

Gospel Reflections:

JOHN 4

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JOHN 4:1-15

- 1: When therefore The Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that JESUS made and baptized more disciples than John,
- 2: (Though JESUS Himself baptized not, but His disciples,)
- 3: He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.
- 4: And He must needs go through Samaria.
- 5: 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.
- 6: Now Jacob's well was there. JESUS therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.
- 7: There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: JESUS saith unto her, Give Me to drink.
- 8: (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)
- 9: Then saith the woman of Samaria unto Him, How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.
- 10: JESUS answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of GOD, and Who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee Living Water.
- 11: The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast Thou that living water?
- 12: Art Thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?
- 13: JESUS answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:
- 14: But whosoever drinketh of The Water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but The Water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.
- 15: The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me This Water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

Why would The Lord take this path, going from Judea to Galilee via Samaria? “He must need to” through Samaria, a despised place and people in the eyes of the Jews at that time in history, inhabited by half breed Jews who had long ago intermarried with local Gentile heathens. They worshipped differently. They prayed at a place other than The Temple at Jerusalem. They prayed differently. In the eyes of especially the leaders of GOD’s people at the time, the Samaritans were spiritually unclean dogs, not worthy of salvation, nor righteous enough to be associated with in any way. And yet, to this land and people JESUS “had need to go!”

Now here comes this particular Samaritan woman, arriving at a very odd time at the local water well to draw out water, alone. For both the Jews and the Samaritans, the community did not allow a single, vulnerable woman to go out in public alone – lest she be ravaged and defiled – even to the local water well. Yet here is this woman, now standing alone before The Lord.

First we see the prophetic design of CHRIST, for He had arranged that His disciples would be away to buy meat. Second we see The Mercy of The Almighty, that He Incarnate would go to a Samaritan, as the woman herself states, “You a Jew ask me for water to drink?” Third we see The Lord’s proclaiming once again His Divinity as The Messiah, for He goes on to speak of Living Water – salvation, eternal life and newness of life of the redeemed in CHRIST by The HOLY SPIRIT – to this woman.

Here JESUS reveals that, if anyone drinks of Him in faith, they shall be truly filled. For what else is man’s purpose, but “to glorify GOD, and fully to enjoy Him forever?” [Westminster Catechism, Q/A 1]. This woman’s sinful soul is thirsty to dwell in The Presence of The Almighty. She responds, “Sir, give me this Living Water, that I may not thirst any more!” Who is The Living Water given up for men, that they may thirst no more, but live now and forever in GOD’s holy Presence? Who, but our Lord JESUS CHRIST!

The LORD promises just this in HOSEA 13:14, “I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes!” The hand of The LORD wipes away the wages of sin from over our lives and souls, giving us Himself to fill our thirsty hearts! The exalted CHRIST, The Living Water of GOD, repeats this in REVELATION 21:4, “...It is done. I am The Alpha and the Omega, The Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of The Water of life!”

JOHN 4:16-24

16: JESUS saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

17: The woman answered and said, I have no husband. JESUS said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

18: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

19: The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet.

20: Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

21: JESUS saith unto her, Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship The Father.

22: Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

23: But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship The Father in spirit and in truth: for The Father seeketh such to worship Him.

24: GOD is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

But now CHRIST goes to the glaring question that would be obvious to both pious Jews and Samaritans in that time, “Woman, why are you out here in public alone, unaccompanied by a protector? Where is your spouse, that he might give you permission to drink of My Living Water, that you as one may drink to fill your souls together?” She

replies, "I have no husband." Here JESUS uses her confession to see into her soul and the sins over it, the uncleanness of her adultery: "Woman, you have had 5 husbands! And the man whom you are with now is not your own, but the husband of another!"

The Almighty always sees all that we do and are, both our righteousness and our wickedness. The prophet records The LORD's conviction of His people by the sin stains which, though they thought were hidden from men, are clear to The Eternal One in JEREMIAH 13:25-27, "This is thy lot, the portion of thy measures from Me, saith The LORD; because thou hast forgotten Me, and trusted in falsehood. Therefore will I discover thy skirts upon thy face, that thy shame may appear. I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, and thine abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?"

But is it not like all of us, that we often love our sins more than The Almighty? For now this woman makes a passing nod, "O, you must be a prophet!" And next she tries to change the subject, to turn The Lord's gaze from her adulterous sins onto questions of theology! "O, you Jews worship The LORD in Jerusalem, but we worship rightly here on Mount Gerazim. You admit to all The Law of Moses, The PSALMS and the prophets. But we rightly admit to only The Torah itself."

