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OUR LORD'S APPROACH TO EVANGELISM

John 4

John 4 : 4 Now he had to go through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?"

8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

11 "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"

13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

INTRODUCTION

When I started wearing reading glasses, sometimes, I will have a hard time finding it and I will look all over the house. I will ask my wife or kids if they saw it, little do I know it's just on top of my head.

In short, I was looking for it everywhere when it's just there.

Sometimes, that's what happens when it comes to reading God's Word. We tend to look for a deeper teaching when the passage in itself is obvious.

Two of the rules of hermeneutics (Biblical interpretation) are looking at the plain meaning of the words and the passage and of course, context, context, context... it means, what is the over-all meaning based on the story, based on the letter and based on the entire Scripture. Without context, we will miss the whole point.

For example : You read the word, "I hate you." In itself, it looks like, "I hate you." But what if the context is the wife is teasing the husband and the husband lovingly replies with a smile on his face, "I hate you."

Good Samaritan Illustration : A perfect example is the story about the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37

Most of the preachings you will hear about this is about helping others specially those who are in need. Nothing wrong with that.

But what is the main point of that parable? It's in the start of the story before Jesus told the parable.

Luke 10: 25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Surely, when Jesus told the parable, He is not saying that in order for a person to inherit eternal life is to be a good Samaritan when the Bible states, that it is not by works we are saved but by grace through faith. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

The Samaritan woman

The reason why I'm saying this is because most of the time, when we hear the story of the Samaritan woman, the focus is too much on the passage on verse 24,

John 4: 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

I myself is sometimes at fault when it comes to this.

But if you read the entire story, that's not the main point. John 4 was about evangelism and how our Lord approached it

And even if you see the main reason why John wrote the Gospel, it is all about evangelism

John 20 : 31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

And this is the point of the story when you read the ending of the passage :

John 4: 42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

TOP GONE ILLUSTRATION : I watched Top Gun Maverick twice. Everytime, I come out of the cinema, I feel like Tom Cruise. As people we like to emulate or imitate the best examples. Today, we will follow the best example when it comes to evangelism and that is our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Now before we go to our lesson by God's grace and see how our Lord did evangelism, let's see

WHO ARE THE SAMARITANS?

We need to understand who the Samaritans were and why did the Bible said this.

John 4:9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

There are several facts about Samaritans. In fact, they still exist today in Israel. But we need to answer **why do Jews do not associate with Samaritans?** Remember, it's the Jews who do not want to associate with them.

- They were Jews who intermarried with Gentiles.

Deuteronomy 7:3-5 3 Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, 4 for they will turn your children away from following me to serve other gods, and the Lord's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you.

- They have their own version of Scriptures.
- When they were trying to rebuild the temple, the Samaritans gave them a hard time (Ezra 4 and Nehemiah 4)

In fact, the Jews hated the Samaritans, they call them “dogs” or “half-breeds”

Again, this is the reason why the story that Jesus telling the Jews about the “good Samaritan is preposterous because for them there is no such thing as a good Samaritan.”

Illustration : In 1869, an Indian chief was introducing himself to General Philip Sheridan. He said to Sheridan, “Tosahwi, good Indian.” Sheridan replied to Tosahwi, “The only good Indian is a dead Indian”

The question is : Who is our Samaritan today?

We’ll answer this by God’s grace as we study our Lord’s approach when it comes to evangelism and mission based on this story in John 4.

THE LORD’S APPROACH TO EVANGELISM

- Intentional
- Inclusive
- Inspirational

I. INTENTIONAL

John 4: 3 So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. 4 Now he had to go through Samaria.

Why is this an important verse?

Again, you have to remember the cultural context at that time. **They have an intense dislike for one another.**

The Jewish historian Josephus reports that Samaritans harass Jewish pilgrims traveling through Samaria.

<https://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/people/related-articles/samaritans>

Now for the sake of accuracy, there has been teaching that Jews avoided passing through Samaria. But Biblical and historical evidence show that Jews travel through Samaria.

But we get the evidence from the word itself “he had to”.

