

17. January 2025

THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN
“I who speak to you am he”

Jn 4:16-26

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 he whom you now have is not your husband; this you said truly.” The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain; and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men 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 now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ); when he comes, he will show us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”

We do not know in detail the personal situation of the Samaritan woman with whom Jesus entered into dialogue at Jacob's well. But Jesus, who also knows what is hidden, knew it very well and spoke to her about it. For the Samaritan woman this was a sign that the man must be a prophet. She immediately brought up the conflict between the Samaritans and the Jews about the right place to worship God, since her fathers had worshipped God on Mount Gerizim, while for the Jews the Temple in Jerusalem was the true place of worship. The Samaritan woman must have wanted to hear from Jesus, whom she now regarded as a prophet, who was right in this matter.

Jesus left no room for doubt: *"You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews".*

The Jews had been entrusted with the Old Covenant and with the worship due to God. According to the divine plan, the Temple was to be the centre until the coming of the Messiah. Jesus never contradicted this, but confirmed it. But the whole revelation to

the Jewish people was directed to His coming, for in Him, the Messiah, the Son of God, the work of the Father would be brought to completion. It is true that *"salvation is from the Jews"*. This statement is now fulfilled for all humanity in the person of Jesus.

But the Lord does not only want to give the woman an answer to this dispute, but He also speaks to her about the true worship of God, which will be prepared and revealed to the faithful after His coming. To worship God *"in spirit and in truth"* will not require the place of worship built by the Samaritans or the Temple in Jerusalem.

"The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him".

With Jesus, a greater knowledge of God and a deeper intimacy with Him are revealed to us. Through the Holy Spirit, people are brought into an intimate relationship with God, to such an extent that the Trinity itself wants to dwell in us and thus make us a temple of His glory (cf. Jn 14:23). Here there is no longer any need for animal sacrifices to atone for the sins of humanity, because Jesus Himself has offered Himself once and for all as the only sacrifice valid for all time, offering man reconciliation with God. For our part, we spiritually offer ourselves to the Lord as *"living sacrifices"* (cf. Rom 12:1), so that our works and our praise become a sacrifice and worship of God in spirit and in truth.

The Samaritan woman could not yet know this, but this wonderful invitation is extended to her and to all her people. Neither the Samaritans nor any other people are excluded from salvation. With the coming of the Messiah, all people are invited to worship God in spirit and in truth and to find unity in Him.

The Samaritan woman will experience great things if she recognises all that the Lord is telling her. But first she must take the next step. She is aware that the Messiah is coming and she is waiting for Him, knowing that He will also announce everything to the Samaritans. You can see that she is coming to a decisive conclusion. And Jesus reveals it to her: *"I who speak to you am he"*.

The Lord has opened the door for her. Will she take advantage of the grace offered at this moment? Will she make a complete change in her life? Will her searching and waiting be answered?

Jesus has offered her the immense gift of knowing Him, of revealing Himself directly to her. Our Lord does not exclude anyone from His Kingdom if one believes in Him and begins to live once life according to His will. That is why He came into the world, to make Himself the way to eternity. Now it is up to the Samaritan woman to give the right answer so that she can drink of the living water forever.