

## **Revelation of Sin and the Son**

SS/HN 11/07/04 am

Reading: Deuteronomy 11, John 4

Study: John 4:16-26

Psalms: 130, 44:1-6, 44:20-26, 139:21-24

The crystal clear water flowing over the rocks and sand was so inviting. I would go down to the creek for a refreshing drink after working hard in the hot sun all morning. But how to drink that water? I had no cup or bucket. How would I get a drink? I had to get down on my knees, right down low to either lap the water or scoop it up with my hands. That was the only way I would get to drink that refreshing water.

The Samaritan woman said to Jesus, *Sir, give me this water*, this living water that you are talking about. What was this living water that he spoke of? It was Jesus himself who would come into her heart by his Spirit and give her new life – what he called eternal life (4:14). He spoke of a radically new life appropriate to the age to come, yet a life that can be possessed here and now.

'The wonderful thing about the gift of the Holy Spirit is that those who have it do not live their lives solely in the possibilities of this present world and its resources. Something of the power and the vision of the age to come is theirs now.'

But before anyone can taste this living water, before this woman could receive the gift of God what had to happen? Note Jesus initially encouraged her to ask. She must ask him for this living water. Now she had asked but in asking, she must do something. What is that? She must repent of her sin. She must recognise her sin and repent of it.

A heart that is hiding sin is not open to the Holy Spirit coming and dwelling there. An essential aspect of knowing Jesus and believing in him is to recognise his omniscience, to realize that he knows everything about us. We can hide things from others but not from Jesus. It is impossible to know Jesus yet to believe at the same time we can hide our sin from him.

Jesus was making progress in his effort to reach the heart of this woman. But it was a heart full of sin. She had more than her fair share of sin to hide it appears. Indeed, she was living in sin. But that did not deter the One who knew all this anyway. Few or many, those sins had to be dealt with and Jesus was ready to do that.

### **Sin Revealed**

*Go call your husband and come here* he said to her. Some see this as an abrupt change of tack in the conversation and it is. No longer is Jesus talking about water but turns his attention to her personal life. But in a sense, his focus has been on her heart from the beginning. And that is where he aims now, albeit more directly.

*I have no husband* she answered him without any elaboration. Jesus commended her for her honesty but knows that this was not the whole truth. In fact, *you have had five husbands and the one whom you now have is not your husband*. Jesus dropped a bombshell on her heart. He blew the

cover off all pretence and pride. He laid bare and exposed her entire immoral life – past and present.

It was as if he held a mirror up to her soul and she saw what filth was there. That is what Jesus does. That is what the Word of God does. We are to examine our hearts in the light of God's holy laws. Look in the mirror and deal with what you see by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Five husbands! She could have lost these by death though it would be unlikely for so many to die on her. Under the Law of Moses (Deuteronomy 24:1), as applied by the lax school of Hillel a man could divorce his wife for any and every reason, but a woman could not divorce her husband – though like all laws there were ways around this. In any case, she was now living with a man she was not married too.

How tragic that people today think they are so progressive in abandoning marriage and adopting new family patterns. Elizabeth Taylor was in the headline for years because of her many marriages. But there is nothing new under the sun says the Bible. This Samaritan woman standing before Jesus had done it all.

### **Prophet Revealed**

Probably the whole village knew about her life, but Jesus had only been with her a short time. How did he know? It was by reason of his omniscience, his divine knowledge of all things. She was shocked but at the same time impressed by this man who stood before her. She recognised that he was not just any Jew but that he was a prophet.

Nathaniel was similar touched by the supernatural power of Jesus. Jesus, though miles away, saw him while he was still in the garden. This knowledge was too wonderful for Nathaniel. He confessed before Jesus – *Rabbi you are the Son of God* (1:49).

What did she mean by prophet? Moses was a prophet and God said that he would raise up a prophet like Moses from among his brethren (Deuteronomy 18:15). The Samaritans expected this prophet like Moses, much like the Jews expected the Messiah – they called him the 'Taheb'. But by prophet she probably meant a spiritual man who spoke the words of God, for she did not as yet recognise him as Messiah (4:25).

Now it is the turn of the woman to change the subject. This revelation of sin in her life was not pleasant – we all know that don't we. She was feeling the heat of the Word penetrating her soul. She wanted to talk about something else. He was a prophet. What better than to talk about a controversial religious issue.

At the same time however, she felt relieved, the burden of sin lifted, now that everything was out and confessed. She felt the warmth of the love of this 'prophet' who knew everything about her yet was talking to her and offering her living water. Although she did not express such freedom here she later said to everyone *come see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ* (4:29). So although she was bold in her words and showed little emotion at the time, the words and the person of Jesus touched her deeply.

What then of this question about the place of worship. Was it just a ruse to take the heat off or was it genuine. Commentators differ in their opinions. Certainly, she was under pressure. Was this man

going to delve further into her life and reveal more immorality? This would not be pleasant for her. But at the same time Jesus considered the question genuine because he goes on to answer her – coming back eventually to reveal himself as Messiah.

(We do not have time today to look at the substance of what Jesus says about worship).

We would all be aware of the value of religious controversy in deflecting that powerful light of the word of God upon our souls. What are some issues that are guaranteed to get a good argument going – an argument that edifies no one? Baptism is still a popular one- 'show me one place in the Bible where infants are baptized someone will say'. Or the Lords supper – one cup or individual cups. Or why do you worship in that way? Yes just like the Samaritans and the Jews, Christians still today love to argue about worship.

Why do we do this? It can be very inimical to our soul. For just like this woman we still use such outward issues to divert attention away from issues of the heart. We take the bread and the wine to remember Jesus death on the Cross. We remember that is was because of our sin, our terrible sin that he died that cruel death. But some people, far from examining their hearts, only see what sort of bread it is and how it is broken, or whether it is wine or grape juice, or how the cloths are folded. Let us beware. Beware the sin of the Pharisees.

### **Messiah Revealed**

The woman testified back in her village – *come see a man who told me all things I ever did. Could this be the Christ?* That was a powerful testimony for it brought the people out to see Jesus.

Just before the disciples returned and this amazing encounter came to an end, Jesus told this woman that he was the Messiah. She believed that Messiah was coming and that he would wonderfully explain all the controversies and all the mysteries of life. Jesus responded to that faith by revealing himself to her as the Messiah.

Jesus as we know was reluctant to reveal himself like this to Jews. They had come to believe that Messiah would deliver them politically, that he would lead them in overthrowing the Romans. But this woman believed he would explain everything, everything about worship, about life and about death.

Jesus demonstrated to her that that he knew everything about her life. And he promised her something called *living water*. He demonstrated his grace in revealing all this to her and indeed in revealing himself as the Messiah, the Christ of God.

Do you know that you cannot hide your sin from Jesus? He knows everything about you – all you do, all you say and all you think. Have you confessed your sin to him? Do you know that wonderful freedom of having your sins forgiven? Do you know the amazing grace of this man Jesus who revealed himself to this sinful Samaritan woman?

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