

JESUS SITTING ON THE WELL

“Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.”

John 4:6

IF we were wise, dear Friends, we would find a thousand things in the world to remind us of our blessed Lord. It is well to form the habit of connecting things that are seen with Him, “whom, having not seen, we love.” If we do so, there will not be an hour in the day when we shall not be helped to think of Him and scarcely anything that we see in our trade, or in the street, or in the field, or in our house which will not be the means of reminding us of Him. When we rise in the morning, would it not be well to think of how He rose a great while before day that He might have time for private prayer? He had a hard day’s work before Him and, therefore, He needed strength with which to do it. And He gained it, not by a longer sleep, but by stealing time from sleep in which to draw near the strengthening Father in prayer! Even when the morning is ended and we come to the middle of the day, if we are hot and weary and the sun scorches us, we shall do well to think of our text, “Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well.”

When the clock strikes three, Christians should not forget that it was about that hour when He yielded up the ghost and passed away. When it comes to eventide and we go to our comfortable bed, or to our hard pallet, as the case may be, would it not be sweet to remember Him who said, “Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head”? The whole world might constitute a system of helps to memory if we were but wise enough to use it so. The stars speak of Him to those who have but ears to hear. The morning sun reveals Him and even the setting of the sun is not without instruction concerning Him. As God is everywhere, so are the footprints of the Only Begotten. He has so taken up materialism into connection with His spiritual and Divine Nature that He has left His impress upon all materialism and in His temple of Creation everything speaks of His Glory!

Our second observation shall be how truly Human was the Lord Jesus Christ! Nowadays, we do not have to insist much upon that because it is not often denied—we have to fight for His Deity, but not often for His Humanity. Perhaps it is none the better for us that it is so. You know that there were some, soon after the Apostle John’s days, who denied that Christ took upon Himself a real body. They believed that He existed as a phantom. I will not go into the philosophical way in which they put it, but their main attack was against the Humanity of the Son of God. Now, times have changed and men admit that He existed and they admit His Humanity—yes, they so much admit it that they deny that He was anything more than Man! We must fight against that thrice-accursed doctrine as long as we have any being, but we must not forget how truly Human Jesus was. How really Human He appears when the burning sun smites Him, the sweat rolls off Him and He is thoroughly weary! And, being weary, He must do what we do when we are tired and worn-out—He must sit down. And the sun is so hot that He thirsts—He is parched with heat and there is the water in the well, but He has nothing to draw with, so He must sit there in the heat and bear the thirst.

You remember also, dear Friends, how He hungered. You will never forget how “Jesus wept.” You all know how He suffered and how, at last, He died. Treasure up in your mind and heart the assured fact that Christ was most really and truly Man—and though the Godhead was most mysteriously united to His Manhood—He was none the less completely and intensely Man. Because He was perfectly and supremely God, His Godhead did not take away from Him His power to suffer and to be wearied.

It seems rather singular, but it is worthy of notice that our Lord appears to have been more weary than His disciples were, for they had gone away into the city to buy food. I suppose that He might have gone with them if He had not been more fatigued than they were. He was quite worn out and thoroughly weary, and so, while they went into Sychar to purchase provisions, He sat down on the well. I take it that, in all probability, the reason is this—He had mental weariness associated with His bodily fatigue—and when the two things come together, they make a man wearied, indeed. I know that there are some who fancy that to think and to care for others, to preach and to teach, is not much of work. Well, my dear Brothers and Sisters, I can assure you that you may keep on working much longer with your arms than you can with your brain! And I am speaking from experience when I say that careful thought and great anxiety to do good bring much wear and tear with them to a man's whole constitution. And if the life is taken out of a man in two ways at once—by fatigue of body and by fatigue of mind, too—then you will see that such a man will necessarily be the first to give way. The disciples had little to do but to follow implicitly as their Master led them. He had to be the Leader and upon the leader comes the strain and stress of thought and care. No man knows what were the cares that agitated the great heart of Christ. Surely, in one sense, He never rested—He was constantly thinking, not only of the twelve, but of all those who were with Him. And not merely of them, but it was as He said in His great intercessory prayer, “Neither pray I for these, alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word.” All Believers had a share in His thoughts of love even then, for He was bent upon no less a mission than the salvation of a countless number who shall be His in the day of His appearing!

