

## **The Church, part 9**

(John 4:1-30)

(preached Pine Grove 8/13/17; Sunday PM)

### **Introduction**

A Christian decided to use their home as a place for evangelism...

They were a young couple with small kids, so they planned to invite unbelievers to dinner at their house to minimize the distractions..

Their first guests were also a young couple with small children...

The meal was ready and laid out on the table, and both families were ready to eat, so the couple decided to ask their young 5 year old son to ask God to bless the food...

They hoped the sight of their son praying would be a good example to the other couple..

However, the young boy resisted and told his mom, "I don't know what to pray."

Slightly embarrassed, the mom simply looked at the little boy and told him, "Just pray what your dad prayed today at lunch."

So, the little boy closed his eyes and began,...

“Dear Lord, there are some bad people coming over tonight to eat supper with us, please be with us and them...”

That is how our best efforts at evangelism go...

They create uncomfortable moments and usually crash and burn...

Yet, we are called and commanded to go and share the gospel with our friends, family, and neighbors...

And in every effective church, there must be relentless evangelism...

Which is our 4th characteristic in our look at effective churches....

In other words, churches that please the Lord are churches that take the gospel into the world and into their communities...

They are churches filled with people who take evangelism seriously...

Now, the greatest question about evangelism is this...

How are we to do it effectively?

And let me tell you, there are no shortage of people who will come into your church and sell you materials and train you on how to be an evangelistic church...

There are no shortage of books on how to do evangelism...

There are no shortage of videos on how to do evangelism..

And look, all of that stuff is helpful and appropriate provided that it is biblical...

But the best way to see how to do evangelism is to see how Jesus did evangelism...

You see, Jesus came to earth and did what we are called to do..

He came to share the gospel with people who needed it...

He encountered strangers who weren't saved...

He interacted with people who were unbelievers, so how did he do it?

The good news is that we have some examples of Jesus' evangelism in the Bible...

And one of those examples is found in John chapter 4...

And what I want to do is examine this encounter that Jesus had with the Samaritan woman at the well and pull out 7 principles of biblical evangelism as we look at this scene in John 4...

So, let's begin by reading this whole passage just to get the whole story and then we will go back and work our way through it....

And learn some valuable lessons about evangelism along the way...

***4 Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John 2 (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), 3 He left Judea and went away again into Galilee. 4 And He had to pass through Samaria. 5 So He \*came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; 6 and Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about [a]the sixth hour.***

***The Woman of Samaria***

***7 There \*came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus \*said to her, "Give Me a drink." 8 For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. 9 Therefore the Samaritan woman \*said to Him, "How***

*is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.” 11 She \*said to Him, “[b]Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water? 12 You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?” 13 Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.”*

*15 The woman \*said to Him, “[c]Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw.” 16 He \*said to her, “Go, call your husband and come here.” 17 The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.” Jesus \*said to her, “You have correctly said, ‘I have no husband’; 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly.” 19 The woman \*said to Him, “[d]Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.” 21 Jesus \*said to her, “Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the*

*Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. 24 God is [e]spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” 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.” 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 [f]the Christ, is it?” 30 They went out of the city, and were coming to Him.*

So, there is the well known story of what is often called “Jesus and the Woman at the Well”

Now it is our job to turn over every leaf in this story and learn about evangelism from the Master of evangelism...

The first principle we see in John 4 about evangelism is this...

## **I. Evangelism is a Way of Life (1-6)**

**1 Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John 2 (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), 3 He left Judea and went away again into Galilee. 4 And He had to pass through Samaria. 5 So He \*came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; 6 and Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about [a]the sixth hour.**

Though we dont have time to look at the previous 3 chapters of the book of John, we find ourselves in the early years of Jesus' ministry in John 4.

He had been in the southern region of Israel doing ministry...

Now if you think about the layout of Israel in Jesus' day, it is really divided into 3 sections...

You can see it on the map on the screen...

The southern region was known as Judea and it contained the cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem....

Then you had the middle region known as Samaria, where Shechem and Sychar were located...

And the northern section was known as Galilee and contained the towns of Nazareth and Capernaum as well as the sea of Galilee..

And I tell you this not to bore you with geography of Israel in Jesus day but to help to see how Jesus' life was driven by evangelism...

Because as Jesus left Jerusalem and Judea in verse 3, he headed through Samaria on his way to Galilee..

And you may look at the map on the left and go, "Well, sure that is the way he went. The fastest way between 2 points is a straight line."

But I want you to notice the map on the right and especially the red line on the map to the right...

That red line is the route that all Jews took when going from Judea to Galilee or from Galilee to Judea...

