

Personal Evangelism 101: Reveal Christ

Scripture: John 4:25–26

Code: B130613

When it comes to evangelism, we often hear about “asking Jesus into your heart” or “making a decision for Christ.” But condensing the whole process of repentance and faith into a short—and often unbiblical—phrase like that trains us to emphasize the wrong things in evangelism. Instead, we need to emphasize biblical methods and models of what it means to preach the gospel.

To that end, we’ve been examining Christ’s interaction with the Samaritan woman at the well, looking at their conversation as a model for our own personal evangelism. We’ve already seen how the Lord initiated the conversation, identified her spiritual need, offered God’s mercy, confronted her sin, and exhorted her to reject her false worship. Today we’ll look at the wonderful conclusion of their conversation and see how Christ revealed the truth about who He is and what He came to accomplish.

We’ll pick up their discussion in John 4:25, as she responds to Christ’s exhortation to reject her false worship. “The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.’”

As we previously discussed, the Samaritan religion was a hybrid of the Pentateuch and pagan idols and rituals adopted during the Assyrian captivity. It’s not clear exactly what this woman believed prior to her divine appointment with Christ. What is clear is that she held on to at least some kind of Jewish Messianic theology—possibly based on Genesis 3:15 or Deuteronomy 18:15-18.

Regardless of what specific prophecy she was referring to, she knew *something* about Messiah. She knew the Messiah is God’s anointed One who would come to fill the earth with righteousness and truth. She’s just been told she needs to worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:24). And implied in her response is the understanding that she won’t know the full truth until it’s revealed in Messiah’s arrival.

That makes Christ’s response to her in John 4:26 all the more glorious: “Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am He.’” There is no “He” in the original text—this is an *I AM* statement, where Christ self-applies the name of God. In essence He’s saying, *The one speaking to you is the I AM*. She’s asking for the truth and He unveils that He is in fact the Truth incarnate.

When they first began talking, she was completely ignorant and completely disinterested in who He was and what He had to say. After a few short minutes, she wants forgiveness for her wretched life, she is repentant, and she’s hungry for God’s truth about eternal life.

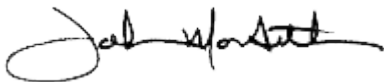
We don’t know what else was said between Christ and the Samaritan woman, but it’s safe to assume the conversation didn’t abruptly end there. And we do know from further into John’s gospel that her repentance was real and that she was converted. In fact, John goes on to explain how her salvation was the first of many conversions in her community.

From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all the things that I have done.” So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. Many more believed because of His word; and they were saying to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world.” (John 4:39-42)

The transforming work we see so vividly in John 4 is only accomplished by God. As believers, our job is to initiate evangelistic conversations, identify sinners’ spiritual needs, offer the surpassingly rich mercy of God to meet those needs, confront their sin, and exhort them to reject their false worship and turn to the true worship of the true God. And we can’t do any more than that. It’s up to the Lord to disclose Himself to them—to penetrate the darkness of their hearts and reveal His true nature to them. It’s a divine work that we cannot manufacture or duplicate. In terms of salvation, only God can reveal the life-transforming truth about His Son (cf. John 1:15-26).

Admittedly that means many of our evangelistic encounters may end without a clear resolution. How and when the Lord reveals Himself to people is beyond our control or influence. Our task is to look for opportunities to proclaim the person and work of Christ to the people we encounter, and to make the most of those opportunities. We have to trust the Lord to bring forth the spiritual fruit how and when He chooses.

From a results perspective, that might initially seem frustrating. But from an eternal perspective, it’s *liberating*. Our job is to faithfully sow the seed of the gospel. We leave the spiritual harvest up to the Lord.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Mark". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "M".

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