



NO ONE SHOULD NOT HEAR • Evangelism

What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

John 4:4-42

This study also looks at Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman, though it does so from a different angle. We will extract from the methodology of Jesus, five principles we can apply in ministry.

Take the Initiative (John 4:4-9)

As the story opens, we see Jesus initiating a conversation despite significant cultural and geographical barriers. He was not content to wait for opportunities to arise where He could communicate the gospel. He sought them out. Though Jews would rarely enter into Samaria, Jesus broke many cultural taboos by entering the land and engaging in a conversation with this woman (See "No One is Too Bad"). It is critical that we, too, take the initiative to go into uncomfortable places or situations to share the gospel.

Use Meaningful, Relevant Language (John 4:10-15)

When Jesus begins to share with her, He uses a metaphor relevant to her life. Since they were at a well drawing water, Jesus talked about water. We need to do the same. A non-Christian is not likely to understand phrases such as "born again" or "saved," and may be turned-off by them. In order to be understood, we need to communicate the gospel in non-religious language. We need to draw on the common cultural experiences we share. Music, movies, and TV shows are often great sources to find common metaphors our culture would understand.

Focus on the Good News (John 4:10-15)

The language Jesus uses to talk about eternal life is overwhelmingly positive. The images are luxurious and attractive. We can do the same thing. In 1 Peter 2:9, Peter describes our role as evangelists: "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light." The heart of evangelism is praise. Our job is to tell people how great God is, so that they will want to know Him, too. We need to tell friends and students we meet how wonderful it is to know God and be forgiven by Him. James Stewart, a Scottish pastor, said, "Knowing Christ is no tame, hum-drum monotony, but rather is the most thrilling, exciting adventure the human spirit can ever know." We need to find ways to communicate Christ so that people can see Him for who He really is.

What's the Big Idea?

This study includes the same text as the previous study ("No One is Too Bad"), but instead of focusing on Jesus' motivation in talking to the Samaritan woman, we will look at His methodology.

What's the Problem?

Reaching someone with the gospel isn't always easy. There are many barriers which we need to learn to overcome including personal laziness, fear, and uncertainty of what to say.



Focus on Jesus, Not on a Person's Lifestyle (John 4:16-26)

In John 4:16-18, Jesus exposes the woman's sin and need for forgiveness, but graciously allows her to change the subject. We must talk about sin when sharing the gospel; otherwise, we really haven't shared the whole gospel. But notice how Jesus raises the issue and restrains from battering her with guilt. Having surfaced her need, He brings the focus back to God and the salvation He offers. We should model the same approach. Our job in evangelism is to point people to Jesus. Allow them to see the depth of their need and then focus on Jesus' sufficiency to meet that need.

Create Ambassadors (John 4: 27-30, 39-42)

Immediately after her conversation with Jesus, the woman goes back to town to tell everyone about Him. In her haste, she even leaves her water jar behind. She can't wait to tell people about this man who claims to be the Messiah. Because of her witness, many people from that town believe in Christ. She becomes an ambassador for Jesus to that town. The best person to reach a Samaritan town is a Samaritan!

In verse 4, it says that Jesus "had to go through Samaria." He needed to meet with this woman and bring her to faith, but He also wanted to send an ambassador who would reach the whole Samaritan town with the gospel. We can do the same. We can be ambassadors to every group on our campus or in our community and raise up new believers, in those groups, who will reach their peers for Christ. Imagine every dorm, athletic team, academic major, sorority, and club on a college campus having a group of believers regularly reaching their peers. Every subculture could then become transformed by Christ in the way Samaria was transformed due to this woman's witness.

Jesus' Perspective (John 4:31-38)

In this passage, Jesus talks to His disciples about what is happening. He describes a world ready to hear the gospel and to believe. Today the work of reaping and sowing is ongoing. As you walk in the power of the Holy Spirit, you can trust God to do great things and to draw people to faith.

What's Our Response?

