

## **Jesus Lures a Samaritan Woman to Life**

**John 4:1-26**

### **I. Fishing Instructions from the Master**

I've never been much for fishing. I don't like any seafood, so I knew I'd never eat whatever I caught; but I also knew it took a great deal of patience, the right equipment, and skillful technique to actually catch a fish! Someone once said "If it were easy it'd be called 'catching' not fishing!!"

Jesus' earliest disciples were professional fishermen on the Sea of Galilee; one day Jesus was walking beside the Sea as they were preparing their nets for another day of hard toil in their boats. They were experts at fishing that Sea... but Jesus had a higher calling for them:

***Follow me, he said, and I will make you fishers of men.***

Now every different type of fish requires a different kind of bait. I learned that not from experience but from movies

The movie "A Perfect Storm" taught me that, if you want to catch a five-hundred pound swordfish, you have to use a swordfish rig with 300 pound test line, heavy-duty J-hooks, and live bait like squid or mackerel; also you have to intersperse fluorescent light sticks to attract the Swordfish to the line

The movie "A River Runs through it" taught me how to catch a river trout in Missoula, Montana: Two brothers who are highly competitive with each other, sons of a Presbyterian minister

- i) They deeply love fly fishing; and there was a tremendous art to they way they flicked the fly line through the air gracefully back and forth, imitating the motion of a fly before lightly setting the fly down on the river surface
- ii) There was also art to tying the fly itself: an elaborate knot of thread tied precisely to look like certain types of insects, concealing the hook that would catch the trout
- iii) At one point in the film, one brother is bitten on the neck with a large insect; he studies the insect that bit him, and selects the perfect imitation of that insect from his box of flies; soon, to the annoyance and jealousy of his brother he catches a beautiful trout

iv) His brother yells “What are they biting on?” He answers “Bunyan bugs”... and offers him one from his collection

v) The proper bait made all the difference

Jesus knows what kind of bait to draw all His elect; He knows how to attract His people into the Kingdom... here we see all His skill put on display in His remarkable encounter with a Samaritan woman at a dusty well two thousand years ago

#### B. Last Week: Lessons from Zacchaeus’s Salvation

1. Christ’s central mission clearly revealed

***Luke 19:10 “To seek and to save the lost”***

2. FBC: Our greatest challenge as a church... we need to have the same passion for seeking and saving the lost that Jesus did

#### C. The Need of the Hour: A Fully Faithful Great Commission Church

1. So many churches do one or the other or neither

2. Some churches are excellent at drawing people from unbelief, from the rolls of the unchurched to a commitment to Christ... but then they falter, because the whole church structure is set up only for that initial commitment

3. Other churches are good at preaching/teaching the deep things of God, and at meeting the needs of existing Christians... but they show little passion or fruit for the lost

4. Some churches do neither one!!

5. I yearn for our church to be fully faithful to this commission:

***Matthew 28:18-20 “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.***

My desire is that you would take this message personally to heart, so I have given you a bulletin insert by which you can be thinking of someone you would like to bring to faith in Christ... write that person’s name on the sheet and pass it in with the offering. The staff will join you in praying for that person... and we look forward to seeking and finding out from you how it went!

As He was last week, so this morning, our example in personal evangelism is Jesus Christ

## II. Feeding on the Father's Will (vs. 1-6)

### A. Father Seeking Worshipers All Over the World

1. It was God the Father who sent the Son into the world to seek and save the lost
2. John 4 tells us what in particular the Father is seeking

***John 4:23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.***

3. Jesus has come to carry out His Father's will

### B. Jesus Came to Do the Father's Will... Relentlessly

1. Jesus "ATE" His Father's will

***John 4:34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.***

2. Jesus entered the world to do His Father's will

***John 6:38-39 For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.***

Jesus came to save the elect the Father had given Him before the foundation of the world... that NONE of them should be lost but ALL brought to eternal life

### C. Christ Fruitful in His Father's Will

***John 4:1-2 The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John, <sup>2</sup> although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples.***

