


JOHN 4:25, 26

JESUS, THE GREAT “I AM”: I AM HE

“The woman [at the well] said to [Jesus], ‘I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ). When He comes, He will tell us all things.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am He.’”¹

od appointed Moses to deliver His people from bondage. Not surprisingly, Moses was reluctant to accept the daunting task of facing the sole superpower of the day by himself. Moreover, the reluctant leader expressed grave concern that the Hebrew slaves to whom he was sent would accept him as God’s appointed spokesman. Therefore, he questioned the Lord God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is His Name?’ what shall I say to them” [EXODUS 3:13]?

It was not an illegitimate question, for it would naturally be expected that Moses would know something about the God whom he claimed had appointed Him. The people had lived without witnessing the Lord’s might for over 400 years. The LORD responded to Moses fears by revealing His Name, “I AM WHO I AM.” God expanded on this response by commanding Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you’ [EXODUS 3:14].

God continued by instructing Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is My Name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations” [EXODUS 3:15]. It is a convention in English that “The LORD,” when spelled with capital letters, represents the Divine Name, YHWH, which is here connected with the Hebrew verb *hayah*, “to be,” in verse fourteen. In effect, the True and Living God identifies Himself by His existence. He is the self-existent One. It is enough to say, “God is.”

Thus it was that in the days of His flesh when Jesus walked among men, whenever a Jew would hear a reference to “I AM,” he would understand that the reference was to the Living God. In light of this knowledge, it is amazing to discover the number of times Jesus referred to Himself as the Great “I AM,” especially in the Gospel of John. During the course of the coming year, occasionally as we prepare to observe the ordinance of the Lord’s Table, I propose to look at Jesus, the Great “I Am,” in a fresh light. Through studying the accounts provided by the John, we will endeavour to discover a fuller understanding of Jesus according to His own estimate. Today, we want to look at the first reference the Master made to Himself as the Great “I Am.”

In order to fulfil the proposed study for this day, we will need to review the full account of the record of Jesus’ encounter with the woman at the well. She was an outcast, but because she met the Living Saviour her life was transformed and she became a powerful and effective evangelists. Oh, that each of us were as successful in introducing friends, family and neighbours to life in the Master!

It is a healthy thing for the people of God to renew their understanding of Jesus’ nature. We become so engrossed in the daily routine associated with life in this world, that we sometimes forget Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. This day, my desire is to focus our attention, if only for a short while, on the Master, recalling who He is and remembering what He is able to do. It is my purpose to encourage us, especially as we worship Him on this day.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from **The Holy Bible, English Standard Version**, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

GOD, WHO OFFERS REFRESHMENT — “A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give me a drink.’ (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?’ (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, ‘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.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water’” [JOHN 4:7-15].

The account begins in a straightforward fashion with John recounting an incident that was rife with the potential for conflict. Jesus did not shy from confrontation, but He did not deliberately seek out such confrontation. John had been thrown into prison, and the Pharisees received a report that Jesus was gaining more disciples than John, which necessitated in their mind the need to examine His credentials. Their actions could only lead to conflict, and the Master was not yet ready for that confrontation. Conflict would come soon enough. Therefore, he led the disciples northward, away from Jerusalem.

I don’t want to leave the impression that Jesus’ move northward was mere expediency; He had a divinely appointed schedule, and He could not jeopardise the appointment toward which He purposefully moved. His journey would require either that he go west, across the Jordan to avoid Samaria, or that He move directly through the region of Samaria. Jews avoided the Samaritans, considering them to be lesser beings with a mongrel religion.

The creation of the Samaritan religion began centuries before Jesus’ ministry in Judeah. The Assyrians employed a policy of resettling conquered populations. This ensured that conquered nations would remain compliant so they would be incapable of mounting a revolt against the conquerors. When the northern kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrians in 722 B.C., the populace was deported and the land was resettled with settlers from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim [see 2 KINGS 17:24]. Those whom the Assyrians placed in Samaria did not worship the LORD God, and thus we read that “the LORD sent lions among them, which killed some of them” [2 KINGS 17:25]. The Judean lions certainly got their attention!

