

The Lord Will Never Have Mixture in Our Life or in Our Work for Him

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life of holiness and separation, free from mixture and worldly influences, in order to worship God in spirit and truth.

Scripture: John 4:4, John 4:23, Hebrews 4:12

Topics: "True Worship", "Purity"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes that God desires purity in our lives and work, using the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman to illustrate the dangers of mixture--where the old and new covenants collide. He explains that the Samaritan woman represents a life of dissatisfaction and confusion, while Jesus offers the clear and satisfying 'water of life' that comes from the Holy Spirit. Sparks warns against blending worldly practices with spiritual life, asserting that true worship must be in spirit and truth, free from any mixture. He concludes that God will not bless a life or work that is not wholly devoted to Him, urging believers to embrace a life of holiness and separation from the old ways. The sermon calls for a commitment to purity in both character and service to God.

Transcript

We are going to read again the fourth chapter of the Gospel by John. (And the reader will benefit from reading this chapter). I want to turn you again, especially to verse twenty-three in that chapter:

"The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father doth seek such to be His worshippers."

I want to put alongside of that passage a verse from the Letter to the Hebrews, the fourth chapter, verse twelve:

"For the Word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit" (ASV).

We have been noting during the past week that the teaching and the acts of the Lord Jesus all related to a time of transition from one old order to a new. Jesus stood between these two orders, the old order which was passing and the new order which He was bringing in. And this fourth chapter of the Gospel by John

stands in a very real way in that transition period. In this chapter the two things are meeting, and here we find the state that is not by any means clear.

Let us look at some of the features. It was not just an accident that Jesus went through Samaria and met that woman. It was all a part of one great whole of this gospel. Jesus is in Samaria, and Jesus meets this Samaritan woman. Now if you know anything about the Samaritans, you know that they were a mixed race. When Jerusalem had been invaded by a foreign country, and the whole land of Israel had been overrun by those foreigners, many of the Jews were taken away into captivity. But some remained in the land, and they married the foreigners. Jews married those who were not Jews. So, the Samaritans were a mixed blood people. They were neither one thing nor another. That is why they were hated by the Jews, as it is said, "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." The Samaritans were a mixture in their very makeup (John 4:4-9).

Then it was at the well that the Lord met this Samaritan woman. And you notice that it was Jacob's well, and that Jacob gave this land to his son Joseph. So here in this mixed situation is something of old Israel: Jacob and Joseph are here. And you notice that that well never satisfied this woman. She came out every day to draw water from that well but was never satisfied. Jesus said to her, 'Those who drink of the water of this well will just be coming, and coming, and coming again. They will never be satisfied.' That is the old dispensation. It never satisfied anybody.

You remember all the millions of sacrifices that were offered in Israel in the Old Testament. Sacrifices were offered morning and evening every day for hundreds of years. And still there had to be more sacrifices because they never made anything perfect. The priests went into the tabernacle or the temple and offered their prayers every day. But all their praying every day never brought anything to perfection. The law of Moses was read to the people continually, but it never made any difference to their character. It never brought satisfaction to their hearts. And that is just how things were in the old dispensation, and this well where Jacob and Joseph are found represents the old dispensation. You may come and drink of it every day of your life and you are not satisfied. Because as the New Testament writer says, 'The law could make nothing perfect.' So that this poor woman came out every day to get her water and had to do it all her life and was never satisfied. Well, we have got the Samaritan woman. She represents a mixture of two things, nothing distinct or nothing clear, neither one thing nor the other. And we have got the well, and it speaks of the disappointment of the Old Testament.

What about these disciples? We read that the disciples went away into the town to buy bread. They left Jesus alone. The woman was not there when they went into the town. But while they were gone, the woman came out of the town to the well. And then there commenced this conversation between Jesus and the woman. When the disciples came back, and saw Jesus talking to this woman, of course, they did not know what kind of woman she was, they did not know all about her sinful life. They only knew that she was a Samaritan woman. And they were very shocked when they saw Jesus talking to a Samaritan woman. They were Jews. The Jews have nothing to do with the Samaritans. And here is their Master talking in a friendly way to a Samaritan woman. They thought that was a terrible thing. Why? Just because they were Jews, they belong to the Old Testament, where Jews and Gentiles have nothing to do with each other. They are still on Old Testament ground. They have their Old Testament prejudices, and they thought this was a terrible thing, so they had better break in on this.

And so they brought their bread, 'Master, here is the bread we went to buy. You must eat.' They thought they would just break up this little conversation. They said, "Master, eat." Jesus said, "I have meat to eat

that you know not of." Once again, they were found to be people without new understanding. They said, 'Has anybody brought Him food?' They can only think in terms of the material and not of the spiritual. Jesus said, 'My meat and My drink is to do the will of My Father' (John 4:27-38).

