

*“Give a
larger
heart and
a holier
to me.”*

“FROM GLORY TO GLORY.”
2 COR. 3:18



Be still.

PROSELYTES just make more PROSELYTES

from FAITH BEYOND REASON by A. W. Tozer

JOHN 4:24-26 GOD IS A SPIRIT: AND THEY THAT WORSHIP HIM MUST WORSHIP HIM IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH. THE WOMAN SAITH UNTO HIM, I KNOW THAT MESSIAS COMETH, WHICH IS CALLED CHRIST: WHEN HE IS COME, HE WILL TELL US ALL THINGS. JESUS SAITH UNTO HER, I THAT SPEAK UNTO THEE AM HE.

We are going to consider what it means to be an effectual and effective Christian witness as we take a look at the encounter of our Lord with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well.

I am going to begin by saying that there is a great deal of ineffectual Christian testimony among us today. Much of it is well-intended, I am sure, and honest and sincere. We do the best we can with what we have to work with, but our performance turns out to be something like that of a salesman selling fountain pens. We try to make a case for our product but down in the hearts of those we deal with seems to be a deep knowledge that we are not too much convinced ourselves. We are unconvincing because we have not been convinced. **We are ineffectual because we have not yet capitulated to the Lord from glory.** It is like the proselyte making proselytes.

I don't like to confess the fact that, for the most part, Christians seem to be a very sad people. They are not the happy sort that they ought to be, and that is why their testimony is wavering and ineffective. The gleam has gone out of most Christian eyes and the shine has disappeared from the countenance and the testimony is no longer sparkling and contagious. Perhaps this is happening because **we are trying to plan how everything should happen.** Everyone reads a little leather book on "How To Do Christian Service" and we try to do it the way we have been taught to do it, but it becomes perfunctory and without any contagious element. **It seems to me that if angels can weep, they must weep salty tears**



upon seeing a proselyte who has never really met the Lord making another proselyte who will also never meet the Lord. The woman of Samaria met our Lord at the well and the Gospel account of that which took place within her soul and the spontaneous, contagious witness that followed, is rich with spiritual lessons for every one of us.

It is interesting to trace in the scriptural account how Jesus quickly drew the woman into a conversation about worship, and how she told Him her belief that when the Messiah came He would tell her everything. Jesus said, *"I that speak unto thee am he."* She had come out from the city of Samaria holding her waterpot on her head. She had held a

conversation with the strangest man she had ever met—a Jew who had asked her for a drink!—and now she was running back into the city, leaving her waterpot, to spread the word: *"Come, see a man which told me all things that I ever did. Is not this the Christ?"*

Let us examine this encounter at the well to find out why our Lord chose to reveal the great and holy secret of His Messiahship to a Samaritan woman. Why was He willing to reveal so much more about Himself in this setting than He did in other encounters during His earthly ministry? He talked about the meaning of His person, His life and His ministry to a woman, and to one who had not been a very good woman, at that.

Why should this be? There were plenty of priests around Jerusalem, with all of the proper credentials dating back to the very order of Aaron. There were many scribes, men appointed to teach and transcribe the copies of the Scriptures. There were lawyers skilled in the Mosaic law. There were religionists in numbers, for Israel was a very religious nation. **If you and I had been doing it, we would never have chosen this woman with a shadow lying across her life as the receptacle for a holy secret,** a divine revelation above anything that had yet been made, and equal to anything ever made until after Christ's resurrection.

I don't know all of the Saviour's reasons that day at the well. I only know that His revelation of Himself to the Samaritan woman constituted an everlasting rebuke to human self-righteousness. I only know that every

smug sister that walks down the street in pride and status ought to be ashamed of herself. I only know that every self-righteous man who looks into his mirror each morning to shave what he believes to be an honest face ought to be ashamed of himself. I only know that priests in their order, lawyers at their work, were passed over, and this woman was given the holy secret. It was the secret of His Messiahship, the secret of the nature of God, and the secret of the true nature of divine worship!

