

Ordinary People - A Woman Of Samaria

A Witness

John 4:9-15, 28-30

The Lord gave us an example in witnessing by the way He dealt with the woman of Samaria. The woman received salvation and became an effective witness.

People who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb should certainly tell it. No one is excluded from giving his testimony of the work of Jesus Christ in his life. We should tell of the ability of the Lord to save the lost to all people everywhere. Ordinary people, who have received an extraordinary, supernatural, experience should be eager to relate the good news to others. Every redeemed person has a story to tell!

The Lord of the harvest did not call us to be clever, spectacular, showy, or brilliant, but He called us to be witnesses.

I. A SAMARITAN WOMAN

The Samaritans were a people of mixed races. Renegade Jewish remnants intermarried with the Assyrians and others who had settled there. These heathen people were idolatrous and they had very little comprehension of the God of Israel. Moreover, the intermingling of idolatry corrupted even their knowledge of the God of Israel by some Israelites like Jeroboam, who introduced the worship of golden calves to the Samaritans.

All these factors created the environment into which the woman of Samaria was born and they contributed to her life of complete disarray. She was a troubled and confused woman when she met the Master at a Samaritan well.

Family Problems

The Samaritan woman's parents may not have had a copy of the Pentateuch, for they lived in the midst of the heathen, Samaritan culture. It is not likely that her parents observed the teaching of Moses during her formative years.

Whatever the background of the woman of Samaria, her life was in utter turmoil. When Jesus came to her she had not suffered only one failed marriage, but five, and she was living with a sixth man, whom Jesus correctly identified as not being her husband. Failed relationships have a tendency to reproduce themselves over and over again in a person's life. Such was the experience of the Samaritan woman.

Satan is attacking families and homes in unprecedented fashion today. He realizes that if he can destroy these he can destroy the entire fabric of civilization. But people who follow the teachings of Scripture concerning family relationships inoculate themselves against the works of satanic forces. Moreover, they assure themselves of God's blessings upon their home.

Moral Problems

Too often moral problems are at the root of family problems. The marriage vow is sacred and must be upheld with sober respect. Two individuals taking the marriage vows promise to forsake all others and keep themselves only unto each other as long as they both shall live. Of the three avenues Satan uses to tempt humanity, he most often uses the lust of the flesh to attack a person's moral purity (John 2:15-16.)

It is important and right for a couple to keep themselves morally pure for each other and for the sake of their personal salvation. But it is equally important that they remain pure for the sake of their children. The task of rearing children in this permissive society provides quite a challenge to every family, but the eternal destiny of children may be determined by what they are taught and by what is modeled before them in the home. Old-fashioned purity is still right.

Once the marriage agreement is made, it is made for life. "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband is alive; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord" (I Corinthians 7:39). The same is true for the husband. Divorce has never been the will of God. Jesus said that Moses allowed divorce only because of the hardness of the hearts of the people, but from the beginning it was never God's plan or will for people to divorce (Matthew 19:8-9).

There is a plethora of moral issues today that threaten the purity and integrity of today's families.

Child molestation, incest, pornography, filthy movies, and ungodly television programs have inundated our society, producing emotionally scarred people who have difficulty coping with life. Moreover, there is an increased acceptance of homosexual behavior in our time that is abominable in the sight of God (Romans 1:21-32). As a result of declining moral values in general, people's ideas of what is morally acceptable are distorted.

Religious Problems

To live according to the precepts of God's Word is a strong deterrent to many family problems. Jesus is not just *a way* to eternal life, He is *the way*! The only access to God is through His death, burial, and resurrection (I Corinthians 15:3-4). The knowledge of this truth brings with it a great responsibility to take the whole gospel to the whole world! The people of God must herald the good news of Jesus Christ with fervor, intensity, and great zeal.

False religions have done as much to kindle the flames of hatred and bring division between nations, families, and individuals as any single tactic of Satan. History is replete with ugly stories of wars fought and blood shed over religious differences.

The Samaritan woman also was blinded by false religion and it caused her concern about where she should worship. She did not know whether to worship at the mountain where her forefathers had worshiped or whether

the Temple at Jerusalem was the proper place of worship. To her statement of confusion, Jesus answered that whether worship was conducted in Jerusalem or in Samaria was not the point; rather how she worshiped was immeasurably important. *“Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:21-24).*

Jesus led the Samaritan woman to understand that He was the Messiah that the people of God were expecting to come. He realized that resolving her religious error would put her on the right path to solving her moral and family problems as well.

II. A SEARCHING SAVIOR

The supreme purpose of seeking the lost compelled the Lord to include a trip through Samaria. With all the resentment and animosity that existed between the residents of Samaria and the Jews, it was not a desirable place to visit. But salvation was not designed to remain only with the children of Abraham; Jesus went to Samaria to plant the seeds of eternal life.

