

Title: **BECAUSE OF THE WOMAN**

Text: John 4:39-42

Subject: *The Conversion of the Samaritans*

Date: Sunday Evening — December 28, 2008

Tape: John #36

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Introduction:

Have you ever paused to consider the things revealed in the Book of God that have come to pass because of a woman? Adam, of course, blamed the fall on the woman God gave him. And the Scriptures tell us about many Jezebeels and Salomes by whom Satan has attempted to thwart the gracious purposes of God. But have you ever thought about the fact that there would be no such thing as eternal salvation, were it not for women? — God forbids women to speak in the church. The New Testament strictly prohibits female preachers, deaconesses, and such. Women are not to teach or usurp authority over men in the house of God. But that does not mean God does not use women for the furtherance of the gospel and the salvation of his elect. The fact is, no one would be saved, were it not for the many things God has done by the use of women.

- Christ is the Seed of woman, the Seed promised to Eve in the Garden.
- The Lion of the tribe of Judah came into this world because Judah's daughter-in-law Tamar believed God.
- It was a woman by the name of Rahab who brought God's Israel into the land of promise and preserved the elect nation.
- The Lord God raised up a woman named Deborah (a prophetess, a worshipper of God), to deliver Israel from the hand of Jabin, the King of Canaan.
- It was another woman, Jael, the wife of Heber, who nailed Sisera's head to the ground.
- It was by the faith of Ruth the Moabitess that the seed royal was preserved in a day when few believed God.
- And, of course, the Son of God came in the flesh through Mary's virgin womb.

If you will turn with me to the 4th chapter of John's gospel, I want show you how that God saved a great multitude of Samaritans because of the testimony of a woman.

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(John 4:39-42) “And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. *40* So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. *41* And many more believed because of his own word; *42* And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard *him* ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

As the Lord enables me, I am going to pick up right where I left off this morning and talk to you about faith in Christ, — faith as it came to and was displayed by these Samaritans because of the woman. The title of my message is **BECAUSE OF THE WOMAN**. The Spirit of God here tells us that “*many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.*”

GOD’S GIFT

Wherever faith exists, it is the gift of God. Faith is not a plant that grows spontaneously in the soil of corrupt human nature. It matters not whether we are talking about little faith or great faith, it is the gift of God. If we find faith in one who was raised under the sound of the gospel by godly parents, with loving care and discipline, it is the gift of God. If faith is found in one who was raised in infidelity as an educated barbarian and has lived all the former part of his life in the most vile profligacy, his faith, too, is the gift of God. Faith is the gift of grace, the operation of God, the work of the Holy Spirit, in no way dependent upon man (Ephesians 1:19-20; 2:8-9; Philippians 1:29; Colossians 12:12).

I take great encouragement from this fact. If faith in Christ is, in all cases, God’s gift, we should never be selective in the work of the ministry¹. Our Lord gave us no such example, and no such commission. He told us plainly, to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, beginning in Jerusalem and Samaria. Had our Savior carefully studied a map of Palestine, he probably could not have found a more unlikely place in the

¹ The world’s way, the way of all denominations, to build churches is first to get some surveys, find out where the upwardly mobile, prosperous, educated part of society is moving and what they want.

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entire country from which he might expect to find men and women who would believe the gospel and become his disciples.

Samaria was as unlikely a place as any in which we might expect to find people chosen of God to be made followers of the Lord Jesus. When the Lord Jesus first came there, he found the great evil of racial prejudice against him. The Samaritans despised and would never trust a Jew. They would not even listen to a Jew. Yes, it is true, the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. Yet, the Samaritans reciprocated the feeling, and had no dealings with the Jews.

Yet, it was from among the Samaritans, a race of mongrels whose faith was a mongrel faith, that the Lord Jesus gathered his elect in larger numbers than anywhere else. Judging by the events of John 4, we would be wise to always go the opposite way of the world. We ought always go first to those places and those people where there seems to be least likelihood of conversions. God's thoughts are not our thoughts. God's ways are not our ways. But his thoughts are always right and his ways always best. When Paul wanted to go preach the gospel in Bithynia, God would not allow it. He had planned and purposed the salvation of some folks down in a place called Philippi (Acts 16).