Jesus was able to see a potential in the woman at the well that we could never have sensed.

What a gracious thing for us that Jesus Christ never thinks about what we have been; He always thinks about what we are going to be! You and I are slaves to time and space and chronology and records and reputations and publicity and the past—all that we call the case history. Jesus Christ cares absolutely nothing about your moral case history. He forgives it, and starts from there as though you had been born one minute before.

The woman to whom Jesus talked had led the kind of life that made her familiar with the men of Samaria—a great deal more familiar than with the women. Yet, our Lord did not shame her and He did not denounce her. Christians have quite a reputation for being among the great denouncers. The odd thing about it is this: **we often denounce the ones whom the Lord receives with open arms, and receive the ones the Lord denounces!** That's how some carnal rascal frequently gets in our churches.

That's the danger of proselytes making more proselytes. It is possible to have some kind of an external religious experience that immunises you to the new birth, and puts you where you will never be born again, because you think that you are already born again. Because the proselyte never was 'in', he doesn't require the other proselyte to get 'in'. So, it is possible that entire churches are established with the membership comprised only of proselytes, echoes of echoes and reflections of reflections—never the true light shining!

It should be a profitable exercise to think back upon some of the reasons for Jesus' revelation to this woman at the well. There were a number of things that were in her favour.

One was her conscious need.

There are some things that do not always follow—they are not always the same and are lacking in uniformity. But there is always uniformity in this area: every person that ever receives anything from God must have a conscious need, a conscious and vital sense of lack. This woman had it. She never fought back, for she was in great need and she was completely frank about it. No doubt she had heard much religious argument in Samaria, and she was a good side-stepper. She did what she could to take the heat off as the Lord's kindly eyes bored into her conscience. But, when she saw there was no use, she threw up her hands, and was completely frank about her life and problems.

Her frankness, her humility and her enthusiasm appealed to the Lord Jesus Christ as they talked

of man's need and the true worship of God by the Spirit of God. Jesus was drawn by her warm enthusiasm and by her frankness and her self-conscious need. So, He revealed Himself, opened His own being to her, giving her the secret that He had not given to anyone else, and that He gave to very few in the days that followed.

When she spoke of the Messiah and His coming, and Jesus said, "I am He," the revelation came to her own soul. The light of God slipped down into the shadows of her past, and there within her began to shine. She was lifted in her being, so that she was compelled to run and tell the men.

Jesus accepted the situation, because He accepted her. I cannot see a church board anywhere that would have accepted it. I think the ladies in their aid societies would have raised their eyebrows and made funny little clucking sounds with their tongues. But our Lord accepted the situation because He always begins as though there had not been a past. *Behold, He maketh all things new!*

We can benefit, too, by noting **the fervency and the validity of her response.**

I would not deny that this woman still had a long way to go in her spiritual experience and development. But Jesus indicated God's willingness to use artless testimony and the sincere, candid witness, even though they may be imperfect and limited.

The woman had this one, gracious fact in her favour: she had known a valid encounter with the One called the Messiah. Her heart had come into collision with the revelation of the Person and the Will of God in Christ, and the result was an emotional upheaval in her own life and will.

Now, I confess that I don't know what to do with those Christians and those teachers who are so afraid of the word "emotion". Nowadays, we say that a man is very emotional when we really mean that he is a neurotic, that he has lost self-control, that he cries over nothing, laughs over nothing, gets blue over nothing, gets elated over nothing. That man is simply a mental case. We have taken the word 'emotional' and applied it to that. But, I disagree. That is not emotion. That is a mental condition of a man, and he needs prayer and rest.

