

Title: **A PHARISEE, AN ADULTERESS AND THE SAVIOR**

Text: John 4:4-7

Subject: *Nicodemus, the Adulterous Woman And the Lord Jesus*

Date: Sunday Morning — September 14, 2008

Tape: John #22

Reading: *Psalm 130:1-8*

Introduction:

Standing as I do to preach the gospel of Christ to eternity bound sinners, I am constantly aware of my utter insufficiency for the task before me. What great wisdom and grace is needed to minister to the souls of men, wisdom and grace that only God the Holy Spirit can give!

We have all come here today with different needs, from different backgrounds, different experiences, and different circumstances. Yet, we all need the same thing spiritually. We all need...

- Grace.
- Forgiveness.
- Righteousness.
- Salvation.

Today, I want to show you two people who could not have been more different, who were saved by the marvelous, free grace of God in Christ. These two great sinners and Christ our great Savior are set before us John chapters three and four in a most remarkable way. The title of my message is **A PHARISEE, AN ADULTERESS AND THE SAVIOR.**

(John 3:1-3) “There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: (2) The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. (3) Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

(John 4:4-7) “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. (7) There cometh a

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woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.”

It is always a mistake to interpret any portion of Scripture without considering the context in which it is found. In fact, it is impossible to interpret the Word of God correctly, if we do not interpret it contextually. Not only did the Holy Spirit inspire the words of this Book, he also inspired and fixed the order in which we are given things in the Inspired Volume. It is no accident that the two stories of Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman are set before us in the same context.

Proposition: Together Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman show us that none are beyond the reach of God’s saving grace in Christ.

Nicodemus shows us that none can rise too high, and the Samaritan woman shows us that none can sink too low, to be saved by the grace of God. At the end of these two stories of grace, we have this great declaration in John 4:42 – **“This is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world!”**

1. **The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Savior there is.**

He is the Savior of Jews and Gentiles, men and women, out of every nation, tongue, and position in the world.

(Acts 4:12) “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

2. **All who are saved are saved in the same way.**

- By Grace
- Through Righteousness -- (The Obedience and Blood of Christ
- By Providence
- By The Revelation of Christ

3. **Yet, we all experience grace in a distinct, personal way.**

No two sinners experience grace in exactly the same way. This is clearly set before us in these two people. Let’s look at the way our Lord dealt with

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Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, and see what we can learn from their experience of grace.

Divisions: I want to show you three things in this message.

1. A Great Separation
2. A Great Sameness
3. A Great Savior

A GREAT SEPARATION

First, we see that there is a great separation, between Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman. Both were chosen of God and saved by his grace. We see this fact with regard to the Samaritan woman in the immediate context. Once the Lord revealed himself to her, she immediately left her water pots and said to the men of the city, — “*Come, see a man, that told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?*” (v. 29). Many believed because of her word.

Nicodemus was one of those disciples who, in John 19, came to bury the Lord Jesus. He was not converted immediately upon hearing the gospel. But he was converted. The Master said to him, “*Ye must be born again;*” and he was, at the appointed hour.

Here are two sinners, chosen, redeemed and called by grace; but it would be impossible to imagine two people more distinct and separate from one another. The contrast between Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman is obvious to the most casual reader.

- Nicodemus was a recognized, important, sophisticated ruler of the Jews, a man of name, rank, and reputation. — She was an unnamed, insignificant nobody.
- Nicodemus was a proud Jew. — She was a despised Samaritan.
- Nicodemus was a wealthy, well-educated scholar. — The woman was poor and uneducated.
- Nicodemus was a man. — The Samaritan was a woman.

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- Nicodemus was a man known and respected for his great morality. — She was an adulteress.
- Nicodemus came to the Savior by night, to protect his reputation. — This woman came to Jacob's well at noon to avoid other people, because she had no reputation to protect.
- Nicodemus sought the Lord Jesus. — The Lord Jesus came to Samaria seeking this woman.
- The Samaritan woman was converted immediately upon hearing the message of Christ. — Nicodemus was converted a good while after he first heard.

It would be impossible to find two people more diverse, more unlike, or more separate from one another socially. Yet, these two people, Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman are now seated together around the throne of the Lamb in Glory. Only the grace of God can do that. Only in Christ are social dividers demolished. And in Christ they are demolished.

(Colossians 3:10-11) “And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: (11) Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all.”

