

30. The Gospel of John—4:1-30, 39-42

“Evangelism—the Master’s Way”

(5/13/18)

Many times, professional athletes, who are masters in their sport, will put out instructional videos to help others become more proficient in things like tennis or golf or some other sport.

In fact, I remember many years ago while I was still in high school that professional golfer, Jack Nicholas, who had recently won the Master’s Golf Tournament put out such a video entitled *“Golf My Way”*.

The purpose of the video was to teach others the secret of winning golf thru the style of Jack Nicholas.

This morning we have before us an example or a sample, not of a person winning the Master’s—but of the Master winning a person!

And if we will study this passage carefully in John 4 as Jesus, the Master, wins someone to Himself—if we will study His ‘approach’, His ‘style’, His ‘technique’ if you will—I believe it will help us to be more effective in winning people to Jesus, as we watch the Master in action!

Let’s set the scene—

John 4:1-4 (NKJV)

¹ Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John ² (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), ³ He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. ⁴ But He needed to go through Samaria.

As we have been saying in our two prior studies in John 4—the Jews hated the Samaritans and wouldn't set foot in their land—even if they had to go from Jerusalem to Galilee or from Galilee to Jerusalem.

The quickest way was to go thru Samaria—but because of their hatred for the Samaritans they would either travel using the road that ran along the Mediterranean Sea coast or they would cross the Jordan River and travel thru Perea and Decapolis and then back into Israel—by-passing Samaria altogether.

So, when we read in John 4 that Jesus wanted to go up to Galilee, but He *needed* to go thru Samaria—there is only one reason I can think of as to why He *needed* to go thru Samaria to get to Galilee.

It was because He had an appointment with a woman of Samaria who was thirsty in her soul and needed living water. (Check out the last two studies)

Before we go on to our first point—understand what Jesus said was the reason He had come to the earth—

Luke 19:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Mark 2:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ When Jesus heard *it*, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

If we're going to save sinners than we must *seek* them—which means to go where they are.

(Story of man who lost coin down a dark street but was looking for it under a street light.)

And so with that in mind, we come to the first point in our outline of the Master's approach to evangelism—go to where the sinners are and make contact.

I. The Contact

John 4:7-8 (NKJV)

⁷ A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." ⁸ For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

Jesus establishes contact with this lost woman by finding some common ground with her, something they mutually had in common—which in this case was the need for water.

Jesus met this woman at the point of her physical need, and then used it to elevate her thinking to her real need which was spiritual.

But notice *how* He made contact with her—He asked her for help (to give Him a drink of water from Jacob's Well).

The quickest way to get people to drop their guard is to ask them for their input with something you're dealing with (a problem perhaps), or for their help in some way.

So often when we witness to unbelievers we give off the impression that we're better than them—that we're 'above' them because we have something they need.

That they have nothing to give us, nothing to offer or contribute to us—but we have the answers for their messed-up lives.

This tends to make them feel like they're inferior to us, that we're looking down on them—and that causes them to become defensive and to *'put their shields up'*.

Again, the quickest way for you to make people feel you're not above them is to ask them for their help with something.

Now, *they* feel somewhat superior because you need *their* help and that not only causes them to lower their guard—it makes them feel connected to you which leads to an open door to share Jesus.

John 4:9 (NKJV)

⁹ Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

Now folks, that has to be one of the great understatements in the Bible. (Explain)

One author summed it up this way—

“The Jews typically regarded the Samaritans as unclean apostates. Shortly after this incident the Jews made a law stating that “the daughters of the Samaritans are menstruants from their cradle” and therefore perpetually unclean. The Pharisees prayed that no Samaritan would be raised in the resurrection. And when Jesus enemies wanted to insult Him, they called Him a Samaritan (8:48).”

The normal social conventions of the day prohibited public conversation between men and women (even between husbands and wives)—and the rabbis adhered to that ‘religiously’.

So, to have a Jewish rabbi (teacher) speak to a woman in public, let alone a ‘defiled’ Samaritan woman, was off the charts shocking and unorthodox—which is why this woman was so taken back by Jesus’ request.

The word ‘**dealings**’ in verse 9 is *suncrontai* which means ‘*to use vessels together.*’

In that culture to share a meal with someone and to use the same cup to drink from was a deep expression of friendship and oneness—which no self-respecting Jew would ever want with a Samaritan!

That’s why she responds incredulously, “*You want to drink from my vessel!?”*

But look, Jesus is no respecter of persons—He loves everyone the same whether they're Jew or gentile, black or white, rich or poor, famous or unknown—all are equal in His sight and He desires for all men and women to come to Him for salvation.

