

The Savior of Samaritans

(John 4:27-42)

(preached 8/5/18; Pine Grove BC Sun AM)

Introduction

Abraham Lincoln is one of the most well-known US presidents...

Regardless of how you view his politics, most admire Lincoln due to his rags to riches story..

You see, Lincoln was born and raised on the American frontier in the early 1800s..

Not only did his family have very little, Lincoln even had very little even after his marriage to Mary Todd.

In fact, it was his poverty that made him pursue a career in law and eventually led him to the White House.

And it is this underdog story that really leads people to appreciate Lincoln's story..

In general, people pull for the underdog..

They like to see the the poor make it big...

They like to see the weak defeat the strong..

It is one of things in life where what we don't expect to happen actually happens..

The Bible even speaks of what can be called these paradoxes of life..

1 Corinthians 1:26-28

26 For [r]consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to [s]the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are,...

Often in life, God uses the underdog to shame the favorite...

God often uses the weak to shame the strong..

The foolish to shame the wise..

And the point is not that God loves the weak more than the strong..

The point is that when the weak is elevated, everyone says that only God could do that..

Now in terms of the world in 30 AD, there were no more elevated people in Jewish life than the Pharisees and Saducees...

They were the strong.

They were the wise..

They were the admired.

They were the honored..

And in terms of the elite of Jewish life, they were the elite.

They knew the Scriptures.

They were the representatives of God on the earth..

And all of those factors would lead nearly everyone to believe that if the Jewish Messiah were coming, his first stop would be in Jerusalem to announce his presence to them..

In other words, the expectation of the Jewish world would be for Messiah to come and head straight for Jerusalem so that he could hang out with the best of Jewish society..

Yet, strangely enough, that is the exact opposite of what happened...

Jesus did come as Messiah...

Jesus did go to Jerusalem..

But it wasn't to bless the temple and the leadership there..

It was to clean out the temple and confront the leadership there..

And furthermore, the first person that he declares his identity to is a very sinful woman in the region of Samaria...

This would be like President Trump announcing his victory in the past election at the community center in Fairview...

In other words, this is the last place on earth that any Jew would expect their Messiah to identify himself to the world..

Yet, that is exactly how God works at times..

That is exactly what 1 Corinthians talks about...

This is the Jewish Messiah choosing the foolish things of the world to shame the wise..

And that is exactly what we are continuing to look at in John 4...

For two weeks now, we have been with Jesus at a well in Samaria...

Samaria was the slum region of Israel...

Though it was in the middle of the nation, it was the last place a Jew wanted to go..

Samaria was home to what the Jews in southern Israel considered a mixed breed people..

Samaritans were the descendants of Jews that had intermarried with unbelievers in the 600-700 BC..

As a result, they were disrespected by all other Jews..

They were forced to build their own temple...

They had their own brand of the Jewish religion..

And their region of Israel was treated like the plague by other Jews..

In spite of that, Jesus had no problem traveling through Samaria..

He was no racist.

He wasn't going to avoid people because of their background.

Jesus was on a mission to seek and save the lost, and when Jesus had to travel north from Judea to Galilee, he went right through Samaria..

And we have gone with Jesus, but for the past 2 weeks, we have been at a well in Samaria where Jesus stopped to talk to a Samaritan woman..

Now that is unusual in a couple of ways..

First of all, not only is Jesus a man, and men didn't normally speak to women..

But also, Jesus is a Jew and she is a Samaritan woman and Jews never even travelled through Samaria much less stopped and spoke to anyone who lived there..

But Jesus engaged her in conversation in order to expose her sin and push her to faith in Him..

And last week when we left off, we got to the climax of the scene where Jesus declared himself to be the Messiah...

Verse 25...

25 The woman *said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us." 26 Jesus *said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

This is not only the point of the conversation, this is the point of John the apostle including it in his gospel..

Not only did this Samaritan woman need to know the identity of Jesus, all of John's readers needed to hear Jesus declare who He was as well..

