

SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

May 17, 2020 • Twenty-ninth day of Paschaltide



CHRIST IS RISEN!

Canticle

This is the day of Resurrection, let us be radiant, O people: Pascha, the Lord's Pascha. For Christ our God hath passed us from death to life and from earth to heaven, we who sing the song of victory.

*Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down Death by death,
and upon those in the tombs bestowing life.*



AT EVENING PRAYER

from the Pentecostarion, at this morning's Orthros

Thou sittest near a well at the sixth hour, O Saviour, and in Thine abundant compassion Thou gavest the Samaritan woman living water and floods of knowledge. With her we all cry out in song: O ye works of the Lord, unceasingly bless ye the Lord.

from the Pentecostarion, at Vespers

Glory to Thy holy Resurrection, O Lord.

O Lord, although I desired to blot out with my tears the handwriting of my many sins, and for the rest of my life to please Thee through sincere repentance, yet doth the enemy led me astray, as he warreth against my soul with his cunning. O Lord, before I utterly perish, do Thou save me.

Glory to Thy holy Resurrection, O Lord.

As we come together on the Mid-feast between Thy Resurrection and the divine coming of Thy Holy Spirit, O Christ, we praise the mysteries of Thy wonders. Wherefore, on this day do Thou send down upon us Thy great mercy.



JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

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†407

~ from a homily on the Gospel of John ~

IN THE GOSPEL, we see that Jesus' sitting down at the well was because of weariness and because of the heat, waiting for His disciples to return. He knew, indeed, what would take place among the Samaritans, but it was not for this that He came: rather, it was necessary not to reject the woman who came to Him, when she manifested such a desire to learn. When He had come to the Jews, they drove Him away; conversely, the Gentiles, when He was proceeding in another direction, drew Him to them. The Jews were envious, but the Gentiles believed in Him. The Jews were angry with Him, but the Gentiles revered and worshiped Him. What then? Was He to overlook the salvation of so many, was he to reject such noble zeal? This would have been unworthy of His lovingkindness.

Observe how the Evangelist John declares that the woman came forth for another purpose, in every way silencing the shameless gainsaying of the Jews, that none might say that Jesus acted in opposition to His own command—bidding His disciples not to enter into any city of the Samaritans—yet conversing with Samaritans.

When the woman heard, *Give Me a drink*, she very wisely made this request of Christ an occasion for a question: *How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?* For *Jews have no dealings with Samaritans*. Perhaps someone may ask why Jesus asked her to give Him a drink of water, when the Law did not permit it. To the disciples He had said: *Do not enter into any city of the Samaritans. (Matthew 10:5)* He did not say: ‘And when they come to you, reject them’; that would have been very unworthy of His lovingkindness. And therefore, He answered the woman, saying: *If you knew the gift of God, and Who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.* First, He shows that she is worthy to be heard and not to be overlooked, and then He reveals Himself. For she, as soon as she had learned who He was, would straightway hearken and attend to Him. No one can say as much of the Jews, for when they had learned who He was, they asked nothing of Him, nor did they desire to be informed on any profitable matter, but rather insulted Him and drove Him away. But when the woman had heard these words, observe how gently she answers: *Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; where do you get that living water?* Already He has raised her from her low opinion of Him, and from deeming that He is a common man. For not without a reason does she here call Him, ‘Sir’, but rather she is assigning to Him high honor. That she spoke these words to honor Him is plain from what is said afterwards, since she did not laugh nor mock, but doubted for a while. And do not wonder at the fact that she did not at once perceive all, for neither did Nicodemus. Christ said one thing, and she imagined another, hearing nothing beyond the words, and as yet unable to form any lofty thought. Yet, had she spoken hastily, she might have said, ‘If you had that living water, you would not have asked of me, but would rather have provided for yourself. You are but a boaster.’ But she said no such thing; she answers with much gentleness, both at first and afterwards. For at first she says, *How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me?* She does not say, as though speaking to an alien and an enemy: ‘Far be it from me to give to you, who are a foe and a stranger to our nation.’

If, now, a woman of Samaria is so eager to learn something profitable, if she abides by Christ though not as yet knowing Him, what pardon shall we obtain, we who know Him—being not by a well, nor in a desert place, nor at noonday, nor beneath the scorching sun, but at morning, and beneath a roof like this cathedral, enjoying shade and comfort, yet we cannot endure to hear anything that is said, but are wearied by it. This cannot be said of the Samaritan woman. So occupied was she by Jesus’ words, that she even called others to hear Him. The Jews, to the contrary, not only did not call others to hear Him, but even hindered and impeded those who desired to come to Him, saying, *Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the Law is accursed. (John 7:48)* Let us, then, imitate this woman of Samaria; let us commune with Christ. For even now He stands in the midst of us, speaking to us by the Prophets and Disciples; let us hear and obey. How long shall we live uselessly and in vain? Because, not to do what is well-pleasing to God is to live uselessly, or rather not merely uselessly, but to our own hurt; for when we have spent the time which has been given us for no good purpose, we shall depart this life to suffer severe punishment for our unseasonable extravagance. It was not for this that God brought us into this present life and breathed into us a soul, that we should make use of the present time only; but that we should do all things with a regard to the life which is to come. Irrational things are useful only for the present life; but we have an immortal soul, that we may use every means to prepare ourselves for that other life. Our best condition is that which follows on our departure hence; and we must do all, that we may shine there, that we may join the choir of Angels, and stand before the King continually, through endless ages. And therefore, the soul is immortal, and the body shall be immortal too, that we may enjoy the never-ending blessings. But if, when heavenly things are offered you, you remain nailed to the earth, consider what an insult you offer to your Benefactor, when He holds forth to you the things that are above; and you, making no great account of them, choose earth instead. And therefore, despised by you, He threatens you with hell, that you may learn of what great blessings you deprive yourself. God grant that none make trial of that punishment, but that having been well-pleasing to Christ, we may obtain everlasting blessings, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ; to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Amen.

