, the Samaritans established their own temple and religious services on Mt. Gerizim (v. the Temple in Jerusalem). This only fanned the fires of prejudice. So intense was their dislike of the Samaritans, the Pharisees prayed that NO Samaritan would be raised in the resurrection!

KEY – Though Christ strategically focused upon the Jews (cf. Mt. 15:24), He DID minister to OUTSIDE cultures!

2) Jesus Was Willing to Transcend Social Custom and Taboo (SPECIFIC)

FYI – It was against every taboo of His era for a Jewish rabbi to minister to a SAMARITAN and SINFUL WOMAN!

John 4:7–9 (Emphasis Mine)

7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” 8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

9 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).

CLEARLY...

3) Jesus Was Willing to Place Value Upon the Outcast, the Unlovable and the Unlovely

NOTE – Read through the Gospels and you will see accounts that MIRROR what we see in John 4—accounts of Christ’s ministry to the broken, the lowly, the unwanted, the rejected and beyond. He was willing to love the leper (Luke 5:12–16); the possessed (Mark 5:1–20); the poor and the pitiable (Mark 10:46–52); the vile (Luke 7:36–50; Luke 19:1–10) and beyond!

KEY – We must RECOGNIZE His love and ever seek to COMPREHEND it (i.e., intellectually and experientially)...

Ephesians 3:17b–19

17 . . . I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

4) Jesus Was Willing to Make Himself Accessible to People and Was Present Among Them

NOTE 1 – Take note WHERE Christ placed Himself in this account (i.e., where He met this woman)!

John 4:6a

6 Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well.

NOTE 2 – As we will note in the moments ahead, Jesus was tired and weary from His travels. He COULD have picked a shady spot far off from the populace that He might rest, etc. But He put Himself in a place where—if He was going to meet anyone—it would be at the PUBLIC well!

KEY – Jesus was NOT the kind of person to hide from/make Himself inaccessible to! He was very present...

5) Jesus Was Willing to Seize “God-Moments” and Divinely-Inspired “Open Doors”

NOTE – We all know that this story ends with the transformation of an entire village—but let us not forget it all began with a SIMPLE conversation at a well! Jesus was willing to go through the open doors of casual conversation and experienced tremendous result.

Q. Who would have guessed that lives would be changed with a simple, “Can I have some water?”

6) Jesus Was Willing to Minister to People Despite His Personal Needs

NOTE – Notice the **CONDITION** of Christ before the events of John 4 transpire. Consider the following...

John 4:4–8 (Emphasis Mine)

4 Now he had to go through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, **tired** as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. 7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a **drink?**” 8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy **food**.)

KEY 1 – We can read that Jesus was **CLEARLY** tired, thirsty and hungry. If **ANYONE** deserved a time-out it was Jesus. Yet notice that Jesus was willing to put His own needs **ASIDE**, engaging in conversation, connecting with this woman over deeply spiritual matters, reaching an entire town, etc.

KEY 2 – Jesus regularly **PERSEVERED** through His personal needs and fatigue for the sake of others...

Matthew 14:13–14

13 When Jesus heard what had happened [i.e., killing of John the Baptist], he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place [i.e., to mourn for His relative and to receive a much-needed rest]. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. 14 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. →**FEEDING** of the 5K!

7) Jesus Was Willing to Be Vulnerable and Share of Himself

NOTE 1 – It may seem small, but Jesus asked this woman for a drink. He was willing to admit He had a need. In the ministry of Christ, we **NEVER** see Him wearing any kind of mask (i.e., masking His humanity). He was **VULNERABLE** and allowed people to see Him tired, weary, hungry, and even in anguish (cf. Gethsemane).

KEY – The world has **NEVER** known a more authentic person or leader!

NOTE 2 – It may also seem small, but Jesus was willing to **REVEAL** His nature to this woman (i.e., secret)...

John 4:25–26

25 The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” 26 Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”

8) Jesus Was Willing to Listen Attentively (i.e., Jesus took this woman and her Q’s seriously)

KEY – Jesus could have dominated this conversation, barely allowing her to speak. But look at how much of this conversation is comprised of **HER** words, her thoughts, her concerns, her Q’s, etc.—and Jesus **LISTENED** to them all and engaged her point by point! He was the embodiment of the following...

James 1:19b

Everyone should be quick to listen, [and] slow to speak . . .

1 Peter 3:15b

15 . . . Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

9) Jesus Was Willing to Touch Upon Deeply Felt Spiritual Needs

John 4:7–15

7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” 8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

9 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).

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.”

11 “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? 12 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?”

13 Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

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.”

NOTE – Jesus was willing to help this woman CONSIDER a need beyond physical water: i.e., spiritual/eternal life!

10) Jesus Was Willing to Communicate to People in Ways they Could Understand

ILL – As my friend (Joe Shea) states, “A firetruck that only lifts its ladder to the fourth floor is NO help to someone on the sixth.” i.e., Those who seek to impact people must be willing to meet people where they are—and Jesus always was!

KEY – Jesus continually explained deep spiritual principles/truths in ways that people could understand. i.e., His teaching was full of the IMAGERY of seeds, vines, fish, nets, wheat, tares, rocks, weeds, sheep, shepherds, etc., because these were images that the people could understand! He never talked over their head or “down to them”—and that’s why He is known as the Greatest Teacher!

