

=CONVERSIONS=

Lesson 1

The Conversion of the Woman at the Well

INTRODUCTION: We now begin a series of lessons on Bible conversions. Our Lord was passing through Samaria on His way from Judæa to Galilee. At noontime He sat down beside a well which was called Jacob's well. A lady who had been married five times came to draw water. Knowing she was in need of salvation, Jesus spoke to her and won her to Himself. She in turn left her waterpot and ran into the city, telling the people about Christ. She told them she had found the Messiah. Multitudes from the city came out and were saved. Let us notice this wonderful conversion recorded in John 4:1-45.

- I. THE WOMAN AT THE WELL WAS A "HARD" CASE. Notice what John 4:18 tells us about her. We should not give up on the "hard" cases. God can save them, too.
- II. JESUS WITNESSED WHILE TRAVELING. Read John 4:1-42. This is very important! Every person who takes a trip should be a missionary for Jesus Christ. It is interesting how many times our Lord witnessed while He was just "passing through." His "passing-through experiences" include a blind man beside a road, Zacchæus in Jericho, a dead boy that He raised, and the woman at the well. It is important to witness wherever we are; but how much more important it is that we witness while traveling! Hence, every trip should be a missionary journey.
- III. JESUS HAD TO GO THROUGH SAMARIA. Notice the word "must" in John 4:4. This does not mean that this was the only road. There were several roads between Judæa and Galilee, and most of them were more traveled than the ones through Samaria. The road near the seacoast was oft traveled, and there was a road up through the Jordan Valley which went around Samaria. The Jews and the Samaritans had no dealings with each other. There was animosity between them. The normal Jew would go around Samaria. However, Jesus "must needs go through Samaria." Why did He have to go through Samaria? It was certainly not because of any external compulsion. It was simply that the Holy Spirit was leading Him to do so. There was someone there to whom He must witness. The word for "must" here is the same word used by our Lord when He was twelve years old and said, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49b) In other words, it was the will of God that He go through Samaria. Consequently, He did.
- IV. THE HUMANITY OF JESUS IS SHOWN IN THIS STORY. See John 4:6-8. Here we find Him tired, needing rest; thirsty, needing water; and hungry, needing food. The Bible says that He "was in all points tempted like as we are." This means He understands when we are tired, hungry, thirsty, lonely, etc. He had taken a 42-mile journey which was dry and dusty; hence, He was tired and hungry. He came to the well at Sychar, which at that time was about 100 feet deep. (By 1886, it was 75 feet deep, and perhaps it is now even more shallow because of fillings.)
- V. JESUS WAS WILLING TO WITNESS TO LOWER-CLASS PEOPLE. The Samaritans were considered inferior to the Jews. When the Jews were taken from their land, six or seven hundred years before Christ, some of the poorer Jews remained. These Jews intermarried with the Babylonian people and people of other nations. A race was formed called the Samaritans. After the Babylonian captivity, the Jews returned and began rebuilding the temple. The Samaritans wanted to help them, but their help was refused because they were half-breed people. They, in turn, built their own temple on Mount Gerizim. Here they set up the sacrifices and the Passover just as the Jews did in the temple in Jerusalem. (There are still Samaritans in Palestine. The temple on Mount Gerizim is still there. The Samaritans still accept the first five books of the Bible—the five books of Moses, or better still, the Pentateuch.)

There is something very interesting in this story. In John 4:9, the lady asked, "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." Actually, this means the Samaritan could not use the same drinking vessel with a Jew. This

was a law of the land. Hence, she was surprised when Jesus asked her for a drink of water. This would have been against all of the laws of the Jews. Also, Jesus was a rabbi, and it was unlawful for a rabbi to talk to a woman on the street, even his own wife. Yet, Jesus was talking to this woman in public. This shows the compassion of Christ for people of all walks of life and all races.

- VI. NOTICE THE SOUL-WINNING METHODS JESUS USED. Read John 4:7. He met her where she was. He talked about the thing that was foremost in her mind at the time. She was interested in water, and so He talked about water. Of course, this is the best method of soul winning.
- VII. JESUS TAUGHT THE WOMAN TRUE WORSHIP. See John 4:20-24. There were two temples—one on Mount Gerizim for the Samaritans and one in Jerusalem for the Jews. Jesus told the lady that He would fulfill all prophecy, and henceforth a person could worship anywhere as well as in the temple. This is vital! God no longer dwells in a building made with hands. He dwells in the bodies of believers.
- VIII. THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPED IN SOUL WINNING. John 4:27 begins, “And upon this....” In other words, “At that moment....” As soon as Jesus had won her to Himself and she had accepted Him as the Messiah, the disciples returned with lunch. It is interesting that it was “at that very moment.” The Holy Spirit had kept the disciples away while Jesus was witnessing to someone. It is wonderful how the Holy Spirit leads when people are witnessing.
- IX. SOUL WINNING IS JESUS’ FOOD. Notice John 4:31-34. Jesus was tired and hungry. He sat down beside the well while the disciples went to Sychar to buy some lunch. They came back and found Him refreshed and revived. This was surprising to them, for He had been tired and hungry when they left. They offered Him the food, but He did not eat. He no longer needed the food; He had “eaten.” He told them, “I have meat to eat that ye know not of.” This food was soul winning. Oftentimes people come to First Baptist Church, see the evangelistic services, and criticize by saying that the pastor ought to “feed the sheep.” They do not have enough spiritual discernment to know that “feeding the sheep” is seeing people saved. This was the “meat” of which our Lord was speaking.
- X. A NEW CONVERT BECAME A SOUL WINNER IMMEDIATELY. Read John 4:28-39. Certainly the people in Sychar were surprised to see this woman coming and preaching! No doubt she was surprised to see them heed her words and come out to hear Jesus. This teaches that a person should witness as soon as he is saved and that people will believe. Not all will be saved, but many will believe when a new convert witnesses. The whole city was moved, and lost people were saved because of this lady.

In John 4:28, notice the words, “The woman then left her waterpot.” This does not mean she forgot her waterpot, but that she left her waterpot intentionally. Why did she do this? Though she was saved and though she just had a great emotional experience, she had not forgotten that Jesus wanted a drink of water, so she left Him her waterpot. Immediately she wanted to do His will, to satisfy His needs, and to please Him. This should be our desire—just to please the Saviour!