

How to Witness (10): To Be A Witness, Be A Worshipper

Sermon April 16, 2023

Scriptures: 1 Timothy 1:12-19/a (NRSV)

Golden Verse: “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.”

(1 Timothy 1:15)

We continue to talk about this Samaritan woman, who met Jesus at the well. We don't know too much about her life and her lifestyle. We guess that she had marital issues since she already had five husbands. We don't know if they died or they left her. At that moment, she had a partner but they were not married. In Jesus' time, the rules around marriage were quite different from our rules in the 21st century. A common law situation was not accepted. But we have to understand that this woman needed a partner as well. She needed a companion, somebody to support and protect her. We guess there were more issues in her life, which is why she was hiding from the community and went to the well at noon to ensure she wouldn't meet anybody and did not have to face neglect. She must have had issues with why she felt an outcast.

Jesus was looking for her, to heal her life, providing forgiveness and love. So, Jesus started to talk to this woman. This is how He began to provide care, comfort, and healing.

This woman engaged in conversation with Jesus, and it brought her renewal.

I am so glad she did not have a North American attitude. I am often sad as I witness the coldness of our hearts and North American attitude. Often, we see that people can pass each other without noticing each other. Walking into a narrow foyer, people almost bump each other's shoulders but look forward, ignoring each other. Often, they purposely turn their heads in different directions, so they would not have eye contact and ignore each other. Why is it so difficult for some people to smile and acknowledge the other person with kindness?

I wondered how the story would continue if this woman had ignored Jesus, saying: “You are a Jew, an enemy of my people, and I won't even talk to you. I will get my water quickly, and I am gone. I don't want to meet or speak to anyone.” If she did not converse with Jesus, her life would never have changed.

I am glad she engaged in a conversation. This way, Jesus was able to talk to her and to ask questions.

This woman listened and replied.

Dear beloved, our Lord Jesus Christ wanted to talk to us in the past so many times, but maybe we have ignored Him, running after our duties. He is here again to speak to us: to you and me.

Are you listening? Are you engaging yourself in a conversation with Him? If He is asking something from you, are you answering His questions?

If Jesus asks you today to listen to Him, are you listening? If He is asking you to follow Him, what would you reply? Are you following Him, or are you following your dreams?

Once, a grandfather was working in his flower garden. His three-year-old granddaughter offered her help to him, saying: “Grandpa, you tell me what you want me to do, and I am going to do what I want to do.”

Do we act similarly? Ask God what He wants from me, and I will decide what I want to do. Lord, I want to show You that I am asking You about Your opinion because I am a good Christian. But then I will decide what I want to do.

Let me ask you again: Do you give a chance for God to talk to you?

Secondly: This woman was carrying her past with her constantly.

Her past actions placed an almost unbearable weight and shame on her and isolated her from the community. But Jesus Christ came to meet her to help her to reorganize her life to be free from the past and to enjoy her life with a pure and cleansed heart.

Jesus did not come to make her heavy spirit’s load heavier but to lift the heavy load of her conscience and free her from the past.

Jesus exposed this woman’s past. He gently lifted the veil of her hidden life which covered her. Jesus doesn’t drag us down, and He doesn’t shame us, but the past must be clarified.

Jesus often holds a mirror to us when we do something wrong, not to humiliate us but to remind us of what we did and what we have to correct before is too late.

Later the woman said: “He told me everything I did.” **Why does Jesus have to remind us when we are wrong?** Because we don’t even know when we are

wrong or what we have done. Or because we want to wipe our mistakes under the carpet, into the subconscious, and we don't want to remember those.

There was a person, who said: Before I met Jesus, I liked to cover my mistakes with nice, colourful stories. Now I realized: I was lying.

The truth must be told. Jesus gently helps us to speak the truth, to see it, to recognize it, to admit it, to say it. We are here before Him, so let's say to Jesus: Lord, this is who I am. Sometimes I hate myself too. So, what happens now?

What happened there at the well? While Jesus lifted the veil from her with one hand, **He** already **offered the gift of forgiveness with the other**. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

In the past, we all made smaller or bigger mistakes, which might still hurt us when we recall them. Today, Jesus Christ is here, giving us a new opportunity to bring those to Him so that He can provide us with forgiveness and free us from our bad conscious and the results of our bad decisions.

Jesus told her: I know your situation, I know your past, I know your actions, I know everything about your bad decisions, I see how you feel about your past. There is nothing to hide because I am not here to make your heavy load, your heavy conscience heavier, but I am here to forgive you, and asking you to forgive yourself and start something new.

This is what the Lord Jesus is saying to all of us today: I love you, and I am here to forgive you today, and I am asking you to forgive yourself as well. Be free, be renewed, and be happy.

I died for you on the cross to pay for all your mistakes, to wash you, and to make you whiter than snow. Because I died for you, you are so innocent, like a newborn. It is so simple to be cleansed, free from the past, and enjoy the happiness of being saved. It is very awesome to talk to Him and receive His forgiveness and love.

Let us give Jesus thanks now for fully forgiving, saving, and cleansing us. Because of Jesus' love, we are forgiven, and nothing condemns us from now.

I want to give you quick homework, which we can accomplish here and now. I will provide you with a pen, and please write on your left-hand fingers, starting with your thumbs. **THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD**. Remember this every time you do anything with your hands. Amen