

14. Carnal life and True Worship

January 1, 2016

The vast majority of people on earth live by whatever they want to do, if they can, including a good number of born-again Christians. I can confidently say that almost 99% of the people know right from wrong. Within that group of people, those who have been exposed to Christianity to some extent, know that many things they do are against the Word of God, the Bible, for example, sex before marriage, adultery, being a drunkard, gambling, doing drugs, etc.

I'll go one step further. Amongst those who attend Christian churches somewhat regularly know what they should do and not do clearly. Yet, they make lame excuses to continue their sins in their carnal life – I am not talking about sinning here and there due to our sinful nature, rather I am talking about blatant, willful, and repeating sins. They don't denounce their sins, rather they hide them, protect them, and feed them with more enticing temptations.

Many of us make New Year's Resolutions at the beginning of each year, only to break them within 2 weeks, tops. I hope and pray that one of your and my New Year's resolutions is honoring the Lord with our holy life and true worship. And stay with this resolution throughout the year and as long as we live.

The Lord Jesus is going to teach us through His conversation with an unnamed Samaritan woman that happened at the town water well in Sychar.

A. JESUS AND HIS DIVINE APPOINTMENT

John 4:1-10 Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John 2 (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), 3 He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. 4 But He needed to go through Samaria. 5 So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. 7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." 8 For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. 9 Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. 10 Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

It was not the time to confront the Jewish religious leaders yet, so Jesus simply avoided them by heading up to the Galilee region. There were three possible routes: along the coast, across the Jordan and up through Perea, or straight through Samaria.

No orthodox Jew would ever go to Galilee through Samaria. In fact, he would do anything to avoid that area altogether, even if he had to go all the way around. The reason? Because they hated the Samaritans. They already disliked the Gentiles, but in their minds, a Samaritan was even worse, because the Samaritan was essentially a Hebrew who had intermarried with others. And so the Jews wanted nothing to do with them. The relationship between these two groups of people were like between the KKK and the Black Panther. So, you get my drift.

Why in the world did the Lord Jesus who was a Jew go through Samaria? Because He had a divine appointment with a Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar. Israel is about the same latitude as Sahuarita and Green Valley. So you can imagine how hot their summer is. Jesus and His disciples had a long journey already and it was high noon which was known as the sixth hour in their local time. He was thirsty and weary. We should have been there with a couple of cold cans of Mountain Dew for our Lord Jesus, huh?

In those days, women normally drew water at dawn or dusk – the cooler hours of the day. It was a time to visit, to exchange the newest fashions for their sandals and purses, to idle away a little time gossiping. But this woman has come to the well at noon, the heat of the day, alone. It hints at her reputation, being loose with the men. The hot noon day sun was more bearable than the cold-shoulders and stares by other women.

It was considered totally not kosher for any Jewish rabbi to speak to a strange woman in public. But our Lord could care less about the social customs for the sake of her eternal soul. “Give Me a drink” was the Lord Jesus’ way to break the ice.

In ancient times, they called spring water ‘living water’, because it seemed ‘alive’ as it bubbled up from the ground. Of course, Jesus was making a play on words with the phrase ‘living water’ because He meant the spiritual water that quenches our spiritual thirst and gives life to our dead souls. Only God’s Living Water can meet a human’s deepest need that cannot be met by anyone or anything else. It doesn’t matter with one’s age, gender, or financial, social, and educational status.

I am sure that you all remember the visitor to Jesus in chapter 3 – Nicodemus, a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews. You couldn’t find two more polar opposites in human beings than Nicodemus, the Jew of Judea, and this unnamed woman of Samaria. Totally opposite from each other. Check these out:

He was a Jew; She was a Samaritan.

He was a Pharisee; She belonged to a rival religion.

He was highly moral; The woman was immoral, as you will see pretty soon.

He had a name, Nicodemus; She’s nameless, at least we don’t know her name.

With Nicodemus, he came seeking Jesus; With this woman at the well, Jesus came seeking her in Samaria.

You’ve got Nicodemus that represents a group of people that no one is too high and too mighty and too lofty, so as to be above the need for the Gospel. The woman represents the other side of the spectrum that can’t sink too low to be noticed and wanted by Christ. People need the Lord Jesus no matter wherever they are spiritually and whoever they are physically. Without Jesus in their lives, people are dying with spiritual dehydration and they don’t even know it.

B. CONVICTION BEFORE CONVERSION

John 4:11-20 The woman said to Him, “Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? 12 Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?” 13 Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” 15

The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw." 16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." 17 The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly." 19 The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

Can you tell this Samaritan woman became rather snobbish and sarcastic, when she asked Jesus a question in v11 and 12, as well as when she responded to Him in 15? It was more of 'who-do-you-think-you-are' question to put Him in His place. But the Lord responds to her by patiently appealing to her immediate physical desire for water and greater spiritual thirst.

