

## **"I THIRST"**

### **An Invitation to Love**

Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." The Samaritan woman said, "What! You a Jew, ask a drink of me, a Samaritan woman?" (Jews and Samaritans, it should be noted, do not use vessels in common.) Jesus answered her, "If only you knew what God gives, and who it is that is asking you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." (John 4:9-10) NEB

Jesus asks for a simple service to Himself in order that He may give in return a gift that nothing on this earth can buy, "Give me a drink." And do you know what? She didn't! Scripture records the conversation, and then simply says that she put her water jar down and ran to town to start a revival. Perhaps we can see that the pattern of God seems to remain the same, and all too often our response is the same too. The pattern is that God initiates, invites us to serve Him with love for Him with what we have in hand, and our response is often to run off and serve someone else thinking that we have therefore served Him. Let's look at the story recorded here and see how we might better respond to Jesus as the one God has sent for us to love.

Perhaps we should begin in the very natural facts presented. It was about midday, Jesus had been traveling with His disciples, and he was tired and hungry and thirsty. He sat down near this well that had a reputation for being some of the best water in the world, and, while the disciples went into town to get provisions, this woman came out of town with her water jar to get water for the household. Jesus sees her and the conversion begins, not just the conversation, the conversion. Scripture records often that Jesus was now completely immersed into his mission of proclaiming the Kingdom of God. He has spent the first thirty years learning submission, trust in God, obedience to the ways and will of God, and now he is about His Father's business empowered by the Holy Spirit. He could now say with conviction, "I only speak as I hear my Father speak." "The words I speak and the deeds I do are not my words and deeds, but the Father working His will through me!" Because this is true we can surely say that as the Lord Jesus sat there in his human tiredness, his heart and mind were in communion with his Father. He was in worship as God desires worship - in spirit and truth.

So as Jesus begins the conversation with the simple request for a drink we must be reminded of what his real thirst was, and still is - that the Father's work and will be completed. His real thirst, even stronger than the natural, is for each one of God's children to be united with their real Father in heaven. St. Paul could say "I bruise my body and make it know it's master..." surely this was the same spirit of Jesus living in Paul. Living for the will of God as more important than anything else life had to offer. Jesus asks of each of us the same question today, "Will you give me a drink?" "Will you give to me the only thing that can quench my thirst?" "Will you give me your life that I may give you mine?"

The prophet Jeremiah says, "I alone know my purpose for you, says the Lord; prosperity and not misfortune...." "If you invoke me and pray to me, I will listen to you; when you seek me, you shall find me; if you search with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord." (see Jer. 29:11-14) What each of us needs to ask is if we really want God, or do we only want what He can give us? And who should we ask this kind of a question? If we ask ourselves, we will surely answer, "of course" we only want God. But in fact we must ask God what is really in my heart because Scripture again records, "The heart is the most deceitful of all things, desperately sick, who can fathom it? I, the Lord, search the mind and test the heart," (Jer. 17:9-10) NEB

The prophet Ezekiel records for us that there is a difference between serving the Lord himself, and serving the people of God. (see Ezekiel 44:9-26) God is again inviting His people to come near to Him and serve Him in this wave of sovereign outpouring of the experience of the Holy Spirit as in the Charismatic Renewal. Around the world this outpouring is in response to our prayers before and during the II Vatican Council. When our Bishop's stated in the Document on the Laity that all baptized believers should be serving in the power of the Holy Spirit through the ministry of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, they were proclaiming the truth we have had from the beginning. The mission of the Church is evangelism, and the method of God is by the power of the Holy Spirit. (see Acts 1:4-8) Pentecost must be an ongoing experience in the people of God if we are to carry out that mission. Although all are called to live their faith as a testimony of God's love in Jesus Christ, and be willing to share it whenever possible, the way we serve is chosen and appointed by God. Some will be called to serve as priests, religious, or deacons and brothers, and we need to pray for these vocations, but what God is doing is augmenting these ministries with the responsibilities of every one of us to serve Him in our station of life. Under proper order and submission the Lord is empowering for service everyone who will respond, and the work of the prayer meeting in the Charismatic renewal is one of those areas of service. As we perceive it the Holy Spirit is not seeking to get everyone into 'membership' in a prayer meeting, or even necessarily speaking in tongues, (although that is such an asset we can't imagine why not), but rather God is seeking the kind of personal relationship with each of His children that we are truly proud of our Lord Jesus Christ and really want to tell everyone of our "Good News". That relationship of oneness and love requires the Holy Spirit! It did then, it still does now! And it seems that God has again chosen the most unlikely vessels to work through. Untrained lay men and women (Acts 4:13) are being drawn into service to be that portion of the Body of Christ that God is using to bless and empower for service people in all kinds of ministry. Perhaps we should review again what has been discerned to be the task, or "VISION" of the Charismatic Renewal in our Diocese, and in the review to remember that this is what each of us have been invited to understand:

We perceive that God's vision<sup>1</sup> for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Office in the Diocese of Oakland is to respond to the call that we are the portion of the Body of Christ<sup>2</sup> which God has Chosen<sup>3</sup> to display His power<sup>4</sup> through the mature exercise of the Charismatic Gifts of the Holy Spirit<sup>5</sup> as they glorify Jesus.<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, our goal, in order to accomplish this, is to increasingly become a people of praise,<sup>7</sup> by providing environments wherein we can learn to praise God<sup>8</sup> and obey the Holy Spirit in the ministry of these Gifts.<sup>9</sup>

This narrow statement of purpose is possible because of our faith and trust in God that He has raised up the other ministries that are needed to bring the members of the Body of Christ to full maturity.<sup>10</sup>

Again Jesus says, "Give me a drink." Serve Me in the way that I alone know for you, obey Me. Stay faithful to what and where I have placed you. If your prayer meeting is only 3 or 4 people, that's OK if you are willing to still be Charismatic, God will still bring His people to receive ministry and empowerment for the service He has called them into. Be faithful in prayer; put love first in service to God through Jesus Christ, and seek to minister to whomever God brings by all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The fewer there are in the meeting the more each one needs to seek to be the servant that will bring the gifts of the Holy Spirit into the meeting. Through our submission and service God will be able to do in the lives of our brothers and sisters the work of encouraging, enabling, empowering for service. We have a task beloved, a very important task, but we are not to do it alone without the rest of the Body of Christ. But if all of us will respond as God has called, the wave of evangelism will flow out into a dark world of hopelessness and bring the light of Christ, and the Name of Jesus to the world, and one day Jesus' thirst will be satisfied. He says again today, "I Thirst." "Will you give me a drink?"

If your heart is now saying 'yes' again with ours, then we must recognize that what God asks of us is really "impossible" for us, but "possible" with God. Often over the years we have responded 'yes' to God's call, and then tried even harder to do the things we ought to do to live this life. St. Paul recognized this dilemma in his own cry, "I know that no good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; the desire to do right is there but not the power. What happens is that I do, not the good I will to do, but the evil I do not intend. But if I do what is against my will, it is not I who do it, but sin which dwells in me. ...I am a prisoner of the law of sin.....Who can free me from my self, selfishness, rebellion, greed, jealousy, envy, worry, independent self?" He rejoices, "All praise to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (see Romans 7:14-25) Only the Holy Spirit can do the work of God. We may do works for God, but the Holy Spirit alone can enliven and empower the work of God.

The "how" of this calling is the Holy Spirit working ever deeper in our lives to reveal our need of conversion, and then revealing the person of Jesus as the person into which we are to be transformed. Only the Holy Spirit can reveal the mystery of the death we have died with Christ that has set us free from selfishness. Jesus proclaims that we are daily to choose the cross as our way of life, and God is not some sort of sadist that wants His children to suffer as if suffering is the end toward which we move. We are invited to move toward Jesus who is life, but our life must be laid down on a bed of trust in our Father's love. And God knows we really can't do that alone! Picture a father telling a ten year old child, "I want you to lift the car over your head today so I can work on

the brakes." That may sound really absurd unless the father and the child both know that the power of the hydraulic hoist in their service station is going to do the lifting if the child will put a hand to the control to allow it to work. As this is an external power that can do the impossible, so is the Holy Spirit a power different from ourselves that is well able to perform the task if we will 'put our hands' to the task in prayer and abandonment to the Holy Spirit to hear and obey our Lord. Then our Father can indeed work on our 'breaks' to make us whole in Christ Jesus our Lord. Come Holy Spirit, glorify Jesus in our lives so that He may glorify our Father in heaven. Amen.  
Be loved little children. Amen!

Footnotes:

1. Habakkuk 2:2
5. 1 Cor. 12:8-109. 1 Cor. 14:40
2. 1 Cor. 12:12-25 Mark 16:17-18 Romans 1:5
3. John 15:16 6. John 16:13-14 10. 1 Cor. 12:12-31
4. Eph. 2:10 7. Hebrews 13:15 Eph. 4:11-13
- 8: Hebrews 10:24-25

Drink deeply dear Jesus, and be satisfied in our lives.