When I use the word 'emotion' here, I am referring to a person's inner feeling, and I am not afraid nor ashamed to use the word in that way. I really prefer the expression used so often by Jonathan Edwards; he referred to our 'religious affections'. I seem to be so busy that I cannot do everything that I think of doing, but why someone doesn't resurrect that expression for our day—'religious affections'? Jonathan Edwards could show some of these cold, stiff, deep-freeze Christians of the present day that 'religious affections' and the spiritual emotions of the modern day are one and the same. There are too many of us who go only on text and theology, and are afraid of emotion.

So, this woman had come through a collision. Her heart had come into vital contact with the heart of Christ, and the result was a spiritual

experience which she would never forget. A stroke from God had fallen upon her, and it was little wonder that she started away without her waterpot. Probably she did not know why, but she was bursting inwardly to tell good news that had come to her through the Messiah. It really wasn't much of a story at that time—the Lord knew that, but she didn't. But, it had about it the brightness of a revelation.

Notice this, too, about the sincerity of her story and her actions: they were **not imitative**, they were **not formal** and they were **not planned**, and best of all, they were **not programmed!**

I really hate that ugly French word as I hate the devil—that word 'programmed'! We have to announce now that the service of worship is 'programmed' so as to have a minimum of preaching and a maximum of enjoyment. But, my point is this: if this woman could have been 'programmed', there would never have been any revival in Samaria, brother! They didn't programme this woman—they couldn't. She had too much bounce in her soul! She was not involved in anything formal—she just ran as fast as her heels would take her. No one planned her testimony for her, and thank God for that! Sometimes we have been encouraged to meet with a group, to 'plan a revival.' You might as well plan a lightning strike as to plan a revival. No one has ever done it yet, and no one will ever really 'plan' or 'programme' a true revival.

The Lord God Almighty makes a world—and nobody 'plans' it. When he raises the dead, no one plans it. And, let me tell you this: when He raises the dead, it never comes as the fifth item on 'the programme'. Of that you can be sure!

In our churches, we have fairly well programmed ourselves into deadness and apathy. Think of this woman running to testify with the good news brimming over in her soul. If someone had halted her by taking hold of her garment as she ran, and said "Sister, we are glad to see the new light in your face, and we would like to have you third on the programme," she would have died along with those scribes and Samaritans, and all the rest. But, she went bouncing along, eager to share the new revelation which had come to her heart, to tell the men she knew that she had found the Master, the One who had told her everything she had ever done and known.

That was an exaggeration, of course. But, you know, brethren, when you get so full of something that you begin to talk about it, very often your mouth is smaller than your heart, and exaggeration is the result, I think we call it 'hyberbole' now—that is the learned word for exaggeration.

However, this must be said about her: she was *contagious*. She didn't have to make converts. They 'caught' it from her by contagion!

Did you ever wonder about the result she produced with her breathless testimony? The men of Samaria heard her story, and then started out to find the man about whom she had spoken. I suppose there was some curiosity involved, and perhaps an element of the spirit of religious adventure, but certainly, that was not all. These Samaritans, moved by this

woman, went out and found Jesus and brought Him to the city. They heard Him and they saw Him and they were convinced and they believed. They testified, saying, "Now we know, not because of what you said, but we have met him ourselves, and we believe that he is the Christ, the saviour of the world."

That which had begun in the shadows had now gone into the clear sunlight, and the testimony of the woman whose real life had only just begun brought these men to God. They found out the truth that you cannot rest on another person's testimony. You might just well try to get fat on what someone else eats as to try to get to heaven on someone else's religious experience. A testimony itself does not convert you. This woman's testimony was used to bring people to Christ, but when they believed in Him, they said, "Now we know for ourselves; we don't need your testimony." But if they had not actually come to faith in Christ, they could have started the First Church of the Samaritans there in the city, based on her testimony, and without ever having met the Lord for themselves.

So, this is the glory of the Christian witness: it may serve to excite men and women to get going in the direction of the One about whom the testimony has been given. A Christian witness is not a spiritual experience for the third person. The witness itself never saved anyone. A Christian witness is an honest confession of what the Lord has done for us, and that may stir others to go and do likewise—to find the same Lord and His salvation.