Now you can see that in almost every feature of this story, on the one side, there is mixture. Nothing is distinct. It is neither one thing or the other. But when you move over onto the side of Jesus, there is no mixture here. The water that He says He will give is quite clear water. There is no mixture in that water. It is the water of Life. And it brings perfect satisfaction. IT IS THE WATER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Now you know our verse, verse twenty-three. It is interesting that although this woman was such a great sinner, Jesus said, 'You have had five husbands; and you have got somebody now who is not your husband.' Although she was such a sinner, Jesus is speaking to her about some of the most wonderful things in the Bible. Why I say that, is this: Some people may think that the things that I am going to say this morning are for advanced Christians, that they are not for beginners. But I want to say that what I am saying is right at the very foundation of true Christianity. This is not something for those who have been on the way for many years. Although I think that many people who have been on the way for many years need to go back and learn the first lesson. But here is a woman right back there at the beginning of the Christian life. And Jesus is saying to her this one thing. Everything in this story points to this one thing. The beginning of the Christian life, like all the rest of the Christian life, must be absolutely clear as crystal. Now all the old Christians as well as the young ones can take notice of this. The Bible reveals that there is one thing that God hates. It is the one thing that God will not accept and will not bless, and that is mixture. Mixture is the bringing together of two contrary things. A situation where you bring in something that is not of God and try to link it up with something that is of God. That is mixture. That is what the devil did at the beginning and God hates it. He will never accept mixture.

There is an Old Testament illustration of this. One of the commands of the Lord to Israel was this, 'Thou shalt not wear a garment made of two kinds of materials. Thou shalt not wear a garment made of wool and cotton.' Of course, today a lot of people do that. There are various kinds of materials that are made up into our garments. But God said to Israel, You are not to wear a garment made of wool and cotton together. You see, that is an Old Testament parable. It is an outward story with an inward meaning. What did God mean by that? Well, there are not many people in this hall this morning wearing woolen garments. And I think in a few weeks time, there will not be many people in this whole city wearing woolen garments. Why is that? Because wool makes you perspire. The heat of your own body is brought out. The natural life expresses itself in wools. But most of you this morning are wearing cotton. Why are you wearing cotton? Because cotton keeps down the natural heat.

Now you see God's lesson. You cannot bring together in your own person that which is of the flesh and that which is of the Spirit. You see, clothes speak of our character. Perhaps not so much in this country, but if you were to go to the West, you would see how people dress there. You would say of this person, 'Well, I do not think much of her.' Or you might say about someone else, 'What an extraordinary person!' You would be judging their character by their dress. And dress is usually an expression of character. So God in His Old Testament parable says, 'You cannot have two characters, if you are a true Israelite. My people must be one thing or the other. I cannot have mixture.'

But God did not leave it there. He added something else to it. He says, 'Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together.' What is the difference? Well, the ox in the Old Testament is a clean beast. It is included among the clean beasts. You are allowed to eat the ox. Its flesh is clean. The ass is included amongst the

unclean creatures of the Old Testament. That was particularly the case in Israel. Now God says, 'You shall not bring into your work for Me this contradiction.' The plow is the symbol of work. And God, by His parable says, 'When you do My work, you must not do it with two things that are of contradictions. I will not have a mixture of what is spiritual and what is carnal in My work. I will not allow there to be what is the flesh and what is the Spirit brought together in My work.' I think I have said enough about God's parables in the Old Testament. It shows how God will not have mixture. Everything with God must be quite pure. It must be one clear thing. There must be no contradiction in life or in service.

Now we come back to our chapter in John. We have seen that on the one side, everything was mixture; and therefore, it was all disappointing. It did not go through. It just went so far and then it failed. But there is the other side. There is the side of the Lord Jesus. What is He talking about when He speaks about the water that He will give? Well, He is only illustrating these words, spirit and truth. He says: "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth." The Holy Spirit is the characteristic of this new dispensation. I think it would be a good thing if you have not done so; if you would just take this gospel by John and go through it looking for the Holy Spirit. You will find that the Holy Spirit is mentioned thirty times in this gospel. And the Lord Jesus gives large sections of His teaching to this matter of the Holy Spirit. You see, the movement is from the old to the new. **AND THE NEW IS THE LIFE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

May I just for the moment speak about the nature of our new birth. Perhaps the young people need to have this made clear, and we all need to be reminded of it. You know we all have a human spirit, and we all have a human soul, and of course, we all have a human body. But not many people understand or know the difference between our spirit and our soul. Our spirit is that which God gave in order that we might have fellowship with Him Who is Spirit. Jesus said to the woman, "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth."

