

A Positive Influence

1 Corinthians 1:21-22

INTRODUCTION: WHAT DOES THE BIBLE HAVE TO SAY

Have you ever considered whether you can be a positive influence in people's lives?

Sometimes we think that our situation is hard but there is always someone else whose life situation is worse off than ourselves.

And because we think that our situation is hard or tough or difficult we find ourselves not willing to extend our help to others.

It may not be out of selfishness that you are not willing to help, but it may just be that you think you can't help? Or that you are not qualified to help?

- ✓ **But many times it may just be that those in difficulty just need someone to talk to?**
- ✓ **Or to give them some biblical scriptures to reassure them that there is someone who cares?**

This is where we get the term "Good Samaritan from"

But that term "Good Samaritan" is not what someone made up but it is based on good sound scripture in John 4.

I can remember years ago in the good old telephone public call boxes there would always be a notice put up which said "Do you need help? Or someone to speak to" then please call us on this number they say.....and they would give their good Samaritan number?

Well those times are gone I suppose but the statement of a "Good Samaritan" still lives on with us until this day.

- But this morning I want to share with us the biblical "Good Samaritan".
- But let's first consider 1 Corinthians 1:21-23 as to the reason of the "Good Samaritan" position.
- Many times it's a spiritual difficulty or challenge that people are facing either in their own life, or maybe the circumstances they surrounded in is a spiritual difficulty.
- ✓ Even as a Christian believer we face the whiles of the devil. Because the devil is seeking whom he may devour. So we don't want him to get the victory in our lives nor in others.

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because **your adversary** the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

1 Corinthians 1:21-23

²¹ For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, **it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.**²² For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

²³ But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

1. The main point that I want us all to pick up on this message is that **it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.**
 - ✓ The Lord Jesus is always in the ministry of saving people from their sins. The whole of the OT and the NT is all about God not wanting people to perish in their sins. He does not want people to die in their sins?
 - ✓ But He would rather have them come to “repentance” which the word means to turn to him and believe on Him for salvation and eternal life, the living water.
 - ❖ So it pleases God, by the “foolishness” of preaching to save them that believe?

One of the most profound messages on preaching and there are many, come from the ministry of Jesus.

Jesus was always preaching, to the lost. From all four gospels recording the preaching to the 5000 and Mathew and mark recording the 4000 and also to the individual person like Nicodemus in John 3.

But one of the famous recordings of Jesus ministry preaching is known as the Sychar ministry recorded in John 4. This was when he preached to the woman at the well. And she gets saved and goes back to the rest of the city to bring them back to hear Jesus preach that he is the Messiah, the Christ Jesus.

John 4:5 King James Version⁵ Then cometh he to a **city of Samaria, which is called Sychar**, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

- ❖ You might be asking why this message is so important, and why it has been preached for hundreds of years just as the other preaching messages of Jesus.
- ❖ But this message to the woman at the well carries some distinctions not found in many of the other message except like Matthew 28:19-20 which is the referred to as the great commission message, which also includes the parallel passage of Mark and Luke.

But here the message is slightly different in that the woman receives a revelation of the great Messiah called the “Christ” which was Jesus at the well resting. and she gets saved.

1. This scripture also contains the woman at the well going back home to her city to spread the gospel message of Jesus with everyone.
 2. It also is one of the first recordings of a person getting excited about the fact that she found Jesus the Messiah, the Christ which was spoken of in the OT.
- ❖ So important was it for her, that she left her water pot at the well.
 - ❖ So eager was the women about finding Jesus, that she felt compelled to go straight away to share the “good news” (the gospel) with the whole city where she lived.

This is perhaps a remarkable contrast to evangelism today where many don't share the gospel unless it is physically extracted from them.

❖ **So with this in mind we can examine how to be a positive influence.**

- It is at this time when we should be thinking about a friend, brother, sister, uncle or aunt who we know needs the gospel message preached to them.
- The challenge for you may be how am I going to approach them.
- But the opportunity may be there if you are a positive influence over them.
- But first pray without ceasing that the Lord would open that door for it to be possible.

