



RECRUITING WARRIORS

WEEK 5
04.03.16

FOCUS VERSES

Jude 1:22-23

And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

LESSON TEXT

John 4:7-19, 23-26

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

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23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.



FOCUS THOUGHT

Spiritual warfare reaches its zenith (apex) when the believer engages in soulwinning. Delivering a soul from Hell causes the greatest damage to the enemy and brings the greatest victory to the church.



CULTURE CONNECTION

An Army of Volunteers

In an entry titled “Background of Selective Service,” one can read a historical overview of the American Selective Service. The author states, “For more than 50 years, Selective Service and the registration requirement for America’s young men have served as a backup system to provide manpower to the U.S. Armed Forces. President Franklin Roosevelt signed the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, which created the country’s first peacetime draft and formally established the Selective Service System” (www.usmilitary.about.com, accessed February 4, 2015).

The article mentions the draft, which operated between the years of 1948 and 1973. While volunteers were encouraged and accepted during these years, a draft ensured that adequate numbers of young men were entering

the armed forces for service to their country. For a few years—from 1969 to 1973—a lottery system was used to determine which young candidates would be ordered to report for service. When the draft ended in 1973, “the U.S. converted to an All-Volunteer military,” which also now includes young women.

God does not utilize a draft system; He works exclusively with an army of volunteers. His army is not a force that fights with human weapons of warfare, but as Paul observed to the Corinthians, “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds” (II Corinthians 10:4). God is looking for willing volunteers to conduct His vital work on earth. Any volunteers?

OUTLINE

- I. THE DEVIL’S PRIORITY
- II. CHRIST’S PRIORITY
- III. THE CHURCH’S COMMISSION
- IV. EVERYONE’S RESPONSIBILITY

CONTEMPLATING THE TOPIC

“And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh” (Jude 1:22–23).

There are three clauses in today’s focus verses. In the first clause (“And of some have compassion, making a difference”), the idea is that believers are to exercise discernment in dealing with people. The manner in which we deal with those who are in danger of being seduced by false teaching depends on the degree of their involvement with the error.

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, by which are spiritual, restore such

an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Galatians 6:1).

“Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (James 5:19–20).

Jude’s overriding concern was for his readers to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3). False teaching introduced among Jude’s readers had a range of impact on those who heard it: (1) some were questioning their faith, as here; (2) some were at the point of departing from the faith, as in verse 23; (3) some had departed from the faith, as in verse 23.

Those who are questioning are at a critical point in their spiritual journey. They must be treated gently, with kindness and love. They must not be condemned for having questions. It is acceptable to have questions. Great heroes of biblical fame sometimes questioned God and their understanding of His ways and

words. The psalms are especially rich in the candid accounts of a struggling soul.

Neither must those who are at this point be given pat answers. Those who would rescue the wavering must be willing to invest the time and effort to deal with hard questions and to give thoughtful, biblically consistent answers.

Some who are confronted with persuasive heretics will be unable to answer their arguments. They may not be quite ready to depart from the faith, but they are in danger of losing their salvation unless someone intervenes and pulls them “out of the fire.”

When people are at this point in their spiritual journey, they must be forcibly confronted by someone who is able and willing to clearly identify error and the danger of the loss of salvation. Still, the person giving the correction must do it in a spirit of gentleness with full awareness that he could someday need correction himself. But it should also be given with the urgency born of mindfulness that failure to rescue one who is deceived will certainly result in a soul’s death.

Jude’s warning seemed to include concern for those who had been fully convinced by false teachers and perhaps even for the false teachers themselves. They were in need of mercy, but those who showed mercy to them were to do so “with fear,” that is, with full awareness of the danger associated with the false teaching. Even being close enough to heretics to show them mercy was to be in a certain amount of spiritual danger.

The word translated “spotted” or “stained” in Jude 23 seems to be the equivalent of the Hebrew word translated “filthy” in Zechariah 3:3–4. That Hebrew word refers to human excrement. The word translated “garment” refers to the garment worn closest to the body. To associate these words makes for strong language, but Jude was acutely aware of the corruption and far-reaching danger of false teaching.

In a number of places in Scripture, language that is not used in polite company in the Western world is employed for emphasis. (See, for example, Philippians 3:8.) Although we may not use such descriptions on a regular basis, we should be fully aware of the stark message intended by Scripture: False teaching is repulsive and dangerous. Anyone who harbors fond feelings for heresy is misguided.

Even though believers must extend mercy to all, they must remember that mercy is for the person caught in the trap of error; it is not for the error itself. There must be zero tolerance for false teaching. (See Philippians 3:2.)

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8–9).

“And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you” (Galatians 2:4–5).

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

When we think of soulwinning, we should remember this includes retaining those who have come to faith in Christ but are in danger of falling away, as described in Jude 22–23, Galatians 6:1, and James 5:19–20.

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30).

