

Title: **TWO GREAT SOUL WINNERS**

Text: John 4:30

Subject: *Lessons in Witnessing*

Date: Sunday Morning — December 14, 2008

Tape: John #33

Reading: *Proverbs 11:1-31*

Introduction:

We do not hear much about soul winning these days. In fact, I do not recall ever hearing a sermon by a gospel preacher on the subject. In gospel churches, we tend to think of soul winning as an evil thing and of soul winners as ignorant Arminians. Yet, we read in Proverbs 11:30, — “*The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life: and he that winneth souls is wise.*”

My subject today is soul winning. The title of my message is **TWO GREAT SOUL WINNERS**. Our text will be John 4:30. In John chapter 4 we are given a beautifully instructive picture of the soul winner. Actually, we see two great soul winners in the chapter. First, our Lord Jesus Christ came to Samaria as the great soul winner, seeking a lost soul. Then, the sinner to whom he revealed himself immediately became a soul winner herself. Let me show you. I will begin reading at John 4:27.

(John 4:27-30) “And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? (28) The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, (29) Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? (30) Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.”

Are you concerned about the souls of men? Are you interested in the salvation of sinners for the glory of God? Would you like to be used of God for the everlasting salvation of others?

If you have yourself experienced the grace of God in Christ, that the Lord is gracious for yourself, if you have experienced the love of God in your own soul, I know that your answer is “yes”. You know that your family, friends, neighbors, and most implacable enemies need the Savior. “*The one thing needful*” is Christ; and you know it. You want to lead others to him. Is that not so? Who here would not count it his or her highest honor and most

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distinct privilege to bring a lost soul to the Son of God? Is there any believer who does not long for this? I am sure there are none.

The thing that hinders you is, perhaps, a great concern for the glory of God and the truth of God. You want to be useful to the souls of men, but you do not know how to go about the work in a manner that is consistent with the gospel of Christ. You do not want to say or do anything that would dishonor our God. And all you have ever heard about soul-winning has come from will worshippers who are soul destroyers, not soul winners.

How many times have you asked yourself,...

- “How can I show the kid next door that he needs Christ?”
- “How can I get my friend interested in hearing the gospel?”
- “How can I minister to my mechanic?”
- “What words should I use to talk about Christ to my wife, husband, son or daughter?”
- “How can I minister to my neighbor?”

If these are questions that interest you, this message is for you. But it is not for you alone. It is also a message for you who re yet without Christ. While I try to tell God’s saints how to minister to others, I will not fail to minister to you, if you will give me your ear.

Proposition: It is the privilege and responsibility of every saved sinner to seek the salvation of other sinners.

A TREE OF LIFE

Let’s begin in Proverbs 11. I want you to see at the outset that **all who are born of God ought to be soul winners** (Proverbs 11:28, 30). Some may think, “That is strange language for one who preaches election, predestination, limited atonement, and divine sovereignty.” If you have such thoughts, you do not yet understand the glorious gospel of God’s free and sovereign grace in Christ. Hear the words of Solomon.

(Proverbs 11:28 & 30) “He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch... — (30) The fruit of the righteous *is* a tree of life; and he that winneth souls *is* wise.”

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In these two verses God's saints are described as both "*a flourishing branch*" (a fruitful branch — John 15) and "*a tree of life*". In the whole course of his life, — his prayers, his instruction, his example and his influence, — in the whole course of his life, the believer is "*a tree of life*". What the tree of life was in the garden and is in glory¹, every child of God is in this wilderness...

(Revelation 2:7) "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

(Revelation 22:2) "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations."

- **A Fruitful Tree** (Revelation 22:2; Proverbs 10:11,31,32).

(Proverbs 10:11) "The mouth of a righteous *man is* a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked."

(Proverbs 10:31-32) "The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out. (32) The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked *speaketh* frowardness."

- **A Nourishing Tree** (Revelation 2:7; Proverbs 10:21).

(Proverbs 10:21) "The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom."

- **A Healing Tree** (Proverbs 12:18; 15:4).

(Proverbs 12:18) "There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise *is* health."

(Proverbs 15:4) "A wholesome tongue *is* a tree of life: but

¹ I do not know what the tree of life was in the garden; but the tree of life in glory is Christ himself; and it is Christ whom we are to imitate.

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perverseness therein *is* a breach in the spirit.”

Without question, **none but Christ can win lost souls to himself.** I am fully aware of that fact, and rejoice in it. “He only,” wrote **Charles Bridges**, “who purchased them by his blood, can win them to himself.” It is the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and himself alone, who calls dead sinners to life by the sovereign power and irresistible grace of his Holy Spirit. He gives eternal life to whom he will. Repentance is a gift only he can give.