His mind and heart were always at work. That busy brain of His was never still, so I do not wonder that though the disciples could go into the city to buy food, their Master could not go, but He must sit down on the well. “Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well”—in a thoroughly exhausted condition. He sat down as if He could go no further, could do no more—and there it was that the Samaritan woman found Him. How perfectly human all this proves our Lord to have been!

I want you, while we are speaking of that fact, to admire the great self-constraint which our Divine Master put upon Himself in bearing weariness, because, although He was Man and could be weary, I have also reminded you that He was God and, therefore, He could have refreshed Himself if it had been right for Him to do so. According to the Divine order of things, it would not have been right. When our Lord was in the wilderness 40 days, He hungered. Why did He not turn the stones into bread? He certainly could have done so, but to do so was evidently quite out of order with Him who had come to be a Servant and to suffer as a Man. The devil tempted Him to do it, which proves to us that it would have been wrong for Christ to do it. But, only think—if you and I were hungry and we could turn stones into bread—would we not do it? If we were weary and could immediately give ourselves the rest we required, would we not do so? Why, I think the water would have been glad to leap out of the well to refresh the lips of Him who had created it! That well would have been honored by suddenly pouring forth all its liquid refreshment that He might drink and be satisfied, but Jesus never worked a miracle merely for His own comfort. He felt that His miraculous power was to be used for others in His great work, but as for Himself, His Humanity must bear its own infirmity, it must support its own trials—so He keeps His hands back from relieving His own necessities. Oh, I never imagined how strong Christ was till I saw His love hold back His Deity! That Omnipotence which restrains Omnipotence—it cannot be something more than Omnipotence and yet, in a sense, it must be! The Love of Christ restrains the Omnipotence of Christ! He might have broken through all the infirmities of manhood, but He must not do so if He is to be perfectly bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh—and He does not do it. He bears exhaustion, He bears deprivation of comfort, He bears, in fact, the very curse of labor which our father Adam brought upon us, that in the sweat of our brow we should eat our bread—and He bears it still with a magnanimity of condescension which cannot be imitated. It is far beyond our conception and infinitely beyond our venturing to follow this. We can only admire and adore. We worship You, O Son of God, that for our sins You could even deign to be wearied and to sit thus on the well!

Another thought I put before you is this. Behold the wonderful sympathy of the Lord Jesus Christ with us. You have been on a very long journey, and your feet are tired and you are weary and worn—you could not go a step further. Now Christ, in the days of His flesh, was like you. He knows

what is meant by all that heaviness and heat of the feet, that blistering of the soles, that drawing of the sinews, that testing of every muscle! And the next time you go a long tramp and sit down because you are weary, think to yourself, "He who is at the right hand of God remembers when He felt as I do, and He sympathizes with me in this, my present distress." Or take it to be another case, that your daily work is very hard—and I know that I speak to many who earn their bread with very severe toil and labor—and when the hour, at last, comes (alas! alas! how late it often is!) when the shop can be closed, or when your work is finished, you are thoroughly exhausted. You can scarcely crawl up to your bed, you feel so weary. It is often so with you and getting to be more often so, now that you are growing old and years are telling upon your once stalwart frame. Well, the next time you sit down, say to yourself, "Jesus, my Lord, You know all about this and You can pity Your poor servant, and help and comfort me as I have to bear it."

Do you not remember the story about Alexander's soldiers? When they went on long, forced marches, they, none of them, grew weary because although Alexander had a horse, he never rode. He said, "No, not while one man walks shall Alexander ride." So he tramped side by side with them and once, when a cup of water was brought for the king, he said, "There is a soldier who looks more faint than I am; pass it over to him." And every man felt strong because of that sympathy. Now, you who toil, think of Him who is the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the Prince of the kings of the earth—and for your comfort read the text again—"Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well."