Which leads us to our second main point in the Master's approach to evangelism—He first of all makes contact with her and then He stimulates her **curiosity**.

II. The Curiosity

Again, Jesus meets her on common ground (they were both thirsty for water—you might use a common interest or hobby) and He uses it to create curiosity in her—

John 4:10-14 (NKJV)

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 The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? ¹² Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"

¹³ Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

And so, this is how *Jesus* created a curiosity in this woman—how might this look when *we* try to evangelize someone?

Well, say a co-worker invites you to go out with a group from work to a bar for a drink or to celebrate someone's retirement.

You thank them for including you, but you explain to them that you don't drink.

They might ask you *why*, but even if they don't you follow that statement with the reason why you don't drink—"I used to drink but it was a problem in my life. When I became a Christian God broke the hold alcohol had on me..."

Now you've piqued their curiosity and often that will open a door for you to share your testimony and ultimately the gospel.

Let me just say that some Christians might encourage you to go with your co-workers to the bar—not to drink (a coke maybe) but just to show them you're not too 'holier than thou' to go with them to a bar—*"it will give you an opportunity to witness to them"*, they'll tell you.

I would advise against that—especially if you've had a drinking problem in the past.

First of all, when people are in a group, a group that is going to a bar for the sole purpose of celebrating something with alcohol—it isn't a conducive environment to share the gospel.
(Explain)

Besides, I feel it's more of a witness to thank them for the invitation (explaining to them why you no longer drink alcohol) and excuse yourself without making any critical or condescending remarks about the evils of alcohol.

So, Jesus meets this woman on common ground and uses her physical thirst for water (something she knew very well) to teach her about the inward or spiritual thirst in her soul (her thirst for God).

Jesus had a way of meeting people on the level of the physical and then elevating their thinking from the physical to the spiritual.

- To this thirsty woman He said—*"I'll give you living water."*
- To a self-righteous Pharisee named Nicodemus He said—*"You must be born again."*
- To the professional fisherman Peter—*"I'll make you a fisher of men."*

- To Martha standing by the tomb of her dead brother—“*I am the resurrection and the life.*”
- To the man born blind—“*I am the Light of the world.*”
- To the hungry crowd—“*I am the Bread from heaven.*”

Jesus knew how to use the physical to teach people about their true need (spiritual)—the need for eternal life.

Jesus truly is the Master—it’s exciting to see Him in action!

And so, after Jesus stimulates her curiosity—she is now open to hearing what He has to say.

This then leads to the third main point in our outline—

III. The Conversation

John 4:15-19 (NKJV)

¹⁵ The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw." ¹⁶ Jesus 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 well said, 'I have no husband,' ¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly." ¹⁹ The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.

Up until this point I imagine that this woman had been acting a little *cutesy* and flirtatious with the Lord—not realizing who He was.

But this was just her way with men—and there’s no reason for us to assume that she was any different in the way she was conversing with Jesus.

Of course, His only interest in her was her salvation—her attempts to flatter Him fell on ‘deaf’ ears.

Instead, the Lord opens His gospel presentation with penetrating words (the word of knowledge) designed to bring conviction into her heart.

You see, no one can receive eternal life who isn’t first brought face to face with the reality of their sinfulness and their need for a Savior—and conviction is where this realization begins.

(Ray Comfort method of evangelism)

But notice how gentle and loving His is with her as He confronts the sin in her life—it reminds us of what He said to Nicodemus:

John 3:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

The Lord Jesus is this way with all sinners—He doesn’t condemn, He lovingly (thru the Holy Spirit) convicts as He demonstrates with this woman.

Once Jesus exposes the sin in her life and she realizes that she was in the presence of a man of God (she didn’t realize He was actually God the Man!), and now as her life has been laid bare—she asks the question that was burning in her heart.

This is a question that reveals the emptiness that was inside her, a question which tells us that she was searching—and now she reveals that deep down she was searching for God! The problem was—she didn’t know where to go to find Him! She said—

John 4:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

It's interesting that as soon as she discovers that this Man was a 'Prophet' of God—this question comes rushing from her lips—“*Where can I go to find God?*”

This was the running argument, the 'hot' theological controversy between the Jews and the Samaritans in those days.

The Jews said that on top of Mt. Moriah, where Solomon built the temple, was the legitimate (and only) place where God could be worshipped.

The Samaritans had built a temple to YHWH on Mt. Gerizim in Samaria (destroyed in 128 BC), and they maintained that Mt. Gerizim was the only place where God could rightfully (and acceptably) be worshipped.

So, she's genuinely confused as to which one of the two was the place where God could be 'found' and properly worshipped.