I must confess that I have never been blessed by a planned testimony service in my whole life. We have had many Christian musical organisations give their concerts and recitals here, and suddenly, a fellow says, "Now, we will give our testimonies." Everybody has been told ahead of time who is to talk and what they are to say. So, they all get up and testify and I sit there just as cold as a dill pickle. I just can't find anything within me that responds to that kind of a witness.

But, let me tell about the kind of testimony that really moves me. On a Sunday night about 11.30pm, my telephone rang, A friendly, lively, excited voice on the other end of the line said, "Mr Tozer, I had to call you and tell you something that couldn't wait until morning. I have been born again tonight. You know, I have been around your church with my wife, who is a Christian. She prayed for me, even though I thought I was a converted man, but I have never been converted until tonight. After the service tonight, I came into a spiritual experience, and I know now that I am born again!" I knew him as a quiet fellow and didn't know that he could get so excited. He was pouring it on like an evangelist. He has moved from here now, but he is still living his Christian life and praising the Lord. He had a testimony. He could tell what the Lord had done for Him. He had an encounter with God, and was willing to admit that all of his previous religious experience had only been preliminary. Now he knew, and he could say to his wife, "Mary, now I know for myself!"

But the testimony will start out dead and end up worse than dead of you try to plan a man's spiritual expression and programme his happiness and incorporate his vision. Some people would try to incorporate the glory of God, and take out corporation papers on the divine grace. How low can we get?

Now, let's draw a few conclusions from this account and apply them to our day.

First, *Christ is still receiving sinners*—even those who are great sinners. No matter what the reputation may be, He receives them all, if they will come to Him. In Jesus' day, they said with scorn, "This man receiveth sinners!" They were right—and He lived and died and rose again to prove it, and to prove His right to justify all who come to Him in faith.

One of the old German devotional philosophers took the stand years ago that God loves to forgive big sins more than He does little sins because the bigger the sin, the more glory accrues to the God who forgives. I remember the writer went on to say that not only does God forgive great sins and enjoys doing it, but as soon as He has forgiven them, He forgets them and trusts you just as if you had never sinned. When I first read that, I almost went through the ceiling, because I believed it in my heart—that God not only forgives great sins as quickly as little ones, but once having forgiven them, starts anew right there, and never brings it up again.

We have to be aware of the fact that man's forgiveness of man is not always like God's. When a man makes a mistake and has to be forgiven, the shadow may hang over him, because it is hard for other people to forget. But when God forgives, He begins the new page right there, and when the devil runs up and says, "What about the past?" God replies: "What past? There is no past. We started out fresh when he came to Me and was forgiven!"

Now, I think this kind of forgiveness and justification and acceptance and fellowship with God depends upon a man's **willingness to keep the top side of his soul open to God** and the light from heaven. You may wonder about such an expression as the 'top side of the soul' but I do think it is in line with Bible teaching and certainly in line with all Christian experience. It is open to God in some people's lives and not in others.

At the risk of stirring some controversy about the implications of election or predestination, I would refer you to the responses of two different men in the Old Testament.

Jacob was a crooked fellow. His very name meant 'supplanter'. He was not a pleasant man, and it would be well to keep your pocketbook buttoned up when he was around. We wouldn't classify him in the natural as being a completely trustworthy man. But for some reason, he kept the top side of his soul open; there was a little window there that was open to God. Esau, his brother, had much more to be said for his character. Everyone will admit that from the record. He was less willful, he was more frank and outgoing, he was more tenderhearted—for he wept on his brother when he should have

killed him! In every way, Esau was the finer man by nature. But in Esau, there was no approach through the top side of his soul—no open window there. **It was Jacob, the crooked one, who met God and became Israel, because the top side of his soul was open to God.**

So it was with the woman of Samaria. She had not lived a very good life. But there was a vulnerable place in her soul, a window toward God that was open, and through which the light of God shone through.

