

The Well of Sychar

by G.W. North

G.W. North's sermon on 'The Well of Sychar' explores the transformative encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, highlighting the essence of true worship and discipleship.

Scripture: John 4:7

Topics: "Discipleship", "Worship"

Description

G.W. North emphasizes the profound lessons learned from Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well in Sychar. He highlights how the disciples, focused on worldly needs, missed the spiritual opportunity presented by the woman, who was open to Jesus' love and understanding. North points out that true discipleship involves recognizing the importance of worshiping God in spirit and truth, transcending physical locations and rituals. The sermon underscores that the ultimate goal of Jesus' ministry is to cultivate worshippers who are transformed and cut off from their past, leading to eternal life. The preacher calls for a deeper understanding of what it means to be a laborer in God's harvest, emphasizing the need for genuine engagement with others in faith.

Transcript

The next great lesson the Lord taught them was at Sychar in Samaria where He stopped and sat on Jacob's well while His disciples went into the city to buy meat. In their absence a Samaritan woman came to draw water from the well and Jesus struck up a conversation with her, 'Give me to drink', He said, and so began the famous dialogue between them which has brought untold blessing to many millions of saints ever since. It was a private engagement, for throughout its entire length the disciples were absent and had no idea of the matters which so deeply engrossed the hearts of Jesus and the woman, to the exclusion of everybody else. They may have had some notion of the woman's social standing, or have heard something of her reputation; (it is said that only social outcasts went to draw water at that hour of the day) for upon their return, seeing Jesus talking with the woman, they were amazed to the point of marvelling at Him. Whatever did He want with her? What was He seeking of that kind of Woman? Why was He even talking to her? Even they would not have spoken to her and He was their leader; they were expecting Him to set a different example from that. They did not say a word to the woman; they did not need to; she sensed their attitude and departed.

It is of essential importance that disciples should learn that attitudes, like actions, speak louder than words. The record does not say so, but it is legitimate to ask whether the Lord sent these men into the

town to get them out of the way while He dealt with the woman; not just because He did not wish to expose her soul to others, even though they be chosen apostles, but also because He knew they would almost certainly hinder Him if they remained. In their absence the woman opened up to the Lord because she sensed His love and sympathy and understanding; she closed up her conversation and her heart as soon as the disciples appeared; it was a most sad moment. For those of us who are wanting to bare our souls to truth the disciples' behaviour was anything but what may have been expected of them. Right from the commencement of this episode it seems they missed the way. They went into the village to buy bread, but Jesus said He sent them to reap; what a world of difference lies between their attitude to discipleship and that of Jesus. By comparison with the Lord, who had one woman upon whom to work, they had a whole townful of people among whom they could have worked, yet they carried no sheaves and when they did return they succeeded in driving away the lone woman who represented the hundred percent success of the Lord.

Disciples and apostles though these men were, they didn't have a clue of what their calling entailed or of what was going on; they were as dead as dead could be. Behold their conversation and mark the words of the Lord, 'Master eat' ... 'I have meat to eat that ye know not of'. 'Hath any man brought him aught to eat?' 'My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work'. As He was later to say, He lived in another day than theirs and walked in the light of another world, where values and standards were all utterly different from theirs; in His world souls were greater than bread. Sin is of no power there and can be reckoned as though it had never been and a moment of faith can blot out a lifetime of sin. In His world, in the final reckoning, ignorance and knowledge are taken into account and opportunities are weighed against possibilities. The woman had existed in ignorance and our precious Lord, though knowing her sin, thought the best of her and imputed to her the highest of motives; 'if thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that saith unto thee give me to drink thou wouldest have asked of him and he would have given thee living water'. He paid her a compliment in advance -- the apostles imputed the unworthiest of motives to her and even wondered about the Lord - what shame! But then they were as ignorant as she.

They no more knew what meat was than she knew what water was. He had been feeding all the time He had been dealing with the woman, feeding on the will of God. They had been feeding on this world's bread (legitimately enough of course) but they were no more eating the bread and meat Christ knew of than she was. It would be interesting to know what was passing through the minds of those men, especially Peter's, at that time. 'Follow me', He had said to them at the first, 'and I will make you fishers of men'; now He is saying, 'I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour; were they to be reapers as well as fishers? 'Other men laboured and ye have entered into their labours'. They had to learn the importance of doing their duty; unless the harvest is reaped all the labour of others gone before has been in vain. To bring consummate joy to the sower and crown his work the reaper must labour too. Every disciple must realise what a privileged person he is that he should be chosen to enter into other men's labours. He must realise also that he is a labourer, a worker hired by God who will pay him his wages at the end. of the day -- and he will get what he has earned; 'he that reapeth receiveth wages'; he also 'gathereth fruit unto life eternal'.

One further vital lesson must be learned from this account of the Lord's encounter with the woman -- it may be posed as a question -- when does the Lord consider a person to have been properly reaped? Many answers may be attempted to the question, but on the evidence of this chapter it is when that person becomes a worshipper of the Father; that is the immediate objective to which He moving in all His dealings with men and women. Whenever He deals with men it is to this end and He would consider His

labour to be in vain except this be accomplished. No soul is properly reaped unless that soul is well and truly cut off from its former root or stock, and when that happens the life springing up within issues in worship of the Father unto all eternity. Worship, to be worship at all, must be in spirit and in truth though and not just in meetings: Father is seeking this and Jesus knew it. A worshipper is a reaped person, his affections have been won and everything within rises and pours forth to God. There are now no special headquarters of worship, 'neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem'; neither is there any other building or spot, whether regarded as specially sanctified or otherwise; there are no places of worship any more; places have been replaced by persons. When persons worship the Father in spirit and in truth every place is a place of worship and so is every time and attitude.

The only way we can possibly arrive at truth and understand Jesus is to remember that all the Lord's sayings must be interpreted in the light of His person; He is THE Light, and He said of Himself, 'I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me'. So when He says we must worship in spirit and in truth He means we must worship with the entirety of our life; He did, and He has gone to the Father. With all His being as a man He worshipped the Father, calling Him the only true God. All He ever did or said was unto His Father and He was the truth; the life He lived was the way and anyone who exists on earth any other way can never hope to come to the Father. Before recording this incident John had earlier written down one of Christ's testimonies, 'the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life'; let every man ponder that in relation to his own words. If we also take into account John's later words, 'let us not love in word but in deed and in truth' we shall arrive at the truest understanding of what God means by worship. Worship may use words but it is not of them and not in them; there are no set biblical forms or attitudes of worship; deed and truth are what the Lord is seeking; as with words, so with worship, all must be spirit and life and truth or all is vain.

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