They would literally follow the Jordan River and walk around the region of Samaria...

When Jesus chose the green line on this map, he did something that no self-respecting Jew would ever do....

He walked through the bad part of town.

Now, why did Jews avoid the region of Samaria?

Weren't these people Jews?

And the answer to that is the real problem...

You see in 722 BC, the Assyrians conquered the northern region of Israel and much of the northern population was carried off into exile, while the southern part of Israel survived.

Well, the Jews that remained in the north began to intermarry with their neighbors and what eventually happened is that the northern part of Israel lost its Jewish identity...

You had Jews married to unbelieving Gentiles, so the southern Jews no longer regarded the northern Jews as fellow Jews...

The northern Jews also pulled away and built their own temple and refused to worship in Jerusalem...

We will talk more about that later...

But what you had in Jesus' day was an intense hatred that split Israel into the regions...

That is one reason that Jesus was so despised by the religious leaders of Jerusalem...

Because he was from the northern town of Nazareth...

It was even said of Jesus in John 1 that nothing good ever came out of Nazareth...

So as Jews travelled from north to south or from south to north, they avoided Samaria...

Therefore, when Jesus decided to take a direct route from Jerusalem to Galilee and go through the heart of Samaria, he revealed his heart for evangelism...

You see, evangelism drives our life because it drove Jesus' life...

He wasn't concerned about the rivalry between the people of Israel...

He wasn't going to be hindered by the sinful judgment between people...

He was going through Samaria because it made no sense to go around an area to avoid certain people when he goes through an area and take the truth to those people...

A great hindrance to evangelism is that if we do it, we only do it in areas where we are comfortable doing it...

And with people that we are comfortable talking to...

But evangelism is not something that you put on the calendar, it is a way of life....

It is sharing the gospel as you live your life...

If life directs you a doctor's office, you look for people there...

If life sends you to the grocery store, you have your eyes open there...

If life sends you through the bad part of town, you go through it hoping to be able to share the gospel...

Jesus needed to head to Galilee in the north and since the shortest way was right through Galilee, that is fine...

The road trip would simply be a chance to share some truth along the way...

You see evangelism is not an event that we all gather to go out and do on one night of the week....

Now a church can do that and it is a fine thing to do, but the best view of evangelism is that happens as you live life...

And the only way for it to be a way of life is for the gospel to have gripped your life in such a way that it becomes a priority for you and others...

So much so that you will share the gospel no matter where your life takes you...

Now as Jesus travels through Samaria, he gets tired and stops by a well to take a break in verse 6, which leads into principle #2 of evangelism...

## **II. Evangelism Is the Need of Humanity (7-10)**

Now, we notice in verse 7 that Jesus is the one who started the conversation with a Samaritan woman who approaches the well as He asks her for a drink..

Which is important in this scene because it was highly unusual for a Jewish man to look at a woman much less speak to her..

But this is an important principle to remember in evangelism...

We may not live in a culture where it is unusual for a man to speak to a woman, but we do live in a culture where people are increasingly private...

Even in the south, in a place known for hospitality, people are even reluctant to speak...

And the reason we must start conversations is that we have something that all humanity needs to hear...

We have the words of eternal life...

Though Jesus doesn't start the conversation with an invitation to the gospel, he turns the conversation to that by verse 10 where he tells the woman that she has a need for living water...

Though it takes the woman some time to figure out what that is, what we need to see here in verses 7-10 is that evangelism is important because the gospel is the need of humanity...

Look, evangelism is tough but it shouldn't be since the truth we offer is a truth that every human being needs...

It's not like we are on the street corner selling bottled water when everybody who walks by is holding a bottled water...

No, the gospel that you believe is the gospel that everyone needs...

You aren't telling people something they don't need to know...

You are telling them the way to know God in a saving way and be assured of going to heaven when they die...

Look, Jesus came to her and talked to the woman, but what he said to her was not, "how's the weather," but rather how do you stand before an almighty God...

Look, every Christian has something to say to the world...

And what we have to say is not just another voice...

What we have to say saves people from an eternal hell...

What we speak is what every person in the world needs to know to be saved...

You aren't an annoying telemarketer selling something that everybody already owns, you are peddling the words of life that everyone needs to hear....

Now, the woman was first shocked that Jesus talks to her and then she is confused by what he says because she thinks he is still talking about actual water in verse 11...

Since she doesn't see anything in his hands to draw water with in verse 11...

However, Jesus quickly gets to the issue at hand in verses 13-14 as he helps the woman see that he is not offering normal water but rather water that gives eternal life...