QUOTE – “If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough” (Albert Einstein).

11) Jesus Was Willing to Love People Enough to Expose Sin and Tell People the Truth

John 4:15–19

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.” 16 He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.” 17 “I have no husband,” she replied.

Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. 18 The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.” 19 “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet.

KEY – And I love that this woman did NOT resent Jesus for telling the truth—but was moved by it...

John 4:28–29 (Emphasis Mine)

28 Then, leaving her water jar [with Jesus], the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 29 “Come, see a man who **told me everything I ever did**. Could this be the Messiah?”

12) Jesus Was Willing to Be Led of the Spirit and Remained Attuned to His Voice

Q. How did Jesus know/perceive that this woman was sinful—i.e., in so specific a way?

A. Jesus lived His life in SUBMISSION to the Father and trusted in His spiritual GUIDANCE...

13) Jesus Recognized that Community Influence Begins w/ Influencing the Individual/ONE

NOTE – I love how this story ends...

John 4:39a

39 Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him . . .

KEY – But we CANNOT divorce this end-result from its impetus—i.e., Jesus impact upon the ONE!

John 4:39–42

39 Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. 41 And because of his words many more became believers.

42 They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”

KEY – Jesus took the time to impact her. Like a stone cast in a pond, there was a tremendous ripple effect. But if you remove the stone the corresponding ripple effect is gone. Great things—world changing shifts--often take place with a singular event/moment. This is what we are living through now (e.g., George Floyd)!

14) Jesus Was Willing to Set an Example for His Disciples and Made this a Teaching Moment

NOTE – I love that Jesus took these events to INSTRUCT His inner core of followers...

John 4:27 [Latter Point of the Conversation w/ Sinful Woman]

27 Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

28 Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 29 “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” 30 They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

31 Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.” 32 But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.” 33 Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?”

34 “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. 35 Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. 36 Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. 37 Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. 38 I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.”

NOTE – Jesus knew that it was not enough for Him to minister in this fashion. His followers would need to mimic His example and carry on His legacy if they were going to change the world—and they did! Study the Book of Acts and the writings of this core group of followers and you will see that their ministry mirrored His—and they shaped their world and the culture around them continually!

Q. But will we?

APPLICATIONS PT. 1

A great many in the Church TALK about changing the world and seeing the culture changed...

Q. But are we willing to follow the example set forth by Jesus Christ—our Lord/Savior?

Q. Are we willing to do what it takes to change the world/impact community as He did?

Q1. Are we willing to transcend social custom and taboo (general sense)?

-Jesus was willing to travel to and through Samaria. What is our Samaria?

Q2. Are we willing to transcend social custom and taboo (specific sense)?

-Jesus was willing to minister to a sinful Samaritan woman. Cont. corollary?

Q3. Are we willing to value the outcast, the unlovable and the unlovely?

-Jesus was willing to love such individuals. Who are the scorned in our day?

Q4. Are we willing to make ourselves accessible to people? Be present among them?

-Jesus was willing to go to where they were (e.g., well)? Where can we meet them/connect?

Q5. Are we willing to seize “God-moments” and divinely-inspired “open doors”?

-Jesus had the wherewithal to maximize this casual connection. Is this how we live?

Q6. Are we willing to push past our personal needs for the sake of ministering to others?

-Jesus practiced compassion despite being weary, thirsty, etc. Can we not push past like Him?

Q7. Are we willing to practice vulnerability, authenticity, and reveal our hearts to those in need?

-Jesus wore no mask and unveiled His heart. Are we known for genuine authenticity and revelation?

Q8. Are we willing to listen to people attentively and give ear to their concerns, Q’s and perspective(s)?

-Jesus did not seek to dominate the dialogue (steer it)! To what degree are we willing to listen/engage?

Q9. Are we willing to touch upon people’s deeply felt personal and spiritual needs?

-Jesus helped this woman recognize a need for life eternal. To what degree are we willing to identify/expose?

Q10. Are we willing to communicate Christian precepts in ways that people can understand?

-Jesus spoke the “language” of the people (meeting them where they were). How effective are you?

Q11. Are we willing to love people enough to expose sin and tell people the truth?

-Jesus called men and women to repentance. To what degree does our preaching rest on that foundation?

Q12. Are we willing to be led of the Spirit and remain attuned to His voice?

-Jesus lived yielded to that instruction and revelation of the HS. Is this how we live?

Q13. Are we willing to change this world one person/conversation at a time?

-Jesus changed this village by engaging one woman. Who are you willing to engage?

Q14. Are we willing to show forth an example of effective evangelism and personal witness?

-Jesus cultivated disciples and prepared them for ministry? Who—precisely—are you raising up?

KEY – I am convinced that if we—individually/collectively—practice these precepts we CAN impact this world!

CONCLUSION

KEY – Thank you for taking the time to join us today. Should those of you who have joined us online wish to give, please do so through the giving portal of our church WEBSITE (www.NewLifeBarre.org). For those who are present, you may place your donation in the OFFERING BOXES in this Sanctuary.

Numbers 6:24–26

24 The Lord bless you
and keep you;

25 the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;

26 the Lord turn his face toward you
and give you peace.