(Ephesians 2:12-22) “That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: (13) But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. (14) For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; (15) Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace; (16) And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: (17) And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. (18) For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. (19)

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Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; (20) And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; (21) In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: (22) In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

Grace reconciles sinners to God; and grace reconciles sinners to one another.

A GREAT SAMENESS

Second, though much separated and distinguished Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman from one another, still there was a great sameness about them.

As I look into your faces this morning, I see many things which, naturally, distinguish us from one another. Yet, there is a great sameness about us all. You who are without Christ may look at the person sitting beside you, in front of you, behind you, or across the room from you, and think – “I am not like him, (or her),” but you really are exactly the same in many ways. What did Nicodemus and this Samaritan woman have in common? I am sure there was much more than this, but here are four things they had in common, four things we all have in common.

1. **SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS!**

They both thought they were right spiritually, right before God. Without question, neither of them were at peace in their hearts. Their souls were troubled. Their consciences were uneasy. But they had both made a refuge of lies in which they hid themselves in self-righteousness¹. Both had a

¹ Self-righteousness flourishes in human flesh, just as fully among adulterers and adulteresses as among Pharisees and Sadducees, just as well in the hearts of criminals as in the hearts of cardinals. – Just as Nicodemus argued theology with the Master, defending himself and his religion, so did this adulteress!

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religious refuge, which had to be destroyed before they would flee to Christ for refuge. So do you!

(Isaiah 28:14-20) “Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which *is* in Jerusalem. (15) Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: (16) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. (17) Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. (18) And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. (19) From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only *to* understand the report. (20) For the bed is shorter than that *a man* can stretch himself *on it*: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself *in it*.”

2. **SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS!**

Neither Nicomdemus nor the woman had even the slightest spiritual understanding or discernment. Neither could see the kingdom of heaven.

(1 Corinthians 2:14) “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.”

3. **REBELLION!**

Both the proud Pharisee and the Samaritan adulteress were lost rebels. When he was confronted with things he could neither understand nor refute, Nicodemus poked fun at the Master’s doctrine. He ridiculed what he could not comprehend (John 3:4).

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(John 3:4) “Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?”

When the Lord Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman about living water, because she could not understand his words, she did the same thing (John 4:11-12).

(John 4:11-12) “The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? (12) Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?”

The fact is this woman and Nicodemus, like all men and women by nature, like all of you who are yet without Christ, were lost rebels. As it is written, — “*All we, like sheep, have gone astray. We have turned, every one, to his own way*” (Isaiah 53:6). — “*They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one*” (Romans 3:12).

If you are lost, it is because you are an obstinate, stubborn, implacable rebel. If you go to hell, it will be because you have broken God’s law, despised God’s gospel, rejected God’s counsel, laughed at God’s reproof, refused to bow to God’s Son, and hated God in the very core of your being.

4. **EMPTINESS!**

Both Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman tried hard, just like you are doing, to cover it up; but they had an emptiness in their souls, just like you do, which could not be filled with the water pots of their religions, or their accomplishments, or their lusts.

Augustine said, “Thou hast made us for Thyself; and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee.”

“All my life long I had panted
For a draught from some clear spring,
That I hoped would quench the burning

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Of the thirst I felt within.

Feeding on the husks around me,
Till my strength was almost gone,
Longed my soul for something better,
Only still to hunger on.

Poor was I, and sought for riches,
Something that would satisfy,
But the dust I gathered round me
Only mocked my soul's sad cry!"

Have I described you? Has God exposed your self-righteousness? Has the Holy Spirit made you to see and know the rebellion that rules your heart? Have you begun to know and acknowledge your emptiness? If so, hear me another minute or two, while I show you...

A GREAT SAVIOR!

Oh, what a great Savior our Lord Jesus Christ is! Let me show you what he did for these to great sinners. The Lord Jesus did not deal with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman the same way. Yet, in a very real sense he did. This is always what Christ does when he comes to save a sinner. This is what he will do with you, if ever he saves you by his grace.

- He destroyed the refuge of lies in which they hid themselves.
- He exposed their rebellion, unbelief, and sin.
- He made himself known to them
- He crossed them at their point of rebellion.

Illustration: “*Yuh gots tuh git into dat hog pen.*”

- He conquered them by his grace.

Application:

(Psalms 65:4) “*Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth, and causet to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.*”

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(Psalms 110:3) “Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.”

Amen.