We should know this, also. *New life has to be born within us*, and that new life will not be born until there has been a **collision with Christ**. A real collision—the sinner has been met and defeated in his own will, his own life brought down to the dust. He will always remember and look back upon that encounter, as happily he goes forward in his faith. His soul and the heart of God met in violent conflict for a moment, but God won, and then the heart of the man surrendered, and he said, "Thy will be done."

Salvation comes to the soul—and this is our need of the day. This kind of spiritual encounter, this kind of meeting of the soul with God, comes as the freshness of a birth, the brightness of a dawning, with the clearness of a revelation.

Oh, let's not be guilty of taking our religion second-hand, of being 'programmed' into our religion.

We have been taught to accept what people tell us, so we do not push on to know Him for ourselves. A person that has to be picked out of the shell, that has to be guided by red lines and blue lines under the Bible verses, urged and pushed and psychologised into the kingdom of God never really gets in. There must be a revelation to the heart. There must be an encounter with Christ. There must be that sudden engaging of the soul with Jesus Christ, the Lord.

If we had our standards higher, if we really preached the truth of genuine repentance, if we raised the Christian levels higher—does this sound like radical religion? Well, it ought to be the normal thing, the ordinary thing. The Lord had told us that power must come to our lives and the presence and the revelation and the knowledge that we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This is not radical—it is the other thing, the deadness, the lack of power, the uncertainty, that is abnormal.

Thank God for many of you who would stand with me now, and say: **"Yes, I met Him and I know Him. We have had that collision. He won and I lost, and yet, I won, because I am saved! My old will went down and my old boldness and aggressiveness went down. Jesus Christ came in and took over and now, I live no more, but He lives in me!"**

Let us come to Him with simplicity, frankness, hunger and conscious need. Come as you are, without one plea, and the Lord Jesus will receive you and forgive you. Thank God that you can go away tonight, saying, "I have heard this for years, but now I know for myself that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Saviour of the world!"



ADAM'S CONVERSION

from An Account of the Life of Adam Clarke

Though often encouraged, he had not yet found that peace and assurance of which he was in pursuit: and it may seem strange that one who was following God so sincerely should have been so long without that powerful consolation of religion.

But God is Sovereign of His own ways and he gives and withholds according to His godly wisdom. Adam was ever ready to vindicate the ways of God in this respect. "It was necessary," said he "that I should have hard travail. God was preparing me for an important work. I must emphatically sell all to get the pearl of great price. If I had lightly come by the consolations of the Gospel, I might have let them go as lightly! It was good that I bore the yoke in my youth. The experience that I learned in my long tribulation, was none of the least of my qualifications as a minister of the Gospel."

He had now come to that point, beyond which God did not think proper any longer to delay the manifestation of Himself to the soul of his ardent follower: and indeed such were his concern and distress that had it been longer deferred, the spirit that God had made would have failed before him.

One morning, in great distress of soul, he went out to his work in the field: he began but could not proceed, so great was his spiritual anguish. He fell down on his knees on the earth, and prayed, but seemed to be without power or faith. He arose, endeavoured to work, but could not: even his physical strength appeared to have departed from him. He again endeavoured to pray, but the gate of heaven seemed as if barred against him. His faith in the Atonement, so far as it concerned himself, was almost entirely gone; he could not believe that Jesus had died for HIM; the thickest darkness seemed to gather round, and settle on his soul. He fell flat on his face on the earth, and endeavoured to pray but still there was no answer: he arose, but he was so weak that he could scarcely stand. His agonies were indescribable; he seemed to be forever separated from God and the glory of His power. Death, in any form, he could have preferred to his present feelings, if that death could have put an end to them. No fear of hell produced these terrible conflicts. He had not God's approbation; he had not God's image. He felt that without a sense of his favour, he could not live. Where to go, what to say, and what to do, he found not; even the words of prayer at

last failed; he could neither plead nor wrestle with God.