In Scripture, the tree of life is connected with wisdom. (See Proverbs 3:18.) If the forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden was the tree of inappropriate knowledge, it is reasonable to assume the tree of life would have given right knowledge. The “fruit of the righteous” speaks of what the righteous person produces. He or she will develop wisdom, both by word and deed. One of the fruits of wisdom is winning souls, and wisdom is a necessity in this endeavor. In this Old Testament context, the winning of souls seems to refer to the ability to establish lasting friendships and to persuade others to right points of view.

The application of this text today suggests that to persuade people to place their faith in Jesus Christ and to obey the gospel involves

more than the ability to argue and win debates. One must be sincerely interested in others to the point of becoming friends and spending the time and effort necessary to be able to answer the questions they will have about Jesus and salvation. Jesus demonstrated this approach in His interaction with the woman at the well in Samaria.

I. THE DEVIL'S PRIORITY

From the first biblical mention of Satan's work, it is clear his chief concern is to destroy the relationship between human beings and God. In the encounter between Satan and Eve, the devil began his effort by questioning God's word, then by denying God's truthfulness, and finally by questioning God's motives (Genesis 3:1–5). This has been his technique throughout human history. The final mention of his activity is described in Scripture as going "out to deceive the nations" (Revelation 20:8).

When we proclaim the good news of the gospel, we are doing what Satan fears most. When a person hears, believes, and obeys the gospel of Jesus Christ, that person escapes Satan's deception and is restored to fellowship with God.

II. CHRIST'S PRIORITY

"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8).

With the brief statement "he must needs go through Samaria" (John 4:4), Scripture reveals the outworking of Christ's priority. Regardless of social conventions, racial prejudice, or religious differences, Jesus needed to go through Samaria. He knew a woman was there who would respond to the good news He would share with her.

As Jesus, weary from His travels, sat alone at Jacob's well, this Samaritan woman came to draw water. This was an unusual event. First, although the tension between Jews and Samaritans often resulted in Jews avoiding Samaria if they wanted to go to Galilee from Judea or from Galilee to Judea, Jesus not only went through Samaria but also stopped on His journey to rest and to eat a meal.

Second, the Samaritan woman who came to draw water came alone about noon. Typically, drawing water was a social event shared by women early in the morning. That this woman did not participate in that community event suggests the other women would not have welcomed her. Perhaps her exclusion was the result of the disdain of the other women due to her having been married five times and currently living with a sixth man to whom she was not married.

The unusual nature of this event continued to unfold. Jesus struck up a conversation with this woman: "Give me to drink" (John 4:7). For a Jewish man to converse with a Jewish woman was frowned on in first-century Jewish culture; how much less was it typical for a Jewish man to begin and continue a conversation with a Samaritan woman! The Mishna tractate Abot reads, "[D]o not talk much with women. This was said about one's own wife; how much more so about the wife of one's neighbor. Therefore the sages have said: He who talks too much with women brings evil upon himself and neglects the study of the Torah and will in the end inherit Gehenna" (Abot, 1, 5).

The response of Jesus' disciples upon their return with the food demonstrates how surprised they were to see Jesus talking with this woman.

"And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?" (John 4:27).

The woman's response to Jesus' request for a drink also shows her surprise that Jesus would speak with her.

"Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" (John 4:9).

Not only did Jesus open the conversation with this woman, but He carried on an extended dialogue with her that ranged across racial, historic, family, scriptural, and theological issues. This was countercultural for first-century

Jews. The tractate Sota 10a reads, “May the words of the Torah be burned, than that they should be handed over to women.” In Sota 21b it is recorded, “Rabbi Eliezer says: Whoever teaches his daughter Torah teaches her obscenity.” The idea that women were unable to learn the Torah resulted in a special court for women in the temple and in their separation from men in the synagogues (Will Varner, “Jesus and the Role of Women,” *Israel My Glory*, August/September 1996). If this attitude prevailed in the Jewish community, it would have much more profoundly influenced communications between Jewish men and Samaritan women.

At the conclusion of their conversation, Jesus identified Himself to the Samaritan woman as the promised Messiah. This entire episode should be seen as a classic example of soul-winning. The woman returned home, sharing with the men she met the remarkable experience she had just had, resulting in many of them going out to Jesus and believing on Him (John 4:39–40). They were so intrigued with Jesus they asked Him to stay with them, and He remained there two days. Many Samaritans believed on Jesus, not only because of what the woman had told them, but because they had personally heard His words and were convinced He was the promised Messiah (John 4:39–42).

What we see from this encounter is that Jesus brought someone to faith in Him by being friendly, transparent, vulnerable, sensitive, caring, and relevant and by asking questions. He asked, and He listened. This kind of approach to unbelievers has the best possibility of bearing fruit in our mission to bring people to faith in Christ. We should also note the powerful influence of what we would call the word of knowledge. Jesus knew about this woman’s personal background, and it seemed to her that her life was an open book before Him. (See John 4:29.) We must not neglect the role of the Holy Spirit, including the gifts of the Spirit, in our efforts to communicate the gospel.

III. THE CHURCH’S COMMISSION

In what is often referred to as the Great Commission, Jesus, shortly before His ascension, charged His disciples to take the gospel to the whole world.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:19–20).

