

A Lesson of Evangelism

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Date: 22 February 2015

[0 : 00] Unrelated, but a question. How many of you listen to Christian music, some of the songs that we sing on Spotify or Pandora?! Any of you do that? Okay. The reason I bring that up is because I do that sometimes, but, you know, there's something about Spotify and Pandora that kind of lets me down a little bit.

Here's what it is. Your singing is more precious than that. Do you know why?

Because I know you. And because you are part of me. And your singing is an amplified worship.

There's nothing wrong with good Christian music. I want you to understand that. But it's better when we're together. And I want to thank you for that. Now, I have a job.

And you have a job. Do you know what I'm referring to? My responsibility is to preach the word faithfully with the enabling of the Spirit of God.

[1 : 19] To make the Scriptures clear. And your job is to pray me through. Do you understand that?

And your job is to plead with the Holy Ghost that he would allow the truth of the word of God to make a difference in who you are.

So let's pray. And then you pray and I'll preach. Father God, this morning we are so very thankful for the clear instruction of Scriptures regarding the way in which we are to take up your word not viewing it as a mere intellectual exercise but recognizing that you intend for us to also rely upon your Spirit to open up the Scriptures that we might behold wondrous truths out of thy law.

And so this morning we ask that you would touch our hearts and our ears with a readiness to hear. that by your Spirit we would lay aside some of the issues that we have allowed to cloud our affection for the Lord of glory.

And that we would desire above all things to see Jesus clearly lifted up. That we might grow in our affection for him. That we might grow in our confidence in him.

[3 : 02] That we might grow in our longing for the day that we will see Christ face to face and be transformed by that. And so our study in the word this morning is in some senses a mere whetting of the appetite.

A taste before Thanksgiving dinner of that which we will enjoy in heaven. And Lord unless your Spirit helps me and helps your people that won't take place.

And so we don't mind asking. In Jesus name. Amen. Turn in your Bibles to John chapter 4 and as we step into our study in the book of John again I remind you that the truth of the matter is the fourth gospel is radically different from the other three.

The other three are called synoptics in that they're very similar in the material that they cover. John is different in that John relies on a very very limited set of stories from the life of Christ.

Very limited. In fact one scholar has marked the fact that there are only eight different incidents that are really brought forward in the sense that the other gospels present all these different details.

[4 : 30] John admits right up front that he was very selective only chose a few and he explains his purpose in John chapter 20-31.

We know as a general rule when an author writes a book they give you some kind of insight of why they're doing it generally in an introduction. Isn't that right? And John saves it for the last.

He tells us these things are written that you might believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and have everlasting life. And so as we work our way we're dealing with one of those small little pictures of the Lord Jesus and it is profoundly significant to us.

I remember reading that the book of John is one that is edifying for the believer and it is evangelistic. You can't help but read through the book of John and come to grips with the reality of his affection for lost mankind.

It's right there all over the place. And it's hard also to read through John and not come to grips with some of the underlying questions that we should always be asking ourselves namely who is Jesus?

[5 : 43] I remember several weeks ago talking with individuals about the issue of salvation and what the characteristics of that are and I said why don't you read through the book of John and ask yourself two questions.

Here are the two questions. Who is Jesus and what does he mean to me? Who is Jesus and what does he mean to me? And as we take up this passage this morning I trust that one of the things that happens is that those of you who are here that know Christ would end up having that kind of yes that's my Savior.

Do you follow that kind of enthusiasm? That your heart would be thankful that you know him and that you would be lifted up to say man I can't wait to see him.

And those of you who are here today that do not know Christ and I have to believe that in a crowd this size there are some of you sitting here some of you may be under the impression that just because you grew up and you went to Sunday school or you were in Awana that you may be saved and I got to tell you that ain't the truth necessarily.

Please make a note and send me an email on the ain't part and give you concern but here's the fact. Not everyone that said to me Lord, Lord or went to a Baptist church is saved.

[7 : 00] Salvation is the work of the Spirit of God that convicts us of the misery of our sin and draws us to realize that apart from the Lord Jesus Christ we have no hope and salvation brings us to cry out and say God I'm a sinner and I stand justly condemned and I need you to forgive me and to save me and when we come to grips with our brokenness and he saves us we're not the same going forward.