❖ **Lets examine John 4:39-54**

Being a Good Samaritan:

Let us now focus on the facts that came about as a result of Jesus' witness to the Samaritan woman at the well.

The Sychar ministry as it has become known is a well known ministry of how people can change once they are exposed to the Word of God.

- ✓ But in order for them to change they need to be exposed to the word of God.
- ✓ The power is in the Word of God, and without the Word of God they cannot change.
- ✓ Therefore they will need you to bring the word?

³⁹ And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

1. Jesus affected many of the Samaritans “of that city”.
2. These Samaritans were so affected by Him that they “believed on him”.
3. Jesus knows and speaks the truth regardless of the situation. He knows all that we have ever done.
4. Our testimony to others of how the Lord has changed us and had an effect on us can bear fruit that others might also hear and believe.

5. You will never quite know how your testimony to others of how the Lord has changed you may affect others in a positive way to come to salvation or to change their lives to have a renewed hope in Jesus.

A. (39-42) Many Samaritans believe on the Saviour of the world.

³⁹ And **many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified**, He told me all that ever I did.

⁴⁰ **So when the Samaritans were come unto him**, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

⁴¹ And **many more believed because of his own word;**

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.**

1. **He told me all that I ever did**: The woman was amazed not only that Jesus knew the facts of her life, but that He loved her even knowing the facts of her life.
2. We sometimes fear that if someone knew **all that I ever did**, they could not love us - but Jesus loved this woman.
3. **We know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world**: The people of this Samaritan village **came to faith in Jesus as the Christ; The messiah.**
4. From a humble woman came the joy of Jesus, for her to know that Jesus had made her free of sin, and she was now safe in his kingdom.

➤ **After the account with the Samaritan woman the Lord returns to Galilee.**

This is where we pick up on the next miracle that Jesus did.

B. Healing of the nobleman's son: the second sign (2nd miracle after Jesus had turned the water into wine at Cana.

1. (43-48) **Jesus comes to Galilee and is greeted by a request.** His return from Samaria to Galilee proves his need to have visited Samaria and not to just pass through it.

⁴³ **Now after two days** he departed thence, and **went into Galilee.**

⁴⁴ For Jesus himself testified, that **a prophet hath no honour** in his own country.

⁴⁵ Then when he was come into Galilee, **the Galilaeans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.**

⁴⁶ So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman (government official or officer in Herod's service), whose son was sick at Capernaum.

⁴⁷ When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought (urged) him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

⁴⁸ Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

1. Here was the second miracle in waiting that the bible will reveal.
2. There were also many other miracles that Jesus did do whilst he was in Jerusalem at the feast day in John 2:23.

1. **A prophet has no honour in his own country:**

Galilee was Jesus' **country** - where He grew up.

Because these people felt so familiar with Jesus, they did not honour Him the way they should have.

In this we recognize that they really were not familiar with Jesus; if they were, they would have honoured Him all the more.

- 1) It can be said that "There is such a thing as a false familiarity with Jesus;
- 2) A dangerous feeling that we know all about Him. Such a dangerous feeling in fact leads to a lack of **honour** towards our Lord Jesus.
- 3) Such a familiarity could breed contempt. You have heard that saying before.
- 4) And this is true if you try and lower the status of a person who is in charge over you. Be it a teacher, an army officer, or the Lord.

2. **Having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast:**

It was customary for the Jews in Galilee to go to Jerusalem for the feasts (fulfilling Exodus 23:14-17).

But in this particular time they remembered all that Jesus had done in Jerusalem.

- 1) Perhaps they remembered when Jesus turned the merchant's tables in the outer courts of the temple (John 2:13-27).
- 2) Jesus also predicted His own miraculous resurrection (John 2:18-22) and performed many other unspecified signs during this time in Jerusalem (John 2:23-25).
- 3) Nevertheless they remembered all these things which Jesus did, and that is why they came.