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

“And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:46–47).

Although the precise wording of the commission in Matthew, Mark, and Luke varies, the essence is the same: (1) Believers are to go. Ultimately, their mission reached into the entire world. It began in Jerusalem but reached from there into all Judaea, then into Samaria, and it is intended for “the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). (2) Believers are to teach. The content of this teaching includes “all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20). This certainly embraces the gospel of Christ’s suffering for our sins and His resurrection from the dead, the command to repent, and the promise of forgiveness. (3) Those who believe the gospel are to be baptized. A comparison of the singular “name” of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit of Matthew 28:19 with Luke’s record that “remission of sins should be preached in his name” Luke 24:47 demonstrates why the apostles consistently baptized believers in the name of Jesus.

Those who hear the gospel and are obedient to the commands to repent and be baptized have the promise of baptism with the Holy Spirit.

“And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1:4–5).

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

Peter's response to the question, what shall we do? summarized the commission Jesus gave. First, Peter uttered this command in Jerusalem, the beginning point of Jesus' commission. Second, he commanded his hearers to repent, which Jesus declared to be anticipated by the Old Testament. Third, Peter commanded his questioners to be baptized, which Jesus had included in His commission. Fourth, Peter connected the remission of sin with baptism. Jesus had referred both to baptism and the remission of sin. Fifth, Peter promised that those who obeyed his words would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, which Jesus promised believers.

Finally, we have the assurance that as we go, even to the end of the world, Jesus is with us. He will work with us, "confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20). These miraculous signs will significantly help us to proclaim the gospel in a convincing way.

"And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:17-18).

In every nation of the world, in every culture, we have been equipped to make disciples by the example of Jesus and by the supernatural empowerment of the Holy Spirit. We have no reason to feel inadequate and ill-equipped.

IV. EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

There is no indication in Scripture that the Great Commission is pertinent only to a select group of believers. Even before the establishment of the church recorded in Acts 2, the proclamation of the good news was not limited to Jesus' twelve apostles. In fact, He encouraged the seventy to pray for an ongoing enlargement of the number of those engaged in laboring in His harvest.

"After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves" (Luke 10:1-3).

Even though they had not yet been baptized with the Holy Spirit as on the Day of Pentecost, these seventy were equipped to minister in the realm of the miraculous. Jesus said to them, "And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Luke 10:9). Upon their return, with joy these seventy said to Jesus, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name" (Luke 10:17). Jesus responded, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:18-20).

A distinction between believers' experiences with the Holy Spirit before and after the Day of Pentecost is that, upon and after Pentecost, all were baptized with the Spirit. Before Pentecost, some were said to be filled with the Spirit (for example, Luke 1:41, 67), but the coming of Pentecost brought the fulfillment of the promise of the Father, baptism with the Holy Ghost for all who believed (Acts 1:4-5, 8). Though there were similarities between the pre-Pentecost work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of people and the Pentecostal experience, there were also important differences. Compared to the superior degree of the Spirit's work beginning on Pentecost, particularly the Spirit's work in regeneration, the Holy Spirit was not given beforehand.

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the

scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)” (John 7:37–39).

The promise of the Father was, “I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh” (Acts 2:17). The fulfillment of this promise was accompanied by speaking in tongues, something no one had previously experienced, indicating the superiority of this work of the Holy Spirit to that experienced prior to Pentecost. All recipients of this unprecedented work of the Spirit become witnesses of Jesus Christ.

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

All of us are to be witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus Christ; His work in our lives by the power of His Spirit is proof of His resurrection. (See Acts 2:32; 3:15.) It would be a mistake, however, to think each of us is gifted to give this witness in exactly the same way.

“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own

reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon” (1 Corinthians 3:5–10).

One person may have the foundational ministry of planting or building, and another may have the ministry of watering that which has been planted or building on the foundation laid by another. But in the final analysis, it is God who gives the increase.

As a believer, it would certainly be wrong to do nothing to proclaim the gospel. But if we use the gifts God has given us to advance His kingdom, we may be sure we are working together with Him. Ultimately, the outcome is His.

INTERNALIZING THE MESSAGE

If at this moment we were required to list three things we have done in the last twelve months that could be described as proclaiming the gospel, what would they be? What fruit have we seen from our labors?

It may be easy for some to develop a sense of guilt for not being as involved as they should be in soulwinning, but it would be more productive to explore our areas of giftedness to see if our efforts have been directed in the most potentially productive way. All do not plant. All do not water. Neither planters nor those who water are responsible for the increase; God alone can cause the seed to grow, no matter who has done the planting and watering. ■

REFLECTIONS

- As you review the results of your efforts to proclaim the gospel, which efforts were most successful in your view? Keep in mind that only God knows the full results of your efforts.
- Do you consider yourself a planter or a person who waters?
- Does your work in the kingdom of God give you a sense of fulfillment?
- Have you ever considered taking a spiritual gifts inventory? If not, perhaps it would be a good idea to do so.