

Week of November 4, 2012
From Failure to Salvation

Passage Outline:

1. Recognize Your Need - John 4:7-14
2. Confront Your Failure - John 4:15-18
3. Tell Others About Jesus - John 4:25-26,39



What This Lesson Is About:

Failures in our past do not mean we cannot change. We can trust Christ to save us from our sins.

How This Lesson Can Impact Your Life:

This lesson can help you see your need for Christ and share the life-changing message of Christ with others.

1. Recognize Your Need - John 4:7-14

John 4:7-14

⁷When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" ⁸(His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) ⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) ¹⁰Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." ¹¹"Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" ¹²Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?" ¹³Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

- A. For average Jews traveling from Jerusalem to Galilee, they would avoid the Samaritans because they considered the people in that region to be unclean.
- B. For Jesus and His disciples, they travel by way of Samaria, we think intentionally so.
- C. They head toward the Samaritan town of Sychar, where they stopped at Jacob's well, a religious landmark as well as a source of water.

Read articles "Who Were the Samaritans?" and "Sychar and Jacob's Well" contained in your preparation packet you picked up last Sunday. If you missed it, additional copies are on the back table.

- D. Jesus shows us the need to go where people are who have not met Him. Sometimes we tend to take the opposite approach.
- E. We tend to believe that unsaved people need to come to us, but He demonstrated that we should go to them.
- F. At the well, Jesus sat down to rest while His disciples went on into town to buy some food.
- G. A woman comes to the well and Jesus strikes up a conversation with her by asking for a drink of water.
- H. She responds with surprise and perplexity:
 - i. Jewish men would never talk to a woman in public a setting.
 - ii. Jewish people would never drink out of Samaritan utensils.

Read the article “Jesus, Breaking the Rules” contained in your preparation packet you picked up last Sunday. If you missed it, additional copies are on the back table.

- I. Jesus initiated this conversation because He could tell she had a spiritual thirst that only He, the living water, could quench.
- J. Jesus introduced the Samaritan woman to the truth about God’s gift of living water, which alone could quench a person’s spiritual thirst eternally. He also assured her that the source of living water would never run dry.
- K. Immediately she showed interest in what He said, although she didn’t quite understand what He meant.

Go to People Who Don’t Know Jesus

So far, this story shows us the value of spending time with people who don’t know Jesus. In so doing, we can help them to see their spiritual need.

But when we share the good news of Christ with the lost, we can grow frustrated because we cannot get them to see they need Him. Because of their spiritual blindness, they have difficulty with the reality that they need what Christ alone can give them.

As Jesus demonstrated, therefore, talking with people so they can see their spiritual need becomes a critical step in reaching them for Christ. To whom might you go to help someone see his or her need for Jesus?

2. Confront Your Failure - John 4:15-18

John 4:15-18

¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." ¹⁶ He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." ¹⁷ "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

- A. Immediately she mentioned two advantages of getting some of the water that Jesus described:
 - i. She would never get thirsty again. For people living in a desert climate, having a constant supply of fresh water would be a tremendous convenience.
 - ii. She would never have inconvenience herself and return to Jacob’s well to draw water each day.
- B. Jesus, knowing her failures, brings up her husband. He wanted her to get honest with Him about her situation and confront her failure.
- C. Her reply about not having a husband was only part of the truth.
- D. The Samaritan woman’s failure did not start with her lifestyle of immorality. Neither did it begin with her series of failed relationships. Her lifestyle pointed a far more serious problem - the reality of sin.
- E. Like the Samaritan woman, each of us is a sinner; we deceive ourselves if we believe we can deal with our sin problems by ourselves. Only a relationship with Christ, the source of living water, can meet our gaping spiritual need that results from our sin.
- F. People prefer to deny the reality of sin because confronting it brings them pain. Being convicted of sin

hurts, so they tend to do everything they can to avoid it. However, the problem won't go away. Their sin still weighs heavily on them.

"When it Gets Too Hot in the Kitchen..."

"...People change the subject." People would rather deny failure than confront them. But we know that by confessing our sin to the Lord is the only way to truly deal with our failings.

When we see our sin through His eyes, we recognize that we've been going in the wrong direction. That's when we make an about face and turn to Him, literally the meaning of "Repent." The first step toward Him involves confessing our sin. When we make that critical step, the pain of our sin will be replaced with the peace that comes with His forgiveness. The guilt over our sin fades away; the joy of eternal life fills us.

What failure have you been trying to deny or avoid? Why not bring it to Jesus, confront it, admit it and ask His gracious and free forgiveness? You know you will feel better when you do!

3. Tell Others About Jesus - John 4:25-26, 39

John 4:25-26, 39

²⁵ The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." ²⁶ Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he." ... ³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony...

- A. As the conversation, the subject turned to worship. This was a long standing debate between the Jews and Samaritans regarding the proper place to worship God.
- B. Jesus reply indicates that the key issue in worshiping God did not involve a location on a map but the attitude of a worshiper's heart.
- C. God's people worshiped Him "in spirit and truth."

Read the article "Samaritan Beliefs About the Christ" contained in your preparation packet you picked up last Sunday. If you missed it, additional copies are on the back table.

- D. For the Samaritan woman, the arrival of the Messiah would mark the day when all debates about spiritual matters would come to an end. He would give the final word on all spiritual matters.
- E. Little did she know she was talking with the Messiah at that very moment.
- F. There at the well, the conversation with Jesus had taken her from His request for a drink of water to His announcement that He was the Messiah.
- G. We too, who believe Jesus wants to save us from sin, move beyond lives of failures to an intimate walk with Him who makes life complete and fulfilling.
- H. The Samaritan woman left the well and returned to the town to tell others about Jesus and her encounter with Him.
- I. Her eagerness to share her testimony reminds us that meeting Christ results in our enthusiasm over

telling others about Him. It is not a matter of having the right qualifications to share Jesus, but about how Christ has changed our lives.

- J. Having experienced His love, mercy, and grace for ourselves, we can hardly wait to tell others about Him.

The Power of a Testimony

We can never overestimate the power of a testimony about Christ. While people may take issue with what we say about the Bible or what we believe, they cannot argue with what we have experienced in Jesus for ourselves.

The Samaritan woman's testimony made a positive impact on people of her town. What needs in your life has Jesus met? How can you use those experiences to share the life-changing message of Christ with others?

This week, write out a paragraph or two answering this question: What difference has Jesus made in my life? Then pray for an opportunity to share your testimony.

Biblical Truths

1. When we come to see our need for Christ, we find ourselves eager to hear more about eternal life He alone can offer.
2. As we deal honestly with the problem of our sin, we see our need to come to Christ, our only solution for it.
3. A Christian's testimony about the change Christ has made in his or her life can have a major influence on a person who has not met Him personally.
4. When we receive Christ as Savior, He changes our lives by setting us free from our failures and our sin and empowers us to live new lives because Jesus lives in us.