Yes, but there are other kinds of toilers beside these. There are holy workers who, I think, ought to have a drink of water out of this well. You try and speak for Christ, or you go about and visit—you are very earnest to bring sinners to Jesus and, sometimes, you feel as if you could not do any more. You have not succeeded, perhaps, and you are disappointed and heart-weary. Well, when you are so, say to yourself, "My Lord knows all about His servant. 'Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well.'" Or, perhaps, your weariness comes of suffering. The pain is very sharp, you get very little rest, it seems to you as if all night long you had never slept. You steal a little sleep and when you wake again, in the morning, you feel more tired than when you went to bed. And sometimes you say to yourself, "I am so weary and worn. Will these pains never end? Is there no release from this, my chain? Must I always drag it with me?" But when you fall back upon the pillow, oh so weary—and some of us know all about this weariness, for we have many times felt as if we could not even breathe, or lift a finger—remember, then, "Jesus being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well." Oh, the deep sympathy of Christ! He knows it, not only by having heard of it, and seen it, but by having felt it. Go to Him without any fear, with a childlike confidence that He who has been tried in all points like as we are, and who was, Himself, compassed with infirmity, is able to succor us in all times of weariness! And be assured that if we come to Him, He will give us rest.

I am just getting into my sermon, now—all these observations which I have made are only preliminary, but the discourse, itself, will be a short one.

First, dear Friends, if I have, here, a weary sinner who longs to find rest, I want his conscience to paint a picture. And after his conscience has painted it, I want his faith to come and study it. his gratitude and his love to remove that picture and to paint another.

1. First, then, I want every conscience here that is awakened, but has never been quieted by the blood of Christ, to PAINT A PICTURE—and that picture is the portrait of a wearied Savior, a Savior wearied by you, worn out by you—wearied, not with His journey, but

wearied with your sin.

"Can that be?" someone asks. Yes, the Lord has said it in Isaiah. "You have wearied Me with your iniquities." You have wearied Christ by doing wrong and doing it again and again, and sinning against conscience and against light. You are wearying my Lord, my loving Lord! In the Book of Amos He says, "I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves." You know how they heap the sheaves on till the wagon creaks and the axle is ready to break—do you treat my Lord like an old wagon and load on your sins, sheaf upon sheaf, till He can bear no more? He says

that it is so with some of you and I want you to paint the picture of a wearied Christ, wearied with your sin.

Perhaps in the case of some of you Christ is wearied with your religion. "Wearied with our religion?" asks one. When you get home, will you read the first chapter of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah and you will see there how God declares Himself to be tired of the empty formalism of the people? "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me. The new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot endure. It is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates: they are a trouble unto Me; I am weary to bear them." It was a weariness to Him and, if you pray, but do not pray sincerely, my Lord will be tired of hearing your mockery of prayer! If you go to sacraments, or come to public worship and think that this will save you, my Lord will be weary of you, for it is all a sham! There is a shell, but there is no kernel. You mock Him with the solemn sound upon a thoughtless tongue. You sit as His people sit and your minds are far away on the mountains of vanity. You hear, you join in the hymn and listen to the prayer, but there is no true worship, praise, or supplication. I tell you, Sirs, my Lord is getting weary of you—getting sick and tired of your religion! What a picture! Christ wearied with sin and wearied with dead religion!

I fear that I might also say that there are some here of whom Christ is weary because of their broken promises. When they were sick, they said, "We will repent if the Lord will spare our lives." They vowed, when they were in danger, that they would turn to Him if He delivered them—but nothing of the kind has happened. My dear Friend, you are still here undecided! Twelve months ago you would not have believed that another year would have passed and found you just where you are. The wheels of time are running round swiftly as flames of lightning, but you make no advance whatever! On the contrary, I am afraid that you are going backward. My Lord is getting wearied of your excuses and your procrastination! "You have lied to Me," says the Lord, and He will not always endure this treatment from you.

With some, my Lord is getting weary because of their resistance to His Spirit. Remember that God said of some who rebelled and vexed His Holy Spirit, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." He shall not always be put to the indignity of striving with men who resist Him, as did their fathers. When holy thoughts arise, you quench them—and you have done this, oh, so long! How many years has this been the case with some of you? If some persons whom I know are provoked for only five minutes, their anger boils over. If they stood to be insulted for half-an-hour, they would count it a miracle! I know some with whom it is "a word and a blow" and, often, the blow comes faster than the word! But only think of anyone having lived to provoke God for five years, 10 years, 20 years, 30 years, 40 years! Shall I go further? I believe that there are some here who have outdone the Israelites in the wilderness, for they provoked God 40 years, but these people have provoked Him 50, sixty, or even 70 years!