And it is simply the plan of God for Jesus to reveal his identity for the first time to a woman living in sin who was also a Samaritan..

Now, we still aren't sure how this woman reacts to this declaration, but we will today..

So, let's finish off the scene this morning beginning in verse 27...

We will call this..

I. The Woman's Witness (27-30)

Let's read verses 27-30...

27 At this point His disciples came, and they were amazed that He had been speaking with a woman, yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why do You speak with her?" 28 So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city and *said to the men, 29 "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not [ff]the Christ, is it?" 30 They went out of the city, and were coming to Him.

It is clear from what we read here that this woman has believed in Jesus as the Christ, as the Savior, as her Lord..

And the reason we know that is simple...

Her life is immediately changed...

In the first part of verse 28, notice that she leaves her waterspot....

Now I don't want to make a big deal out of that...

She could simply be a forgetful lady..

She could simply be planning to come back later to get..

She could simply be so overwhelmed that she forgot why she had come to the well in the first place..

I don't know the reason but I do know this..

John included the detail because God told him to, and just like the fishing nets that the the disciples left behind when Jesus called to them to follow him, it stands to reason that faith in Christ impacts our lives immediately.

But the waterspot is not the only evidence of a changed life, notice the next phrase..

“...the woman left her waterspout and went into the city...”

True salvation not only impacts our life, it overflows our life..

In other words, salvation causes a celebration where we have to share what has happened with others..

Luke 15 is one of the best pictures of how salvation causes a celebration...

In the first example in that chapter, a shepherd loses a sheep, and when he finds that sheep and bring him home, what does he do?

Luke 15:6...

6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!'

In the next example in that chapter, a woman loses a coin, and when she searches and finds it, what does she do?

Luke 15:9

9 When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost!'

And the final example in that chapter is the story of the lost prodigal son who returns home to his father..

And when the son is found, what does the father do?

Luke 15:22-24

22 But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; 23 and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.' And they began to celebrate.

We also know that heaven celebrates over every salvation, so it makes perfect sense for this woman to celebrate with others over her salvation..

And she goes into the city because her heart is overflowing with joy at what has happened in her life..

That is the picture of how salvation changes us..

It fills us with a joy that must be shared..

Do you still have the much joy over God finding you and saving you?

You should.

And that joy should continue to overflow for all your years that God leaves you here...

And that joy should motivate our evangelism for the rest of our lives as well...

There is also more evidence of true salvation here..

Not only did she leave the waterpot and head to the city to share her joy...

She went to the men of the city...

Now, she is a woman who has a horrible reputation..

The woman despise her and gossip about her, but the men probably ridicule her even worse..

Yet, that does not stop her from sharing with them what has happened...

You see a great evidence of salvation is the removal of shame over our sin..

Remember Adam and Eve hid after their sin..

And this lady is essentially hiding because she is at the well at noon to avoid the other women...

But now that she has put her faith in Christ, the shame of sin is gone..

She doesn't care what these men think about her, she is safe in Christ...

Her sins are gone and so is her guilt and shame..

And then a final bit of evidence of her salvation is what she says to the men...

29 “Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not [f]the Christ, is it?”

Though this is asked as a question, it is not that the woman doubts...

It is simply asked in question form to get the men to come...

Her character is questionable so she asks a question instead of making a statement that will be dismissed why the men..

But what we need to take note of is this..

True salvation causes us to exalt Christ..

Come see a man who told me all things that I have done.

This conversation with the men isn't meant to exalt her..

This conversation with the men has one purpose, - to exalt Christ and call others to go to Him..

The truly saved always point to Christ..

This woman had lived her entire life with her at center of it...

She married and divorced based on her needs..

She ignored the law of God to do what she wanted to do..

But now that she has come to believe in Christ, her life's mission is to exalt Him..

Is this Samaritan woman saved?

You better believe it..

Her life is changed.

She desires to share her joy.

Her guilt and shame of sin is gone.

Her mission is to point others to Christ.

The Jewish religious leaders may not come to Samaria, but salvation has come there...

