

Title: **THE BLESSED**
 CONSTRAINT OF GRACE

Text: John 4:1-9
Subject: *Christ Must Go Through Samaria*
Date: Sunday Morning — September 7, 2008
Tape: John #21
Reading: *2 Timothy 2:1-26 and John 4:1-9*
Introduction:

I want to talk to you about **THE BLESSED CONSTRAINT OF GRACE**.
Turn with me to John chapter 4.

(John 4:1-9) “When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (2) (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) (3) He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. (4) 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 woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (8) (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) (9) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.”

In these opening verses of John 4 there are several things that demand our attention. Here are seven lessons the Holy Spirit would have us lay to heart.

1. The very first thing we see in this chapter is the fact that **our Lord Jesus Christ, the man who lived and died upon this earth to save us from our sins, is himself the omniscient God.**

The primary purpose of John’s gospel is to show us that the man Christ Jesus is God, God manifest in the flesh. Therefore, he misses no opportunity to display our Savior’s Godhood. There is no hint of anyone having informed him of what the Pharisees were saying and doing, but “*the Lord knew.*” There was no need for anyone to inform him of anything, because

THE BLESSED CONSTRAINT OF GRACE

he is the God before whom nothing is hidden, before whom darkness is light.

That One who humbled himself, who took the infinite stoop of taking into union with himself our humanity, who came down here to dwell upon the earth in human flesh as Jehovah's Servant, is here called "*the Lord*" because **he is THE LORD!** This man, whom the Pharisees contemptuously regarded as the Nazarene carpenter, was none other than the Christ of God in whom "*dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily!*"

He who brings in everlasting righteousness as a man for men must himself be the everlasting God. He who obtains eternal redemption for sinners by the shedding of his blood as a man must himself be the eternal God.

2. **The religious world is now, always has been, and until time is no more always shall be set in opposition the God of glory, his Son, and the gospel of his grace.**

Mainstream religion has always been opposed to the worship of our God. I know that many talk of days gone by when "most people believed the things we do, when most people believed the gospel of the grace of God." I defy anyone to show me such a time.

The fact is, from the days of Cain and Abel, through the days of Enoch, Noah, and Job, while Abraham walked in the earth with God, from the days of Moses throughout the years of Old Testament history, the vast majority of the people in this world despised the worship of God, — Even those who professed to worship him and claimed to be his people.

- All men are idolaters by nature.
- All men are will worshippers by nature.
- All men vainly attempt to mix their works with God's grace to find acceptance with God.

There is a way which seems right to all men. All men walk in that way, defend that way, and oppose anything and anyone who speaks against that way; but the ends thereof are the ways of death (Pro. 14:12; 16:25).

This is exactly what we see in these Pharisees, here in John 4. "*The Pharisees heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John.*"

THE BLESSED CONSTRAINT OF GRACE

Even at this early date in our Lord's public ministry, the Pharisees were obviously plotting to get rid of him.

- **They were jealous of his following.** It was bad enough that they had to put up with John; but here was a man, obviously in league with John, who was even more influential than John the Baptist. The Pharisees were threatened by the Master's influence. They feared losing their position, power, and prestige, as religious leaders.
- **The Lord Jesus was looked upon by them as a man from a lower social class,** (He was from Nazareth of Galilee!) from which they no prophet could come (John 7:52). They just knew that nothing good could come out of Nazareth.

(John 7:52) "They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."

- **Primarily, they despised his doctrine.** Our Lord openly exposed, reproved, and rebuked their hypocrisy, their tradition, their customs, their doctrine, and their empty religious ritualism.

Look at verses 1 and 2 again. — "*When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples).*"

3. Here is a third lesson. **Believer's baptism is an ordinance of divine worship for which we are responsible, but only an ordinance of worship. — Baptism has nothing to do with salvation.**

Notice the order here. **First disciples were made. Then they were baptized, not the other way around.** You will search the Scriptures in vain to find anyone being baptized as an infant, or being baptized to obtain grace, or being baptized before conversion. **Baptism is the believer's public confession of faith in Christ, by which we identify ourselves with and make an avowed commitment to Christ, his people and his gospel.**

(Romans 6:3-6) "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? (4) Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should

THE BLESSED CONSTRAINT OF GRACE

walk in newness of life. (5) For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of his resurrection: (6) Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”

Notice this, too, “*Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples.*” “Our Savior did not himself baptize his followers. Now, if baptism depended upon the character or the office of the baptizer, Jesus would certainly have done it; but to show us that the person baptizing does not impart any grace to the person baptized, our Lord baptized not, but left that work to his disciples.”

