

John 4:23-42 (4B)

²³“But there is coming an hour, and now is, when the true worshippers shall do reverence to the Father in spirit and truth; for also the Father seeks such as those who revere Him. ²⁴“God is Spirit, and it is needful for those who revere Him to do reverence in spirit and truth.”

1. God is Spirit – “Saint Gregory Palamas: Therefore, those who thus do reverence the supreme Father in spirit and truth are the true worshippers... they truly see Him everywhere in His Spirit and Truth. Since God is spirit, He is not composed of matter, but the immaterial is not situated in place, nor limited by spatial boundaries. As immaterial, God is nowhere; as God, He is everywhere....He is boundless....Because He sustains and encompasses the universe, He is in Himself both everywhere and also beyond the universe.”
2. Bp. Gerasimos: “Only Christ prayed in Spirit and Truth because He is the Truth and the way toward the true God. We worship God in Spirit and in Truth only in Christ, because now we are united with Christ in the Holy Spirit and we constitute the body of Christ, the Church.”

St. Basil: “...by truth, He clearly meant Himself...it is impossible to for you to recognize Christ, the image of the invisible God, unless the Spirit enlightens you.”

²⁵The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming, the *One* Who is called Christ. Whenever that One should come, He will announce to us all things.” ²⁶Jesus said to her, “I am, the *One* Who speaks to you.”

1. The Divine Name of God given to Moses is “I Am” (Exodus 3:14). It is repeated by Christ in 6:35 (I am the bread of Life), 8:58 (Before Abraham was, I Am), and 11:25 (I am the Resurrection).
2. Jesus clearly reveals Himself as the expected Messiah

Ephrem the Syrian: “She first saw him as someone thirsting; and then as a Jew; then as a Prophet, and after that as God. As someone thirsting she persuaded him; as a Jew, she recoiled from him, as a learned one, she interrogated him, as a Prophet she was reprimanded, and as the Messiah, she worshiped him.”

²⁷And upon this came His disciples, and they wondered that He was speaking with a woman; nevertheless no one said, “What do You seek?” or “Why do You speak with her?” ²⁸The woman then left her waterpot, and went away into the city, and said to the people, ²⁹“Come, see a Man Who told me all things whatsoever I did. This One is not the Christ, is He?” ³⁰Then they went forth out of the city and were going toward Him.

Bp. Gerasimos: “She ran to share with her compatriots the joyful announcement: *I have found a treasure!* She wanted to prepare them also to accept the Christ. She is no longer the shy despised one. She is an Apostle! What a tremendous change comes about when we find something good in our life!”

Origen: “So must we, too, therefore, forgetting things that are more material in nature (she left her waterpot) and leaving them behind, be eager to impart to others the benefit of which we have been partakers.”

Origen: “We learn that He is meek and lowly of heart and does not disdain to speak of such great matters with a woman carrying water who goes out of the city because of her great poverty and labors to draw water for herself.”

³¹But in the meantime the disciples were entreating Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” ³²But He said to them, “I have food to eat which you know not.” ³³Therefore the disciples were saying to one another, “No one brought Him *anything* to eat, did he?” ³⁴Jesus said to them, “My food is that I be doing the will of *Him* Who sent Me, and *that* I should finish His work.

Theodore of Mopsuestia: “What is this work? It is the conversion of the human race.”

The Food of an Orthodox community:

Food keeps a person alive, by doing the will of the Father we participate in true Life, life in Christ who is completely in obedience to the will of his Father.

³⁵“Do ye not say, ‘It is yet a space of four months, and the harvest comes’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and see the fields, for they are white already to harvest. ³⁶“And the *one* who reaps receives a reward, and gathers fruit to life eternal, that both the *one* who sows and the *one* who reaps may rejoice together. ³⁷“For in this the saying is true, ‘There is one who sows and another who reaps.’ ³⁸“I sent you forth to reap on what you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”

Teaching on Discipleship

- Sower is Christ, the Holy Spirit gives the growth but we are responsible for the soil.

Chrysostom: “I, therefore, have reserved for you what involves less work and greater pleasure, that is harvesting instead of sowing, because there is a lot more hardship and work involved in sowing. At the harvest, the return is large and the labor is not great. In fact, it is quite easy.”

Q. What happened (what was sowed) in our lives that prepared the “soil” of our hearts to receive the Word of God and/or convert or rededicate ourselves to the Orthodox faith?

³⁹And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him, because of the utterance of the woman testifying, “He told me all things whatsoever I did.” ⁴⁰Therefore, when the Samaritans came to Him, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. ⁴¹And many more believed because of His word. ⁴²And to the woman they were saying, “We no longer believe because of your talk; for we ourselves have heard, and we know that this One is truly the Savior of the world, the Christ.”

Bp. Gerasimos: “...this is the purpose of John: to lead each person to approach Christ personally, to listen to Christ Himself. Only with personal experience do we come to know Christ and what He can do for us. Then we can speak to others and to confess that He is truly the Savior of the world, the Christ...This confession (of the Samaritans) pre-figures the universal proclamation of the Gospel.”

St. Photini, the Samaritan Woman: March 20

At Pentecost Saint Photini received baptism, along with her five sisters, Anatole, Photo, Photis, Paraskeve, Kyriake, and her two sons, Photeinos and Joseph. She then began a missionary career, traveling far and wide, preaching the good news of the Messiah's coming, She is sometimes claimed as the first to proclaim the Gospel of Christ. After the Apostles Paul and Peter were martyred, St. Photine and her family left their homeland of Sychar, in Samaria, to travel to Carthage to proclaim the Gospel of Christ there. In 66 AD, under the persecutions of Emperor Nero, they all achieved the crown of martyrdom, along with the Duke St. Sebastianos, the close friend of St. Photinos.