

# Sermon Outline

**“LIFE IN HIS NAME”:**  
THE PURSUIT OF WHOLENESS AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

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## **THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD**

*JOHN 4:39-42*

### **I. Introduction**

### **II. Many Samaritans Believed (Jn 4:39)**

- A. “Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, ‘He told me all that I ever did’” (v 39)
- B. Here is a key word in the Gospel of John: “believed” (Gk: *epistensan*)
  - 1. The reason John wrote his Gospel was written: “...these are written so that you may *believe* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by *believing* you may have life in his name” (20:30-31)
  - 2. The Samaritans put their faith in Jesus.
- C. Our life stories do have a place in guiding people to Jesus.

### **III. Christ-Centered Teaching from Christ (Jn 4:40-42)**

- A. Faithful evangelists always lead people to meet Jesus for themselves: “when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days” (v 40).
- B. During those two days, Jesus must have filled the Samaritans in on all the biblical truths they have been missing out of.
- C. There is no record of what our Lord taught the Samaritans during these very important two days. Based on the results of his teaching, we can see what exactly he taught them.
  - a. “...many more believed because of his word” (v 41).
  - b. “...we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world” (v 42).
- D. From what the Samaritans say, it’s clear that the Lord Jesus taught them to put their hope in him.  
—Jesus was at the very Center of his own teaching. Jesus was the Gospel that he preached.

- E. The flesh and of the devil tempt us to ask: “How could Jesus point people to himself? Isn’t it arrogant for someone to make himself the center of his own teaching?”  
—But if Jesus was who he says he is, if God has made Jesus the only Source of eternal life for the world, then it would unloving and deceptive on Jesus’ part *not* to point the world to himself.
- F. The Gospel of John—indeed, the entire Word of God—*challenges* us to submit to Jesus as the ultimate Truth from God.
1. The Jesus that John presents to us is one that we must either embrace Jesus as the Son of God or else reject him as a narcissistic or delusional person. There is no other way.
  2. Why then do we believe that Jesus is the Truth? Because...
    - a. he rose from the dead (Jn 20:27-28).
    - b. he performed signs that point us to him (Jn 2:23).
    - c. he fulfilled the prophecies.
    - d. Jesus is the Truth, by which everything else makes sense!
- G. Because Jesus is the ultimate Truth and the Giver of all meaning and wholeness, Jesus does the only compassionate thing he could do. He points the Samaritans to himself as “the Savior of the world.”

#### IV. Jesus, the Savior of the World

- A. What does it mean for Jesus to be “the Savior of the world” (Gk: *ho sōtēr tou kosmou*)? What is the significance of this title?
- B. First: “Savior” is a *relational* word.
1. In order for someone to be a “savior,” that person must be in relationship with someone else who needs saving. A person is not a savior if there is no one to be saved.
  2. Jesus’ mission, the great work that God the Father had sent him to do, involves drawing near and relating to people who need saving.  
—In Jesus, God himself comes close to people.
- C. Second: “Savior” implies *benevolence, kindness*.
1. When God comes to his people in Jesus, he comes to do them good, not harm.
  2. We are reminded of John 3:17: “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him” (v 17).
  3. If Jesus is the Savior, then it means that in some way, he is our friend. He is the Friend of those whom he has come to save.

- D. Third: Jesus is the Savior of “the world.” “World” implies the *totality* of God’s creation.
1. Not just Jews, but also Samaritans and Gentiles
  2. Not just humanity, but creation (cf. Rom 8:19-23).
- E. To call Jesus “the Savior of the world” is...
1. ultimately to call Jesus “God”
  2. to call Jesus “Lord,” the true Ruler of the world.

## V. The Savior God of Israel

- A. By believing in Jesus and acknowledging him as “the Savior of the world,” the Samaritans have finally come home to the true God of Israel.
1. Consider:
    - Isaiah 43:11: “I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior.”
    - Isaiah 45:21: “...there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me.”
  2. Based on these texts, if Jesus is indeed the Savior of the world, then it can only mean one thing.
  3. He is the covenant God of Israel. He is YHWH himself. For only YHWH can be the Savior.
- B. The mystery deepens. Though the name “Jesus” was a common name at the time, it actually reveals our Lord’s divine identity.  
—Our Lord is fully “Jesus”—“YHWH IS SALVATION”

## VI. Wanted: Good News

- A. This is the good news that the Lord Jesus has entrusted to his Church.
- B. Christians tend to lose the good news of salvation after awhile. Christianity becomes predominantly a list of things to-do, a set of good behaviors to adopt.
- C. Meanwhile, in the world, we see the words of the Lord Jesus coming true in our day: “And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold” (Mt 24:12).
- Hate-filled speech on the internet
  - Legitimizing/normalizing of sinful behavior (esp. sexual sin)
  - Aggressive, relationship-destroying competitiveness in the workplace
  - Looming threat of terrorism
- D. But if God is sovereign, why is all of this happening?
1. Based on...
    - a. how God has acted with regard to his own people Israel,

- b. what Scripture says about the Law imprisoning the world in sin until the Savior can be revealed (Gal 3:22-23),
  - c. passages that suggest that our trials are meant to lead us back to God (Ps 27; Lk 13:3; 2 Cor 12:9, etc.)  
—it seems that God is putting the world into a corner where the only way out is through Jesus Christ.
2. Salvation will not come by moralistic teaching or military force.
  3. Salvation will come only through God’s appointed Messiah, Jesus.

## VII. Jesus—Still the Savior of the World

- A. If, as believers, the truth that Jesus is the Savior of the world no longer excites or unites us, we are in more trouble than we realize. Why would anyone want to come to us for good news, when we have none to share?
- B. I say this to *urge* us to become (once again, more and more) people of the Gospel.
  1. The world needs the special, God-centered, ethical instruction only the Church can give.
  2. Most of all, the world needs God’s good news: “Jesus is the Savior of the world!”
- C. Jesus is where God smiles on us once more, where God lifts his countenance upon sinners to give them peace (cf. Num 6:26), where new life begins, where living Water can be found (Jn 4:14).

## Questions for Reflection

1. Was there anything in particular about today's sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
2. Was there anything that you disagree with or found difficult to accept?
3. What did the Samaritans do "because of the woman's testimony" (v 39)?
4. How does the Samaritans' belief connect with John's purpose in writing his Gospel (20:30-31)?
5. What does Jesus teach the Samaritans during the two days he was with them?
6. What does the title "the Savior of the world" teach us about (a) God's disposition toward us in Jesus and (b) the scope of God's saving work?
7. How does the name "Jesus" reveal our Lord's divine identity?
8. "If, as believers, the truth that Jesus is the Savior of the world no longer excites or unites us, we are in more trouble than we realize. Why would anyone want to come to us for good news, when we have none to share?" Discuss.
9. "It seems that God is putting the world into a corner where the only way out is through Jesus Christ." Discuss this idea.
10. Do you trust Jesus to be your Savior? Does this truth still bring joy to you?