Yet, he has chosen, in great grace and condescending mercy, to use saved sinners to draw lost sinners to himself! This is mercy, indeed!

(Ephesians 3:8) “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;”

If Christ is made of God unto us Wisdom, then he has made us wise; and the wise man here declares, “*He that winneth souls is wise.*”

This is our Lord’s great commission (Matthew 28:19-20). The risen Christ has given each of us our marching orders. They are crystal clear. These orders are for every gospel church as a unit and for every believer as an individual.

(Matthew 28:19-20) “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: (20) Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.”

The souls of men are our business. Let us ever be about our Savior’s business. The **righteous wife** must seek to win her lost husband, by living with him and before him in meekness and sobriety, reverencing him as her husband (1 Peter 3:1-2).

(1 Peter 3:1-2) “Likewise, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; (2) While they behold your chaste conversation *coupled* with fear.”

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The **believing neighbor** seeks to win his unbelieving neighbor by the prayer of faith and work of love (James 5:19-20).

(James 5:19-20) “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; (20) Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”

No one in this world, and especially none in the kingdom of God, “liveth unto himself” (Romans 14:7). We all influence multitudes, either for good or for evil. If we are wise, we will seek by the grace of God to influence all around us for good, for the everlasting good of their immortal souls.

This is my prayer, every time I go into the home of another eternity bound sinner, or have a little time with another soul which I must soon meet before the bar of God: — “Lord God, give me grace to influence this home, or this person for good, for eternal good.”

If we would indeed win souls to the Savior, we must have wisdom from above. The fact is, **souls are hard to be won**.

- Their wills must be conquered.
- Their prejudices must be overcome.
- Their thoughts must be changed.

In a word, the work is impossible, unless he who is Wisdom both makes us wise and uses us for the salvation of others. **Our labor is never in vain in the Lord; but it is nothing but vanity without him!**

Still, it is our responsibility, great honor, and high privilege to engage in this work of winning souls. No work is so great and no reward so glorious as that which belongs to the wise who win souls to the Savior (Daniel 12:3).

(Daniel 12:3) “And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”

Every soul won is a jewel for the Savior’s crown, a polished stone in his temple, a cause for joy in heaven, and a satisfaction for his soul’s travail.

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May God give us grace to give ourselves to this business. May God give us wisdom and make us winners of souls, for the glory of Christ. For us to neglect this great work would be the height of selfish ingratitude.

(1 Corinthians 9:20-22) “And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; (21) To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. (22) To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some.”

(1 Corinthians 10:31-33) “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. (32) Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: (33) Even as I please all *men* in all *things*, not seeking mine own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be saved.”

CHRIST THE SOUL WINNER

If you will turn back to John 4, you will see that **the Lord Jesus Christ himself is held before us as the great, wise Soul winner**. We read in verse four, “*And he must needs go through Samaria.*” Why must he go through Samaria? The answer is given in verses 32 and 34. — “*But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.*” — In verse 34, we read, “*Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*”

In this chapter we see the Son of God, with skillful art, gracious patience, infinite love, and divine wisdom, seeking a single soul! In private, without any fanfare, without calling attention to himself in any way, he quietly, diligently went about his Father’s business, seeking a lost sinner.

“*His disciples marveled that he talked with the woman.*” – They seem to have forgotten who they were, what they were, and where they were when the Savior found them. Let us not be guilty of such forgetfulness (Isaiah 51:1; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

(Isaiah 51:1) “Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock *whence* ye are hewn, and to

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the hole of the pit *whence* ye are digged.”

(1 Corinthians 6:9-11) “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, (10) Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (11) And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

We, too, marvel, O Lord, not that you talked with this sinner, but that you choose to speak in grace to any sinner, especially to us sinners. Oh, how we marvel that you came here to save sinners, such as we are, by...

- Your precious blood.
- Your perfect righteousness.
- Your matchless grace!

Yet, here the Son of God is set before us as the model, exemplary soul winner. If we would win souls, let us learn the wisdom of the art from the Master Soul Winner. Let me show you **five things** our Master did as he sought the salvation of this needy sinner. I encourage you to jot them down and seek to follow his example.

1. **He befriended a sinner.** He went to where she was, and treated her as a friend (vv. 4-6).

(John 4:4-6) “And he must needs go through Samaria. (5) Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. (6) Now Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with *his* journey, sat thus on the well: *and* it was about the sixth hour.”

The Lord Jesus constantly showed himself the friend of sinners. He went to the lost, the lonely, the distressed, the fallen, the perishing, the needy, the desperate, and walked among them as a friend. More than that, the holy Son of God made the most unholy of men and women perfectly comfortable in his company. He was and is the Friend of sinners!