1. It's hard for us to overstate how immensely significant was John the Baptist
2. Huge crowds from all over Palestine went to John, being baptized by him
3. But now Jesus was becoming even more successful than was John
4. John's enemies became Jesus' as well: the Pharisees and teachers of the law;  
That was why Jesus left His growing ministry in Judea and withdrew to Galilee

***John 4:3 When the Lord learned of this, he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.***

5. He didn't want too early a confrontation with the religious leaders, for they would certainly have wanted to kill him sooner than the plan of God called for
6. We see also the great wisdom of God concerning baptism: Jesus did no baptisms, but entrusted that work to His disciples
7. Here we see Jesus' desire to train up a church that will carry on this evangelistic ministry after He has ascended to heaven

#### D. Christ Surprisingly Compelled to Go to Samaria

***John 4:4 Now he had to go through Samaria.***

1. An amazingly strong statement
2. Greek: "MUST"... something that HAD to happen

**[to Nicodemus] *John 3:7 You must be born again.***

***John 3:14-15 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.***

***John 4:24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."***

***John 9:4 As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.***

3. Note therefore the sense of urgency here concerning this encounter with a single Samaritan woman... Jesus HAD to go save her!!
4. Christ's heart was like a compass, and one of his lost sheep was the true north; and He would follow where He must to seek and save the lost
5. The Jews would usually have avoided all contact with the Samaritan... they would have sought at all costs to AVOID this journey through Samaria, even if it meant going way out of their way

#### E. The Doctrine of Election

1. The sense of urgency that compelled Jesus to go to Samaria was based on the doctrine of election that I just mentioned... He had come down from heaven to save all the people that the Father had given Him; that none of them be lost
2. God is operating by means of an eternal plan... there are Christ's sheep, chosen before the foundation of the world, and they will MOST CERTAINLY respond to the gospel... there is no uncertainty at all in the mind of God
3. Another "MUST" verse shows Jesus' care for His sheep and His willingness to go to any trouble to seek them and save them:

***John 10:16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.***

4. So also we must believe that there are some of Christ's sheep we will encounter in our daily lives, and we MUST go and bring them in

#### F. Jesus Seeking the Lost Even When Weary

***John 4:5-6 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.***

1. Jesus was in the midst of the most grueling and physically demanding ministry in history
2. Here we see the humanity of Jesus: His physical needs coming through
  - a. He is weary from the journey, so He sits down to rest
  - b. He is thirsty too, so He asks her for a drink
3. It was about the sixth hour makes it high noon: the hottest part of the day
4. BUT nothing deters Him from seeking out this Samaritan woman

### III. Baiting the Hook: Making the Gospel Attractive (vs. 7-15)

#### A. Amazing Grace: Jesus Reaches Out to a Samaritan Woman

***John 4:7-8 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)***

1. Jesus takes the initiative, but in a fascinating way
  - a. Usually He encounters people at the point of THEIR felt needs... they need a healing, they need food, they need forgiveness, they need SOMETHING
  - b. This time He reaches out to someone to meet one of HIS needs! He asks HER from something!!
  - c. Jesus' approaches are as varied and fascinating as they are effective
  - d. But WHO was He seeking to reach? That's the most amazing part of all

#### 2. Ronnie Stevens

"The Jews were the rejects of the world; the Samaritans were the rejects of the Jews; the Samaritan women were the rejects of the Samaritan men; this Samaritan woman was the reject of the Samaritan women"

There is no one so rejected, so much at the bottom of the pile as was this Samaritan woman with a scarlet past and a sinful present

Yet Jesus clearly is intent on reaching her with the gospel; and through her He will reach the whole Samaritan village; and through them to transform the way the Jews (namely His disciples) would see Samaritans; and through the Jews to save the world

No encounter is insignificant, nor is any person worthless or beyond the realm of God  
AMAZING GRACE

### 3. Clear statement from the woman

***John 4:9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?"***

- a. Racial divide: He was a Jew and she was a Samaritan
- b. Gender divide: He was a man, and she was a woman... though out in public, yet they were alone

