

Fresh Oil Releases

Still or Sparkling Water?

At the outset, I want to acknowledge that we all see in part and prophesy in part. Getting the arms of one's understanding around the awesome greatness of Truth is far beyond the ability of one person. We have to come together as one to give and receive the portion of revelation understanding given each one, and together grasp the beauty of the big picture of what God is doing in the earth. With this in mind, I would like to share the light given me by the Spirit in reading a familiar passage - the story of the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4.

Joh 4:5 Then He came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Joh 4:6 And Jacob's well was there. Jesus, therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus upon the well. It was about the sixth hour.

The word 'Samaria' means 'watchstation'. The church is waiting and watching for a visitation from the Spirit and we see Jesus has come to this place. Which place has He come to? It is called 'Sychar' which means 'intensely strong alcohol, intoxicating'. This is not a place where people are sober and alert but rather a place where they have become intoxicated with a satiating drink or influence. It has caused them to be under the influence of a spirit other than the Holy Spirit. In Isaiah, there is a description of the state of God's people which is very sobering (excuse the unintended pun):

Isa 28:7 These also, the priest and prophet, stagger from drink, weaving, falling-down drunks, Besotted with wine and whiskey, can't see straight, can't talk sense. Isa 28:8 Every table is covered with vomit. They live in vomit.

It seems that those who are supposed to be guiding and feeding the people of God with the Word, are under another influence and can bring nothing forth but vomit and the tables are covered with it! No wonder the people of God are going hungry and thirsty.

We are also told this town is near the place of inheritance. There is a portion of land that Jacob left to Joseph. I want to say to you that there is a portion of land left to you in this generation. There is an inheritance won by those who have wrestled with God and prevailed and it is waiting for the church of Jesus Christ, close to the place they find themselves in now but in order to get there they have stop imbibing the intoxicating brew of seducing spirits intent on making a mockery of the church and instead, become filled with the Spirit! At this point, Jesus is weary with His journey; it is time to rest, time for a face to face meeting.

It is the sixth hour. Six is the number of man and this woman has come to the well to satisfy her thirst. If you keep coming to fetch water in the timing of man and according to the ways of man, you will soon be thirsty again. This woman had been coming to this well to draw water for as long as she could remember. Each vessel-full lasted only a day or two

and then she had to return. As tiring as this ritual was, she was grateful to her forefather, Jacob, for building this well. It was he who first discovered the spring and encased it in rock, making it accessible to those who came after him. Many generations had been watered by this well.

This woman represents the present-day church.

The well is a picture of the organized church system, built around a source of Truth. The construction of the walls of this well have contained and channeled the flow of the water and now people come to this location in order to have their thirst quenched on a regular basis. Unfortunately, the supply does not last long and each week these dry living vessels return, hoping to be filled for the week to come.

It is not that there is something wrong with the water - it comes from a pure underground source. However, it has become stagnant because of the restriction of the stone walls surrounding it. The doctrines of man will always limit and hinder the flow of the Spirit. The water of the Word is available but only at the well, and only if you reach for the water in the prescribed way will you obtain a little - enough just to quench your own thirst or perhaps that of your closest family for a short period. It requires the sweat of man to draw up the water so one becomes weary with the effort.

Jesus looks at this woman who is so thirsty, and He asks her to quench His thirst. He asks the church the same question - will you meet His need before you attend to your own needs? He is thirsty too for the water of our worship. Just as His Word is water to our souls, so our words of worship are water to His soul. It is for this purpose we were created - to worship Him; yet so often we are so intent on quenching our own thirst for words of affirmation from man that we neglect Him.

He then begins to speak to her of living water. Living water is water that is flowing and oxygenated as opposed to stagnant water in a pool. Living water comes from a endless source, an eternal Source, continuously springing up. It is like sparkling water as opposed to still bottled water. Only the Spirit of God can infuse the written Word with life and apply it to our individual lives. The letter of the Law kills but the Spirit gives life. Jesus tells this woman, the Church, that He can give her this living water. In fact, He will cause it to spring up WITHIN her.

