

JESUS: THE MASTER SOUL-WINNER *John 4:1-42*

by Francis Dixon

When Jesus said, "Follow Me!" (Matthew 4:19), He meant that we were to follow His example; in effect saying, "Watch Me as a soul-winner and follow Me!" In the four Gospels we have a record of the methods He adopted in personal work, one of which is His interview with the Woman at the Well (John 4:1-42). Our method of approach to souls must vary according to the person, the time, the place and the circumstances, but the following points suggested by this incident will help us.

HE SHOWED INTEREST AND CONCERN FOR ONE PERSON

On this occasion our Lord set out to win just one sinful woman. He frequently had an audience of one person only; in Matthew's Gospel, sixteen private interviews are recorded, and in John's Gospel there are seventeen. How tremendously important one soul is! In Luke 15 we read of one lost sheep, one lost piece of silver and one lost son, and Mark 8:36-37 emphasises the value of just one soul. The one we are seeking may become an outstanding soul-winner – look at verses 28-30.

HE WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO WIN ONE SOUL

Verse 4 tells us that He went through Samaria, willing to put Himself to some inconvenience to win one sinful woman. Too often we are so preoccupied with our own affairs that we pass by those in need to whom God is giving us a glorious opportunity of ministering (Luke 10:31-32).

PRAISE the Lord for:

- ★ The team going to Malawi prisons saw just under 1500 commitments to Christ received
- ★ Our wonderful volunteers who turn up each month to help with the wrap and distribution of the paper. We are so thankful for their continued commitment to the work
- ★ Our prayer warriors who are a great blessing and asset to the work we are doing in Australia and overseas

HE WORKED UNDER A STRONG SENSE OF URGENCY AND CONSTRAINT

"He must needs go through Samaria" (verse 4, AV). There was a soul-winning "must", a tremendous imperative in His life – compare John 3:14 with John 4:4; 9:4; 12:32-33. His food was to do His Father's will (John 4:31-34) – and this was His Father's will. Is there a constraint in our life? – look up Romans 9:1-3.

HE WAS FRIENDLY, ENGAGING AND SYMPATHETIC IN HIS APPROACH

He was not cold or self-important. There would have been a due propriety and a marvellous dignity about His person and His bearing. The apostle Paul longed to "save some" (1 Corinthians 9:22). We cannot find a better illustration of this than Luke 10:33-37.

HE ALLOWED ORDINARY HAPPENINGS TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES

Verse 6 tells us He was tired and sat down. He could have made that an excuse for relaxation, but instead of viewing His tiredness as a disadvantage He turned it to an advantage. How seldom we view the happenings of our lives in the same way! "I wish I hadn't to go on that journey!" we say, whereas the journey might provide us with a wonderful contact with someone to whom the Lord would have us witness.

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HE ASKED A FAVOUR OF THE ONE WHOM HE WOULD WIN

Verse 7 tells us our Lord established a point of contact. People often like to be asked a favour. Ask someone to direct you to a certain place and see how often that person is delighted to help. This is also true in soul-winning. Think of a sincere request you can make of your contact and ask for his help; in this way you may win his sympathy.

HE SPOKE TO HER ALONE

Verse 8 tells us this. There are times when it is unwise to do this. There are times when young Christians need to be careful about speaking in private to a member of the opposite sex; but the point we wish to make here is that we must not embarrass anyone by speaking to them of spiritual matters in front of others. There may be exceptions to this rule, but generally the rule holds good.

HE OVERCAME THE BARRIERS THAT SHE PUT UP AND THAT ALREADY EXISTED

First, there was the barrier of sin (verses 16-18). This woman was an outcast because of her notoriously sinful life. She came to draw water in the heat of midday when she knew that other women would not be present. Second, there was the barrier of race (verse 9). Our Lord was a Jew and she was a Gentile. Third, there was the barrier of sex. It was "not done" to speak to a strange woman in a public place. Finally, there was the barrier of religion (verse 20).

<p>PRAYER needed for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">★ Carl Carmody's trip to Sydney (10 Sept – 1 Oct) for promotion and development. Pray for God ordained opportunities★ Challenge Board as they navigate new requirements issued by Government to be effective by 2019★ Each edition just completed and sent out namely – Australia, South Africa main and prison, Zimbabwe, Malawi main and prison, USA main, Spanish and prison
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HE PROVOKED ENQUIRY AND CREATED SOUL-HUNGER

Verses 10-13 tell us how He captured her curiosity. Employ this method as we tell the burdened about the Burden-bearer (Matthew 11:28); as we tell the bound about the Emancipator (John 8:36); as we tell the bereaved about the One who is the life (John 11:23-25).

HE DID NOT SCOLD HER, BUT HE MADE HER FACE UP TO HER SIN

Until people are convicted of their sin, and thus of their need of Christ, they will not come to Him. Verses 16-19 tell us how tender, how firm and how persistent our Lord was. We cannot convict people of sin, but the Holy Spirit can, and He will if we use "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17). We can tell people that because they have broken the greatest commandment they have therefore committed the greatest sin (Matthew 22:37-38).

HE SPOKE OF THAT WHICH ALONE COULD MEET HER NEED

She needed eternal life, as verse 14 tells us; salvation, as verse 22 tells us – in other words, she needed Him as her Saviour.

HE CONCLUDED ONLY WHEN HE HAD FULLY REVEALED HIMSELF AS SAVIOUR AND LORD

Look at verses 25 and 26. What a wonderful moment that must have been for her, and for the people of Samaria! – see verses 40-42.

CONDENSED FROM FRANCIS DIXON'S WRITINGS. WWW.WORDSOFLIFE.CO.UK/BIBLE-STUDIES/

Challenge in USA Prisons

Currently, Challenge's USA Prison Edition is in over 285 prisons and jails.

As the responses grew, we knew that discipleship follow-up was required. We found that in **Crossroads Prison Ministries**.

Crossroads centres on mentoring relationships between people in prison and volunteers from churches. The relationships formed through

studying the Bible together and exchanging letters transform both those inside and outside prison walls. The mentors' encouraging and guiding words have a deep impact, providing a vivid picture of the unconditional love of Jesus.

As of 2017, over 800 prisoners have responded to the Gospel message in the Challenge Prison newspaper, and reached out to by Crossroads Prison Ministries.