When the King of Assyria was notified of the problem of the lions, he commanded, “Send there one of the priests whom you carried away from there, and let him go and dwell there and teach them the law of the god of the land” [2 KINGS 17:27]. His theology of multiple gods over the differing nations led him to view the lions as a religious problem. In his mind, all that was needed was for a religious leader who knew what the gods of the local territory demanded.

When the priest arrived in Bethel, he taught the people how they should worship the LORD [1 KINGS 17:28]. However, the people did not forsake their previous practises. Rather, we read, “But every nation still made gods of its own and put them in the shrines of the high places that the Samaritans had made, every nation in the cities in which they lived. The men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, the men of Cuth made Nergal, the men of Hamath made Ashima, and the Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartak; and the Sepharvites burned their children in the fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.”

What is especially tragic is the commentary that follows. “They also feared the LORD and appointed from among themselves all sorts of people as priests of the high places, who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places. So they feared the LORD but also served their own gods, after the manner of the nations from among whom they had been carried away.

“To this day they do according to the former manner. They do not fear the LORD, and they do not follow the statutes or the rules or the law or the commandment that the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel” [1 KINGS 17:29-34].

What developed was a syncretic religion designed to placate the LORD without rejecting the old practises. It is not unlike modern efforts to synthesise religion that permits same-sex marriage and worship of God, or that condones murder of the unborn while assuaging the soul through seeking the God of life. This misbegotten, adulterated religion was obnoxious and odious to observant Jews. It was neither fish nor fowl, pig nor pup—though carrying some of the trappings of worship accepted by the Living God, it commingled truth with error to produce a religion which though soothing feelings of guilt did nothing to address mankind’s root problem. Understanding the genesis of the Samaritan religion, you have some understanding of the horror in the mind of observant Jews whenever they encountered Samaritans. Time had done nothing to nudge the religious practise of the Samaritans toward the truth.

When this woman came to the well, it is quite likely that she had passed the disciples as they made their way toward town. It is possible that only moments before she arrived at the well she had even received a taste of Jewish hostility toward Samaritans. At this stage of their lives, it is doubtful that Peter or the others would have moved off the path for a woman—especially a Samaritan woman. It is even possible that she had been shoved aside as the body of Galileans had marched pass. If this is the case, we can readily understand her terseness toward the Master.

Arriving at the well, the woman was startled to hear Jesus ask her for a drink. This woman had not come earlier when the other women of the village would have met at the well. Water was required for the household chores; therefore, the women of the village would gather at the well early in the morning to draw water. This also permitted opportunity to visit for a brief while before their busy days began; but it was now about noon. This woman came alone. It was obvious that she either avoided the other women or was unwelcome by them; otherwise, she would have been there much earlier to permit her to visit with the other women of the village.

When Jesus asked for a drink, the woman tartly responded to the polite request, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria” [JOHN 4:9]. She touched on two points that should have excluded Jesus speaking with her—she was a Samaritan, and she was a woman. I have no reason to doubt that her tone was acrid when she responded to His request.

However, the Master did not respond to her provocative tone, turning His request rather to a subject that was of far greater importance to Him and of infinite value for her. “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” [JOHN 4:10]. After a rejoinder from the woman, Jesus would continue by noting, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” [JOHN 4:13, 14].

The woman, not fully understanding what Jesus offered, requested that He give her this water. “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water” [JOHN 4:15]. It seemed a boon to her, and if she would never again thirst and never again need to come to the well, it was a gift more precious than anything she might otherwise imagine. She was earthly and not spiritual, but I wonder if we would have responded any better than she did.

You and I know, because we have read the account, that Jesus was offering something other than water that is commonly drunk by thirsty people. He was offering the Water of Life. Had she been even casually familiar with the Scriptures, she would have known of the refreshment God offers His people, and how He often refers to that refreshing as though it were water. Isaiah wrote, “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation” [ISAIAH 12:3], anticipating the words Jesus would speak to this woman, and offer to all mankind. The water which the Son of God offers “will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

Later, God promises,

“I will pour water on the thirsty ground,
and streams on the dry ground.”

[ISAIAH 44:3]

He makes it clear that He is speaking of His Spirit that would be poured out on His people. David spoke of His desire for God in these terms,

“As a deer pants for flowing streams,
so pants my soul for you, O God.”