### 4. Clear statement from John

***(For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)***

### 5. Testimony from the disciples' shocked reaction

***John 4:27 Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"***

### 6. BUT the distance from heaven to earth is infinitely greater than any distance between one sinner and another

During evangelism, I have often asked someone, "Who's closer to the sun right now, you or me?" Now if they are taller than me, they are a few inches closer to the sun; if they stand on a box or a stool, they'll be even closer to the sun

But the distance is 93 million miles!! A few inches closer or farther is not worth talking about

### 7. What is amazing is that Jesus talks to any of us at all!!! And that is nothing less than grace

## B. A Lure with Four Hooks (vs. 10)

- 1. Jesus reaches into His bag of lures and pulls out the perfect one
- 2. It is an amazingly provocative statement, as provocative as His request for a drink

***John 4:10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."***

3. It is a lure with four hooks... and it works to provoke four questions in her
  - a. "What is the 'gift of God'?"
  - b. "Who are you?"
  - c. "Why should I ask you for anything?"
  - d. "What in the world is 'living water'?"
4. All four of those questions become the focus of the rest of their conversation

C. The Woman is "Hooked" Four Ways (vs. 11-15)

1. "Why Should I Ask You for Anything?" (vs. 11)

***John 4:11 "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?"***

- a. One thing this woman knows is what it takes to get water out of the well
- b. She knows right away that Jesus has nothing in His hands, and therefore it seems like He has nothing to offer her!
- c. So the question pops in her mind: "Why should I ask you for anything?"
- d. All she can see is the outside, the surface... it seems like He has nothing to offer
- e. It will seem that way again: When Jesus is dying on the cross, when His clothes have been confiscated and gambled for by Roman soldiers, when His blood has been poured out, when His disciples have all deserted Him and fled, when He is as poor as any human being on the face of the earth, a condemned criminal rejected by His own people... at that moment this statement could come up again:

***"Sir, you have nothing..."***

- f. BUT appearances can be deceiving... the eye of faith alone sees through the outside appearances
- g. The thief on the cross saw something else:

***Luke 23:42 Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."***

- h. This destitute and dusty Jewish man was actually the richest and most powerful man in history... Jesus thus couches His statement this way:

***“If you knew the gift of God and who it is who speaks to you, you would have asked him and He would have given you living water.”***

- i. The real issue here is I have infinitely more to give you than you can possibly imagine... the better you know me the more you’ll ask me for things

2. “What is ‘Living Water’?” (vs. 11)

***John 4:11 Where can you get this living water?***

- a. She picks up this mysterious phrase, but can scarcely understand what it could be
- b. Jesus will bring her back to it in a moment
- c. Her initial issue is: “It seems like you have nothing to offer. How can you give me ‘living water’ whatever that is?”

3. “Who Are You?” (vs. 12)

***John 4:12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?”***

- a. Jesus said “If you knew who it is who is speaking to you...”
- b. Basically, she is interested finding just who He is, and how great He thinks He is
- c. She assumes the answer to her question must be NO? Jacob was one of the great men of antiquity... a patriarch who was specially chosen by God; a man who had visions of God in a stairway to heaven, with angels ascending and descending; a man who was uniquely blessed by God with great wealth, through whom the twelve tribes of Israel came; a man who wrestled with an angel; an man to whom God had made an awesome promise:
- d. The Samaritan woman must have had a smirk on her face, when she said “Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well?”
- e. In effect this question was forefront: Who do you think you are? Jesus’ enemies asked Him that exact question after Jesus made another outrageous claim:

***John 8:51 I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.”***



***John 8:53 Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?"***

- f. Even more important than the question "Who do you think you are?" is this one: WHO ARE YOU?
  - g. Who is Jesus is THE QUESTION of our existence, the question of all existence
  - h. Is Jesus greater than Jacob?
4. "What is the 'Gift of God?'" (vs. 19-20, 25, 29)
- a. Jesus moves on to answer this question and thereby indirectly to answer her questions "Who are you? Are you greater than Jacob?"
  - b. Jesus in effect says "I will prove how much greater I am by giving you a gift that will last for eternity. That's something Jacob could not do. I am greater than Jacob because I give better water than he did!"

