

Sunday School Lesson

January 26, 1947

A. D. Cann

JESUS CROSSES RACIAL BARRIERS

Lesson: John 4:4-10; 27-30; 39-42

Golden Text: Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst. John 4:14

Today's lesson is an example of successful personal evangelism. It also includes the teaching which Jesus uttered concerning his ability to supply the living water. This water is for all, regardless of race.

I. JESUS THE PERSONAL WORKER:

"And he must needs go through Samaria." Jews as a rule did not pass through Samaria on their way from Judea to Galilee. The reason for evading this intersection of country was because of the ill feeling between the two countries. This feeling was deep seated, originating many years before. Jesus did not avoid this pathway of duty, even though it appeared more difficult than other ways, that he might have chosen. If Jesus wants us to go through the Samaria of hard feeling and trouble, let us not shrink but prove that the path of difficulty is the path of blessing. When Jesus arrived at the well he was weary in his journey, but not weary of his journey. One has said that if as much muscular energy was expended by a man in sawing wood as in climbing rocks, wading streams after fish and game, he would faint dead away. Though Jesus was weary, his body and spirit was refreshed in ministering to a hungry soul. There was deep prejudice among the Jews against women, so great that a man seldom held conversation with a woman. It was a surprise, both to the woman and the disciples that Jesus would talk to her. Thus we notice at least three barriers that Jesus overcame in order to bring spiritual life to this woman.

II. JESUS THE WATER OF LIFE:

Like running water, the water that Jesus gives is (1) Life-giving, and life-sustaining. To appreciate this expression we should know something of the country in Palestine which for a great part of the year is parched and dry, then suddenly bursts into bloom with the descent of the early and latter rains. This woman knew something of this renewing power and could make the spiritual application. (2) Abundant. Spiritual blessings are not rationed. There are often shortages of spring water, but not of this "living water." It is a well within the believer that never fails. Jesus speaks of the fulness of the Spirit as rivers of water. "He that believeth on me as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Wells are local and at best only serve a local need; while rivers cannot be confined to any one locality, but serve and bless nations. Having an inner well is good but an inner river alone can meet the need of the world. (3) Satisfying. There are properties in water which satisfy one's thirst. Likewise does this living water satisfy the thirst of the soul.

III. JESUS THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD:

"Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." Immediately this woman believes on Christ she goes and tells others, thus proving her faith by her evangelistic zeal. The disciples thought the Samaritians unripe for the gospel, but Christ showed they were ready for the richest blessings. There are others that are ripe for the gospel and let us not fail in gathering a harvest. Jesus Christ is the Saviour of all—the rich—the poor—the high—the low—big sinners—little sinners—if any can be said to be little sinners.

QUESTIONS AND PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

1. Three barriers which might have prevented the Samaritan woman from receiving salvation were (1) Ill feeling between Jews and Samaritans. (2) Weariness of Jesus. (3) Prejudice against women. How did Jesus overcome these barriers?

2. What are some properties of this "living water." Show the advantages and necessity of the fulness of the Spirit.

3. The best way to learn the art of soul winning is through practise. Let's begin today.

February 2, 1947

JESUS THE GIVER OF LIFE

Lesson: John 4:46-51; 5:2-9; 11-13

Golden Text: "I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." John II:25

Our lesson contains a record of Jesus giving renewed physical life to the sick and even to the dead.