[PSALM 42:1]

Isaiah also declares,

“Come, everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters;
and he who has no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.”

[ISAIAH 55:1]

God promises a river of life flowing out from God’s presence in Jerusalem on several occasions in the writings of both Ezekiel² and Zechariah³. These promises anticipate the words John penned in REVELATION 7:17.

“The Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd,
and He will guide them to springs of living water,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

It isn’t simply that Jesus presents Himself as the Lord God who satisfies human longing, but He said that anyone drinking the water He offered would become a spiritual artesian spring, welling up and spilling over to refresh others. Jesus is offering nothing less than the transformation of believers to become people who constantly energise and rejuvenate others through refreshing their souls. He is not offering a well, filled with water than merely sits there, but He is saying that His people will be a spring that flows unabated to refresh others.

² EZEKIEL 47:1-12

³ ZECHARIAH 13:1; 14:8

He also informed this woman that this spring will never be stopped, even should we try to shovel dirt over it. The spring will continue to flow freely, bringing joy to all who drink from the refreshing coolness of the spring. The Spirit who dwells within the life of the believer bubbles up and spills over the lips ensuring that those in whom this refreshing spring is found become a source of constant joy to many others. This is God, who refreshes me.

GOD, WHO KNOWS ME — “Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come here.’ The woman answered him, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You are right in saying, “I have no husband”; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth’” [JOHN 4:16-24].

Nothing in the exchange between Jesus and the woman at this point indicates that He had breached her defences. She had likely never known anything but scorn from a Jew, and she was obviously surprised that a Jew would speak to her, much less ask her for a drink. It is also true that Jesus had aroused her curiosity by offering “living water” that would well up in a continuous spring of joyous refreshment. However, there is nothing in the conversation to make us suppose that this was anything more than an amusing diversion for this woman. I can almost imagine her continuing to lower her jar into the well to draw some water, until Jesus jolted her with a single sentence. Jesus commanded her, “Go, call your husband, and come here” [JOHN 4:16]. Suddenly, with this one command, the woman was brought face-to-face with the major failure of her life.

“I have no husband,” she blurted. I get the impression she didn’t want to go there. From her perspective, the sooner this line of inquiry was concluded, the better. However, Jesus refused to be put off so easily. He said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband” [JOHN 4:17, 18].

Her pretensions stopped at this point. From this point on, though she would weakly attempt to change the subject, she knew that her life was an open book before this man. He knew her, and yet He didn’t condemn her. He simply stated the facts. Her thoughts and even her life were as an open book before Him. Long before the writer of the Letter to Hebrew Christians wrote, this woman learned the reality of the blunt statement, “All are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” [HEBREWS 4:13].

Like many within contemporary society, this Samaritan woman was guilty of serial adultery. She had entered into a series of marriages—perhaps marriages of convenience, always exchanging her body for security or for momentary companionship. She had no respect within the community, and though she could act as if she didn’t care that others disdained her, she was nevertheless hurt by the rejection of the other women. She didn’t have friends; she was lonely, and even the men that used her body didn’t really care for her in the final analysis.

What must have been stunning in her mind was that this man speaking to her knew who she was and still chose not only to speak to her, but He spoke civilly. He treated her with respect, yet without condoning the choices she had made—and He obviously knew the details of her life! The thought that He knew her and didn’t immediately reject her caught her attention.

What I find fascinating in this is that God knows each of us. He knows me; He knows you. He knows our sinful nature, and still He reaches out to us, willing to receive us just as we are. The one universal trait that we each share is sin. Paul writes that everything has been imprisoned under sin [GALATIANS 3:22]. Solomon declared a dark, though necessary truth when he declared before God, "There is no one who does not sin" [1 KINGS 8:46]. The Psalmist is adamant in affirming that "No one living is righteous before [God]" [PSALM 143:2]. In one of the greatest confessional passages in the Word of God, Isaiah writes:

"All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all."

[ISAIAH 53:6]

God knows the heart; He knows the condition of each one of us. Knowing our rebellion, knowing the evil that seems at times to overwhelm us, He nevertheless sent His Son as a sacrifice for our sin. Jesus has provided atonement for us. This is the basis for what is written: "While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly." And again, "God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" [ROMANS 5:6, 8]. One of the most exciting passages of the Word of God is that which is found in 2 CORINTHIANS 5:21, "For our sake [God] made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God."