Well anyway let's get started in the book chapter 4. You look there in verse 1 it says now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John although Jesus himself did not baptize but only his disciples he left Judea and departed again for Galilee.

As you pick up the passage this morning you recognize that at the outset here is Jesus in an environment in which there is some conflict and as a result of that he decides that he's going to leave where he is in Jerusalem and he's going to take a northward journey.

It's a journey that could take between three and four days. Now John and Jesus had both really come to the attention of the Pharisees who were these religious leaders and they were very concerned because both John and Jesus were kind of turning over the apple cart of what was good Jewish religious behavior and John was calling people to repent and to baptize and by the way that baptism was a baptism that was indicating man I realize there's a mess in my life and I need to do something about it and here comes along Jesus and he's preaching a message of repentance and to good Jewish religious leaders who had put together a program for self-improvement and getting to heaven by doing all the right kind of things it was a little off-putting and so they were becoming more and more critical of Jesus and John and so here is Jesus knowing the tension was growing he decides he is going to leave the environment of Jerusalem and he's going to move north back to Galilee now he didn't leave because he wanted to avoid pressure he left because he recognized that the timing wasn't right

I want you to realize later when the timing was right and Jesus earlier at one point says it's not my time but eventually when it was his time he marched back to Jerusalem and willingly became the sacrifice for sin and so in the time from when he stepped into the public view and three years later when he was crucified in that time one of the things that Jesus did was make the message to the nation of Israel undeniably clear he preached he sent his twelve he sent his seventy and over and over again his announcement was hey listen you need to come to faith in the Messiah that's me and you find here that the time wasn't right and so what we note is as it says he had to pass through Samaria verse four now one of the questions that you should learn to ask yourself and I trust by the way here stop just for a second

[10:33] I hope that every one of you who know Christ here this morning have a regular pattern of reading the scriptures on your own everybody smiles and says I do I do you follow me let me say it again slowly I trust that every one of you who know Christ have a regular pattern of reading the scriptures on your own and I'm giving you little hints of how you can get more out of it everybody understands that right so one of the things that will help you get more out of it is asking obvious questions like why is that there what's that all about and so here is this little verse verse 4 it says and he had to pass through Samaria and so you say why why do you have to pass through Samaria the Greek verb that is used here really communicates the idea of necessity not an imperative or a command but just something that was needed it was unavoidable determined either by law or custom or circumstance let me give you an illustration the other day other evening

I had to buy gas now it was not by law I mean hey the state of Ohio doesn't mind if I pull over to the side of the road and my car dies because I haven't given it adequate fuel but I had intentions of going places and as a result of that I kind of looked at the gauge how many of you have those little lights that tell you you are at the point where in my case I have two more gallons and I've got that kind of parsed out in my mind I can drive about 45 miles and then I'm calling my wife and saying honey you know why did you not put gas in the car well okay so I had to and Jesus had to so the question is why did Jesus have to go through Samaria Jesus did not have to go through Samaria because it was the only way to go sometimes for all practical purposes there is only one path that you can take to go to a particular place and if you're going there you do it this way that wasn't the case the truth of the matter is is that many

Jews would sometimes because of their attitude towards the Samaritans and the attitude of the Samaritans towards the Jews they would actually walk for an extra day to avoid going through Samaria because the Samaritans were these nasty low life non-Jew attitude towards them and so they would avoid they take an extra day of his journey but on the other hand there were a lot of Jews who would travel through Samaria and when it says that Jesus had to go through Samaria it's giving us a little clue that we need to think about Jesus wasn't running away from the Pharisees and so had to take the quickest route to get out of town and by the way you do know that Paul in one case he had to be let down in a basket to get out of a city because it was either that or martyrdom and so it was a necessity in this case he had to do with something else now if you were to read various commentaries on the passage you would find that that some would argue that this necessity was determined by the need of the

