

## Sermon: The Power of Your Story

### **IN** *Opportunities to connect and pray as a group*

1. What is a 'good news' story that you have had opportunity to deliver to someone?
2. What is the worst news you have ever had to convey?  
What was it like to do that?

### **UP** *Time that is devoted to the Word of God*

1. 'Churches die when evangelism as a value slips far down on the list of priorities.' (Pastor Ashwin) What is 'evangelism'?  
Why is it crucial for each of us to understand Pastor Ashwin's statement?
2. Ask someone in your group to read out loud the story of Jesus and the woman at the well. (John 4:4-26) What most impacted her by her experience with Jesus?
3. Pastor Ashwin outlined: 'She was Enthusiastic in her sharing... Invitational in her style... Authentic in her witness.' Discuss what each means.  
Why was her manner of 'evangelizing' so persuasive?  
How does this compare with the feelings that believers often have about sharing their faith?
4. Compare what she said in 4:29 with the words spoken in John 1:39 and 1:46. What makes these words so inviting for those who heard them?
5. What is the connection between 'evangelism' and 'the harvest'?  
(Matt 9:36-39 and John 4:34-38)  
What is empowering about understanding 'evangelism' as a 'harvest'?  
(4:34-38)

### **OUT** *Seek to be the Community of God's people in your community*

1. In your Group, plan for opportunities for each participant to share their story.
2. With whom do you most identify: the disciples (4:27) or the woman (4:28)?
3. What do you see as your role in evangelism?  
Be alert for opportunities to say 'Come and see' this week. How can the group pray for you?
4. Be challenged to write and share your story:  
<https://www.cschurch.ca/share-your-story/>

To read others' stories:

<https://www.cschurch.ca/resources/?type=articles-stories#articles-stories>

*UP – IN – OUT* reflect a balanced life including a focus on our personal relationship with the Father (UP), staying connected to the Body (IN), and reaching our world (OUT).

### **THE WORD (NIV)**

#### **Matthew 9:36-39**

<sup>36</sup>When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup>Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. <sup>38</sup>Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

#### **John 1:39,46**

<sup>39</sup>"Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon... <sup>46</sup>"Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip

#### **John 4:28-42**

<sup>28</sup>Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, <sup>29</sup>"Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" <sup>30</sup>They came out of the town and made their way toward him. <sup>31</sup>Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something." <sup>32</sup>But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." <sup>33</sup>Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?" <sup>34</sup>"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. <sup>35</sup>Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. <sup>36</sup>Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. <sup>37</sup>Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. <sup>38</sup>I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor." <sup>39</sup>Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." <sup>40</sup>So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. <sup>41</sup>And because of his words many more became believers. <sup>42</sup>They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

# Sermon Study Summary

Pastor Kent's message "Hidden Mission" last weekend challenged us to pray for those who don't know Jesus personally and for the Lord to send more workers into the field that is ripe for harvest. (Mt 9). Pastor Ashwin continues the theme of evangelism and witness. All are called to witness and be ambassadors of the Gospel. Churches die when evangelism slips in priority. "Any Christian, any church, any denomination that is left to itself long enough will tend to see the value of evangelism diminish where it becomes almost normal not to reach out to people for Christ." (Mark Mittleberg's definition of evangelistic entropy) CSC is not exempt from this danger. Pastor Ashwin reminds us that CSC exists to introduce people to Jesus and to help them become His devoted followers.

We may do a poor job of witnessing and feel guilty. We may see it as a great burden or arduous task. WHAT IF you don't have to follow a script, knock on doors, talk to strangers, and preach on street corners to defend, argue or persuade others? WHAT IF sharing your faith is sharing your story, testifying and witnessing in the context of relationships? Every Christian has a story telling how they came to Christ and the difference He makes in their lives—this is our most powerful tool in evangelism.

The Samaritan woman told her story so persuasively that others came to Jesus. (Jn 4) What do we learn from her about being effective ambassadors of the Gospel?

1. She was **ENTHUSIASTIC** in sharing. (v 28-29) So excited because Jesus' acceptance transformed her life, she left her water jar at the well and ran into town to tell people about the miracle that had happened. She spoke with passion radiating with the joy of her salvation that made her story come alive and her message irresistible.

Jesus "HAD" to go through Samaria; this was a divine appointment to meet the Samaritan woman and to spend two days with Samaritans in the town. (v 4-5)

2. She was **INVITATIONAL** in her style. (v 29-30) She invited them to "Come, see" and raised the question, "Could this be the Messiah?" The Gospel message is so life-changing and powerful that it brings people to Jesus; it is relational, drawing people into community—the church, group or home. "In our post-Christian nation, people who are skeptical of the faith are often attracted to the Christian community before they are attracted to the Christian message. Therefore, introducing people into the relational network of a local church community becomes an important aspect of their journey to faith." (Ed Stetzer) Evangelism that is coercive, manipulative or pushy may backfire, do more harm and interfere with the message.

3. She was **AUTHENTIC** in her witness. Society saw her as an outcast with a bad reputation, but she was a hurting woman with deep emotional pain searching for acceptance and love. Jesus, who knew her shady past and sinful actions, did not shame or condemn her. He offered her living water and her life was transformed. She told her story to the very people she feared and avoided. Everyone who heard her saw her transformation and many were drawn to Jesus. All of us have a story about how we were dead in our sins and became alive in Christ, evidence of the changing power of the Gospel.

Jesus continued His conversation with the disciples saying "...look at the fields; they are ripe for the harvest..." (v34-38) This reminds us that...

a) We need to develop a spirit of **EXPECTANCY**. The Samaritans, hated by the Jews, were ready for harvest. The most unlikely people came to Jesus because they were spiritually hungry. We may have a pessimistic view of our secular society and declining Christian influence. But the Bible does not. In the New Testament, the Church advances, filled with the Spirit, overcoming forces of darkness and drawing many into the Kingdom. North America faces a cultural shift but the Lord is on the throne; He is the God of the harvest. People come to faith because the Holy Spirit opens their eyes, breaks their shackles and helps them see the truth about Jesus. Opportunities abound in our city. The message of hope shines in the darkness when we invite people to experience Jesus for themselves.

b) Evangelism is **TEAM WORK**. One sows, another reaps. Multiple people, like links in a chain, are involved in bringing people to faith. If we help one person move one step closer to Jesus, we have done our part. Our faithful prayers and offerings, good works in Jesus' name and corporate worship all promote the Gospel. As a church, let us join hands to pray, to share, to give, to worship and God will use our collective efforts to reap the harvest.

Write your testimony in 100 words or less so you are ready to **SHARE YOUR STORY OF SALVATION**.

Ask God to bring you opportunities to **SHARE YOUR STORY**.