We may really here this woman saying, and so we ourselves often say, "Lord, let's change the subject. I love my sins too much to give them up, even for you, though they kill me. Come, let us talk of lofty matters of theology and leave my soul to be its own god!" Sin has so many terrible effects: it brings both earthly and eternal death; it kills our conscience if allowed to dwell long enough; it defiles our souls before The Almighty; it separates us from The Eternal One Who loves us so.

Matthew Henry observes of the woman's pitiful efforts to diver the conversation from her conscience before CHRIST, "...Our fathers worshipped here. She thinks they have antiquity, tradition, and succession, on their side. A vain conversation often supports itself with this, that it was received by tradition from our fathers. But she had little reason to boast of their fathers; for, when Antiochus persecuted the Jews, the Samaritans, for fear of sharing with them in their sufferings, not only renounced all relation to the Jews, but surrendered their temple to Antiochus, with a request that it might be dedicated to Jupiter Olympius, and called by his name. Joseph. Antiq. 12. 257-264.

Matthew Henry continues on this woman's attempted sad shell game, "Secondly, As to the Jews: You say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. The Samaritans governed themselves by the five books of Moses, and (some think) received only them as canonical. Now, though they found frequent mention there of the place GOD would choose, yet they did not find it named there; and they saw The Temple at Jerusalem stripped of many of its ancient glories, and therefore thought themselves at liberty to set up another place, altar against altar."

But CHRIST sweeps all this aside, “Woman, where you worship The Creator is not important, but how you worship Him. For GOD is Spirit and all Truth. So those that worship Him must come before Him in humility and repentance, worshipping in His Spirit and in His Truth!” See how we ourselves stand with this sinner woman before The Lord, of Whom Saint Paul declares in EPHESIANS 1:13, The Living Water of Life come down to men, “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard The Word of Truth, The Gospel of your salvation: in Whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with That HOLY SPIRIT of Promise!”

JOHN 4:25-30

25: The woman saith unto Him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called CHRIST: when He is come, He will tell us all things.

26: JESUS saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He.

27: And upon this came His disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

28: The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

29: Come, see a Man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not This The CHRIST?

30: Then they went out of the city, and came unto Him.

Again we find JESUS declaring to this woman, and so to us, that He is The Anointed One of GOD, The Messiah, The CHRIST of The Maker! JESUS stands before this woman, telling her things of her own life and of GOD that only GOD Incarnate can know, and still it is needful that He say it clearly, “I that speak unto thee am He!” At last, it dawns upon this poor woman, whom The Lord took such efforts to pity, meet and love, that The Messiah has arrived to rescue men from sin and darkness! He has come to personally rescue even this one poor sinner, as He does for the same purpose for all men!

Now the woman runs with joyous wings upon her feet, flying to the very neighbours who know her so well as a lost sinner – the same people whom she could not be seen with in public to even draw a bucket of water from a well in the town square! She becomes a messenger of The Gospel, as in ROMANS 10:15, in the sure hope of forgiveness of her sins and newness of life in The Messiah JESUS, “...How beautiful are the feet of them that preach The Gospel of Peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”

This is the messianic PSALM 118:26, of which the Deliverer-hungry people of Jerusalem would later proclaim of JESUS as He entered Jerusalem the last time riding upon a donkey to save His people, to redeem men back to Himself, to begin to restore the goodness of creation before The Fall:

בְּרוּךְ הוּא בִּשְׁמֵי יְהוָה

- BARUCH HABA' BESHEM 'ADONAY! – Blessed is He that cometh in The Name of The LORD!”

JOHN 4:31-38

31: In the mean while His disciples prayed Him, saying, Master, eat.
32: But He said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.
33: Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought Him ought to eat?
34: JESUS saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.
35: Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.
36: And He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.
37: And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.
38: I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

The meat of GOD The Son, his very daily bread and drink, is to do the will of GOD The Father. What does JESUS say in rebuke to the devil in the wilderness when He came face to face with the demoniac tempter of His people? It is recorded in LUKE 4:1-4, "And JESUS being full of The HOLY GHOST returned from Jordan, and was led by The Spirit into the wilderness, Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. And the devil said unto Him, If thou be The Son of GOD, command this stone that it be made bread. And JESUS answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of GOD!"

Now The Lord sends out His disciple saints into the world to bear testimony of The Gospel of Truth, that men's lives and souls may be healed and saved. So the faithful servant preaches The Word of GOD. We may not be the one to see the fruits of our testimony in CHRIST in those we would see saved. It is not our work within their souls, as it was not in ours, of men, but of The HOLY SPIRIT. Did The Apostles see the full fruit of their labours for The Church on earth while in this life? No. But now they behold it from Heaven Above and rejoice with GOD!