If we ever truly learn that faith in Christ is the gift, work and operation of God, — a supernatural thing, — it will have a profound effect. It will alter everything.

- We will stop trying to figure out how to make the gospel effectual, and just preach it.
- We will quit trying to determine where God is likely to work, and serve him where we are.
- We will cease trying to determine who is likely to be saved, and preach the gospel to anyone whose ear we can get.
- We will quit trying to make the gospel politically correct, socially palatable and culturally relative, and just preach it.

I say to the preachers of this generation who seem hell-bent on compromising the gospel in the name of seeing sinners converted, — **COMPROMISE ACCOMPLISHES NOTHING!** Any converts gained by compromise are twofold more the children of hell than they were before! Faith is God's gift, God's work, God's operation. And it is an operation performed, a work accomplished and a gift bestowed through the preaching

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of the gospel (Romans 10:17).

You and I may and must go, feeble as we are, useless as we are, and tell sinners about the sinners' Savior. We may and must scatter the precious seed of the gospel. **The hand that sows the seed is meaningless. Life is in the seed, not in the hand that sows it.** In spiritual matters, not even the soil matters, for it is the grace of God that makes the soil rich and fertile. Until grace comes, all is alike barren, empty and desolate. **But God can make the seed sown fruitful anywhere.**

He can cause it to spring up in everlasting life anywhere! He can make it spring up like a root out of a dry ground. As of old he brought water out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock, so can he bring a harvest to his glory where everything is utterly barren. If this is God's work, let us have no doubts regarding it, let us have no despondency concerning it. Let us, rather, continually put ourselves into his hands, praying that he will use us anywhere pleases. He knows what is best and always does it. So let him do what he will!

Proposition: Faith in Christ is both the requirement and the gift of God.

Divisions: I want to show you four things in our text, which I trust will be blessed of God to our souls.

1. God used an old harlot, saved by his grace, to carry the gospel to the men of the city (v. 39).
2. Needy sinners hang on to Christ (v. 40).
3. We do not all experience grace the same way. (v. 41).
4. Every believer's faith is the same (v. 42).

GOD'S INSTRUMENT

First, in verse 39, the Holy Spirit shows us the instrument God used to save his elect in Samaria. We are specifically told that God used an old harlot, a harlot saved by free-grace, to carry the gospel to the men of Samaria.

(John 4:39) "And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did."

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How I love and rejoice in God's great, condescending goodness and grace! **The objects of his grace were Samaritans!** These Samaritans were not just sinners. They were the most despised sinners, a mixed breed with a mixed religion. The only thing in the world that ranked lower than dogs, publicans, and women in the minds of Jewish people in that day, was a Samaritan. The fact is — God's elect are always those whom we are least likely to choose.

Illustration: 1 Samuel 16:12

Not only is it true that God's elect are the most unlikely, it is also a demonstrated fact that **God uses the most unlikely instruments for the saving of his elect and the building of his kingdom.**

(1 Corinthians 1:26-29) “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called:* 27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea,* and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.”

The message of grace was carried to Samaria by a harlot. The word she spoke was the instrument God used to bring many of his elect to life and faith in Christ. **God almighty can make the weakest of instruments mighty to pull down the strong holds of Satan.** That simply means that God almighty can use such things as you and me for the salvation of sinners!

The message this old harlot delivered was no more and no less than the testimony of her experience. She told them what she knew, and urged them to see for themselves whether or not she knew what she was talking about.

(John 4:28-29) “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?”

We see a clear display of God's great and glorious sovereignty here, as

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well. Wherever you see grace exercised, you see sovereignty manifested. You do not have to look for it. You just have to open your eyes to see it.

- Many were converted, but not all (Acts 13:48; Matthew 22:14).
- Those converted were idolatrous Samaritans, not enlightened Jews.
- They were converted by the mere word of grace. – No miracles were performed.