Reader, lay these things to heart. Here was a lad who had never been a profligate, had been brought up in the fear of God, and who, for a considerable time had been earnestly seeking His peace, apparently cut off from life and hope. This did not arise from any natural infirmity of his own mind—none who knew him, in any period of his life, could suspect this: it was a sense of the displeasure of a holy God, from having sinned against him; and yet his sins were those of a little boy, which most would be disposed to pass by, for he was not of an age to be guilty of flagrant crimes; and yet how sorely did he suffer, in seeking to be born again; to have his conscience purged from dead works, and to have his nature renewed! He was then being prepared for that work to which he was afterwards to be called; the struggle was great, that he himself might not easily turn again to folly, and thus bring condemnation on himself, and a reproach upon God's cause; and it was necessary that he should experience this deep anguish, feeling the bitterness of sin, that he might warn others more earnestly; and knowing the throes and travail of a sinner's soul, he might speak assuredly to the most despairing of the power of Christ's Sacrifice and of the indwelling consolations of the Spirit of God. God appeared to have "turned aside his ways, and pulled him to pieces; He had bent his bow, and made him a mark for His arrows: he was filled with bitterness, and made drunken as with wormwood. His soul was removed far from peace, and he forgot prosperity." Yet even here though his stroke was heavier than his groaning, he could say, "It is of the Lord's mercies that I am not consumed." Lamentations 3:11-22. See him in his agony upon the bare ground, almost petrified with anguish, and dumb with grief! Reader, have you sinned? Have you repented? Have you peace with your God, or are you still in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity? These are solemn, awful questions. May God enable you to answer them to your soul's safety! But we must return to him whom we have left—in indescribable agonies. It is said that the time of man's extremity is the time of God's opportunity. He now felt strongly in his soul, "Pray to Christ,"—another word for, "Come to the Holiest through the Blood of Jesus." He looked up confidently to the Saviour of sinners, his

agony subsided, his soul became calm. A glow of happiness seemed to thrill through his whole frame, all guilt and condemnation were gone. He examined his conscience, and found it no longer a register of sins against God. He looked to heaven, and all was sunshine; he searched for his distress, but could not find it. He felt indescribably happy, but could not tell the cause; a change had taken place within him, of a nature wholly unknown before, and for which he had no name. He sat down upon the ridge where he had been working, full of ineffable delight. He praised God, and he could not describe for what, for he could give no name to his work. His heart was light and his physical strength returned. He felt a sudden transition from darkness to light—from guilt and oppressive fear, to confidence and peace. He could now draw nigh to God with more confidence than he ever could to his earthly father: he had freedom of access, and he had freedom of speech. He was like a person who had got into a new world although every object was strange, yet each was pleasing; and now he could magnify God for his creation, a thing he never could do before: what a change was here! and yet, lest he should be overwhelmed with it, its name and nature were in a great measure hidden from his eyes.

Shortly after, his friend Mr. Barber came to his father's house: when he departed, Adam accompanied him a little on the way. When they came in sight of the field that had witnessed the agonies of his heart and the breaking of his chains, he told Mr. B. what had taken place. The man of God took off his hat, and with tears flowing down his cheeks, gave thanks to God. "O Adam" said he, "I rejoice in this; I have been daily in expectation that God would shine upon your soul, and bless you with the adoption of his children." Adam stared at him, and said within himself, "O, he thinks surely that I am justified, that God has forgiven me my sins, that I am now his child. O, blessed be God, I believe, I feel I am justified, through the Redemption that is in Jesus." Now he clearly saw what God had done; and although he had felt the blessing before, and was happy in the possession of it, it was only now that he could call it by its name. Now, he saw and felt, that "*being justified by faith, [be had] peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" □

"There are far more people made to think by seeing a believer's joy than by any words he may speak."