

Becoming God's Catalyst for Changed Lives – Part 3

John 4

Introduction:

1. The last two weeks we have studied and analyzed Christ's meeting and conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well.
2. Christ's actions provide believers today with a great example of how to reach others for God's glory.
3. We saw that Christ wasn't afraid to break with tradition to meet the needs of people. He never compromised God's Word; however, he often went against the culturally and ceremonially accepted practices, especially those of the religious crowd.
4. Many times Christ's disregard for tradition infuriated the Pharisees. But He wasn't about pleasing them or keeping their rules; He desired to give the Father praise and uphold His standard of righteousness.
5. Jesus never let men's traditions hinder His ministry toward people.
6. Also, we read that Jesus didn't harbor prejudice because He was a Jew and she was a Samaritan.
7. Jesus thought that any soul was worth saving. It didn't matter their religion, nationality, or skin color. It just didn't matter.
8. Still, there is more to be gleaned from this passage. Let's continue to see Christ's attitude toward this woman and how her life changed.
9. Remember, God wants to use you. You can be God's catalyst for changed lives. How?

First, by a willingness to lay aside tradition.

Second, by a willingness to lay aside prejudice. vs. 1-5

Third, by a willingness to lay aside a condemning spirit. vs. 16-19

1. Have you ever noticed how we love to condemn others? You might be saying to yourself, "Not me, and I am offended! I think you're pretty low-down for even saying that!" See, you are condemning me for saying that we love to condemn. Let's get honest – this is a problem.
2. Once we get saved and God does a little cleaning up in our lives, we can get kind of prideful and think we are a cut above everybody else. One of the reasons we struggle with becoming a catalyst to see lives changed is because of this issue of a condemning spirit.
 - It is really hard to reach people with the grace and love of Jesus Christ while you are condemning them.
 - We tend to see people for what they are; Christ saw people for what they could be!
3. Right before this story about a sinful, lost Samaritan woman in John 4, is one of the most famous, well-known verses in the Bible – John 3:16. But what is the next

- verse after John 3:16? You say, “John 3:17.” Good, but let’s look at what it says in verse 17. What a verse! Look at verse 18.
4. Did you perceive what the Bible is saying here? It is not our job to condemn people. Isn’t that liberating? If Christ didn’t come to condemn people, I sure have no authority to condemn people!
 - The truth is, we don’t have to condemn people. They are already condemned because of their sin and rejection of Jesus Christ.
 5. So, right after making this statement (John 3), Jesus goes through Samaria (John 4) and engages in a conversation with a sinful, Samaritan woman.
 - She was a Samaritan! As we learned last week, this was a race of people that the Jews utterly despised as having no claim on their God.
 - Not only was she despised by the Jews, she was an outcast and a vagabond in the eyes of her own people. This is evidenced by the fact that she came alone to draw water from the community well. During biblical times, drawing water and chatting at the well was the social highpoint of a woman’s day.
 - However, this woman was ostracized and marked as immoral – an unmarried woman living openly with the sixth in a series of men.
 6. But here comes Jesus! The story of the woman at the well teaches us that God loves us in spite of our bankrupt lives. Please understand, Jesus did tell her the truth. He let her know that He knew exactly what state her life was in (vs. 16-18), and in doing so, He revealed to her who He was (vs. 19, 25-26). As a result, she believed on Christ and was saved that day. Her life was forever changed, and she led many more to Christ. vs. 39
 7. Think about the weight of this. Jesus, the judge of “*the quick and the dead*” (John 5:22), and the vilest of sinners are met together at a well. But yet He is not there to condemn her, but to seek and to save her. That is powerful!
 8. Jesus – the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace – was sitting by a well, weary and thirsty. He, as a man, was dependent on an outcast woman for a little water (vs. 6-7).
 - His grace and love, rejected by Israel, now pour out their fullness upon an impure Samaritan woman (vs. 10, 14).
 9. So these two isolated hearts met – Jesus’ heart isolated by complete and total holiness, her heart isolated by sin and separated from society. And this encounter at this well of holiness and sinfulness resulted in the salvation of the sinner, because Jesus is the Savior (vs. 42).
 10. Thus, a sinner responded to the grace that the Pharisees proudly refused. She was a sinner, and she recognized she was a sinner. Jesus didn’t have to yell and scream and condemn her; He just offered her the water of life, and she rejoiced and believed!
 11. Jesus is like, “Yep, I know you’re a sinner, but the Father wants you and is seeking people to worship Him (vs. 23). Only a person like the Samaritan woman, an outcast among her own people, could understand this.
 - To be wanted, to be cared for when no one, not even herself, could see anything of value in her – this is grace indeed.
 - Condemnation judges what you are; grace sees what you can be.

- This woman went from being a vile, sinful outcast to being a powerful ambassador for Jesus Christ. vs. 28-30, 39
- Imagine the vilest, most sinful person you know getting saved and trusting Christ, and then leading scores of people all over Daytona Beach to Christ. This is what happened.

In Conclusion:

1. Isn't it interesting that the disciples show back up again after getting some groceries? Seeing Jesus engaged in conversation, the Bible says, they " *marvelled that he talked with the woman*" (vs. 27).
2. Isn't this just like us. Rather, they should have wondered that He talked with **them**, that He hung out with them, and had anything to do with them! But they were not sensitive enough to their **own** sinfulness.
 - We are much better at seeing others' sins and short-comings than we are of our own.
3. We may be guilty of thinking, "That person is too far gone. God could never save that one." Do you realize what we are saying? We are saying that there is a more redeeming quality in us than in them. No, we are made of the same stuff – sinful flesh.
 - **Illustration:** I could take a beautiful red cardinal bird that is dead and lay it there beside an ugly dead armadillo. The bird may look a little better outwardly, but inside they are both equally dead. We are all in the same condition – spiritually dead in sins and trespasses.
4. Jesus' ministering to those outcasts of the Jewish society (the Samaritans) reveals that all people are valuable to God, and Jesus desires that we (His children) demonstrate love to everyone – to outcasts, wicked sinners, and yes, even our enemies.
5. God wants us to love everybody and become His catalyst to change lives.
6. How can we become that catalyst? What have we learned over the past three weeks? We must have a willingness to be like Christ, as exemplified in this story and:
 - Lay aside our cherished traditions.
 - Lay aside any prejudice that dwells in our hearts.
 - Lay aside any type of condemning spirit and see people, not for what they are, but for what they **can** be through the grace of Jesus Christ.