



RELIGION

Scripture of the Week

SCRIPTURE OF THE WEEK:
ST. JOHN 4

Behold! I Am The Living Water

By Mattie Ann Callier-Spears

Helping others...is the name of the game, that I profess to believe in. Who am I to make such a profound statement? I am a child of the Almighty God, Jesus Christ. As a child of the King of Kings, I am empowered to serve others through the empowering of the Holy Spirit. Are you?

The whole life of Christ had been a life of unselfish service. "Not to be ministered unto, but to minister" [Matt. 20:28], had been the lesson of His every act. But not yet had the disciples learned the lesson. At the last Passover supper, Jesus repeated His teaching by an illustration that was forever impressed on their minds and hearts.

The talks between Jesus and His disciples were usually moments of calm joy, which was enjoyed by all of them. Jesus' entire life was designed to serve, to teach, to instruct, to show the way, to care and to LOVE. Regardless of the persons' background, his or her appearance, the color of their hair or eyes, whether or not the person was sick or well (physically), He extended His hand, in love, and helped them.

We, human-kind, experience so much difficulty simply because we are unable to cast aside our foolish whims of pride and our own "druthers"--things that we hold on to out of ignorance.

Let me share two stories with you. It was a dark, dark night on a Marine Base, during night field maneuvers. The platoon was given the charge to overtake this hill without the use of any lanterns, flashlights or matches; with all of their gear and full packs. As they were charging the steep hill, it was each man for himself. They were nearing the top of the hill when a Marine saw one of his comrades lose his balance and almost topple backwards. Not knowing who the troubled Marine was, the one Marine reached out and grabbed hold of the falling man. He safely pulled him to the top and went on his way. The next day, after evening mess, two men met face to face for the first time. The one exclaimed, "It's you!" The other man asked, "What are you talking about?" Remember it was so dark that they could not see one another. The man was still very excited. With a voice of exuberance, he said, "I was climbing that hill last night. I began to fall and I called out to the Lord to help me. And--I felt a hand grab me and pull me to the top. It was you, man. I just want to say thank you."

Now here is the other story. One day a man went out to the river with some of his friends. They were having a great time. They were standing on the river bank when the man lost his footing and slipped into the water. He could not swim. He did not have on a floatation device. The people on the shore could only yell and pray for help to come along. The water was choppy and he had drifted out rapidly. Just then, a man in a power boat came speeding over the man in the water. The people on the shore were shouting with joy because their friend was going to be rescued by the man in the boat. Wrong! The man in the boat looked at the man and sped off. Leaving the man in the water. The wake, from the boat, caused the man to sink faster. His friends on the shore stood there and watched him drown. They were all shocked by the man in the boat. When the police arrived, they went down river and located the man in the boat. The police officer asked, "Why didn't you pull the man out of the water?" The man in the boat responded, "I got to him and saw that he was black, that's why!" My Lord! What a contrast. These are both true stories. But--in the first story the helping hand came from a born-again Christian. In the second, the man in the boat did not have a personal relationship with God. He does not know the value of a human life. The Marine does. When the one man called out, in his heart, the name of the Lord, God merely sent one of His children in answer to his feeble cry.

When you are in the Word, it is much easier for you to see the needs of others. It is much easier for you to respond without delay. The other man, however, did not know Christ and only cared about his shallow feelings.

If you saw someone in need or had trouble on every hand, which man would you be? Today, we must take a good look at ourselves. Do you need a right relationship with God? Do you get very angry? Are you prone to lash out and hurt others instead of lending a helping hand? If you are angry, don't sin by nursing your grudge. Don't let the sun go down with you still angry--get over it quickly; for when you are angry you give a mighty foothold to the devil. [Eph. 4:26-27 TLB]

In order for someone to obey the words of this scripture, he must be born again. When you are out in the world and the world has it's hold on you--anything

goes. Whatever the devil tells you to do...You don't even care! But when there is love--the love that Jesus has given to you, then you see the world through Christ's eyes...instead of your own.