(Isaiah 55:8-9) “For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

CLINGING TO CHRIST

Secondly, in verse 40, we see this fact demonstrated – Needy sinners hang on to Christ. Those who experience God’s saving grace in Christ will be found clinging to Christ until they are with him in Glory. — “*The righteous shall hold on his way*” (Job 17:9).

(John 4:40) “So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.”

That one sentence contains volumes of practical, spiritual instruction for our souls. The desire of the Samaritans and our Lord’s compliance with it shows the willingness of Christ to abide with and meet the needs of those who want him.

- The Gergesenes prayed for the Lord to depart from them (Matthew 8:34). The Samaritans prayed him to tarry with them. Both got what they wanted!
- What blessings those two disciples would have missed on the Emmaus road, had they not said to the Lord Jesus, as he was about to leave them, — “*Abide with us*” (Luke 24:29).
- If we do not have Christ abiding with us, it is because we do not ask him, because we are willing to be without him!

(Song of Songs 3:5) “I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.”

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EXPERIENCES DIFFER

Thirdly, I remind you, once more, that we do not all experience grace the same way. The needs are the same in us all. And the grace we experience is the same. The salvation is the same. But the experiences of God's elect in grace and salvation vary greatly. Look at verse 41.

(John 4:41) “And many more believed because of his own word.”

Some of the Samaritans were converted by the woman's witness. Others were converted by the preaching of Christ himself. Some appear to have been converted immediately. Others were converted gradually, over the course of the two days of our Lord's ministry in Sychar.

Now, be sure you hear this. — **We must never try to put God in our little box.** He just won't fit! God saves his people as he sees fit; and he always does it in such a way that no man can say, “There, I did that. I am responsible for the grace this or that person enjoys.”

All hell must hoot with laughter while men who profess to be gospel preachers bloviate about theological trivia to immortal souls living but a breath from eternity! — While preachers and churches choose up and take sides, fussing and fighting about how a person must come to Christ, sinners are going to hell! What folly! What madness! I do not care how you come, when you came, or where you were at the time. I am concerned for only this one thing — **Do you trust Christ?**

Having said that, let no one mistake my meaning. I do not mean to suggest or imply in any way that it does not matter who you trust or what you believe. Oh, no! Look at verse 42. I want you to see...

SAME FAITH

Fourthly, that every believer's faith is the same. That's right. All who are born of God believe the same thing. We all have the same faith. In all matters of “*the faith once delivered to the saints*” we all see “*eye to eye.*” Every gospel preacher has the same message. And every saved sinner has the same faith. Let's see if this is not what verse 42 tells us.

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(John 4:42) “And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard *him* ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

“Now we believe.” – Sooner or later, every saved sinner confesses his/her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It may take some, like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimethea a while to openly do so, but all who trust Christ will confess him before men. Believers identify themselves with the Savior.

(Romans 10:9-10) “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. *10* For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Look at this. **“NOW we believe.”** In other words, these men acknowledge that before this, they were unbelievers.

- Religious? Yes, but unbelievers.
- Bible believers? Yes. They believed the same Bible the Jews did. But they did not know God.
- Moral? Yes, very moral. But lost unbelievers, nonetheless.
- These men here repented of their former religion and abandoned it forever. They came out of Babylon!

“Now we believe, not because of thy saying.” — The Samaritans here acknowledged that their faith was not based upon and did not arise from the words and arguments of a mere mortal. Our faith does not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

“Now we believe, not because of thy saying for we have heard him ourselves.” Faith in Christ is the result divine revelation. It is a matter of personal experience.

(1 John 1:1-3) “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; 2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); 3 That which we have seen and heard declare

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we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

(Galatians 1:11-12) “But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. *12* For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

“*Now we believe, not because of thy saying for we have heard him ourselves, **and know that this is indeed the Christ.***” — Those words might better be translated, “*We know that this is truly THE CHRIST,*” or, “***THE TRUE CHRIST.***” — Both the Jews and the Samaritans looked for and believed in a “christ,” a messiah; but both looked for a political savior, a moral reformer, a false “christ.” **all God’s people know, own, acknowledge, trust, love, and worship the true Christ.**

These two things are always joined together. — When God the Holy Spirit humbles the soul for sin, he graciously makes the sinner know his need of a Savior. So that self-adorrence and Christ exalted will always go together.