This is a vital point that no one must miss: God knows us—He knows our flaws and our weaknesses, our rebellion against grace and every sin we have committed, and yet He sent His Son to redeem us and to save us from destruction. This is mercy. This is grace. This is God who knows me. God accepts us in our sin, but God will never leave us in our sin.

Moreover, this One who spoke to the woman invited her to worship the True and Living God, worshipping in spirit and in truth. Jesus said that the Father seeks those who will worship in spirit and in truth. He didn't say that they must worship in "the Spirit," for He was not referring to the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that man must offer spiritual worship.

Man is a tripartite being, consisting of body, soul and spirit. I believe it is fair to say that most people attempt to worship with their bodies. This means that if they have performed a particular liturgy, recited a particular prayer, performed a specified act, they imagine they have worshipped. However, worship consists of so much more than performance of a duty—sitting in a particular place, singing a beloved hymn or reciting a prayer. It is not that familiar liturgies are illicit, but they are not worship. Though they may be vehicles for worship, they are not worship.

Likewise, we must not confuse worship with a particular feeling. Many people imagine they have worshipped because their emotions were stirred—tears filled their eyes or joy filled their hearts. It is possible to be moved by a song or to be challenged by oratory and yet not come to an awareness of God and His presence. Soul worship—worshipping to stir the emotions—without meeting the Living God is unsatisfying and ultimately futile!

True worship occurs when the spirit—that portion of our being that was created to commune with God—meets God, and engages with Him in praise for His love, for His wisdom, for His grace, for His power, for His mercy. True worship is when the spirit, the immortal and invisible part of an individual, speaks to and meets with God, who is immortal and invisible.

GOD, WHO TRANSFORMS MY LIFE — “Just then his disciples came back. They marvelled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, ‘What do you seek?’ or, ‘Why are you talking with her?’ So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, ‘Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?’ They went out of the town and were coming to him.

“Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, ‘Rabbi, eat.’ But he said to them, ‘I have food to eat that you do not know about.’ So the disciples said to one another, ‘Has anyone brought him something to eat?’ Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. Do you not say, “There are yet four months, then comes the harvest”? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, “One sows and another reaps.” I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.’

“Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, ‘He told me all that I ever did.’ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, ‘It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world’” [JOHN 4:27-42].

A moment ago, I said that while God receives us in our sin, He never leaves us in our sin. The woman who met Jesus at the well was forever changed by her “chance” encounter. She had previously thought that religion was a mere activity, something one did to placate a distant, disinterested god. However, she met the Anointed One, God’s Messiah, and discovered that God was not a deity that is manipulated by what we do; but rather she discovered that God is spirit, and therefore, if we will know Him we must worship in spirit and in truth. Having met the Living Saviour, this woman could not wait to tell the man with whom she was then living—and every other person whom she might meet in the town on that day. Her life was transformed.

There were many religious people in that day. They said prayers, but they did not pray. They fulfilled religious duties, but they did not worship. They read the Scriptures, but they were unmoved by what they read. They knew there was a god, but they did not know God. They were icily precise in their conduct, but their heart was unchanged. That same condition continues to infect contemporary churches as religious people place their trust in their church, in their denomination, in their creed, in anything except the grace and the mercy of the Living God.

This Samaritan woman demonstrates a great truth through the transformation of her life. I don’t know that I can say there are more untransformed people on the church rolls than ever before, but I do know that it is not uncommon to witness in our world people who are religious, but lost. They perform all the duties they imagine a Christian must perform, but their lives fail to reflect the presence of God’s Spirit. They continue as they have always lived.

The Apostle has clearly said, “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God” [1 CORINTHIANS 6:9, 10]. These words anticipate some sobering words that John wrote, “If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practise the truth” [1 JOHN 1:5]. John also assured readers, “By this we may know that we are in Him: whoever says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked” [1 JOHN 2:5b, 6].