My Lord is weary! My Lord is weary! You remember, when He grew weary with the Israelites, He lifted His hand to Heaven and swore that they should not enter into His rest. What was the sin that shut them out? "So then," says the Apostle, "they could not enter in because of unbelief." Christ will not always be quibbled at, nor have His promises belied, nor His sweet invitations cast behind your backs. He is getting very tired and very weary of you—and I fear that He will one day say, "I will ease Me of My adversaries." Be thankful that He has not said it, yet, and turn to Him with true repentance and faith!

But there is the picture and to me it is a very pitiful picture, to see Jesus sitting down by the well of Eternal Life, wearied by men whom He came to bless.

II. Now I want you to STUDY THAT PICTURE of the wearied Christ.

Look closely at it—not merely with the eyes of your conscience, but with the eyes of faith—and if you have not any, I must try to lend you mine. For a few minutes I must believe for you, in the hope that what I tell you—and know to be true—God the Holy Spirit may enable you to believe, too, that you may, yourselves, spiritually see. Yes, I can see Jesus Christ, very weary, sitting on the well. Let me look at Him a while. I like the picture so, it seems to comfort me as I look at the well,

for, albeit that He is very weary, yet I perceive that He is waiting. He sits on the well, for there is a woman coming—a poor fallen woman—and He is waiting to bless her. She ought to have been here early in the morning, and it is now twelve o'clock. The sun has reached its zenith and is shining at its hottest. The woman will be here soon. Jesus is very weary, but He still waits. Sinner, that is just the attitude of my Lord towards you! You say you cannot see Him—you have not the eyes of faith, but I can see Him. I remember when I first saw Him that He had long been waiting for Me. He waits to be gracious. He is in no hurry, He allows the sinner time, wicked though the spending of that time is on the sinner's part—but Christ spends that time in patiently waiting.

I must look again at the picture. As I look, I can see that He is not only waiting, but He is watching. I can see that He is turning His eyes toward the city gate. "She will be out very soon," He says to Himself. "She must come here and I know that she is coming." He is not looking round at the scenery. That is not the chief thing to Him, just now—He is looking for this poor soul that is coming. Oh, my dear Friend, though you have wearied Christ, yet He is still waiting and watching for you! There is many an elect soul that my Lord is spying out over there in the first gallery, or up there in those boxes almost in the roof, or down below in that area! And Jesus is waiting and watching for them.

Now I must look again, for my Lord, though He is very weary, has at last spied out the person for whom He is waiting and watching. Here she comes! And now I perceive how willing He is. His heart seems to beat more quickly, His eyes are brighter than usual, He is not half as weary as He was. You may have seen the faint and tired hunter suddenly grow strong when, at last, he spies on the crag, the deer he has come to seek. Or the fisherman standing wearily in the stream, holding his rod, but ready to go home to his long-needed meal, but, at last, the salmon begins to part away at his line—now how strong a man he is! He will go on for an hour at that work and he will not need to eat or drink. The whole of his being is in the fishing. So was it with my blessed Master. That woman was coming and Christ was "all there," as we say. He was ready to speak the right words—a word in season to one who was weary—to speak the word of admonition, or of comfort, or of invitation. And He is "all here" at this moment. I thought, when I stood here tonight, to speak to you, "I am constantly coming to the Tabernacle to talk to this great throng," and something seemed to say to me, "You ought to be glad to have such an opportunity!" I thought, "Yes, and I am glad, and I will try my very best to preach Christ to them as long as this tongue can move, for it is a delightful privilege to be allowed to tell men about my Master's pardoning love." But, oh, if He were here in bodily Presence, He would do it so much better than any of us can, for His heart is so much more full of love than our poor hearts are!

He was at the well, waiting, and watching, and willing. And though He was very weary, yet, when the woman came to Him and she believed His message, He saved her right away. A weary Christ is most willing to save a weary sinner! Though He was tired, yet He could save that great sinner and now, exalted in the highest heavens, though you have wearied Him with your sins, yet He will blot out those sins, even now, the moment you put your trust in Him! And even with His weary hands He will wipe away your transgressions. He is, in fact, so weary with your sins that He will put them away, that He and you, too, may never be wearied with them again! He is so sick of your wanderings that He will end them and receive you into His heart, that you may never wander again!

