

THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA: PERSONAL TESTIFYING *John 4:1-30; 39-42*

by Francis Dixon

The special power in personal testimony may be defined as: *telling others out of our own experience what we know about the Lord – who He is, what He is able to do for those who trust Him, and above all, what He has done for us.* The Woman by the Well did not preach; she simply told her story, with the result that there were scores of conversions. There are four good reasons why every Christian should engage in personal testimony:-

- 1 **The Lord Jesus encouraged it.** Look up Mark 5:19, and compare Acts 1:8.
- 2 **The Apostles practised it.** For example, we have the record of Paul's testimony seven times in the Acts and in his Epistles. He knew the power of personal testimony.
- 3 **The Holy Spirit uses it.** The word "preached" in Acts 8:4 means that they told others what the Lord had done for them and is able and willing to do for all who will put their trust in Him.
- 4 **Every Christian can engage in it.** Not every Christian can preach or teach, but all can say – John 3:11 and 9:25.

PRAISE the Lord for:

- ★ Letters of encouragement received from USA prison chaplains who witness inmates embracing God's message of hope through the Challenge newspaper
- ★ Allowing the Challenge newspaper to be distributed throughout 240 prisons around USA
- ★ Another fruitful and strategic trip thus far (22 Feb-28 Mar) for Carl and John in the USA working with Andrew Trezona
- ★ A full team (24 in total) for our upcoming Impact Africa trip in July. This will be our 16th trip and we are excited to see what the Lord has planned this year

THE BASIS OF PERSONAL TESTIFYING

The woman was a Gentile, and was immoral, lost, helpless and hopeless, but the Lord loved her, and He revealed to her who He was, with the result that she was deeply convicted of her sin and came to know Him as her personal Saviour, her Friend and her Lord – now look at verses 19,25,26,29 and 42, and notice that she came to know Him first as Prophet, then as the Messiah and then as the Saviour of the world. She knew Him in this way as a matter of personal experience. No one is qualified to testify for the Lord until he knows Him for himself; indeed, no one has a testimony at all until he really knows Christ as Saviour and Lord.

THE CONSTRAINT OF PERSONAL TESTIFYING

If we have found the Lord, can we keep this to ourselves? See what happened in the case of the Woman – see verses 26-28. Why did she leave her water jar and run off to the city? – look up Acts 4:20; 1 Corinthians 9:16; 2 Corinthians 5:14. When you think of the many around you who do not know the Lord Jesus, do you not feel constrained to go and tell them of His love and grace? – 2 Kings 7:9.

THE SPHERE OF PERSONAL TESTIFYING

This is indicated in verse 28. The woman went "back to the town, and said to the people..." The sphere for testifying is anywhere, for our commission is to "Go into all the world" (Mark 16:15) and make the gospel known to

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everyone, but there is a special place where we ought to begin testifying, and this is emphasised in verse 28. We should begin in our own town among our own people, where we are known and where it is possible to testify to those who knew us before our conversion so that they are able to see and hear what the Lord has done for us.

THE METHOD OF PERSONAL TESTIFYING

Notice seven things in verses 28 and 29 :

- 1 **First, there is the idea of PRIORITY.** Verse 28: "leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town." Her original concern was to draw water, but now she was concerned to save souls. Often we put soul-winning second or third, when it is a matter of first importance – see John 1:41.
- 2 **There is the note of EARNESTNESS.** Her appeal to the people was not casual; it was earnest – look up John 9:4.

PRAYER needed for:

- ★ Continued growth of the paper and finances to sponsor the USA prison edition. There are over 1700 state prisons throughout USA so there is a lot of work still to do
- ★ The Lord’s protection from the schemes of the enemy for each Challenge edition as we continue to take new ground for Jesus
- ★ The Impact Africa team as they prepare for their trip on various levels from finances; health; family issues and even the availability of time off
- ★ Ananda and Grace Pula and their two children as they head up the Challenge work in Malawi. There have been huge delays in getting papers across the border; pray the Lord will open the way. Also an attempted break into their home so pray for their safety and protection

- 3 **Then, there is the thought of DIRECTION.** Verse 28 says, "She said to the people..." – but first she had to find them. When we set out to seek people for Christ the Holy Spirit waits to direct us so that we do not go to the wrong person, speak at the wrong time or say the wrong thing – look up Acts 8:29.
- 4 **Again, there is the emphasis on SPEECH.** The woman "said to the people..." (verse 28). And why should she not speak or tell? Many Christians say, "I can't speak!" but compare Jeremiah 1:6-9.
- 5 **There is a clear indication of HUMILITY.** The woman's whole thought was not to draw attention to herself but to her Lord – look up John 3:30.
- 6 **We also have here a CHALLENGE.** Verse 29 tells us that the woman said to the people, "Come, see!" She did not argue; she simply asked them to come and meet the Lord for themselves.
- 7 **Finally, there is INTERROGATION.** This was a clever move on her part when, as verse 29 tells us, she said, "Could this be the Christ?" She made the people think for themselves and face her penetrating question.

THE RESULT OF PERSONAL TESTIFYING

This is beautifully described in verse 39 – and note the word "testified". What was the result? Many of the people to whom she had testified believed on the Lord Jesus because of what she had said. But this is not the end of the story, for her testimony led to even greater blessing – see verses 40-42.

In concluding this study, please note verse 35.

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