Now before we take a closer look at what Jesus says to her in relation to her spiritual needs, notice a couple more things that help us in evangelism...

First, look how Jesus started an everyday conversation about well water and quickly turns it to a spiritual conversation...

Look, life offers all sorts of topics that can be turned to the things of the Lord and a person's standing before Him...

And it doesn't require much skill to do it...

Just pick a topic and see how quickly you move the conversation to Christ...

Second, I want you to also notice that this woman is no ordinary Samaritan...

If you noticed in verse 6, it is the sixth hour or high noon, since the Jews began their day at 6 am...

And it is unusual for her to be out here by herself...

Drawing water was a way of life for the Jewish women caring for their homes, and it was often done early in the morning while it was cool..

But this woman was out in the middle of the day, most likely because she was not liked by the women of her community...

We are going to see that she had multiple husbands, and the lesson here is this....

The most down and out around is are the most in need and usually the ones most receptive to the truth...

And our job is not to avoid these people but engage them in conversation about spiritual things...

Too often, we think the down and out just want our money and we are quick to offer it but never offer the gospel to them...

Look, serve people in need but use that service to talk to them about the gospel..

So, we see that evangelism must be a way of life and we also see that the gospel is the greatest need of everyone in the world...

Now, the question is what should we say to them when we turn the conversation to the Lord...

Here is where you must be a wise person...

Because guess what?

Jesus didn't have a one size fits all approach to sharing the gospel...

Sometimes, he confronted people about their sin first...

Sometimes, he confronted people's incorrect view of God first...

But in this setting with this down and out and despised woman, he simply offered God's mercy first...

And so we can learn a third principle of evangelism here as well....

### **III. Evangelism Is an Offer of Mercy (10-15)**

If you look at verse 13 and 14, Jesus does not come to this woman with condemnation first but with compassion...

His first mention of the gospel is the promise of eternal life at the end of verse 14...

Look, let's be clear...

Some people needed to be confronted with their sin and coming judgment at the outset of your attempt to share the gospel with them...

Some peoples sins are so evident and outward that you come to share the gospel with them, you start with judgment and then move to mercy...

However, the offer of mercy is an essential part of biblical evangelism...

No one is scared into the kingdom...

You can't frighten people enough to get saved....

Now, you can frighten them enough to cause them to make an emotional decision, but true salvation comes not as result of people embracing the anger of God but the grace of God..

Yes, sins must be confronted...

We are going to see that in a minute...

But once sin is clear and God's anger at sin is clear, the gospel is the promise of grace and mercy...

The gospel says you can avoid judgment...

The gospel says you don't get what you deserve...

The gospel says that God is willing to overlook your sins...

The gospel is an offer of mercy...

Now, that is exactly what this woman wanted to hear...

And it is what many people need to hear...

I get so frustrated with preachers who make the gospel so hard for people to get saved...

The gospel is not get your life in order and God will save you...

The gospel is God will save you and help you get your life in order...

There are so many people who don't see salvation as an act of mercy but a hill too high to climb...

This woman had enough problems in her life...

She didn't need more requirements to fulfill or obligations to keep...

She was looking for a free offer of mercy and that is what Jesus laid before her...

And notice, and we will end here....

Notice her response...

Verse 15...

Sir, give me this water....

Now, I don't know if she was still thinking about real water or if she completely understood everything about what Jesus was offering...

But I do know this....

She was ready to listen to Him...

He had gotten her attention with a free offer of anything...

And there are so many people who need to understand that getting saved is not about getting better...

But instead, it is turning from sin and trusting in Christ...

Let's end there tonight..

We have 4 more principles that we will look at next week...

## **Conclusion**

Though Jesus hasn't confronted this woman yet, let me confront you with a few questions before we leave tonight...

#1- Is sharing the gospel a part of your life?

Do you go through the world with your eyes open for people in need of the gospel...

OR do you go through life with blinders on until you get back home...

#2 - If you say you are someone who shares the gospel, when is the last time you explained it to someone?

#3 - Do you understand that the gospel is the greatest information that the everyone in the world needs?

So many people think they have nothing of value to offer the world...

IF you understand the gospel and can explain it, you have the knowledge and truth necessary to save lives...

#4 - If you do see the gospel as the world's great news, what makes you reluctant to share it?

Think about those things and ask God to help you be a better evangelist every time you head out in the next week...

Let us pray...

IV. Evangelism Confronts Sin (16-18)

V. Evangelism is Divisive (19-24)

VI. Evangelism Exalts Christ (25-26)

VII. Evangelism Produces Results (27-30)