- What did **Job** say, when he saw God in Christ? — *Behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee: I will lay my hand upon my mouth!* (Job 40:4; 42:5,6).
- What did **Isaiah** say when he saw of the glory of Christ? — *Woe is me, I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips; mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts* (Isaiah 6:1-5; John 12:41).
- What did **David** say? — “*Enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified*” (Psalm 143:2).
- What did **Paul** say? — “*O wretched man that I am*” (Romans 7:24).

If ever God the Holy Spirit opens to you your own vileness and the Christ’s fulness, you will respond the same way!

This one and only true Christ is “**the Savior of the world!**”

- The Only Savior of the World!
- The Effectual Savior of the World!
- The Savior of God’s Elect in All the World!

The word here translated “world” (kosmos), is used 185 times in the New Testament. The vast majority of the time, it is used by the apostle John. It is the word from which we get our word “cosmetic.” Like many words, it is used in many ways, and its meaning must be determined by the way it is used.

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1 “Kosmos” is used of **the universe** as a whole (Acts 17:24). — “*God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth.*”

2 “Kosmos” is used of **the earth** (John 13:1; Ephesians 1:4).

“When Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world he loved them unto the end.” — “*Depart out of this world*” signifies, leave this earth.

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.” — This expression signifies, before the earth was made.

3 “Kosmos” is used of **the world system** (John 12:31). — “*Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the Prince of this world be cast out.*” (Compare Matthew 4:8 and 1 John 5:19).

4 “Kosmos” is used of **the whole human race** (Romans 3:19). — “*Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*”

5 “Kosmos” is used of **all humanity except believers** (John 15:18; Romans 3:6). — “*If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*” — “*God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world.*” — “*The world,*” in this case, cannot mean “you, me, and everybody”, for believers will not be “condemned” by God (John 5:24). As it is used in John 15:18 and Romans 3:6, “*the world*” refers to the world of unbelievers.

6 “Kosmos” is used of Gentiles in contrast from Jews (Romans 11:12). — “*Now if the fall of them (Israel) be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them (Israel) the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their (Israel’s) fulness.*” Here, again, “the world” cannot refer all humanity. It specifically excludes Israel!

7 “Kosmos” is used in reference to God’s elect alone (John 1:29; 3:16, 17; 6:33; 12:47; 1 Corinthians 4:9; 2 Corinthians 5:19).

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Application: Like the old harlot of Samaria, I want to persuade you who hear this sinner's voice to come to Christ. This I know...

- This is the true Christ.
- He is the Savior of the world.
- He has saved me by his grace.
- He can save you, too.
- He is as able as he is willing, and as willing as he is able, to save all who come to God by him.

Have you met the Lord God of the Hebrews, as this woman and these Samaritans did? Have you seen your sin exceeding sinful? Have you seen Christ exceeding precious? If you have met the Lord Jesus Christ by the saving revelation of his Spirit, in the saving experience of his grace, then do you know him as he is: the Christ of God, the Sent One of God and One with God. Now, you can truly say with holy men of old, "*We believe, and are sure, that thou art Christ the Son of the living God*" (John 6:69).

Nothing short of this knowledge of yourself and of the Lord Jesus Christ can enable you, as this woman and these Samaritans did, to believe on him unto life everlasting. Oh, may God the Holy Spirit give you life in his Christ! Oh, may he give you grace, in this Christ-despising day and generation, so to know the Lord and to believe in him for life and salvation, as he did this woman and these Samaritans!

If he has given us such knowledge and such faith, let us, like the Samaritan harlot invite others from heart-felt joy to come and see Christ for themselves! And like the Samaritans under the same heart-felt conviction, let us confess and say to all who will hear us, — "*Now we believe, not because of the saying of another, but because we have heard him ourselves; and we know that he is indeed the Christ of God, the Savior of the world!*"

Amen.