Now, let's move to the next set of verses in 31-38....

WE will call this..

II. The Disciple's Duty (31-38)

*31 Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." 32 But He said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." 33 So the disciples were saying to one another, "No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?" 34 Jesus *said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work. 35 Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. 36 Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. 37 For in this case the saying is true, 'One sows and another reaps.' 38 I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored and you have entered into their labor."*

Though I didn't make note of it, the disciples with Jesus arrived at the well just as Jesus was ending his conversation with this woman..

Though they were shocked, they trusted in what Christ was doing so they didn't say a word about him talking to a Samaritan woman..

But now that she has left, they offer some of the food to Jesus...

And this allows Jesus to make an incredible statement on how their lives will be changed by following him...

In verse 34, Jesus makes this important declaration...

“My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.

In other words, though Jesus was human and needed food to survive, he was more filled by seeing someone come to know Him in a saving way...

This woman was an outcast before her meeting with Jesus..

Not only did the Jews despise her, her own people despised her..

Yet, Jesus had offered her hope and she responded in a saving way...

And the miracle of salvation is food for the soul..

The disciples had no idea how often they would see Jesus change someone's life..

The disciples had no idea how often their own preaching would change someone's life...

Yet, Jesus wants them to know that sharing the gospel, witnessing to the lost, evangelizing the world is going to be their duty...

And the good news is this..

God is going to use them to win countless souls to His kingdom..

This picture of sowing and reaping is a picture of salvation..

God is going to sow seeds of belief in the hearts of people and the disciples are going to reap what God has sown through their preaching and teaching..

In verse 35, Jesus tells the disciples to lift their heads and look on the fields which are ready to harvest..

And it seems that the fields around them were probably months away from being ready to pick...

Yet, what else would they see as they lifted their heads?

Well, they would probably see the men of the town headed out to see Jesus..

Remember that the woman had told them to come see Jesus, and verse 30 tells us that they were headed out to the well..

And Jesus' point is clear...

First, their food is not the grain of the fields..

IT is the fullness of seeing people saved..

But second, today is the day to see people saved...

The fields may not be ready, but people's hearts are ready to respond to the gospel..

And the disciples' duty is to make sure they are busy reaping the harvest of what God is sowing in the hearts of people..

The reality for us is this...

The harvest is still going on today..

God is still planting seeds of belief in the hearts of men and women still today..

And our great joy is the head to the field and reap what God has sown...

Every evangelistic encounter with someone is an opportunity to be fed by the glorious reality of someone getting saved..

Now, I don't know who has good seed in them, and neither do you...

That is why we preach and teach and talk to as many as possible about the Lord...

When I was a kid, there was a little store off main street in Whitmire called Joe's Market.

Well, there was a gumball machine in there...

And most of the gumballs were a solid color but there were a few speckled ones in there too....

And if you got a speckled one, you would either get your nickel back or you could win up to a dollar..

Well, I always put my nickel in and most of the time it was a normal gumball, but every once in a while, I got a speckled one and it was awesome...

Look, sometimes you will talk to people about their need to repent and believe and you will get little or no response..

But if you are faithful, every once in a while a speckled gumball will drop and you will be fed and feel the joy of seeing someone have all their sins forgiven and secure a place in heaven...

Our job is to simply keep putting the nickels in the machine as we are faithful to talk to people about Christ...

A final comment on this scene is found in verses 39-42..

Let's call this...

III. The Sinner's Savior (39-42)

39 From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all the things that I have done." 40 So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. 41 Many more believed because of His word; 42 and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."

I think it is clear from these verses that the woman didn't just tell the men of the city about Jesus...

She must have shared with others who also believed as well according to verse 39..

In fact, so many believed that they asked Jesus to stay in town and teach them, which Jesus did for two days...

And I love this statement in verse 41...

Many believed because of his Word...

Look, personal testimony is good...

Telling me what the Lord did in your life is helpful and can be a great blessing..

But the most effective weapon in salvation is the word of God...

Romans 10:17..

17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word [k]of Christ.