Listen to me, Church of God. We come Sunday after Sunday to the well our forefathers built for us. We do church the prescribed way they laid out for us. We partake of the water of the Word and yet somehow within a day or so, we are thirsty again. We might make minor adjustments to the walls of the well, aesthetic touches to make it more attractive to passing travelers, but essentially the ritual is the same - bring your vessel and be filled for the week ahead. Now Jesus is sitting on this very system man has built and is offering a simpler way. He says that if we will come to Him, he will install a source of water WITHIN each of us so that we do not have journey to a place to receive the

water of Life. We do not have to go to a manmade building in order to have our desperate thirst for God quenched.

The woman is very defensive at this seeming criticism of her source of supply:

Joh 4:12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself, and his children and his cattle?

This system has worked for generations. Who do you think you are, offering something better? Of course, at this point she does not realize she is speaking the One who fashioned the worlds with His Word. He gently directs her back to the issue at hand. As Doctor Phil would say, "how is this working for you?" The present church system is designed to make people dependant on other people to reach in and draw a little cup of water for them. Yet here before us stands Jesus, and He is saying we don't have to go to this mountain or that fellowship to worship. Its not about a place - its about a Person! Jesus said to the Pharisees:

"you search the scriptures because you believe that through them you have eternal life; and still you do not come to Me that you may have life!"

This Word still rings in the ears of the Church to this day! Do you want to have life, to possess and contain the life of God within you? All of the written Word is only a treasure map which should lead us to the feet of the Treasure - Jesus, the source of Living Water.

Finally the woman is convinced and asks for some of this living water and it is then that Jesus puts His finger on the root of the problem. This woman has been married five times and is now living with a man who she is not married to. How scandalous! Yet, is this not an accurate description of the Church of today? She has embraced and 'married' herself to doctrine after doctrine, movement after movement; only to grow tired of each one's face and hollow promises. The next 'man' that comes along, looks great, is saying all the things her hungry heart wants to hear and promises her a life of comfort and security. So she tears up her old photographs, burns her bridges and moves in with the next wind of doctrine. Year after year, relationship after relationship, and now the Church is scarred and her faith in the words of men is shaken.

In fact, the latest in her line of lovers, she wasn't prepared to walk down the aisle with. She has become commitment-shy. She is prepared to live in the same house with the present teaching but she will no longer put her signature to it. She is not prepared to bear the name of the 'man' she is shackled up with. She has been used and abused by doctrines of man in the name of Love and has been disappointed too many times. Yet still within her, there remains this raging thirst - to know as she is known.

How beautiful Jesus is! He truly sees her, right into the hidden depths of her cynical heart. What He is really saying is this (in the beautiful translation of the Message):

Mat 11:28 "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Mat 11:29 Walk with me and work with me--watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Mat 11:30 Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

He is calling her to cease from her own labors, to enter into a Sabbath rest of fellowship with the Spirit.

Joh 4:23 But the time is coming--it has, in fact, come--when what you're called will not matter and where you go to worship will not matter. "It's who you are and the way you live that count before God. Your worship must engage your spirit in the pursuit of truth. That's the kind of people the Father is out looking for: those who are simply and honestly themselves before him in their worship. Joh 4:24 God is sheer being itself--Spirit. Those who worship him must do it out of their very being, their spirits, their true selves, in adoration."

This is a relationship she has not experienced before. This woman only knows sixth hour relationships. She has only experienced the taste of water from a well built by man and she doesn't understand what He is saying. She tries to fit it into her theology:

Joh 4:25 The woman said, "I don't know about that. I do know that the Messiah is coming. When he arrives, we'll get the whole story."

