

SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

In today's Gospel, we heard an interesting conversation between Jesus Christ and a Samaritan woman. The Samaritan woman was an ordinary woman. She met Jesus as an unknown traveler, who asked her for a drink. She could have turned away and went back to her city without answering, but there was no dislike or malice toward the Jews in this woman's soul.

Jesus Christ reveals her inner world with His question. He begins to dig a new well in her heart, a well of faith. He asks her for water, but what is He really doing? He gives her the living water she asks for and teaches her. The Savior spoke to the Samaritans about the living water of His teaching and the life-giving and healing grace that quenches man's spiritual thirst.

The Lord spoke to the Samaritan woman about the water of life. Water is a substance that consists of two components that only God can create and unite. One of them is hydrogen, which has no color or odor and is not visible by the eye. The other is oxygen, which is also invisible and has no color or odor. The combination of these two elements gives us rivers, seas, oceans, and water, itself, is the source of life.

What the Lord calls the water of life also consists of two elements, the Spirit and the Truth: "God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

The behavior of the Samaritan woman was far from the moral norms of the society of that time. She had been married five times, but none of these marriages had lasted very long. Later, she lived with a man outside of marriage. When the Samaritan woman appeared in public, all the other women stopped talking and each of them kept a close eye on her.

It is not possible to hide such behavior in a small settlement. Not surprisingly, local women expelled the Samaritan woman from their company. Usually, women went to the well early, before the heat of the day began, or in the evening, when the activity of the sun was waning (Gen. 24:11). In addition, local women went to the well in large groups (1 Sam. 9:11), sharing news and rumors. The fact that the Samaritan woman came to the well at noon, in the midst of the heat of the day, suggests that other "decent" women did not accept her or publicly humiliated her.

The brief mention that the Samaritan woman left her vessel seems insignificant, but if we look at it in parallel with other Gospel texts, it becomes quite important. The apostles left their fishing nets, tax collection points, and families, and immediately accepted the call to serve. Leaving everything she had, the Samaritan woman became an apostle and educator of her neighbors.

Scripture does not reveal the name of this Samaritan woman who found the Messiah. Sacred Tradition reports that her name was Photinius. Photinia is translated into Ukrainian as Svetlana - the one who carries light. And this Samaritan woman, whom the Sacred Tradition of the Church calls Svetlana, the bearer of light, brought this divine light of Christ's teaching to the Samaritan people, who were antagonistic to the Jews, and enlightened all her land with this light! And the Samaritans, who were hostile to the Jews, after communion with Christ the Savior, received in their land a representative of the Jewish people, and were so fascinated by His teachings, that they asked Christ to stay with them longer!

Dear believers! Today, the Savior's conversation with the Samaritan woman made her a devout Christian, and later a martyr.

Therefore, we ask the Lord to strengthen His great love in our hearts and to teach us to be good and zealous followers and disciples of Him.