Samaritan woman and I think that's fair in a broad sense and I'm going to help you think that through as you recognize the character and nature of Jesus you come to grips with the fact that his heart and his affection were for lost mankind and so when we think about him having to go through Samaria it wasn't because the Samaritans were the worst sinners around and so they were the ones who needed him most it wasn't like spiritual triage and if anybody really needs help it's the Samaritans on the other hand we recognize and I think it is fair to say that when it says that he had to go through Samaria it is reflective on the underlying mission that Christ had in the hearts of people and their salvation and if you were to look at some of the passages where you pick up on the heart of Christ you will see that connection now when Jesus went through

Samaria it was because of his mission to save sinners that was the thing that drove him and when you hear me say that well he traveled through Samaria for the sake of sinners a practical question that you would ask yourself is okay well where does that show up in the Bible isn't that a standard question that you have when pastor says something the question you have is yeah show me I want you to have that I want you to always have that so let's look at a couple different passages and they are some that probably should be underlined in your Bible those are the go-to passages kind of remind you these are important turn back in your Bible if you will just for a moment to Luke chapter 19 verse 10 Luke chapter 19 verse 10 this is the story of Zacchaeus and by the way here is Jesus showing mercy to someone that none of us probably in our natural inclination would ever give any attention to hated despised

[16 : 02] Zacchaeus and yet Jesus willingly stepped into this man's life and brought salvation to him and he explains it this way why would you do that Jesus for the son of man came to seek and to save the lost for the son of man came to save those who are lost that was his purpose why did he come he came to seek out to find those who are struggling and broken by their sin and desperately need to be saved that's why he came in John chapter one as we look back into the book of John itself you'll remember that here's what it says about Jesus in John chapter one verse 29 it says behold the lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world why did Jesus come he came to be the satisfaction for our debt here's the reality sin creates a debt and a judgment upon all sinners and only Jesus chapter 10 verse 10 there's another passage in where it says this he came to give us abundant life stop just for a moment and think with me here everybody think do you know what abundant life looks like it is not necessarily that you're at the top of the financial food chain and anybody who promises you that is in sharp contradiction to the scripture and the record the 21 men who were martyred in

Libya I guarantee you did not go hog wild for the prosperity gospel they having faith in Jesus Christ died and their families did you read the remainder of the bulletin their families are saying we're thankful that they were chosen and they were given the privilege of being martyrs and by the way we are reminded to pray for our enemies and so I want you to think just for a moment today because I recognize that it's fairly easy for us to get kind of caught up in the difficulties of life and forget the fact that Jesus came to save us from the misery of sin and to make us happy people in Christ abundant living is not being a sourpuss at home and all God's people said that was the most enthusiastic statement I've heard in the last seven years well let's try it again right abundant living is not being a sourpuss at home everybody said amen okay

I can see you're persuaded well here we are Jesus went through Samaria because his mission was to save sinners and as you stop and think about it when we think about Jesus coming to save sinners do you realize that everyone is included in this picture I mean it's not just the Samaritan woman and by the way she was a trophy case of the kind of people that need to be saved and sometimes we kind of think to ourselves that well we're pretty good I want to remind you of what it says over in Romans chapter 3 verse 23 it says can help me with this passage all have sinned and come short of the glory of God we're all equally judged and condemned before a holy God and he came with me in mind now let me tell you something we do no favors to sinners by not gently helping them understand what is right and what is wrong ultimately sin is not a culturally determined set of behaviors that change over time sin is a violation of

God's holy law and for example I've been troubled by the movie Fifty Shades of Grey that I have not gone and seen I have not read any of the books I have just picked up on some of the blog statements that have been made on Gospel Coalition in fact I would suggest that you go to Gospel Coalition as a periodic and a regular attention to something that would be healthy for your spiritual development but here's what troubles me the most it troubles me that 100 million copies of this book have sold around the world 100 million and it's because I'm going to tell you something the next thing that you who are younger are going to live to see take place is children being treated as adults are being treated today I've tried to say that with a certain amount of discretion and propriety but make no mistake we are headed towards where