— C.H. Spurgeon

4. Here is another lesson, a lesson which is evident to almost everyone except those who make it evident. **Religion without Christ makes people even more proud, bigoted and mean spirited than we are by nature.**

Look at the last line of verse nine. “*The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.*” The Jews looked upon the Samaritans as a lower class, an inferior race, and despised them. The Jews had the Word and oracles of God; but they would not think of sharing the knowledge and worship of God with the Samaritans. The Jews, particularly the Pharisees, were a heartless people, totally indifferent to the glory of God and the souls of men. They were only concerned for themselves, their appearance before men, and their religion. The proudest, meanest, most dishonest people I have ever known have been religious people, — Not Believers – Religious People!

5. **Light despised will be withdrawn and turned into darkness.**

What sad, sad words are those found in verse three! – “**He left Judea!**” Our Lord refused to cast his pearls before swine. “**He left Judea!**”

(John 12:35-41) “Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. (36) While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did

THE BLESSED CONSTRAINT OF GRACE

hide himself from them. (37) But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: (38) That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? (39) Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, (40) He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with *their* eyes, nor understand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. (41) These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.”

(John 12:42-43) “Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: (43) **FOR THEY LOVED THE PRAISE OF MEN MORE THAN THE PRAISE OF GOD.**”

(John 12:46) “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.”

(2 Corinthians 5:20-21) “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. (21) For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

(2 Corinthians 6:1-2) “We then, *as* workers together *with him*, beseech *you* also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (2) (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)”

I urge you to believe the gospel. I call upon you, in God’s name, as God’s ambassador to your soul, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, I assure you, that God’s will, God’s purpose, God’s grace, and God’s glory do not depend upon you!

6. **The purpose of God is not and cannot be altered by man’s unbelief.**

THE BLESSED CONSTRAINT OF GRACE

Far from it! If you go to hell, it will be your fault. There is no question about that. God would save you, if you would obey his voice, if you would trust his Son. If you go to hell, you will, as he says, *eat the fruit of your own way and be filled with your own devices!* But your unbelief, your rebellion, your despising the counsel of God will not alter the purpose of God, but only fulfil it.

(Romans 3:3-4) “For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? (4) God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.”

God cast off Israel because Israel cast off God. Yet, in their rejection of God’s gospel, God’s kingdom, and God’s Son, the Jews, by bringing judgment upon themselves became the very instruments by which grace was carried to the Gentiles, that the fulness of the Gentiles might be brought in by the grace of God.

(Romans 11:1) “I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, *of* the tribe of Benjamin.”

(Romans 11:25-26) “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. (26) And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”

(Romans 11:29) “For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance.”

(Romans 11:33-36) “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! (34) For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? (35) Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? (36) For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.”

THE BLESSED CONSTRAINT OF GRACE

Blessed be God, it is yet true, and forever shall be – “*The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his*” (2 Tim. 2:19).

Now, let’s look at verse 4. I want you to hear, and understand, and rejoice in this fact. Though the Jews despised him, — Though the Pharisees sought to destroy him, Though he left Judea...

7. It is written in verse 4, “*He must needs go through Samaria,*” because, **there are some people in this world who must and shall be saved, by the almighty grace and according to the sovereign, unalterable purpose of our great and glorious God.**

Read the text as it stands. “**He must.**” It does not say he might, he wants to, he hopes to, he will if, or he is going to try. The text says, “**HE MUST!**” Just in case you have difficulty with the English language, that means – “**He must needs go through Samaria!**”

This was not a thing he might or might not do, but a thing he must do. Why? Because there was a chosen, blood bought sinner there for whom “*the time of love*” had come. In fact, there were a bunch of chosen, blood bought sinners¹ down in Samaria, for whom “*the time of love*” had now come; and they must now be saved by his almighty grace, every one of them!

“**HE MUST!**” I do love those two words – “**HE MUST!**”

Proposition: Though obliged to do nothing, yet, as our Surety, the Son of God obliged himself to perform specific deeds of mercy, love and grace for his people, that he might bring us to glory.

¹ Yes, I do understand that Christ had not yet shed his blood at Calvary. I also understand that he is the Lamb of God who was slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8; 17:8). These Samaritans were, like all God’s elect, redeemed in the purpose of God from eternity, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, “*who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world!*”

THE BLESSED CONSTRAINT OF GRACE

The salvation of chosen sinners is a thing as certain and as much a matter of necessity with God our Savior, as his own truth and faithfulness.

“*He must needs go through Samaria,*” to save his chosen, to seek and save his lost sheep. I know, many say, “He had to go through Samaria, because that was the nearest way to get from Judea to Galilee.” They are exactly right. The closest route from Judea to Galilee was to go through Samaria. But it was God who, in his wise and adorable providence, made it the closest way, because God in his providence put his elect there.