As you study the book of James, the author (James) stresses the need for Christian living to show both the reality of ones' inner faith and to show the world that the gospel does in fact change lives. If a person says that he is a Christian but is no different than he was as an unbeliever, what benefit has there been either for him or for the needy world? But--in fact, the gospel does change lives and if we will commit ourselves to Christ, we will find that from our living faith will flow living deeds of love and kindness.

Love and kindness is what the world needs more of. Continue to love each other with true brotherly love. Don't forget to be kind to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it! Don't forget those in jail. Suffer with them as though you were there yourselves. Share the sorrow of those being mistreated, for you know what they are going through. [Hebrews 13:1-3 TLB]

Help others less fortunate than yourselves. Not just helping, but--helping with love in your hearts. Bless those who persecute you, for great is your reward in heaven. Pray for those who wrongfully mistreat you. Don't hit back or plot on how you can knock them down. When we entertain these kinds of ideas, the devil is saying "Ah-ha! I got him/her now just where I want him/her." Don't let Satan win in you life. Don't let him have the upper hand.

It is better for us to take abuse than to dish it out. I am speaking to believers. As we walk through this world, the path is very narrow. Sometimes you feel like you are all alone; but--be consoled. Christ sent the Holy Spirit. He said that he would not leave you Comfortless. He promised never to leave us alone. And He didn't.

Oh, by the way, the Marine in the first story is my son, Eric. I praise God for using him for His glory.

Let God use you! Let God speak through you! If He can't, then you have to establish a right relationship with Him. "Study to show thyself approved unto God..." [II Tim. 2:15 KJV]

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The Desire of Ages...The Conflict of the Ages Illustrated in the Life of Christ

Part Two...An Excerpt from the Book

Teach the children to see Christ in nature. Take them out into the open air, under the noble trees, into the garden; and in all the wonderful works of creation teach them to see an expression of His love. Teach them that He made the laws which govern all living things, that He has made the laws for us, and that these laws are for our happiness and joy. Do not weary them with long prayers and tedious exhortations, but through nature's object lessons teach them obedience to the law of God.

As you win their confidence in you as followers of Christ, it will be easy to teach them of the great love where-with He has loved us. As you try to make plain the truths of salvation, and point the children to Christ as a personal Saviour, angels will be by your side. The Lord will give to fathers and mothers grace to interest their little ones in the precious story of the Babe of Bethlehem, who is indeed the hope of the world.

When Jesus told the disciples not to forbid the children to come to Him, He was speaking to His followers in all ages--to officers of the church, to ministers, helpers, and all Christians. Jesus is drawing the children, and He bids us, Suffer them to come; as if He would say, They will come if you do not hinder them.

Let not your un-Christlike character misrepresent Jesus. Do not keep the little ones away from Him by your coldness and harshness. Never give them cause to feel that heaven will not be a pleasant place to them if you are

there. Do not speak of religion as something that children cannot understand, or act as if they were not expected to accept Christ in their childhood. Do not give them the false impression that the religion of Christ is a religion of gloom, and that in coming to the Saviour they must give up all that makes life joyful.

As the Holy Spirit moves upon the hearts of the children, co-operate with His work. Teach them that the Saviour is calling them, that nothing can give Him greater joy than for them to give themselves to Him in the bloom and freshness of their years.

The Saviour regards with infinite tenderness the souls whom He has purchased with His own blood. They are the claim of His love. He looks upon them with unutterable longing. His heart is drawn out, not only to the best-behaved children, but to those who have by inheritance objectionable traits of character. Many parents do not understand how much they are responsible for these traits in their children. They have not the tenderness and wisdom to deal with the erring ones whom they have made what they are. But Jesus looks upon these children with pity. He traces from cause to effect.

The Christian worker may be Christ's agent in drawing these children to the Saviour. By wisdom and tact he may give them courage and hope, and through the grace of Christ may see them transformed in character, so that of them it may be said, "Of such is the kingdom of God."

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