

“Faith Comes by Hearing”  
John 4:39-42  
(Preached at Trinity, June 13, 2018)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Much of Chapter 4 deals with Jesus interacting with the Samaritan woman who had come to the well to draw water. What she didn't know is that God had ordained this meeting with Christ. She was a sinful Samaritan woman who had a reputation from her immorality, and yet, she had been chosen to eternal life.
2. Being amazed at this one who knew every secret of her heart, she was convinced that Jesus was the Christ. Immediately, she returned to her town to proclaim Christ.  
**John 4:29-30 NAU** - "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I *have* done; this is not the Christ, is it?" <sup>30</sup> They went out of the city, and were coming to Him."
3. At this point, John pauses to give the interaction between Jesus and His disciples who have returned from their trip to town to obtain supplies. He uses the literary pause, "Meanwhile."  
Having traveled for a distance without having eaten anything they press upon Him to eat.  
**John 4:31 NAU** - "Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."
4. Jesus presses upon them two important points.
  - A. First, He stresses His chief priority. He had come to save His people from their sins. Nothing would take a higher priority than this.  
**John 4:34 NAU** - "Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work."
  - B. Second, He pressed upon them their duty in this great work. Jesus accomplished the redemption of His people, but it would be necessary for them to receive it through the Gospel. It was the duty of the disciples of Christ to bring this Gospel to the lost – to bring in the harvest.  
**John 4:35-36 NAU** - "Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. <sup>36</sup> "Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together."
5. John then returns to his account of the Samaritans. As the woman arrived in town she began proclaiming Christ.  
**John 4:29-30 NAU** - "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I *have* done; this is not the Christ, is it?"
6. They heard her testimony and were intrigued and curious about the power of one who was able to know a person's past.  
**Verse 30** - They went out of the city, and were coming to Him."  
**Verse 39** - "From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all the things that I *have* done."

7. Her testimony was excellent. They wanted to know more.
- A. They were intrigued by her words and believed she had met someone extraordinary.
  - B. But this was not saving faith. It wasn't salvation. It isn't enough to believe *about* Jesus. Many people think this is salvation. They believe *about* Jesus but they don't trust *in* Jesus. Many are curious about Christianity without embracing Christ.
  - C. The belief of the Samaritans at this point was along the same line as what we saw in **Chapter 2**  
**John 2:23-24 NAU** - "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. <sup>24</sup> But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men"
8. Our testimony alone is not the Gospel.  
 The Gospel is not declaring that Christianity has been good for you. That makes it simply a subjective choice. And that leaves the lost man with the option of saying, "I'm glad it works for you, but it's not for me."
- A. This does not mean our testimony has no value. Our testimony is a declaration of what Christ through the Gospel has done for us. This is a powerful tool. It is a powerful testimony to the reality of the Gospel and the power of the Gospel.
  - B. We must never forget that the testimony of our lives and of our church gives credibility to the Gospel we preach. We must demonstrate what it means to be a Christian.  
**Matthew 5:16 NAU** - "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."  
**1 Peter 2:12 NAU** - "Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation."
  - C. Sometimes, however, too much emphasis is placed upon personal testimony as if this is the whole of evangelism. Testimony without the Gospel is incomplete evangelism. Evangelism isn't just telling what Christ has done for you. It must include Christ's claims upon *their* life. It must include *their* great need of a Savior – of their two-fold debt: the debt of the Law's demand for of obedience which we have not met, and the debt God's justice of which we must suffer the punishment due to our sin. We must declare what Jesus did to satisfy our debt.  
 He fulfilled the Law's demands by His righteous life  
 He satisfied God's justice by suffering in our place.
9. The people of the city came and they heard the Word of Christ. The Word of Christ was the means of their salvation. There is a great contrast between the *λόγος* (Word) of **Verse 41** and the *λαλιά* (talk) of **Verse 42**.  
**John 4:41-42 NAU** - "Many more believed because of His word; <sup>42</sup> and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."