C.H. Spurgeon put it this way – “Providence directed man to build Samaria directly in the road, and grace constrained the Savior to move in that direction.”

When the time of loves comes for the objects of his mercy, love and grace, the Lord Jesus will come to his chosen in almighty, omnipotent, irresistible, saving power. We bless and praise him for the fact that his people shall be willing in the day of his power! **When God says “must,” it must be!** There is no standing against God’s omnipotent “must.” Let me give you four reasons for these words, and I will be done.

A DIVINE PURPOSE

“*He must needs go through Samaria*” because of a divine purpose. God purposed it before the world began, and so it came to pass. We believe and rejoice in the grand, glorious, God honoring doctrine of divine predestination. It is a doctrine plainly taught in Holy Scripture, and a doctrine full of comfort to for the believer’s heart.

(Romans 8:28-30) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. (29) For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

(Ephesians 1:3-6) “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: (4) According as he hath chosen us in him before

THE BLESSED CONSTRAINT OF GRACE

the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: (5) Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, (6) To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

(Ephesians 1:11) “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”

Keep silence all created things,
And wait your Maker’s nod:
My soul stands trembling while she sings
The honors of her God

Life, death, and hell, and worlds unknown,
Hang on His firm decree:
He sits on no precarious throne,
Nor borrows leave to be.

Chained to His throne a volume lies,
With all the fates of men,
With every angel’s form and size,
Drawn by the eternal pen.

His providence unfolds the book,
And makes His counsels shine:
Each opening leaf and every stroke
Fulfils some bright design.

A DIVINE PROMISE

“*He must needs go through Samaria*” because of a divine promise. Divine predestination moves according to the promise God himself made in eternity to give eternal life to his elect. Oh, yes, the Bible does teach the doctrine of election. We are told plainly that God promised eternal life to chosen sinners before the world began.

THE BLESSED CONSTRAINT OF GRACE

(Titus 1:1-3) “Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; (2) In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; (3) But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour.”

(2 Thessalonians 2:13-14) “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: (14) Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(2 Timothy 1:9-10) “Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, (10) But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

(John 15:16) “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”

Father, `twas Thy love that knew us
Earth’s foundations long before:
That same love to Jesus drew us
By its sweet, constraining power,
And will keep us safely now and ever more.

Divine predestination arranged all things from eternity, in the purpose of God, according to the divine promise of eternal life to chosen sinners in Christ. This promise of eternal life to God’s elect was made in...

A DIVINE PACT.

“*He must needs go through Samaria*” because of a divine pact. We delight to trace everything back to that sovereign pact and blessed covenant of

THE BLESSED CONSTRAINT OF GRACE

grace made on our behalf with Christ, our Surety, before the world began. There is nothing more delightful to my soul than covenant love.

(2 Samuel 23:5) “Although my house *be* not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all *things*, and sure: for *this is* all my salvation, and all *my* desire, although he make *it* not to grow.”

It was in that covenant that our Savior put himself in bondage, put himself under obligation to save his people.

(John 10:16) “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.”

“*He must needs go through Samaria,*” some of those other sheep were there, whom he must bring into his fold! Once more, “*he must needs go through Samaria,*” because of...

A DIVINE PURCHASE.

The Lord Jesus came here to fetch this woman, and the others in the city whom he had chosen, because he bought them with his blood. How I rejoice to tell sinners everywhere that the cross of Christ shall never be discovered a miscarriage.

The Lord Jesus must go through Samaria because there were those in Samaria whom the Father had given him from eternity to save, for whom he voluntarily assumed all responsibility, whom he purchased with his own blood, whom he must save.

Now, listen to me, my friend. If you are one of God’s elect there is a needs be for Christ to save you; and save you he will. Perhaps you are yet in your sins. You may have been fleeing from him for years; but when he comes, he will over take you. He will conquer you. He will have you. I am here to tell you, he is already on his way, and he will have you. **Blessed be God, there are some people in this world whom he must save, from whom he will not take “no” for an answer.**

THE BLESSED CONSTRAINT OF GRACE

When the Son of God comes to save, he will come to you like he did Zaccheus of old.

(Luke 19:5) “And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for **TO DAY I MUST ABIDE AT THY HOUSE.**”

(Luke 19:9-10) “And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. (10) For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Illustration: *The College Boy Who
Used His Bible for Shaving Paper*

(Isaiah 25:9) “And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this *is* our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this *is* the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

This is the blessed constraint of God’s grace. His people must be saved because he has purposed to save them. Therefore we read in John 4:4 that our Lord Jesus Christ “*must needs go through Samaria.*”

Amen.