

Relational Evangelism... Each One Reach One

Part 14 in the series The Journey... Walking As Jesus Walked

John 3 and 4

March 28, 2010

*Do you know how to engage someone in a spiritual conversation?
How do you turn a conversation from the earthly to the eternal?
Jesus was a master when it came to relating to people where they
were at, and then introducing spiritual truths. How did He do it?*

Transition: Last week we left off on John 4:21 and at stage 4 of the Samaritan woman's process of belief. Let's quickly review the previous 3 stages.

- I. The **Stages of Belief**: How did the woman's attitude change as she came to faith? (v. 9-29)
 - A. **Sarcasm and Bewilderment**: v. 9-10. You are asking me a Samaritan and you are a Jew?
 - B. **Curious and Questioning** (v. 11-14). How do you get that kind of water?
 - C. **Seeking and Desiring** (v. 15-18). I want it!
 - D. **Amazement and embarrassment** (v. 19-20)
 1. The **cleverness** (v.19): Attempting to change the subject, she says, "You must be a prophet." Quite a compliment since they didn't accept the prophetic books only the Law!
 - She wants to protect herself from Jesus by putting him in a box that she can label: "typical Jewish religious bigot and male chauvinist." But she can't!
 - Remember: The well was the place of happy gossip with other women. She is well aware that when she is not there, she was the topic of gossip. How had He known these things about her?

2. The **confusion** (v.20): The Samaritan woman was embarrassed and amazed at what Jesus had just told her. She tries to hide her embarrassment by changing the subject by asking which mountain she has to go to get right with God. She asks, “Why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim?” Jesus gives her a surprising answer.

3. The **clarification** (v.21-24)

- *In spirit and truth*: The word "spirit" does not refer to the Holy Spirit but to the human spirit. Jesus' point here is that a person must worship not simply by external conformity to religious rituals and places (outwardly) but inwardly ("in spirit") with the proper heart attitude. The reference to "truth" refers to worship of God consistent with the revealed Scripture and centered on the "Word made flesh" who ultimately revealed His Father (John 14:6).

4. The **characteristics** of “true worship”

- Jesus says that true worship involves not the *where* but rather the *how*; that is, God must be worshiped in spirit and truth!
- It doesn't matter *where* you worship but *who* you worship. True worship always seeks the Father. It's not about you!

E. **Belief and Recognition**: *I know that Messiah is coming* (v. 25-29, 39-42)

1. Her **conversion** declared (v.25-26):

- She acknowledges Jesus as the Messiah! His response: I am the Messiah.
- You are talking to Him! I am that guy!
- A reference to the “I AM” passage of Moses in Ex. 3-4.

2. The **concern** of the disciples (v.27)

- The disciple's response shows they are both puzzled, and are tracking on a physical plain as opposed to a spiritual one!
- The disciples arrive just as she departs and are amazed that he was talking to this woman! They don't say what they are thinking "out loud" because they are so stunned with who he is talking with!
- To the woman, "What do you want woman?"
- To Jesus, "What in the world are you thinking?" Are you crazy? This isn't proper! So unconventional, yet so Jesus!
- **Application: The disciples walked right by the real ministry...The Samaritan woman! How about us? What marginalized people groups have we overlooked?**

3. **Her commitment** demonstrated (v.28-29)

- She connects the dots and confirms her belief that He is the Messiah. She becomes the first evangelist! She goes and tells the men that this guy is a prophet! (The women would have nothing to do with her and the men probably only listened because she was attractive!)
- ***Leaves her water pot:* What do you have to leave behind to follow Jesus? A bad relationship, relational security, wanting acceptance, wanting to be first? We always need to leave something behind, if we are going to follow Him!**
- She wonders out loud, "***Could he be the Messiah?***" She cautiously asks the question vs. declaring His Messiahship boldly. She asks it in such a way, that she doesn't cause others to get defensive. She raises the question, so they will go check it out themselves?
- Whether she fully believes (or fully understands the implications) that He is the Messiah at that very

moment, she acts as if He is by virtue of her testimony in v. 39.

- The result: Many people become Christ Followers! It was a 2 day Billy Graham crusade. People saw for themselves who Jesus is. App: We have to come to Jesus on our own. No one can do it for you!
 - *Savior of the world*: (v. 42) only used 2x (I John 4:14) and the first time is right here in relation the Samaritans...which the Jews didn't think were worth saving or couldn't be saved! Jesus always believes people matter. Do you?
4. Many years ago a man named Ephraim the Syrian summarized the text this way: "At the beginning of the conversation, He did not make Himself known to her. But first she caught sight of a thirsty man, then a Jew, then a rabbi, afterwards a prophet, last of all, the Messiah. She tried to get the best of the thirsty man, she showed her dislike of the Jew, she heckled the rabbi, she was swept off her feet by the prophet, and she adored the Christ."

II. The Substantiation: How does Jesus claim to be God?

These verses reinforce Jesus' acknowledgment that He was Messiah by offering proof for His claim to be God. John 3 gives us 6 subtle proofs that Jesus was truly the Messiah and the Son of God (20:31). We see proof from His...

A. **Incredible offer of eternal life** (v.14)

He compares physical water with eternal life. Jesus' offer of eternal life comes because He is God!

B. **Insight into her life** (v. 18-19)

He has supernatural knowledge of her situation having not met her before and her recognition of such! How did he know those things, if he wasn't God?