***John 4:13-14 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again,<sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."***

- c. Now see the response... the "Gift of God" is eternal life, and eternal life is knowing and loving God

***John 4:15 The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."***

- 5. The woman is now "hooked"... I believe Jesus has already started to draw her into His glorious net; she feels an accelerating interest in this man, something she can barely explain... Jesus is the most magnetic, the most appealing man who ever lived; I believe He has already opened something in her heart that is as real as the sensation of cool mountain water going down a parched throat
- 6. But she still doesn't understand fully... and there is a vital matter she must face first
- 7. Here the most skillful fisher of souls in history also shows He is the most skillful heart surgeon in history as well
- 8. He opens her up to face her own heart... its darkness, its sin; if she will not face it, He can give her nothing

#### IV. Dealing Directly with Sin (vs. 16-18)

***John 4:16-18 He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."***

### A. Salvation from What?

1. With consummate skill, Jesus must risk offending her or He cannot save her
2. He brings up her marital life, her sexual life
3. All sin is intensely personal, but this is the most personal of all, the one that causes the most shame
4. For this reason, she tells an evasion, a partial truth that amounts to a lie

***Vs. 17 "I have no husband.", she replied***

5. Jesus amazingly commends her for the partial truth she told:

***Vs. 17-18 Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. <sup>18</sup> The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."***

6. But Jesus has come for a distinct purpose: salvation
7. Salvation from what? You may ask...

***Matthew 1:21 you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."***

8. Without repentance from specific and personal sin, there can be no salvation

### B. A Supernatural Touch

1. Jesus probes her life with supernatural skill
2. He also proclaims her secrets with supernatural knowledge
3. He utterly amazes her with a knowledge no stranger could have had... the deepest secrets of her past
4. The sordid nature of her sexual life was probably common knowledge; but maybe not the details
5. We don't really know what amazed her so much; perhaps it was the number FIVE: "You have had five husbands" Perhaps it was the fact that she was with a man "Now"... maybe the water she'd come to draw was for yet another man in her house that no one else knew about
6. In any case, she was convinced that He was supernatural

***John 4:19 "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet."***

Later, she will go beyond this, with not much more to go on:

***John 4:29 "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"***

### C. Some Lessons for Us

1. We must be willing to address sin... even personally
2. Obviously Christ did it in a way that was winsome and appealing, for the woman did not shut Him off
3. Christ could do that because she was amazed at His supernatural knowledge of her particular sin, which power we do not have
4. BUT we have something Christ did not... the ability to say "I am just as much in need of a Savior as you are... there's no difference between us"
5. People these days seem very satisfied with themselves, very confident in their own standing, very unaware of their need for a Savior
6. Too many "Seeker Sensitive" churches gloss over sin; they present Jesus as someone who can make their lives here on earth far more enjoyable and then give them heaven when they die
7. The real issue is the person we're speaking with needs to be ready for judgment day, when he/she will give an account for every careless word they've spoken
8. If they have even a single unforgiven sin, they will be condemned to hell
9. Speak lovingly but directly about sin
  - a. Use the sermon on the Mount's probing of the human heart

***Matthew 5:21-22 "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' <sup>22</sup> But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. ... and anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.***

***Matthew 5:27-28 "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' <sup>28</sup> But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.***

- b. Use the two great commandments

***Matthew 22:37-39 "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'***

No one keeps the law perfectly... but perfect righteousness is required on judgment day

The goal of evangelism is not mere grudging assent: alright I admit I'm a sinner

Nor is it life reformation: okay, okay, I'll try to be a better person

Our goal today is the same as Jesus' goal with the Samaritan woman: to make a true spiritual worshiper out of a former sinner

## V. Seeking a True Spiritual Worshiper (vs. 19-24)

### A. Greatest Passage on Worship in the New Testament

1. The word WORSHIP is mentioned ten times in five verses
2. Amazingly, this woman gets to the heart of the matter very quickly!!