This picture looked very sad when I saw it at a distance and when you saw it with the eyes of your conscience, but, oh, if you can put on the blessed glasses of faith and see it as I have tried to describe it, the picture grows very lovely! "Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well"—waiting, watching, willing and able to save—yes, to so save the woman as to make her the means of saving others! And, maybe He will now save you who have wearied Him, and start you at once to bringing others to Him. I shall not be surprised if it is so! I shall be concerned if it does not happen, for we have sought it at His hands and we expect to have it!

III. Now I want to ALTER THE PICTURE ON THE CANVAS.

I suppose I have not an artist here who can help me with his brush. I want to take a little out and put a little in, for the new picture is to be a portrait of the weary Savior sitting on the well,

refreshed by the very sinner who had helped to weary Him! A woman must be put into the picture now, Mr. Painter. There she is and the Master is saying to her, "Give Me a drink." And did she do it? She did not dip her water pot into the well, but did she give Him a drink? Yes, that she did! I am sure she refreshed Him even more than she would have done by a draught of water, because when the disciples came back to their Master, He said to them, "I have meat to eat that you know not of," so that He had evidently been refreshed. And how was it done? Why, by that woman! What had she given Him which had so refreshed Him?

Well, first, she had put to Him various enquiries. She began asking Him a number of questions and the Lord Jesus Christ is always refreshed when He meets with enquirers. If you only want to know all you can about Christ, that will be some sort of refreshment to Him, for the mass of men pass by Him with indifference, so that He has to say—

"Is it nothing to you, all you that pass by?"

Is it nothing to you that Jesus should die?"

I am sure that my Master will be glad if some of you will begin to enquire, as the woman did, "Are You greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well?" Or, "From where, then, have You that living water?" I do not mind even if your question is a foolish one, because that will only show the state of mind you are in—and Christ can cure the foolishness and give you wisdom. Read the New Testament carefully. Go down on your knees and say, "Lord, teach me what the meaning of this passage is." You will thus refresh my Master's heart and I shall expect to see you, before long, among the saved!

Next, this woman refreshed the Savior's heart with prayer, for when she had asked Him questions, she prayed in her poor way, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come here to draw." She hardly knew what she said, but, as far as she knew anything, she meant to ask Jesus to give her what He had to give! Dear Heart, may the Lord help you to begin to pray even now! The Master's spirit will be wonderfully refreshed by your supplication. He will have a deep draught of cold water from the well when He gets to hear your voice in prayer. "Take with you words," says the Prophet Hosea, "and turn to the Lord. Say to Him, Take away all our iniquity and receive us graciously." If one poor soul in this Tabernacle, far away at the back, there, who cannot see, and perhaps can hardly hear, is moved to pray, "God be merciful to me a sinner," that petition will touch the heart of the Son of God! Even on the Throne of the highest heavens, He will be refreshed—He always is when He hears a sinner pray!

But, further, this woman not only prayed, but she confessed her sin. The confession was not very explicit, but she acknowledged that what the Lord laid to her charge was true. "Sir," she said "I perceive that You are a Prophet." And to the men of the city she said, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that ever I did." A hearty confession to God, while it is good for your soul, is good for Christ's soul, too—He gets refreshed thereby.

Best of all, this woman believed in Jesus. When He said that He was the Christ, she accepted His declaration as true and, therefore, she said to the men of the city, "Is not this the Christ?" O my Lord, You will again see of the travail of Your soul and You will be once more satisfied if some poor sinner does but receive You! Does not a mother rejoice when, after her pangs, she fixes her eyes upon her first-born child? That is the very picture that Isaiah drew of the Lord Jesus Christ—"He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." Oh, to think that you and I can give satisfaction to the heart of Christ for all the anguish that He bore when He poured out His soul unto death! That is no metaphor of mine—it is a Scriptural symbol! I have only given you what the Holy Spirit, Himself, has said and, oh, dear Friends, I do pray that some of you may thus gratify, satisfy, refresh, invigorate, delight and glorify the Christ who now, though He reigns on high, has never forgotten that He did once sit on the well and thirst! And while He so thirsted, saved a Samaritan sinner and found Himself refreshed in the doing of it!

God bless you, Beloved, and bring you to the Savior, for His name's sake! Amen.