C. **Insistence that He was the Messiah** (v.26)

She knew enough to know that the Messiah was coming!

D. Impression on the woman herself (v. 28-30)

She immediately goes out and tells the story. App: [Who are we telling the story to?](#)

E. Implicit obedience to the Father (v.34)

Jesus always was in alignment with the Father. **Not my will but thine:** Seen in the Lord’s Prayer and later in the Garden of Gethsemane.

F. Impact on the Samaritans (v. 39-42)

It was like a revival...many believed. They checked it out for themselves.

III. The Simplicity of Jesus’ Approach

Look at similarities and differences of his approach to Nicodemus (John 3) and the Samaritan woman (John 4).

Nicodemus	Samaritan Woman
Moral Religious Ruler	Immoral Irreligious Prostitute
Met at night in <u>private.</u>	Met during the day in <u>public.</u>
Educated Jewish man	Uneducated Samaritan Woman
Rich...upper caste	Poor...outcast
Nicodemus came to Jesus	Jesus came to the woman
He asked <u>questions.</u>	She makes <u>statements.</u>
He leaves wondering (v.9)	She leaves convinced (v.25)
He takes awhile to respond	She confesses Him now!
He begins a spiritual journey	She begins an evangelistic revival
Key Verses: John 3:16-17	John 4:25
Salvation is for those who think they know God, but really don’t!	Salvation is for those don’t know God, but really want to find Him!

A. The implications:

1. Jesus reaches across socio-economic, racial and geographic boundaries to share His love.
2. People's backgrounds may be different, but the gospel (message) remains the same.

IV. The **Significance**: What evangelism lessons do we learn from Jesus?

A. **Take** initiative and make contact

1. Start with their Agenda...Engage them on their turf! He established common ground.
2. Nicodemus was drawn to Jesus because of the miracles, an unsettled conscience, and ultimately a desire for a changed life!
3. **Illustration: Fly fishing...Go where the fish are! (MK. 1:17)**

B. **Talk** in such a way that they want to know more!

1. Physical questions often move toward spiritual conversations.
2. Make statements that cause them to be curious or provoke their thinking.

C. Show **respect** in spite of your different beliefs

1. Jesus had to overcome fear, ignorance, prejudice, and societal expectations. They were different: sex, race, religious background, and moral character... but he still engaged her in conversation.
2. You can disagree without being disagreeable! Did you ever think that maybe Jesus was invited to parties, weddings, etc. because people liked Him! He loved people!

3. Build a relationship. Be a friend not a foe! **He is more interested in winning the woman, than winning the argument!**
4. Abraham Lincoln: “If you want to convince a man, first show him that you are his true friend.”

D. Don't be afraid to **spea**k “hard” truth

1. With Nick he called him out:
 - **Don't look so dumbfounded (v.7)**
 - **You're a teacher (v.10)**
2. With the woman he confronted her living situation:
 - He had to confront her about her sin. If we aren't sinners, then we don't need saving!
 - His honest confrontation was the turning point in the conversation. He didn't call her out publically in front of other people. By doing so, he is letting her know that God will take her right where she is...no façade, no phoniness. He knew exactly who she was!
 - **She was looking for a relationship with a man when what she really needed was a relationship with God!**
3. Note: There was no previous relationship with either individual. He hadn't technically earned the right to confront either one...but He is God!
4. **Speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15)**

E. Don't **force** a decision.

1. Jesus let Nicodemus wrestle with the implications of what he was saying. Nicodemus takes awhile before he fully commits.
2. Jesus gave S.W. time to process. Even though he was tired and probably hungry, he didn't rush things! She came to her own conclusions! He just guided the conversation.

3. **Thought: An investment in people always pays eternal dividends!**

V. The Summary: Genuine Salvation always involves 4 things...

- A. **Acknowledge** your need for living water!
Our independence and pride, keeps us from recognizing our true needs. (v.15)
- B. **Believe** that you are a sinner.
Sin is what separates us from God. She didn't dispute his claim! She knew she had been "found out"! (v.19).
- C. **Confess** Jesus Christ as Lord.
Jesus is the solution! He is the Messiah! He is the eternal well of water that quenches our spiritual thirst! (v.25)
- D. **Declare** what He has done! v. 29

Next week you have the chance to declare who Jesus is in your life! Next week is Easter Sunday. It is arguably, the most important Sunday of our calendar year. People come to church that we won't see again until next Christmas! It will be an opportunity for you to invite an unchurched (or dechurched) neighbors, family members, co-workers, and friends. I am asking you to do 4 things this week:

1. **Ask** God to give you boldness to invite at least 4 people to come to church next week. Who are some of "our people" who have only been attending sporadically? Invite them too! Be strong and courageous. You have God at your side.
2. **Pray** that God will help them be receptive. Ask God to soften their hearts, even though they have said "no" in the past!
3. **Handout** at least 5 "invite cards" to people in your neighborhood or at work. They will be available to pick up on Sunday.
4. **Be there** yourself. Schedule your family gatherings for later that afternoon...even if you have to drive a few hours! Make this Sunday a priority for you and your entire family (including adult kids)!

Table Talk

1. What insight about Jesus' interactions with Nick and the Samaritan woman impressed you the most? Why?
2. How would you have handled their questions and their "ignorance"?
3. How do these chapters (John 3-4) fit with the overall theme of the book? (See John 20:31)