Encourage people to live out each of these five principles.

1. Take the initiative.
2. Use meaningful, relevant language.
3. Focus on the good news (i.e., the gospel).
4. Focus on Jesus – don't pick on a person's lifestyle.
5. Create ambassadors.

If possible, divide the group into pairs so that they may go and talk to someone about Christ during the week, or even after the Bible study.

What Are the Questions?

John 4:4-42

LAUNCH

Have you ever talked with someone about your relationship with Jesus and how they could know Him too? If so, what happened?

EXPLORE

Read John 4:4-11.

1. What barriers did Jesus cross in order to have a meaningful conversation with the Samaritan woman?
2. How do you think the disciples felt about going through Samaria?
3. Why did Jesus bring them along?
4. What metaphor does Jesus use to describe eternal life? Why?
5. What movies, TV shows or common experiences have you used as a bridge to share the gospel or to engage someone in discussing spiritual issues?
6. How do you think students on your campus view what it's like to be a Christian?
7. How should this affect the way you share the gospel?
8. Why does Jesus mention the woman's relationships?
9. How does she respond? What are some common talking points, or smoke screens, people retreat to today when they feel confronted by the gospel?
10. What does Jesus do with her response? Why?
11. After Jesus confesses who He is, what does the woman do?

Read 4:30-42.

12. Summarize what Jesus is saying in verses 34-38.
13. As this woman was most effective in reaching fellow Samaritans, who would be the most effective in reaching the Greeks, the freshmen, or the football team on your campus?
14. What if there are no Christians in those subgroups? What would Jesus have you do to change that situation?

Read John 4:15-30.

8. Why does Jesus mention the woman's relationships?

APPLY

15. In light of what we have seen in this chapter, what would motivate a Christian to want to talk with others about their relationship with Christ? What propelled the Samaritan women to tell others about Jesus?
16. What motivates you to talk with others about Christ? Can you think of a time when Christ became real to you in a way that you were really motivated to want others to know about it?
17. There seem to be at least five principles we can extract from watching how Jesus interacted with this woman. List as many as you can draw out based on this study.
18. Which of the methods that Jesus modeled is hardest for you? How can you improve your skills as a communicator of the gospel?

What Are the Answers?

1. Being a Jew Himself, Jesus traveled into Samaria, an area where there was a history of hostility between Jews and Samaritans. He also had to overcome barriers of gender, race, religion, and social status.
2. No doubt they were uncomfortable and displeased.
3. To teach them to overcome their prejudices and to show that the gospel is for everyone.
4. He used water. She understood and needed water. It was relevant to her life.
5. Allow the group to discuss.
6. Allow the group to discuss.
7. We need to show the gospel as it is: wonderful, life-giving, satisfying our deepest needs. The gospel is not a dry, religious exercise.
8. To surface her sin and need for forgiveness.
9. Obviously uncomfortable, she changes the subject and moves to a peripheral debate. Today people often bring up issues like the Crusades, or slavery, or why God allows evil in the world.
10. He lets her change the subject and continues to treat her with respect. His purpose was to expose her need for forgiveness, not to belittle her for being a sinner. He also does briefly answer her question.
11. She goes back to her town and tells everyone about Jesus.
12. Allow the group time to summarize the passage.
13. Members of those groups.
14. We need to send ambassadors for Christ to these groups or be that ambassador ourselves. Then we can reach others who will in turn, and most effectively, reach that group.
- 15.-16. Allow the group to discuss.
17. The five principals are:
 1. Take the initiative.
 2. Use meaningful, relevant language.
 3. Focus on the good news (i.e., the gospel).
 4. Focus on Jesus – don't pick on a person's lifestyle.
 5. Create ambassadors.
18. Allow the group to discuss.

Memorize

Memorize the following definition of successful witnessing:

“Successful witnessing is taking the initiative in the power of the Holy Spirit to share Christ, and leaving the results to God.”