While it is true that a Christian may fall into sin, no Christian will ever be comfortable in living a life of sin. Perhaps a Christian will get drunk, but there are no "Christian" drunks. Perhaps a Christian will succumb to temptation, proving himself immoral, but there are no "Christian" homosexuals, no "Christian" prostitutes, no "Christian" swindlers, no "Christian" idolaters. Likewise, greed and gluttony, dishonesty and disharmony are not simply incongruous with the Faith, they are incompatible with the new life we have in Christ the Lord. It is impossible for one who has been born from above to continue unchanged from what he or she was before salvation. The child of God has received a new spirit, the soul is saved and she now has a relationship with the Living God.

Some actions and attitudes reveal an unchanged spirit, and it does not matter what one claims, some actions demonstrate a spirit that is dead. This is the reason the Word of God warns, "The works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" [GALATIANS 5:19-21].

Likewise, we are warned, "Sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience" [EPHESIANS 5:3-6].

I am not saying that a Christian will never do any of these wicked deeds, but they will not make a practise of living in such a way that these dark deeds define their lives. The child of God cannot practise sin with impunity; he knows his Father will not permit him to continue without correction of the sinful action or attitude. The child of God will have little appetite for continuing in sin once they have met the Son of God.

Remember Jesus' concluding instruction to the woman taken in adultery. When He asked where her accusers were, the woman responded that there were none. Now, take specific note of what Jesus said next, "Neither do I condemn you." Many attempt to stop reading there, but we must see that Jesus also warned her, "Go, and from now on sin no more" [JOHN 8:10, 11]. Indeed, the Master does not condemn those who repent, but neither will He permit them to continue living in the sin which once ruled their life. You will be changed when you have come to the Master, and you will no longer be the person you once were. You will henceforth bear the mark of heavenly royalty on your life because of the presence of God's Spirit.

It is wonderful to know that the presence of Christ the Lord changes the child of God. Though Paul inveighed against a variety of awful sins, he could also say of those to whom he wrote, "And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" [1 CORINTHIANS 6:11]. And though he would categorise a daunting list of the works of the flesh, he was able to follow that dark list with a far different category. He identified the "fruit of the Spirit" as consisting of "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, [and] self-control" [GALATIANS 5:22, 23]. He also noted that "those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" [GALATIANS 5:24]. Thus, he would urge believers to "be imitators of God, as beloved children," and to "walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" [EPHESIANS 5:1, 2].

Though we live in a day in which multiplied churches appear content to declare a message that demands little and offers much to those who would be saved, the Word of God is very clear in teaching that when we are born from above and into the Kingdom of God we will bear His divine image. We will not continue as we were; rather, His redeemed people are transformed. The process of changing into the image of God’s Son begins now.

We will do well to refresh our memories of the words John wrote to believers so many years ago. “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

“Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother” [1 JOHN 3:1-10].

The Samaritan woman was transformed, and she demonstrated her transformed life by inviting all whom she met to come meet the man who told her everything she ever did. Just so, we will reflect the joy of Christ’s presence once we have met Him. We will no longer be able to acquiesce silently to evil when the Spirit of Holiness dwells within our life. We will no longer be content to remain mute while our loved ones and friends stumble into eternity without receiving the redeeming grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Are you saved? Have you met the Living Son of God? Do you bear the imprimatur of Heaven on your life? God offers eternal life—a new quality of life—in Christ Jesus the Lord. Though “the wages of sin is death,” “the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” [ROMANS 6:23].

I love Eugene Peterson’s treatment of Paul’s words to Roman Christians. “Say the welcoming word to God—‘Jesus is my Master’—embracing, body and soul, God’s work of doing in us what he did in raising Jesus from the dead. That’s it. You’re not ‘doing’ anything; you’re simply calling out to God, trusting him to do it for you. That’s salvation. With your whole being you embrace God setting things right, and then you say it, right out loud: ‘God has set everything right between him and me!’

“Scripture reassures us, ‘No one who trusts God like this—heart and soul—will ever regret it.’ It’s exactly the same no matter what a person’s religious background may be: the same God for all of us, acting the same incredibly generous way to everyone who calls out for help. ‘Everyone who calls, “Help, God!” gets help’” [ROMANS 10:9-13].⁴

I pray you are a Christian. I pray that you are changed by the presence of the Son of God. This is our message, and this is the hope that is promised to all who will receive Him. Have you met Him? Amen.

⁴ Eugene H. Peterson, **The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language** (NavPress, Colorado Springs, CO 2002)