Now, as we're talking about Jesus' approach to evangelism—I must point out that many believe as Jesus confronted her with her sin—she got convicted and tried to **change the subject** by bringing up a theological controversy.

I've had this happen many times over the years when witnessing to unbelievers—as soon as you start revealing the fact that they're sinners based on the way their living—they immediately want to **change the subject**.

And they often do it by bringing up some 'hot-button' theological issue or controversy—such as “*evolution vs. creation and which one best explains the existence of life on the earth?*”

Or, “*if God is such a good and loving God why does He allow evil and injustice in the world?*”

Over the years I've heard people try to change the subject by asking questions like "*where did Cain get his wife?*" or "*did Adam have a belly-button?*" or "*can God make a rock so big that He can't pick it up?*" (say no and they'll come back with "*well then He can't do everything...*")

This is the natural tendency of someone who's being convicted by the Holy Spirit thru your gospel presentation—they often try to deflect the conviction by changing the conversation onto some controversial religious topic ("*what do you think about that Shroud of Turin—do you think it's real?*").

How did Jesus, the Master, handle this—He kept His **concentration**.

John 4:21-24 (NKJV)

²¹ Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²² You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. ²³ But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴ God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

We will 'unpack' and carefully examine these verses next time in our study of John as we explore the very important subject of 'True Worship'.

I will say this—Jesus has just revealed to this woman that true worship isn't a matter of *locality*—it's a matter of the *heart*!

Jesus could have spent hours answering her question—but He knew it wasn't germane to the conversation at hand.

Don't let people get you side-tracked with non-essential, trivial, unimportant questions that steer you into the 'weeds' and off the main road—the gospel presentation and their salvation.

Keep to what's important—she needed a personal relationship with God thru His Son, Jesus Christ—and at that moment, that was all that mattered.

Now once again, she again tries to deflect or derail the conversation—

John 4:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things."

She attempts to put off everything Jesus has said—for another time and place.

This also happens quite frequently with people you witness to—you start to get to them and they say “*well someday I’m going to read the Bible or go to church...etc.*”

You must communicate to them that, that is all well and fine but “*today is the day of salvation*”!

John 4:25-26 (NKJV)

²⁵ The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." ²⁶ **Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am *He*."**

In the Greek He literally said to her—“**I that speak to you, I Am**” (the name of God!)

The final step in our evangelism is introducing them to Jesus, the Son of God—the great I Am.

Look, she didn’t need a religious guru or a spiritual avatar—she was thirsty for God (not religion or church), and Jesus, the Living Water was the only One who could satisfy her thirsty soul.

That then brings us to our last main point—

IV. The Conversion

John 4:27-29 (NKJV)

²⁷ And at this *point* His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?" ²⁸ The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, ²⁹ "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"

So somewhere in the ‘white space’ between verses 27 and 28—this woman gets converted, she gets saved!

How do I know?

First of all she left her water pot (the thing she was going to use to satisfy her thirst).

When you’re truly converted you’ll leave your ‘water pot’ too, (of course I’m speaking allegorically) you won’t need it anymore because you’ll never thirst again (you’ll be satisfied in your soul)—you’ll have an eternal fountain with in you (v.14).

One commentator offered this explanation—

“Perhaps she left her water pot out of appreciation. “You have told me about my sin and my need,” said the woman. “You have told me about true worship. You want a cup of water? Take the whole pot. Take everything I have. It’s Yours.” When people truly get saved, they quit asking, “What can I get from God?” and ask instead, “What can I give to God?”

And secondly, she goes right out and begins to share her faith with others (a good sign of conversion).

She runs into town to tell the men (she had a better relationship with them than with the women) about her encounter with Jesus—but she’s careful about what she says to them (male pride).

Her question in v.29, “*Could this be the Christ?*” comes thru in the Greek this way, “*This couldn’t be the Christ (Messiah), could it?*”

In this way she let the men think *they* figured out this was the Christ—“*well, of course He’s the Christ woman, how can you not see that! It’s good you have us here to enlighten you!*” (smart gal!)

But notice, how she started to whole process over again—she made contact, created curiosity in them and then shared the Christ with them!

It worked, and they decided to investigate this matter for themselves—

John 4:30, 39-42 (NKJV)

³⁰ Then they went out of the city and came to Him...³⁹ And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did." ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. ⁴¹ And many more believed because of His own word. ⁴² Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."

Jesus brought life to those who were hated and rejected—the social outcasts.

He is making the same offer to you because He loves you and doesn’t care how you’ve lived your life or how others feel about you.

He is no respecter of persons—He is the friend of sinners—the only One who can satisfy your thirsty soul and give purpose to your life.

John 7:37-38 (NKJV)

³⁷ On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."