In v15, we find her still meandering down a dead-end path in the physical realm by missing Jesus' point entirely. Obviously, the seed of the Word from Jesus fell on shallow soil and was not going anywhere.

The only way to prepare the soil of her heart was to plow it up with conviction. That is the reason Jesus told her to go get her husband. He forced her to take a good long look at herself in a full-length spiritual mirror of God's law and to admit her own sin.

Listen, there can be no conversion without conviction. There must first be a conviction and repentance, and then, there can be saving faith in Christ.

Did you notice her answer in v17? For the first time, it was the shortest answer she made so far. Her motor mouth was shut, because her conscience was pricked. But she wouldn't stay there long, so she shifted her direction to more comfortable way, a semi-spiritual way, by evading Jesus' statement. But what she said only reveals her ignorance about the proper way of worshiping the Lord.

It is like many people who are at their wit's ends. They say, "Oh, my life is crumbling, I'd better go to church. I need religion," as if that is going to appease God enough to give them His favor. It doesn't work that way. This situation might describe one of you. Before anything else, before you put your life in order physically, you must be right with God spiritually. Don't think that He owes you anything, because He doesn't. You must come to Him with complete humility and total repentance. That is a good start.

When you come to the sense of your sin, you don't need a ritual or religion, you need Jesus Christ. Of course, it is far more comfortable to discuss religion than to face one's sins. God doesn't accept religion, but accepts our relationship with His Son Jesus. Religion is a joke and it doesn't help anyone for their eternal life.

C. WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH

John 4:21-26 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in

spirit and truth.” 25 The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.” 26 Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am He.”

The Lord God gave the ancient Jews the proper way of worship of Him in the OT laws. Anyone who violated was punished by the Lord as it happened to Aaron, the first high priest’s sons, Nadab and Abihu in the Book of Leviticus chapter 10. But in v23, Jesus tells us that we must worship Him in spirit and truth.

I strongly believe that worshiping the Lord is one of the most misunderstood elements of Christian activities. A good number of Christians believe that worshiping the Lord happens only at the church right before the sermon begins and it is not as important as the sermon.

If you believe it in that way, here is a newsflash: **YOU’RE WRONG.**

First, worshiping the Lord should happen every moment throughout our lives. We cannot and should not compartmentalize our lives – doing whatever we want outside of the church, but acting as holy Christians in the church building. Every part of our lives should be permeated with Jesus and His Word. Whatever we do in word or deed, we must do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him as the Book of Colossians says.

Second, worshiping the Lord in corporate setting, like singing worship and praise songs to the Lord is as equally important as listening to a sermon. We don’t sing a few songs so that we can allow those who come to church service late can sneak in. They should be our love songs to the Lord and preparing our hearts to hear from Him in the sermon.

And don’t measure worship good or bad according to whether your favorite songs were sung or not. Worshiping the Lord has **NOTHING** to do with us and our favorite songs. It should be all about Him. It is not about the musicians’ capabilities, though it is important, our singing voices, rather our hearts for Him.

A.W. Tozer put his finger on the pulse of the Christian worship in America:

“Worship is the missing jewel of the evangelical church. It is scarcely possible in most places to get anyone to attend a meeting where the only attraction is God. One can only conclude that God’s professed children are bored with Him.”

Did you hear that? Bored with God?!?! Heaven forbids.

I hope and pray that your thought regarding worshiping the Lord has changed to the right one. If you have enough common sense to give respect to the American Flag and the National Anthem, our God is much greater than this country and Flag. Please show all the more respect in worshiping the One who died for our dead souls so that we can have eternal life in Him in heaven.

In light of what is happening around the world right before our eyes, the Bible prophecies coming together stunningly accurate and fast. Who would have ever thought that Iran, known as Persia, and Russia which was known as Magog, which was led by Gog became allies militarily 10 years ago? And now, they are becoming the major threat to Israel just as the prophecies in the Book of Ezekiel chapter 38 and 39. Thanks to president Obama and his anti-Israel, anti-American, and anti-Christian policies, and the new entitlement generation, this once-great country is rapidly going down the drain.

I had a chance to talk with a Christian young man not very long ago. We were talking about the current events and the rapture. He told me, "Rapture shouldn't happen for at least 10 years, because I have a plan." A newsflash, young man. God doesn't work according to your schedule, rather we live according to His will.

Listen up, folks. It doesn't matter what you are planning for this year. Rapture might happen this year 2016. Are you ready to meet the Lord your Savior Jesus? Be right with Him, serve Him, and worship Him in spirit and truth.

D. APPLICATIONS

- 1) Without Jesus, the Living Water, in their lives, people are dying with spiritual dehydration and they don't even know it.
- 2) There can be no conversion without conviction. There must first be conviction and total repentance, and then, there can be saving faith in Christ.
- 3) Let's examine our hearts. Live the life of worship that pleases the Lord Jesus, not according to our own preference, but His, since it is Him Whom we worship.