JESUS calls us to lift up our spiritual eyes to Him; to behold the harvest of hurting men and women all around us; to look with the same Compassion upon our neighbours – both saved and unsaved – as CHRIST looked upon us from before all of creation, as on the day when He rescued us! Our call is to be faithful witnesses for our Saviour's Word, but it is He Who converts the soul and cleans men from within. Our task is to love others, even as He loves us, enough to sow the seed of The Divine Truth from His mouth. PSALM 33:4-5, "For The Word of The LORD is right; and all His works are done in truth. He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of The LORD!"

JOHN 4:39-42

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.

See how hungry these Samaritans, whom the Jews held as not worth the very time of day or the dust beneath their feet, hungered for and received The Living Word of GOD Incarnate! When they heard and beheld The Lord, their hearts were opened to receiving The Messiah JESUS, and yet GOD's fully covenant people – the Jews – were not! O LORD, how you so often put us in The Church to shame by raising up unbelievers into Your salvation at The blessed Cross, while we often within The Church consider such lost people not worth the very time of day or the dust beneath our feet!

In DEUTERONOMY 5 we find Moses repeating The Ten Commandments to the children of Israel. He rebukes them as in verses 4-5, calling them to remember how he had stood as a mere man as an intermediary between themselves and The Almighty: "The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire, (I stood between The LORD and you at that time, to shew you The Word of The LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;)..."

Now here is The LORD Incarnate, standing before those whom GOD's covenantal people saw as outside of GOD's Grace and unworthy to receive The Word of GOD. Moses chastised the ancient Israelites in his day for their lack of charity, want of love of The Creator first, emptiness of thanksgiving. And for his pains, he – and The LORD Whom he served before the people – were continually rebelling against. Now comes JESUS, revealing that He is The Living Water come to fill the earthly and eternal thirst of men's lives. And the Samaritans receive and drink of Him hungrily! But GOD's covenantal people do not? GOD forbid that it should ever be so with us!

JOHN 4:43-45

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.

Recall that CHRIST had stood up to read from the scroll of ISAIAH 61:1-2 in his home town of Galilee when He began His public earthly ministry, "The Spirit of The Lord GOD is upon Me; because The LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the

acceptable year of The LORD.” This is a messianic prophesy that only The Anointed One of GOD could fulfill. When JESUS read This Text, He revealed Himself to be The Saviour long promised of GOD.

This event is recorded for us in LUKE 4:18-19, “The Spirit of The Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach The Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of The Lord!” But what did they do? They called JESUS a blasphemer. They sought to stone Him. They dishonoured Him.

So Saint John calls to mind here that, as JESUS says now, “the prophet of The LORD has no honour in his own hometown.” We must wonder, do we within The Church on earth not often withhold the honour due to CHRIST? Do we seek to proclaim our will be done, rather than our Lord’s, when His will does not suit us? “O JESUS,” the cry in The Church is often heard today, as it was then heard in Israel, “Do not give us that which You know to be good for us, but give us that which we dare to declare You should give us!”

JOHN 4:46-54

46: So JESUS came again into Cana of Galilee, where He made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, 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 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.

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 inquired 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.

In PSALM 6:1-4 David cries out to The Almighty, “O LORD, rebuke me not in Thine anger, neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure. Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O LORD, how long? Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for Thy mercies' sake!” When we cry out to The Lord in faith, does He not hear the cries of the faithful? Yes. The King of the universe always hears the prayers and cries of His people.

There is no place on earth, no darkest corner nor any furthest wasteland, where The Almighty does not hear the cries of His saints. Here we have a faithful Jewish man of consequence believing in The Word of The LORD so much that, even if The Presence of GOD Incarnate were to pass by his home, his son would be made well. Such faith, JESUS perceived, in a humble and believing heart, that He spoke The Word from His mouth, and the child was made whole!

Now GOD always hears the prayers and cries of men. And He always answers prayers. But it is His will, and not ours, that He accomplishes by The Word of His mouth. There may be physical injury or sickness, emotional suffering, even the dark night of the soul. Sometimes He makes whole; other times He continues us in such states; at other times He calls our souls before His judgement seat.

But in whatever way He answers our prayers when we call out to Him, He always answers our prayers. Perhaps to make us whole again, that we may rejoice publicly and give Him praise before men. Perhaps to give us The Grace needed to endure our suffering, that our faith in Him might convict the hearts of others. Perhaps to give us earthly peace in physical death, that our souls may enter rejoicing into His Eternal Presence Above forever, there to worship and enjoy Him in eternity! But let us not doubt, that He always answers our prayers!