A. **Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe:**

Jesus rebukes those who depend on signs and wonders before they will believe.

It might seem that Jesus was harsh towards this man, who wanted his son healed, but He encountered many in Galilee who were only interested in His miracles –

He therefore questions this man for that reason.

1. Signs and wonders can lead a person towards belief in God, and can validate a heavenly messenger - but they can also have no effect on a person, and Satan can also use lying signs and wonders.
2. **(2 Thessalonians 2:9)**. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,
3. Signs and wonders from God are obviously good things, but they should not form the foundation of our faith.
4. We should not depend on them to "prove" God to us.

iii. By themselves, signs and wonders cannot change the heart;

iv. Israel saw incredible signs at Mount Sinai and even heard the very voice of God (Exodus 19:16-20:1), yet a short time later they worshipped a gold calf (Exodus 32:1-6).

The Jews were always seeking signs to try and prove everything.

1 Corinthians 1:21-23

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²² For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

²³ But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

C. (49-54) Jesus heals the nobleman's son.

⁴⁹ The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, **come down ere my child die.**

⁵⁰ Jesus saith unto him, **Go thy way; thy son liveth.** And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

⁵¹ And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth.

⁵² Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

⁵³ **So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.**

⁵⁴ **This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee.**

A. **Sir, come down before my child dies!** The nobleman's plea comes from a deep need, but did he ask in light of what Jesus said in John 4:48?

It was as if He perfectly understood what Jesus just said was not meant to discourage signs and wonders in themselves, but to discourage a carnal dependence on them.

- i. He was a **nobleman**, an officer most likely in Herod's service of high standing and stature. Even though his physical standing in the community seemed to be higher than Jesus, he still addressed the Lord as Sir. He knew in his heart that this man was greater than himself.
- ii. All of his status and importance seemed to matter nothing when he was at his point of need.
- iii. Sometimes when we or others are low we hope we will come to Him with this kind of deep need, and find that the ground is all level at the cross.

B. **Go your way; your son lives:** Jesus severely tested this man's faith, forcing him to believe in Jesus' word alone.

- i. By faith the man took Jesus at His word and departed.
- ii. All Jesus gave him to trust in was His word, but real faith is simply that - taking Jesus at His word.

✓ **What difference would it make in our lives if we really believed what Jesus says?**

C. **Your son lives:** Why didn't Jesus use any dramatic effects in this healing?

- i. Many long to see dramatic effects in God's work; and sometimes God provides them. But to real faith, they are not necessary.
- ii. Maybe dramatic effects in healing can encourage weak and ignorant faith; but a mature faith does not need them.

iii. That is why we are called to walk in faith.

2 Corinthians 5:7 (For we **walk by faith**, not by sight:)

➤ **And if by faith? Then what is faith?**

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the substance of things **hoped for**, the evidence of things not seen.

- The result of the Nobleman's faith had a dramatic effect on his whole household.
- It would be a miracle in itself that his entire family embraced the Lord for salvation.
- The effect could only have come from knowing the Lord. The truth of the Lord's word had sustained his whole family.

D. **And himself believed, and his whole house:** The miraculous authority and power of Jesus developed greater faith.

i. **And he himself believed:** Didn't this man believe before?

Of course he did, but now his faith is deepened by his personal experience of God's power.

ii. His previous faith and God's work led to more faith. We can take God's past blessing as a promise of future blessing.

iii. It is essential that we believe God if we want to see His work done.

E. **And his whole household:** The whole group was touched by this nobleman's faith and God's power working through it.

i. It is wonderful that these Jews from the region of Galilee believed; but they would not unless Jesus performed signs, and they were slow to believe even then.

ii. These Jewish Galileans pale in comparison to the despised Samaritans who believed on Jesus without a sign - they believed at His word only (John 4:39-42).

iii. **This is the second sign.** All of them are given that we might believe (John 20:30-31), and it isn't hard to see how this miracle specifically builds our faith.

John 20:30-31³⁰ And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: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.

PRAYER.....CLOSE