### B. Illogical Smoke Screen? Jesus Didn't Think So!

1. So often in evangelism people throw up smoke screens: "What about evolution?" "What do you think of gay marriage?" "Do you support the war in Iraq?" They do this to avoid facing the power of conviction over sin

2. John Piper's observation on the train of thought

"A trapped animal will chew off its own leg to escape. A trapped sinner will mangle her own mind and rip up the rules of logic. 'Why yes, as long as we're talking about my adultery, what's your stance on the issue of where people should worship?'"

3. A spicy topic as a smoke screen

- a. This was a controversial topic in that day
- b. The Samaritans were Jewish half-breeds who rejected every book of the Old Testament except the five books of Moses
- c. They had their own place of worship on Mount Gerizim so they wouldn't have to submit to Jewish rules and regulations
- d. They debated legalities and technicalities with the Jews, especially over the place of worship
4. She actually went precisely where He wanted her to go, and He skillfully addresses her smoke screen as if it were the real issue
5. Jesus' sweetly and boldly answers her question: But He changes it

The issue is not WHERE you worship but WHOM and HOW

6. WHOM is the Father... the very one who is seeking her now

***John 4:21 Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem."***

***John 4:23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.***

***John 4:24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."***

7. HOW is "in spirit and in truth"

a. "in spirit" = with all your heart, with deep passion and emotion and desire

b. "in truth" = based on the revealed word of God, written in ALL the Scripture

***John 4:22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews.***

Worship = revelation + response

C. What the Father Seeks and What We Should as Well

1. We were created to worship God

St. Augustine: You have made us for yourself, O God, and the heart of man is restless until it finds its rest in you.

2. Worship in spirit

3. Worship in truth

4. Only possible from a regenerate heart by the power of the Spirit

5. Away with shallow conversions and "pray the prayer"... eternity beholding and cherishing God's radiant glory is the goal

6. Regeneration happens when they see God's glory in the face of Christ

VI. Revealing the Savior Plainly (vs. 25-26)

A. We End Where He Began: Who Am I?

B. The Clearest Messianic Statement the Messiah Ever Made

***John 4:25-26 The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." <sup>26</sup> Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."***

Actually He reveals His DEITY to her, using the name He gave to Moses in the burning bush:

The one who is speaking with you... "I AM"

C. Her Reaction: Eternally Priceless

***John 4:28-29 Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, <sup>29</sup> "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"***

## VII. Application

A. Perhaps you don't need to learn about evangelism right now... perhaps, like the Samaritan you need the Savior lovingly to draw you into the Kingdom

1. Would you like to know the Savior, to know what he meant when He said

***John 4:14 whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."***

2. Would you like to know that He has forgiven you for your sins, that like the Samaritan woman's sexual immorality all your sins can be covered by Christ's blood shed on the cross?

3. Jesus told you what to do:

***John 4:10 "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."***

Know God's gift: salvation is a FREE GIFT

Know Christ, the One who is speaking to you now by His Spirit: He is the One who paid for the free gift and who offers it to you now, free of charge

ASK HIM and HE WILL GIVE IT TO YOU!!

For Christians:

B. Learn from the Master

C. Specifically, Learn to Make the Gospel Attractive

1. Speak of the beauty and refreshment of Christ to you

2. Speak as one who has a spring of water welling up to eternal life within you
3. Be joyful and speak as if compelled by joy

John Bunyan: repairer of pots and pans, overheard three or four women talking about the things of God and how deeply grateful they were for the saving work of Christ in their hearts

“I thought,” said Bunyan, “that they spoke as if joy made them speak!”

4. Learn some attractive statements like a lure to draw people into conversation

D. Be Willing Courageously to Face Sin

E. Aim for Making a True Spiritual Worshiper of God

F. Clearly Reveal the Savior: Jesus Christ

G. WRITE DOWN A NAME AND PASS IT IN

1. We will pray for that person to come to faith, and we will pray for you personally to lead that person to Christ
2. We also will take some opportunities as the Lord allows to initiate with you and see how it went
3. We look forward to the people of FBC being more fruitful than ever before in seeking and saving the lost by the power of the Holy Spirit