- *Jesus went against accepted opinion of the day.* If the Lord could have been influenced by public opinion, there are many people who are in the kingdom of God who would have been excluded. If this journey had been left to His disciples, it probably would never have happened.
- *Jesus went to the Woman of Samaria out of Concern.* It was a feeling of deep concern for this sinful woman that caused Jesus to make this trip through Samaria. First, He knew that she was lost. This is still a matter of grave concern. The Lord Himself declared that a person must be born of water and of the Spirit if he is to enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:5).

Second, Jesus had compassion not only for the Samaritan woman but also for all humanity. The Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of Christ, will cause us to go to the lost and show concern for their eternal destiny.

- *There is no one so lost that God will not save him.* There is no such thing as being “just a little bit lost.” It is true that some people have gone to greater depths of sin than others, but everyone outside of Jesus Christ is lost.

III. A SINCERE HEART

By looking at her life one might never suspect that inwardly she desired deeply to live right. She had searched for fulfillment and satisfaction in the wrong places. By gratifying the base desires that are born of fleshly lust, her life had become empty. The hunger inside was growing with every wrong turn she made. In her desperation she resorted to going for water at the most unlikely hour. She would not be apt to show her discontentment to others if she were the only one at the well.

- *Jesus Sensed the Woman's Sincerity.* By probing the depth of her spirit, Jesus discerned her inward misery. He also recognized that she was aware that she had spiritual needs. She was sincerely displeased with her lifestyle. She longed to change but lacked the strength to do so. Her inner conflict was as transparent to the Lord as ours is to Him even now. Jesus, the One who possesses all knowledge, keenly observed her disappointment in how her life had gone. In her condition she was a prime target for the testimony of Jesus.

- *Jesus Found Common ground with the Samaritan Woman — Water.* One of the most essential ingredients in sustaining physical life became the plateau for the meeting of the minds between the witness and the hearer. The woman's need for water was obvious as she approached Jacob's well.

In sharing with her His need for natural water, He also was able to establish a dialogue concerning living water.

- *Jesus Made a Spiritual Application—Living Water.* The simple request by Jesus, “Give me to drink,” unleashed a reply that revealed the pent-up

hostility this woman felt toward the prejudice the Jews had toward Samaritans. After she vented her feelings, Jesus countered with a statement that aroused her curiosity. “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water” (John 4:10).

Stung by the inference that she was uninformed about whom she was talking with and the abilities He possessed, she countered with questions. Was He greater than Jacob who gave them the well? He lacked the necessary bucket and rope to bring the water to the surface. It did not make sense to her from where He would draw this “living water.”

IV. A SAVED SOUL

Little did the Samaritan woman realize what was in store for her as she made her trip to the well? She was not expecting to meet Jesus, and perhaps the farthest thing from her mind was that she would receive a life-changing experience. To her, the trip was just one more necessary chore for sustaining her life, dissatisfying as it was. But her unexpected encounter with Jesus relieved her burdened soul of guilt and condemnation. She met the Master and she would never be the same.

The miracle of God’s grace that produces repentance had begun its work in her heart. The resentment against the Jews was broken. Her lifestyle that she had followed suddenly became sinful to her, and she experienced a change of heart.

- *The Samaritan Woman Had a Change of Mind.* The mindset of this woman had been the result of prejudice that she had been taught by her forefathers. The fact that a Jewish man would speak to her was unthinkable. To further complicate matters, He offered her water that would satisfy to the extent that she would never thirst again. Furthermore, He reached into her private life and revealed things that only God could know. She was so deeply moved that she experienced guilt, remorse, and repentance.

• *The Samaritan Woman Had a Change of Direction.* All this was too much. She had come for a bucket of water, not to be challenged about her way of life. Jesus revealed Himself to her as the Messiah and it caused a transformation in her life. Suddenly, she felt an overwhelming desire to change the way she was living. In genuine conversion there is first an inward cleansing. Next comes the cleaning up of the outward man. Moral problems, drugs, tobacco, and alcohol are results of inward problems that appear outwardly. One must experience inward change first if the change is to be genuine and lasting.

The most effective way to witness is to tell your personal experience. Every redeemed person has a story to tell. What God has done for each person is worth telling. We never know who may be longing to hear what the grace of God has wrought in us. How different it is since we know Jesus in the power of the Holy Ghost!

Summary

Jesus was compelled to journey through Samaria, an undesirable area for Jews. Even His disciples did not understand or agree with this decision. The searching Savior knew that He would encounter a troubled woman. This woman was beset with multiple problems. Mixed up in her beliefs and morally wrong, she desperately needed help. To many she would hardly be worth the trouble.

Only the Lord knew the intense hunger the woman of Samaria felt and how desperately she needed to be reached. But Jesus' approach disarmed her resistance. Overwhelmed by His offer of living water, she could not refuse. As the light of revelation dawned in her darkened soul, she became excited over who Jesus was and His ability to uncover the wrong in her life. This caused her to want to correct her life (repent) and share the good news with others (witness).

The fact that not everyone will accept our testimony does not change the fact that we need to witness. God has done great things in all our lives. Let us rejoice and share our experience with others, for they need to receive it as much as we need to give it.