



STORY

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman - John 4:1-43

7/17/03

TEACHER PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I thank you for the grace and mercy you revealed in sending your Son Jesus to die for the sins of the world. Help me realize my own sinfulness and the miracle of your grace in bringing me to faith in Jesus. Enable me thereby to speak to these children of your accepting grace in terms that they can understand and live by. Bless this hour we spend studying Your word. Amen.

VOCABULARY

Samaritan - a mixed race of people despised by the Jews

OUTER AIM

Jesus came to seek and to save all sinners

INNER AIM

Jesus came to seek and to save me

BACKGROUND Jesus told Nicodemus that “God so loved the world that He gave....” These were radical words for the Jews who thought of themselves as God’s special people. The self-righteousness of the Pharisees was revealed in their attitude toward other people. They trusted in themselves that they were righteous. As a byproduct of this error, they despised others. At Jacob’s well, Jesus revealed Himself as the Savior of the world and the Savior of all sinners.

STUDENT PRAYER

Dear Jesus, help us to understand your perfect love for all people. We thank you that you came to seek and to save those who were lost. We ask that you would bless our study this morning so that we may understand your grace in our lives. Help us never to look down on or despise any other person. Thank you. Amen.

PRESENTATION

A knowledge of the historical background is helpful for the understanding of this story. Samaria is located between Judea and Galilee. The Samaritans were Jews who had been left behind at the time of the Babylonian captivity. When the nation of Judah returned from the Babylonian captivity, the Samaritans were not allowed to participate in the rebuilding of the temple. (Neh. 2:10; 4-6) There were racial reasons for the Jews’ hatred of the Samaritans (John 4:9); they were a racially mixed people. There were also religious reasons. Their religion was a mixture of the truth and falsehood. (They accepted the first five books of Moses and worshipped at Mt. Gerizim.) Finally there were political reasons for their hatred. Historically, the Samaritans had always been political enemies of the Jews.

It is against this background that Jesus reached out for the Samaritan woman who was an open sinner. Instead of going around Samaria as was normal for a Jew, Jesus chose to journey through it and thus came to the Well of Jacob near Sychar. Jesus’ disciples proceeded into town leaving Jesus to minister to the needs of this woman.

In the truest sense, God sought out this woman in her need. She had not come looking. Jesus came giving. Jesus offered the woman “living water” promising that if she drank of it, she would never thirst. Jesus

promised her a spiritual drink that would satisfy her deepest spiritual needs. Jesus had something wonderful to give to her. This water would become a well “springing up into everlasting life.” (4:14)

Jesus brought this woman to the point of confessing that she needed a Savior. He revealed her evasive answer to His direction, “Go and get your husband.” He told her that she was living with a man who was not her husband. He thus revealed to her that He was a prophet; indeed, the Messiah of whom the Samaritans also knew. (4:26) She revealed faith in Jesus although she did not yet realize the fullness of what that meant. Jesus revealed Himself to her as the promised Messiah.

The purpose of this account is seen in 4:34-38. Jesus saw the world as ripe for the harvest, the ingathering of souls. Already we have an indication of the worldwide nature of this harvest pictured in the Samaritan woman. This was an important part of Jesus’ training of His disciples to be prepared to “go out and make disciples of all nations.”

This woman brought many from her village to see Jesus. The good news had to be shared. Because of Jesus’ words, many believed. Here we see a beautiful picture of our mission spirit and zeal as it should be today. We pray that the Lord would send forth laborers to gather in His harvest.

APPLICATION

The obvious application is that Jesus seeks for sinners and individually ministers to their spiritual needs. There is no one excluded from the kingdom of God because of his or her race or color. But not so obvious is the truth that no one is outside of God’s grace on account of his or her sinfulness. All of need to realize our personal sinfulness.

Jesus captures this woman’s attention with the promise of “living water” of which she could drink and never thirst again. People have spiritual needs which are not being met today. They need to understand that material things can never satisfy man’s deepest needs. The only answer is to be found in Jesus who is the “water of life” and the “bread of life.”

It is important to discuss ways in which children can reach out to others. At the same time discuss barriers that exist today which might prevent our reaching out with the Gospel.

When the woman found salvation in Jesus, she wanted to share it with others. The people in this village believed, not just because of the woman’s testimony, but because of the words of Jesus.

PASSAGES

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.

Luke 19:10 - "For the Son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

John 4:14 - "But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

Luke 10:2 - Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

HYMN CHOICES

Hark! the Voice of Jesus Crying - TLH #496

I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say - TLH #277