The 'whole story' is standing in front of her but she is blind to it - it seems too simple. Surely there must be a list of things she has to accomplish, places where she needs to sign up, courses that must be passed? In the same way, the Church knows a visitation of God is coming in the future. She scans the horizon with expectation. It's going to be awesome when the promised appearing happens. However, Jesus breaks in on her futuristic theology - "what you are looking for, has already arrived:

Joh 4:26 "I am he," said Jesus. "You don't have to wait any longer or look any further."

People of God, if there is anything we need to hear, it is this! The Living Word, the Fountain of Life is sitting atop our wearisome manmade religious system and offering us rest and life

NOW!

If you could have the choice of a petrol pump in your own backyard as opposed to a gas station down the road, which would you choose?? We are born into the Kingdom of God, not to come to church but to BE the Church. We are called not to come to a meeting but to come to Him! We don't have to wait any longer or look any further. He is here. Christ is the fullness of all in all. There is nothing greater, no revelation that will surpass this simple truth - that Christ in us is a spring welling up to eternal life.

If we will take the time to just be with Him, we will find that He really sees us, just like the woman at the well.

Joh 4:29 "Come see a man who knew all about the things I did, who knows me inside and out. Do you think this could be the Messiah?"

He knows everything we have been through, every wrong step we have taken, and yet all we feel from Him is unconditional acceptance. He knows we got this way drinking from the cisterns of men. It is time to become vessels full of the water that flows from heaven's rain, rather than containing the chlorinated piped water of the religious system. Then we will have a profound effect on the world. Look at the harvest of this one woman after just one sip of living water:

Joh 4:39 Many of the Samaritans from that village committed themselves to him because of the woman's witness: "He knew all about the things I did. He knows me inside and out!"

Joh 4:40 They asked him to stay on, so Jesus stayed two days. Joh 4:41 A lot more people entrusted their lives to him when they heard what he had to say. Joh 4:42 They said to the woman, "We're no longer taking this on your say-so. We've heard it for ourselves and know it for sure. He's the Savior of the world!"

When we are partaking of living water ourselves, it flows automatically from our lips and quenches the thirst of the waiting world. Jesus addressed this when He spoke to His disciples about what satisfied His hunger:

Joh 4:34 Jesus said, "The food that keeps me going is that I do the will of the One who sent me, finishing the work he started."

As we drink of the fountain of Life deep within, the Father reveals His will to us and when we are obedient, it brings far greater satisfaction than any temporal reward. The Church has been speaking of the great harvest that is going to happen shortly. What we don't realize is that the ripe harvest is all around us.

Joh 4:35 As you look around right now, wouldn't you say that in about four months it will be time to harvest? Well, I'm telling you to open your eyes and take a good look at what's right in front of you. These Samaritan fields are ripe. It's harvest time! Joh 4:36 "The Harvester isn't waiting. He's taking his pay, gathering in this grain that's ripe for eternal life. Now the Sower is arm in arm with the Harvester, triumphant."

Just like the woman at the well, the people we see every day in our place of work, at the shops, at school, our neighbours - all these are standing ears of grain, ready to be harvested; if only we would stop our religious ritual long enough to have a conversation with the Source of Life and allow Him to bubble up within us.

It is time to leave our lesser lovers, Church of God and embrace the Truth. All that has gone before has given us glimpses and partial understanding. We have been gazing through a mirror dimly. It is time to put our childish ways aside because the Complete has come. It is time for the Body to be joined to the Head; time for the Bride to see her Groom.

1Co 13:12 We don't yet see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We'll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he knows us!

Throw away your bucket and rope - Christ is within you. You can sit and rest at last. The seventh hour has arrived, the day of rest from our labors. We no longer need to go from watering hole to watering hole, desperately trying to slake our thirst. We don't have to swallow the intoxicating brew of seducing spirits. We don't need to go to another man to get a word from God - we have a living freshwater spring in our own inner chamber! We never have to be thirsty again. And there is enough for anyone thirsty we meet - hallelujah!

Selah