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2. **The Lord Jesus got this sinner engaged in a conversation by asking her questions, questions about something in which she had an obvious interest.**

She had a water pitcher. She had come to the well. It might, therefore, be reasonably assumed that she was interested in water. So, the Master got her talking about water. He asked her for a drink of water.

Looking at this as an outside observer, it might seem a bit amusing. She was the one in need. He had come to her aid. But he asked her to do something for him. He humbled himself, that he might put himself in immediate contact with her and compel her to give him her attention.

- **He got her talking.** – The voice most people like to hear best is their own. So the Lord got this woman in a talking mood.
 - **He aroused her curiosity.** — No doubt, as they talked, the Samaritan woman must have begun to think, — “What an interesting man this is. How polite. How genuine.”
3. **The Savior talked about something relevant to the woman.**

It is completely useless to try to talk to people about things about which they have absolutely no interest. Of course, our Master had something on his mind other than what she perceived, and was resolved to direct her attention by the conversation; but he talked to her about water.

- Nicodemus asked him about the new birth. So the Savior talked to him about new life, a new beginning (John 3:3-7).
- To the man who was born blind, he talked about light, and made himself known as the Light of the world (John 9:5).
- To this Samaritan woman, he talked about water. He talked about her needs, needs which she (in some sense) knew she had – water (vv. 13-14).

(John 4:13-14) “Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: (14) But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that

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I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

4. Notice, also, that **the Lord Jesus stressed the good news.**

Yes, he dealt with sin. Yes, he taught her the truth about the character of God and the necessity of worshipping God in spirit and in truth. But **he never got side tracked.** He never got entangled with other issues. He never let her draw him into debate and argument about their different religious sects, doctrines, or practices. He had come to communicate to her the water of life. That is what he talked about – WATER.

- Refreshing Water.
- Cleansing Water.
- Thirst Quenching Water.
- Everlasting Water.

5. **Then, the Master pressed this woman for a decision.**

When she finally brought up the subject of the Messiah, whom she had been taught must come, the Master said, “*I am he.*” With those words, she was forced to make a decision, either to believe his claims or to deny them. Now, she must either bow to or rebel against the revelation of God (1 John 5:7-13).

(1 John 5:7-13) “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. (8) And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. (9) If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. (10) He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. (11) And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. (12) He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. (13) These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

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What happened? The woman believed the testimony of God. She said, “*Is not this the Christ?*” And she became a witness to the people around her.

ANOTHER SOUL WINNER

So, in the last place, I want to show you **how this saved sinner went about the work of wisdom as a soul winner** (John 4:28-30).

(John 4:28-30) “The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, (29) *Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?* (30) Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.”

This saved sinner became a messenger of Christ. — She went to the men of the city. The Master had said to her, “*Go call thy husband, and come again.*” But he did not tell her which husband to call. So she called them all. Since they were all apparently mixed in the crowd, the crowd heard her. “*Then went out the men of the city, and came unto him.*”

She left her water pot. — She seems to have simply forgotten it, being absorbed with something more important – CHRIST and THE WATER OF LIFE THAT IS IN HIM!

She went to call sinners to the Savior.

- “*Come, see A MAN.*”
- “*Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did.*”
- “*Is not this the Christ?*” – Come and see!

She told others what the Savior had done for her. That’s called witnessing.

(Mark 5:18-20) “And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. (19) Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. (20) And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all *men* did marvel.”

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The Samaritan woman told all who would hear her “*how great things Jesus had done for*” her.

- He has revealed me to myself.
- He has revealed himself to me.
- He has received me.
- Her testimony was, by inference, this – Since he has received me, as I am, surely, he will receive you, too!

APPLICATION

More than 150 years ago, there was a woman in England, who had heard the gospel all her life. She was raised in a godly home. Her brother was a preacher. But she had become an invalid before she was 33 years old; and she was angry. She was mad at God and hostile with her family, filled with anger.

One day, sitting in a church service, filled with mixed feelings of anger and despair, fightings and fears, she heard an old, old man preach the gospel. Right in the middle of the service, the preacher paused, seemed to point his finger directly at her, and said, “You, miss, sitting there in the back, you can be saved right now. You don’t need to do anything.”

His words were barbed arrows, shot from the bow of God to her heart. She believed the gospel. The peace of God flooded her soul. That night, *Charlotte Elliott* wrote these words.

“Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about,
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears, within, without,
Lamb of God, I come.

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Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind, —
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yes, all I need in Thee to find, —
O Lamb of God I come.

Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God I come.”

Amen.