Now God gave Adam a spirit as well as a soul and a body. Before Adam was disobedient, he had fellowship with God in his spirit. God was able to speak to him because Adam's spirit was alive to God. Adam had the faculty in him for receiving things from God. When Adam sinned, his spirit died unto God, that is, he was separated from God in his spirit - the link between himself and God ceased to be. Fellowship with God, which is always spiritual, was destroyed, and the spirit sank down into subjection to man's soul. The soul came to dominate the spirit! What is the soul? Well, it is our reason, it is our emotion, and it is our will. Everybody has that, more or less. You have a reason. That is why you argue about things. And you have a will. Some people have a stronger will than others, but we all have a will. And you have feelings. You have strong emotion. All that makes up your soul. But that only has to do with this world. It has nothing to do with God. And, of course, I need not say anything about the body. We all know that we have a body. And until we are born again, we cannot understand the things of God. We cannot hear God speaking in our spirit. We cannot have fellowship with God. Now what happens when we are born again? That spirit in us, which has been separated from God, is brought back into life. Then God becomes alive to us again. We are able to hear God speak to us. We are able to begin to understand the things of God. We now call God "Father." Before, if ever we spoke of Him, we thought of Him just as Almighty God. Now He is our Father and is very near. The spirit in us which died, which was separated from God, has been brought into life. And now we are called upon to live in fellowship with God in the Spirit.

But there is another thing that happens when we are born again. The Holy Spirit Who is the Spirit of God comes into our new spirit. We do not hear God speaking out from heaven to us. But we know that God

speaks in our hearts. We know that the Holy Spirit in our spirit tells us when we are wrong, and gives us the joy of the Lord when we are right. That is the order of this new dispensation. Does it sound very difficult to you young people? Really it is very simple. I think this is one of the first lessons that ever I learned in the Christian life. I used to do certain things before I was born again. I did not see any harm in it at all. Indeed, I would argue with this soul of mine, 'What is wrong about that?' I will not tell you what those things were. They are just the things that all the people of this world do, and the places to which they go.

Well, I used to do those things before I was born again. Then I had a very real experience of the Lord. No one said to me, 'Now you are a Christian, you may not do those things.' But one day I just did one of those old things, and do you know - all the joy went out of my heart. I had been able to do that for years and not be troubled about it. Now when I did it, I lost all my joy. Everything seemed to have gone wrong, and I had to go home and go into my room and got down on my knees, and ask the Lord what had happened. Why do I feel so miserable, what does this mean? And the Lord simply said, 'You are bringing over the old life into the new. And I cannot have this mixture. You are now a new creation in Christ, and the old things are passed away.'

Now I say that was one of the first lessons I learned in the Christian life. This was very real then. I was born again, the Holy Spirit had come in, and He was just teaching me what the Lord was pleased with, and what the Lord was not pleased with. You can all understand that, I am sure. That is how it ought to be at the beginning of the Christian life. But it ought to be like that all the way through the Christian life. You, my dear friends, along with myself, who have known the Lord for a long time, who have worked for the Lord for a long time, we must remember that these laws of the beginning remain to the end. We may not bring into our Christian character the old life. We may not be two things, a Christian, and something else. The Lord will not have it. His blessing will not be upon that. In our Christian work, we may not bring that which is of the world alongside of that which is of Christ. There must be no worldly methods in our Christian work. God will not have that mixture. Sooner or later it will all be brought to confusion. The Lord will never have mixture in life or in work. He says, "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch no unholy thing, and I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and My daughters" (II Cor. 6:17,18).

So you see the great lesson that the Lord was teaching the simple woman of Samaria: Everything around her and in her spoke of mixture. But the Lord spoke to her about THE WATER OF LIFE in which there is no mixture. You know when you get to the end of the Bible, to the last chapters of the Book of the Revelation, we have another great parable of God, another great illustration. It is the heavenly Jerusalem. It is just a representation of the perfected work of God in the Church. GOD'S PERFECTED WORK IN HIS NEW HEAVENLY ISRAEL. It is a new spiritual Jerusalem. And it says that right in the center of that city is the river of THE WATER OF LIFE, clear as crystal. There is no mud in that river. You can look into it, and look right through it, it is so clear. It is the river of THE WATER OF LIFE. And in that, God is saying that in the end, all defilement will have been removed! All mixture will have been put away and everything will be perfectly clear and pure. So the Lord is calling us to a life of holiness. And holiness just means everything is of God and nothing else, not some of us and some of the Lord, not some of the Lord and some of the world, but ALL and only of the Lord. That is the meaning of our verse: "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth."

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