I. JESUS HEALS THE NOBLEMAN'S SON:

This took place in Cana of Galilee where Jesus had turned the water into wine. The greater part of Jesus' ministry was in Galilee, which was due no doubt to the fact that the people there were more susceptible to the gospel. Notice (1) The nobleman's distress. His son was about to die and how terribly he felt. In seeking healing from Jesus he did not plead that the boy was good or that he was of noble birth, but his extremity was the reason for his persistence. If he is not healed there will be a funeral in the home. Let us at least be equally persistent for the salvation of those who are dead in trespasses and in sin. (2) The nobleman's faith. "Then said Jesus unto him: Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." "It would appear that Jesus here is testing the sincerity of the applicant; not for any information that he might gain, but that this nobleman might discover what is in his own heart. Jesus wanted people to believe his word, to believe in him and to be saved from all sin. Faith, or believing is the battle ground of the christian and of the church. This man was extremely conscious of sickness in his home, but not so conscious of sin. He had faith for healing of the body, but Jesus wanted him to also have faith for the healing of his soul. "Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way, thy son liveth and the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him." The man obeyed, consequently he believed, even though Jesus did not go with him. (3) The nobleman rewarded. This man had faith in the deity of Jesus, faith in his teachings, faith in his miracles and on the basis of this obedience and faith he was able to trust in Jesus as his Saviour.

II. THE IMPOTENT MAN HEALED:

"Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me." The man whom Jesus addressed had been sick with paralysis for 38 years. Perhaps the reason Jesus picked him out of the crowd was because he was the greatest sufferer. Man's extremity is often God's opportunity. The impotent man's answer would indicate that the others were more or less selfish—also that he was poor or he could have had hired help. Furthermore the man was grateful for later he is found in the temple evidently giving praise to God for the mercy performed. Notice the words of Jesus in the temple: "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." This clearly implies that the man's sin was the cause of his paralysis, while all sickness is not caused by our immediate sins, as in the case of Job; yet all disease can be finally traced to a common source — disobedience.

God will forgive and God will forget providing there is a confession, repentance and a making wrongs right up to the measure of our ability. Nature, however, seldom forgives us of our sins. A body that has been dissipated by sensuality or by strong drink will almost invariably bear the marks to the grave. Let us by the grace of God be kept from these evils rather than be forgiven of them. "Sin no more" is the minimum standard of salvation.

QUESTIONS AND PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

1. Why did not Jesus go with the nobleman when he was requested so urgently to do so?

2. Distinguish between miracle working faith and faith for salvation, which do you think more important?

3. Why is it better to be kept from certain sins than to be forgiven of them? Why do you think Jesus told the man to take up his bed?

KEEP YOUR TICKET UNTIL THE JOURNEY'S END

Travelling in a crowded bus the other day I came across the following notice painted inside the vehicle big enough to be read by everyone: "Keep your ticket until the journey's end." People have been careless in keeping the ticket which they receive on payment of fare, but now there is an inspector calling at various intervals and examining tickets, so the bus people have asked their patrons to stick to the ticket.

I was reminded of another journey. If St. Paul were here today we would hear him saying: "Keep the faith." There are so many things in the world today to draw people away from God — pleasures and worldly allurements. I recently heard of a man who was at one time a very sincere Christian, devoted and earnest, but now his present position and greater influence in high places and other attachments have made him cold towards religion.

If at our journey's end we mean to meet our Saviour we must "keep the ticket" or in the words of Paul "keep the faith."

Travelling on the railway so often I have been surprised at the attention paid by officials to tickets. There is the danger of people travelling without tickets and thereby deceiving the authorities.

There are so many people today who in relation to spiritual matters are travelling "on the train" but possessing no ticket. They cannot hope to reach the journey's end. St. Paul had before him his goal—his journey's end—and he pressed towards it. He had a ticket — he kept the faith — and he pressed towards the mark of his high calling!

What is it that hinders thee, brother, sister? Come to the Lord and ask Him to help you to throw it aside!

At the journey's end there is to be a Crown—a Crown of Life—an abundant entrance into the Kingdom! Are you going to miss it? If you mean to get there then "Keep the ticket" or "Keep the faith!"—Sel.

WEDDINGS

Ratray-Hanson

At the home of Mr. and Mrs. George M. Ratray, of River de Chute, Pauline Fern Hanson, of Rowena, N. B., became the bride of Charles Gordon Ratray. Rev. M. M. Grant officiated.