Etymology : he had to “dei” or it’s a necessity, he needed

Now, it doesn’t mean he had no choice but our Lord intended to pass there because of a divine appointment to bring the good news. Remember, though our Lord is fully man, He is still fully God. This is the reason why He was able to say to the Samaritan woman.

Proof of our Lord's Omniscience

16 He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

17 "I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. 18 The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

This is the reason why

*Luke 4: 42 At daybreak, Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. 43 But he said, "**I must** proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent."* (SEE THE INTENTION THERE)

Why was it intentional? It's because that's the primary intention why our Lord became man.

Luke 19: 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

In fact, our Lord knows that's the reason our Father sent Him.

John 4: "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."

We also know it's intentional because on how He approached this woman, meeting her to where she is at that time...

Look at the conversation :

7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?"

8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

First, our Lord need not ask the woman for water. But he asked the woman **for water in order to pave the way to introduce Himself as the living water** that gives life...that was His primary intention.

Story : Evangelist in the plane

There was this evangelist who visited our church in the Philippines. He said, he likes riding planes. Why? It's because automatically he has a captive audience. And his intention every time he rides a plane is to share the Gospel but he starts the conversation in meeting them where they are.

By the way, I know we have been taught in Evangelism seminars "Do you know where you're going when you die?" That's a good question, but don't start with that question specially inside an airplane. They might think you're a terrorist. HAHAAH

Back to the evangelist, he met them where they are. So one time he sat down beside this man and he asked him, "What do you do for a living?" The man replied, "I'm a businessman." And then they talked about the business of the man. Of course, the man asked him, "What do you do for a living?" He said, "I'm a businessman too." So of course, the natural question is, "Really, what kind of business are you in?" And then he replied, "I'm in the business of saving souls." And then that started the conversation about Jesus Christ. Eventually, by God's grace, the businessman accepted Christ before the plane landed. By the way, in the middle of the conversation of telling about Christ in an airplane, that's the perfect time to ask a person, "Do you know where you're going if you die, for example, if this plane crashes?" But again, not at the start inside an airplane.

Again, we need to be intentional whenever we're talking with someone and that intention is how can I share Jesus Christ to them.

Quote : I'm all for lifestyle evangelism, but I'm also in favor of intentionality, where we seek out opportunities for spiritual conversations and are equipped to explain the gospel and why we believe it. – Lee Strobel

II. INCLUSIVE

*9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a **Samaritan woman**. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)*

Look at the disciples reaction :

27 Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

I've shared with you earlier that the Jews treat the Samaritans as pagans.

Here is Jesus, remember, He is considered a Rabbi and yet He's talking with a Samaritan. Aside from talking with a Samaritan, he's talking with a woman.

Woman with Alabaster Jar Illustration

Remember the story where a woman brought an alabaster jar of perfume and wet Jesus feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair and poured perfume on His feet? Look at the reaction of the Pharisees

Luke 7: 39 When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

Our Lord Jesus is known to associate Himself with sinners. And sinners come in shape and sizes... whether big or small.. man or woman

Example : Zacchaeus the tax collector

Remember, Zacchaeus was not only a tax collector but a chief tax collector. The Jews hated him and considers him a traitor. I have a whole sermon on this. But again when Jesus self-invited Himself to Zacchaeus house, look at the reaction of the people.

Luke 19 : 7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

Again, why? It's because our Lord Jesus is intentional and inclusive.

Why again? When Zacchaeus believed and repented this is what Jesus said,

9 Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Remember, we asked earlier, who is the Samaritan today?

They were half-breeds. They have their own Scriptures (although the wrong Scriptures).

But remember, all of them came from Abraham also...

Now if you want to be technical about this in our society, do you know in our world, of

7 Billion...there are only two sources of religion,

4 Billion is called Abrahamaic

The rest the source is Indian "Buddhism, Hinduism and etc"

The Abrahamaic religion are Christians (Catholics, Orthodox, Protestant, Lutheran, Evangelicals and etc)I think that's 2.3 billion and the other Abrahamaic religion is Islam which is 1.9 billion

Now, let's use Islam as an example :

When you hear the word Moslem before, what's the first thing that commonly comes into the minds of men, "Terrorist". But remember, Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

Let me do some research today : show PHOTO OF MOSLEM MAN AND WOMAN... what did you feel before when you see them?