Rome and Greece were in sexual deviancy and don't think that it's not a problem in fact you know what I would suggest you do give your phones to one another and check to see what the history is on where you've been with your data plan let me come back to the subject and recognize that when Jesus came to the well he was coming because people need Christ and so let me ask you this question as you think about the subject where have you gone and what are you doing that others might know Jesus is that a fair question where have you been what are you doing that people might come to grips with the need of their heart one of the things that marks those who follow Christ closely is that their interest honestly is in those who need

[22 : 23] Christ and they go out of their way to do it does it take extra time yes it does but at the end of the day that's why Jesus had to go through Samaria is because there were sinners there and he was the same mission as Christ has well John chapter 4 we see first of all the divine necessity that Christ had of reaching out to those who are lost but let's look at something else and learn a gospel method we've already seen that Christ's love for the lost brought him to Samaria but let's go a little deeper in the text you read there in verse 7 it says a woman now we do know that his disciples we know this from verse 27 had gone on into town to buy sandwiches you know whatever pita bread something stuffed in between hummus or whatever else

I don't know what the menu was for that day at the little stores that sold whatever but Jesus sat down tired and a woman approaches the well at noon noon and she comes to draw water and Jesus engages her in a conversation and asks for a drink now there's a great deal we can glean from this text for one this text confirms the complete humanity of Christ the idea that that God the son did not have physical needs did not get tired did not get thirsty did not get hungry those are not true he did he suffered from the normal afflictions that we really learn is that in his heart for lost mankind Jesus went to where the need was can I tell you something I remember hearing Alistair Begg comment on the fact that living where he did in Solon and the church is right next to a wonderful golf course he said where

I minister most everybody is completely persuaded that they have everything they could possibly think of and if they have something else that they discover that they're interested in all it takes is a little bit of money to buy it and for where I minister it's very hard to have people come to grips with the fact that their soul is in desperate condition and they can't buy their way into spiritual well-being Jesus went to where there was a mess and I want you to recognize that he overstepped societal bounds to minister to someone who was in desperate straits now think about this with me just for a moment you find there in verse seven woman comes and Jesus says give me a drink now look at verse nine the woman said to him how is it that you a Jew ask for a drink from me a woman of Samaria couple things that you can discern from the text is that for one

Jewish men as a general rule did not talk with women didn't talk with women and the fact that he was talking to the women actually was shocking to his disciples turn over to verse 27 it says just then his disciples came back they marveled whoa what is our good rabbi doing well verse 27 he was talking with a woman it wasn't done it was something that was off page furthermore and this is something that I want you to get your hands around a good Jew would never be caught sharing the drinking vessel of a Gentile and worse than that sharing the cup with a woman of Samaria how many of you have ever been somewhere where someone offered you a drink and you know there was only one like there was only one cup and so what they did was they turned it around and gave you the clean side okay

I will drink from the cup that my wife has used all the way around the rim I love you but I would be hard pressed to drink from any side of the cup that the rest of you have used how many of you are there with me it's alright I'll go thirsty but I'm not doing that here's Jesus and you know it's not like they all had little Dixie cups on the side of their hip here as they pull out an extra cup it was like hey I have my jug and when I lower it down 75 feet down there to where the water is and I pull it up you can have a drink so in contemporary terms what this woman is actually saying you look at the passage she says what are you doing asking me a Samaritan woman for a drink and when it says there that

[27 : 46] Jews don't do that okay you recognize that there it says for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritan it's not saying that they have no social contact how do we know that where were the disciples by the way where were they come help me they had gone into town to buy sandwiches they were having dealings what this is referring to is drinking from the cup and this woman says whoa you're asking me to have a drink from my cup I'm a little ashamed when I stop and think about it that part of American history is marked by the fact that we fought a civil war and hundreds of thousands of men died so that black brothers and sisters could be franchised but then we turned around and allowed unequal treatment at drinking fountains and restaurants and actually in reality and social justice so