10. This is a powerful testimony to the effectual power of God's Word.  
Paul would later declare:  
**Romans 10:13-17 NAS** - "Whoever will call upon the name of the LORD will be saved."  
<sup>14</sup> How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? <sup>15</sup> And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!" <sup>16</sup> However, they did not all heed the glad tidings; for Isaiah says, "LORD, who has believed our report?"  
<sup>17</sup> So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."
11. Tonight, I want to reaffirm this important truth – the absolute necessity of the Word of God in salvation. It wasn't the word of the woman alone that was powerful unto their salvation. It was the word of Christ.
- I. First, we need to understand the necessity of the Word of God in Salvation
- A. No man can be saved apart from the Word of God
1. Too many today seem ashamed to declare God's Word with confidence. It is our only authority in evangelism.
  2. The Word of God is God's means of imparting faith to the sinner  
**Romans 10:17 NAU** - "So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."  
**1 Thessalonians 2:13 NAU** - "And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted *it* not as the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe."  
**2 Timothy 3:14-15 NAU** - "You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, <sup>15</sup> and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."
  2. This has been one of the great pillars of the Reformation – Sola Scriptura
    1. **1689 London Baptist Confession**  
Chapter 1:1 - Of the Holy Scriptures  
*The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience.*
    2. Spurgeon's Catechism  
Q71. What are the outward and ordinary means whereby the Holy Spirit communicates to us the benefits of redemption?  
A. The outward and ordinary means, whereby the Holy Spirit communicates to us the benefits of Christ's redemption, are the Word, by which souls are begotten unto spiritual life, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, Prayer, and Meditation, by all of which believers are further edified in their most holy faith.  
Q72. How is the Word made effectual to salvation?  
A. The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort,<sup>2</sup> through faith unto salvation.

- B. Saving Faith demands knowledge – the receiving of propositional truth (Notitia)  
**1 Corinthians 15:1-4 NAU** - "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, <sup>2</sup> by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. <sup>3</sup> For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,"
1. The Bible is the only source of knowledge unto salvation – God's appointed means
  2. In the Parable of the Sower Jesus describes the Word as the seed which the sower sows to the saving of the soul  
**Matthew 13:23 NAU** - "And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."
  3. The Bible is God's revelation of Himself to humanity
    - a. We cannot know God apart from His Word.
    - b. The Bible contains God's Law and the demand for obedience  
 We cannot know sin apart from the law  
**Romans 3:20 NAU** – "...for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin."
  4. The Bible contains God's revelation of the Gospel of Christ  
**Romans 1:16 NAU** - "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."  
    - a. The Bible sets forth the conditions for salvation
    - b. It describes our sinfulness
    - c. The Bible reveals Christ, the nature of the atonement and the fulfillment of the Law
    - d. The Bible teaches God's demand for faith and repentance

## II. The Word of God can be preached with confidence

God uses His Word powerfully and effectually

- A. The Word of God has the power to cut through the heart of the most hardened sinner - God can save even the worse skeptic and scoffer  
**Hebrews 4:12 NAU** - "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."
1. God makes the preaching of the Word effectual  
**1 Thessalonians 1:5 NAU** - "for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction"  
**1 Corinthians 2:4-5 NAU** - "my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup> so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God."

2. God applies and presses His Word upon the heart of the sinner  
**James 1:21 NAU** - "Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls."

God has implanted His Word upon our hearts.

**Jeremiah 31:33 NAU** - "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

- B. The Holy Spirit takes the Word and illuminates our minds enabling us to perceive and comprehend the spiritual truths of the Word of God
  1. The Bible is a plain book, intelligible to the common man.  
 But the lost man is incapable of discerning the spiritual truths of Scripture without the help of the Holy Spirit.
    1. It isn't just knowing the facts of the Bible. They must be spiritually discerned. It demands a new heart
    2. This is clearly seen in the case of Lydia  
**Acts 16:14 NAU** - "A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul."
    3. This was Christ's word to Nicodemus: "You must be born again."
    4. The greatest power in all the universe accompanies God's Word effectually as the Holy Spirit opens the dead hearts of sinners and applies to them the atoning sacrifice of Christ enabling them to receive the good news of the Gospel

#### Conclusion:

1. We must never become ashamed of the Gospel. We must never lose our confidence in the powerful Word of God. It is our only authority.
2. John Cheeseman stated it well:  
 "Evangelism is not a making of proselytes; it is not persuading people to make a decision; it is not proving that God exists, or making out a good case for the truth of Christianity; . . . it is not exposing the contemporary dilemma, or arousing interest in Christianity; it is not wearing a badge saying 'Jesus Saves!' Some of these things are right and good in their place, but none of them should be confused with evangelism. To evangelize is to declare on the authority of God what He has done to save sinners, to warn men of their lost condition, to direct them to repent, and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup>
3. The source of this authority is the Word of God.

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<sup>1</sup> Cheeseman, John; Gardner, Philip; Sadgrove, Michael; Wright, Tom, *The Grace of God in the Gospel*, (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1976), 119.