Or let me say this name : Kim Kardashian, The Tinder Swindler

Again, we need to be intentional and inclusive when it comes to evangelism.

Our Lord was inclusive that this is what the Pharisees said about Him.

Matthew 11: The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.'

Now why was our Lord inclusive? It's because His intention is to seek and save the lost!

John 4:34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."

IMPORTANT NOTE Now being inclusive doesn't mean we participate in sin or we condone sin in their lives. It means, we look at everyone who needs the Lord.

We also don't look at color, status, accent, religion or even political affiliation like BBM or Leni, Conservative or Liberal. We look at them who needs the Lord.

When we look at a person, we look at him or her as someone who needs the Lord...that's how we should look at a person first.

Look at what the Bible says :

1 Timothy 2:3-4 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. (NLT)

Note : This is not universalism where everyone is automatically saved. No, it shows that the heart of God is He wants everyone to be saved and that's why He sent His Son Jesus Christ that **whoever believes in Him** shall not perish but have eternal life.

*John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, **that whoever believes in him** shall not perish but have eternal life.*

III. INSPIRATIONAL

Inspirational means something that gives joy.

John 4: 35 Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. 36 Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together.

Now, the King James and ESV version translated John 4:35 as this.

John 4:35 Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. (ESV)

John 4:35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

(show photo) It is said that wheat become white when it's ready to harvest.

(show photo) But it's also said that the Samaritans wear white and Jesus was looking at them and are ready to be harvested for God's kingdom.

Of course, Jesus was speaking metaphorically, he's talking about harvesting of souls..
AND IT'S A TIME OF CELEBRATION...

That's why he says :

36 Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together.

The reason why our evangelism is intentional and inclusive because it's a source of celebration not only here on earth but also specially in heaven.

That's why most of the parables like the Lost coin, the lost sheep and the lost son...everyone ended up with a celebration.

Look at what the Bible says :

PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP

Luke 15:7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

PARABLE OF THE LOST COIN

10 In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

32 But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

That's the reason why we share the Gospel because it gives us great joy knowing that someone is saved.

Shoes illustration :

Once upon a time, a shoe company sent two salesmen to Africa to determine the market potential for their products. One salesman was sent to the east coast of Africa, while the other salesman was sent to the west coast of Africa. Both the salesmen completed a basic survey of the target market and called back to the office. The salesman sent to the east coast of Africa reported: "No one here wears any shoes, there is no market for us here!". The other salesman sent a message "No one here wears any shoes, there is a huge market for us, send inventory fast!".

The reason why we support mission, the reason why we evangelize is because it's not only we're following the Lord's command. It's because it's a source of joy for us.

Quote : To be a soul winner is the happiest thing in the world. And with every soul you bring to Jesus Christ, you seem to get a new heaven here upon earth. – Charles Spurgeon

APPLICATION :

Remember, let us follow the Lord's approach when it comes to evangelism :

Intentional

Start with one person whether in your place of work, or in school. Who are you going to intend to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Inclusive

It doesn't matter who they are. Don't pick and choose...share the Gospel to them. Don't debate them about their religion. All of them have challenges in life. Start with that. Be a friend. Start to listen and then when the opportunity comes do what Peter says :

1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

Inspirational

Remember why you do it? It's a cause of joy and celebration not only here but we know also in heaven.

Now, let me leave you with this last word on this topic by God's grace.

Remember, it was God who sought this woman...just like the parable of the lost sheep or the parable of the lost coin...they were the ones finding them. Our Lord said, He came to seek and save the lost.

In the 90s, the term "seeker-friendly" church became a trend. It encourages churches to set programs that are seeking for Christ

But more than being a "seeker-friendly" church, may your church be a church who is a seeker of the lost.

Quote :

The Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time. God became Man for no other purpose. – C.S. Lewis

S.G.D.