

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

BIBLE TEXT: John 4:1-42.

LESSON 30 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" (Isaiah 12:3).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

John 4:1-42.

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 Judæa, 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

notes:

Samaria

Jesus always knew where there were honest people who would listen to His preaching. Although it was a much shorter route, the Jews did not go through Samaria when travelling from Jerusalem to Galilee, because they hated the Samaritans. Many years before, when the Jews were carried away into captivity, the ancestors of the Samaritans had been brought in to occupy their country; and of course the Jews resented them. The Samaritans were idol worshipers, and when trouble came upon them they thought the gods of the land were displeased, so they invited some Jewish priests to teach them about the true God. However, they never really gave up their heathen practices, so the Jews considered them unclean.

But Jesus knew there was someone in Samaria who would answer the Gospel call, so He "must needs go through Samaria." We sometimes hear the expression that God would move Heaven and earth to save one soul, which shows us how important He considers our salvation.

We remember that Philip was holding a revival in Jerusalem at one time. Undoubtedly there were many people in his meetings; but right in the midst of them, God told Philip to go down to the desert of Gaza. It seemed like a strange command, but God could see that Philip would meet a man there who was hungry for salvation. Philip met the eunuch from Ethiopia, and taught him how to find Jesus. Thus he won another precious soul for Christ.

Jesus at Jacob's Well

Jesus and His disciples had walked many miles by the time they came to Jacob's well, and they were in need of supplies. While the disciples went into the city to buy food, Jesus rested on the curb of the well. As we learned in a previous lesson, the few wells in this hot and dry country were priceless possessions and very important in sustaining life. Jesus used this for a talking point when He greeted the woman who came from the city to draw water while He rested there.

When Jesus opened His conversation by asking of her a favour, He showed that He did not think He was too good to speak to her. There is never anything beneath Christ's notice. No sinner has gone so far into sin but that Jesus will hear his cry for mercy. None of our problems are too small for Him to consider and help us solve. Jesus told His followers: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father ... Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Matthew 10:29, 31). Jesus lived among the poor, who heard Him gladly; and He ate with the publicans, the despised of the Jews. Jesus knows the heart, and if He sees a desire there for the truth, no one is too low or insignificant for Him to help. "For man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (I Samuel 16:7).

Living Water

Jesus now had the opportunity to discuss the Living Water, which He had to give. The Spirit of God is often likened in Scripture to living water, and we read that on the last great day of the feast Jesus stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me ... out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7:37, 38). Here He was

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.

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.

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.

speaking of the Spirit of God that will be in every true believer when he is saved, that will flow out so that everyone will be able to see that he has been with Jesus and learned of Him.

The Samaritan woman could not understand what Jesus meant. Surely there was no one greater than Jacob who had dug this well deep into the rock and soil -- 105 feet deep -- from which water had been taken for more than 2000 years! But precious as it was, this water satisfied the thirst only temporarily. One must always come again to draw.

When Jesus told the woman she would never thirst again if she drank of the water He would give, she wanted it. It would make her tasks so much lighter if she never again had to travel that hot dusty trail to get water. But Jesus was talking about greater things, and she listened and heeded.

Many times people will come to Jesus for material blessings -- for healing for their bodies, or other aid -- but they will not be willing to give up their sins. When the crowds thronged about Jesus after He had fed the five thousand, He told them they were not following Him because of the words He spoke, but because they had eaten of the loaves and fishes. We see many people like that today.

What to Believe

When Jesus began to uncover the sins in the life of the woman of Samaria, she did not resent it. She acknowledged that He was a prophet, and there were questions in her mind about religion that she now asked Him to answer. The Jews said that Jerusalem was the place to worship God, but the Samaritans had built a temple on Mt. Gerizim. Who was right? Were they not worshipping the same God?

People often ask today, "How can I know which church is right? There are so many different beliefs, and each claims to be right." Jesus explained to her what true worship was. Salvation was of the Jews because from the time of Abraham they had been God's chosen people, and He had promised that through them all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Jesus was the fulfilment of that prophecy, and here He was to bless -- even the Samaritans. The place where men worshiped was not as important as how they offered their praise; they must worship Him "in spirit and in truth."

At one time God spoke of the Children of Israel, "This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me" (Isaiah 29:13). And later Jesus applied the same saying to the Jews, adding: "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:6, 7). God wants His children to lift up "holy hands, without wrath and doubting." They must worship Him with "clean hands, and a pure heart." There is no room for sin in the life of a follower of Jesus. When one is saved and sanctified he has that pure heart.

The woman at the well had heard that the Messiah should come, and she seemed to believe that His blessings would be for everyone, because she said, "When he is come, he will tell us all things."

The trouble with many people is that they do not want to be told "all things." They do not want Jesus to reveal their sins. But this woman was willing to acknowledge her sins because she realised Jesus was the Christ Who should come.

Woman Missionary

When the Lord made the change in her life she wanted others

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.

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.

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

to know about it. That is a good sign of a sound conversion. When Jesus saves our souls and makes us happy we want others to know about it so they may be happy, too. Many people believed the woman, and came out to the well to see Jesus. After they heard Him they said, "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." Every man can know Jesus for himself -- not just know about Him, but have a personal acquaintance with Him and live daily to please Him.

These Samaritans loved Jesus and asked Him to stay with them. And He remained with them two days. How different they were from the Gadarenes among whom Jesus healed the demoniac. The Gadarenes prayed Him to depart out of their coasts -- He Who had done such a wonderful act of kindness to one of their own!

The disciples were worried about Jesus because He hadn't eaten, but He told them His meat was to do the will of the Father -- that was to tell people how to be freed from their sins. His purpose in coming to earth was to redeem men and women to God, so they would be ready for Heaven.

Labourers Few

We often hear the quotation, "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few," meaning that there are many souls who need to be saved but very few true Christians who are holding up the standard of the Gospel, and who are ready to deny themselves earthly pleasures in order to work for Jesus. Spreading the good news of salvation should be more important to us than eating our natural food. When we eat our meals we get hungry again very soon, but the work we do for Jesus is building a lasting reward for us in eternal life.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you think there was a reason for Christ's going through Samaria?
2. What three titles or names did the woman give Christ?
3. Did Christ declare unto her Who He was?
4. Did the people of the city believe her testimony?
5. What was more important in Christ's life than natural food?

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.