This is why Bible preaching and Bible studying and Bible verse memorization is so important in evangelism...

The word of God is a great weapon in witnessing to others....

The word of God is what God often uses to win others to Him.

And the final word of this scene in Samaria is the testimony of the Samaritans who came to faith in Christ...

“...for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world.”

That statement really rings true because of where it was said...

Jesus did not just come to save the Jew in and around Jerusalem...

Jesus came to save those who are half Jewish in Samaria...

Jesus also came to save those who are Gentile as well...

Jesus is the savior of anyone in the world who repents and trusts in Him..

In fact, Jesus is the only Savior in the world..

There is no other way to heaven than by Christ..

But not only is Jesus a savior of Jews and Gentiles, Jesus is the Savior of those who see, admit, and repent of their sin...

The lady who came to get water at the well was the worst of sinners...

Adulterous and immoral yet even she could find salvation in Christ..

Jesus did not come to save those who didn't sense their need of salvation, Jesus came to those who thought they were beyond his saving power..

This is the saving nature of God..

He saves the greatest and the least and everyone in between who will repent of their sin and put their trust in Him..

Jesus is the Savior of world and the savior of sinners..

Conclusion

So how are we impacted by these 42 verses of Jesus and the woman at the well?

#1 - Evangelism knows no borders.

Jesus wasn't concerned about who he should speak to and who he shouldn't speak to.

Jesus wasn't concerned about the bad neighborhood and those who lived on the other side of the tracks..

Jesus knew that sin had infected all people from the greatest to the least..

Both the rich and the famous and the poor and lowly need the gospel.

And we must be ready to take it wherever the Lord directs.

#2 - Evangelism feeds our soul.

It is good to share your faith even when your attempts seem to go nowhere.

There is a certain joy that comes from being obedience to take the gospel to the nations.

And the more you share, the more the Lord gives us opportunities and the closer we grow in our walk with the Lord..

Jesus was an evangelist and when we evangelize, we grow to be more like him and that is always rewarding..

#3- Evangelism is not a system.

John 4:1-42 is not the way to do evangelism.

Rather it is a way.

I don't see step by step systems of sharing your faith as the only way to do it..

Jesus spoke to this lady about water, but that doesn't mean that we only do evangelism at the water fountain or by a well..

It simply means that we do evangelism as we go throughout our daily lives...

The command is to make disciples as you are going throughout your life in the world..

Add I would also note that you can't force an ending to a conversation..

Jesus wasn't leading this woman to raise a hand or repeat a prayer after him or go to church..

Jesus was leading this woman to see that He was God in the flesh and a Savior for sin..

We don't need to lead people to say a certain thing or repeat a certain prayer in our evangelism...

Did this woman pray in order to be saved?

Did she shake Jesus' hand?

We have no idea.

And the point is simple..

Salvation occurs in all sorts of ways.

The point is not how people express their repentance and trust in Christ.

The point is that they do.

Which leads to the last point..

#4 - Evangelism points to Christ.

When we started this scene, the woman had a physical need.

She was coming to the well to get water..

But by the end of the scene, she had forgotten her physical need as Jesus had met a spiritual need in her life..

I talked about this a few Sunday nights ago, but the point of going to people in evangelism is not to meet physical needs but spiritual ones...

There are always going to be thirsty and hungry people in the world..

A fallen world will always produce that, but the job of the church is not to meet physical needs while ignoring spiritual needs..

I see so much money spent in the name of evangelism to feed the hungry or provide drinking water or building a school..

And while all those things are great, the church's job is to take the message of salvation in Jesus' name to the world..

And though we can meet physical needs to do that, spiritual needs are always the priority in evangelism..

Which leads me to ask you...

Are you spiritually thirsty this morning?

Are you dying because you lack the living water of Christ?

It would be awful to thirst to death physically, but it will be much worse for any who thirst to death spiritually...

My prayer is that you would come to the living water of Christ today..

If you will repent and trust in Christ alone to save you, you will never thirst like that again...

Let us pray.