I want you to think this morning of Jesus reaching out to where the real need was reaching beyond this woman's baggage how do we know the baggage was there we'll find out later in more detail but the woman's journey to the well at noon was unusual now we think water is something that really just comes out of spigots isn't that true I mean truthful matter is that water comes out of spigots I remember when I finally was able to talk Judith into going camping and for me growing up in India camping was you had to walk a certain distance and you had to carry everything that you enjoyed with you and when we went down to Hocking Hills she found out that there was running water hot showers and electricity and she says I can do that in the good old days if you had water it's because you hiked to the well and then you carried it and you can imagine at home when mom was you know taking care of life and she saw one of the kids throwing water on the other kid she said hey don't waste it

I had to carry it here's the woman at lunch noontime and she is at the well and we need to understand that the reason she was at the well at noontime is that's when the crowd was not there she came to the well because it was the only time she could go without receiving some of the pressure the social pressure because she was not a respected and appreciated woman you may be sure of this that the rest of the town knew all about this woman and didn't like her here's a woman who had been married five times and she was living in immorality with another in all practical purposes you can imagine that the rest of the women thought that this person the rest of the women thought that this woman let's try the single and plural there we understand that the rest of them hated her because she was she was a troll and she was relying on her sexuality as a means of livelihood and here is

Jesus our savior who reached out in tenderness to offer to this woman salvation and so practical question is so where are you in your life as a believer in reaching out to people that have real needs for Christ and do you know that they're working with you they're at work where you are there are people whose lives are broken and messed up by sin and you don't have to go very far to see it well let's mark the gospel blessing as we close you recognize here as Jesus kind of runs through the remainder of the passage that he is talking about something different than just a drink of water verse 10 Jesus answered her if you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you give me a drink you would have asked him and he would have given you living water you know we really don't think very much about water today do we honestly

I talked about the fact that you know it's part of our life but in the ancient world water was something that was absolutely essential and you really never would find much in the way of life apart from where there was a proximity to water and so when Jesus used this imagery of water he was relying upon something that was well understood both in the Old Testament and in the ancient world to represent that which was incredible blessing and when he spoke about living water he was really talking about salvation and also the gift of the Holy Spirit that indwells the believer at salvation turn in your Bible over to John chapter 7 verse 37 through 39 John 7 37 through 39 on the last day of the feast the great day

[33 : 21] Jesus stood up and cried out I mean this was a public announcement he cries out if anyone thirsts let him come to me and drink whoever believes in me as the scripture has said out of his heart will flow rivers of living water now this he said about the spirit whom those who believed in him were to receive for as yet the spirit had not been given because Jesus was not yet glorified so going back to John I want you to understand that when Jesus said to this woman if you knew who you were talking to you would ask for living water because I'm the one who can give it do you understand what he offered salvation to those who would believe in him he offers salvation to all that call in his name and so let me encourage you if you're sitting here this morning and the truth of the matter is that this morning you sense a dryness and an emptiness you sense the burden of your sin it is not merely because of the word of a human being that that sense is going on in your life that is the convicting power of the

Holy Spirit who is with his winsome heart drawing you to realize that apart from Christ you are not only morally bankrupt but you're empty and you're on your way to hell and Jesus came why to bring salvation to those who are broken and ruined!

Jesus do you understand that? that's my Jesus he's the only one who can satisfy the emptiness and the void in a person's life and he's the only one who can take away all the guilt and shame and give to the person who is broken and contrite complete forgiveness and why stop and think about that I don't have any hesitation in saying you need to know Christ I have had back surgery about 15 20 years ago and I would in a heartbeat tell you to get a hold of Janet Bay if you're having back trouble she can cure you I think but Janet's getting old and Jesus isn't do you understand that and even with back surgeries one of these days I'm going to be room temperature but when that happens you know where

I'm going to be I'm going to be in heaven absent in the body present with the Lord and I have no hesitation to say to you who sit here this morning if you are the children of God your heart ought to be lifted up to say come to Jesus because he is the one who can give you abundant!

and I know about it and if you are sitting here with the burden of your sin let me help you know that there is no deliverance apart from Christ let's close in prayer Father God we depend upon your spirit to work to make believers happy in Christ joyful and abundant in their living and we rely upon the spirit to draw those who are here today that need Christ to the cross that you might be glorified and we ask this in Jesus name amen let's stand as John leads us in our closing song