

“Inquiring Minds Want to Know!”

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

*Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord* (cf. 1Timothy 1:2). Amen.

Maybe you’ve been around long enough to remember the advertising slogan, “Inquiring Minds Want to Know.” It was used by a company which put out a weekly paper, “reporting” on the lives of famous individuals to give it’s readers the “inside scoop” into their personal lives. Many times their stories were about strange experiences that people purported to have dealing with the appearance of aliens or Jesus or Elvis and other out-of-the-ordinary occurrences. People were drawn to the paper in a desire to hear about the latest scuttle and “dirt” on famous people and read the outrageous stories. Unfortunately such “rag magazines” (as they came to be called) passed false information off as truth with the unfortunate result of destroying reputations many times.

Although an inquiring mind may be drawn into sin very easily, it is still a good thing. It moves you to seek and learn. The challenge which the inquiring mind presents is how to discern truth in the midst of so much false information. While we are told not to believe everything we read and see in the newspapers, on television, on the internet, in social

media and so forth, it becomes an even more serious endeavor when it comes to reading God's inspired truth—the Bible.

Jesus was constantly striving to produce inquiring minds in people in an effort to lead them through a discovery process of sorts. He would make statements intended to get them to question Him and look at their own lives in relationship to the Lord more closely. He had done it with a Pharisee named Nicodemus by telling him he had to be born again in order to go to heaven (cf. John 3:1-15). He did it with statements and teaching about Himself being the light of the world (cf. John 8:12); or needing to eat His flesh and drink His blood to be saved (cf. John 6:48-59); or telling people to cut off their hands or gouge out their eyes if they cause them to sin (cf. Matthew 18:8-9).

In the case of Jesus' encounter with a Samaritan woman by a well His action of talking to a woman, who was a Samaritan on top of it all, sparked her inquiring mind (cf. John 4:9). She asked him a natural question considering the Samaritans were despised by the Jews because of their being half Gentile and half Jewish. It was also a natural question considering a rabbinical rule in Judaism stated: "Let no man talk with a woman in the street, no not with his own wife."

When she asked about His actions Jesus responded true to form in John 4:10 → *If you knew the gift of God, and Who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink," you would have asked Him, and He would have*

*given you living water.* While many of us may immediately wonder what Jesus meant by *living water*, she seems more concerned about His inability to get the water because He had *nothing to draw water with, and the well was deep.* *Where would He get that living water?* (cf. John 4:11) *Living water* is a phrase used in Scripture to describe flowing water (i.e. a stream). Where was Jesus going to get flowing water from a well in Sychar?

Apparently it made her wonder: Who does He think He is? So she asked: *Are You greater than our father Jacob?* (cf. John 4:12) His claim naturally pointed to Him as someone special if He could produce streams in the desert. The need to inquire further was sparked. So Jesus explained Himself in John 4:13-14 → *Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.* Jesus had brought this woman from simply having an inquiring mind to desiring what He wanted to give her, even though she still didn't fully understand. *Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.* (cf. John 4:15).

Just as living water sustains life, this water Jesus gives sustains *eternal life*. It does so by quenching the thirst of the soul for the eternal life for which God created human beings. It is natural for people to have

inquiring minds about what is eternal, such as God, heaven and hell. What stands in the way of eternal life in heaven and all human beings is sin. The very reason Jesus encountered this woman was to reveal to her *the gift of God* by faith in His Person & Work. However, sin runs so deep within our human natures that it must be dealt with in order to see the gift with its *eternal life* and pure contentment (i.e. to *never be thirsty again*).

Like every other human being in the world this woman lived with her sin and its guilt and shame daily. Encountering the judgment upon your sin constantly by your own conscience, by the rebuke of God's Law and/or the presence of others around you, is a heavy burden which can lead you to despair. You may want to change your sinful ways but soon discover the depth of your sin so that you feel like the apostle Paul when he confessed in Romans 7:15,18-19 → *I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate . . . I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing*. Pretty soon the delusion to give up on God and give in to sin, resigning yourself to a life of sin, becomes a reality.

Thus, Jesus pointed out the depth of this woman's sin with His command: *Go, call your husband, and come here*. (cf. John 4:16) She gave a straightforward answer: *I have no husband*. (cf. John 4:17) It is probable

that she was not functioning out of any fear or guilt in connection to her interaction with Jesus. He was a stranger to Sychar. Certainly she was safe in her answer since He wouldn't know anything about her life in sin. After all, He didn't treat her contemptuously so far, as probably happened with the other people from the community.

Then Jesus did what Simeon had said about the baby Jesus while holding him in his arms thirty plus years early in Luke 2:34-35 → *Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel . . . so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.* Jesus revealed her sinful heart by telling her about her continuing in a life of sin with her numerous divorces and presently living with a man outside of marriage (cf. John 4:17-18). The fall had come. How could this complete stranger know about her heart resigned to a life of sin? Had He spoken to someone in town about her? He was spot-on in His evaluation of her heart and life.

It is the nature of the sinful heart to avoid talking about and giving up sin. One common method to do this in a “religious” way is to defer to a “theological discussion.” So the woman changes the subject: *Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.* (cf. John 4:19-20) A discussion concerning worship practices should certainly get His focus off of her sin. It is one the devil's common

tactics to get you from seeing *the gift of God* in the forgiveness of sins through repentance and faith in Jesus by talking about a “religious issue,” usually based upon personal opinion with no definitive answer. When inquiring minds are distracted this way the sinner walks away from the discussion still stuck in his sin.

Jesus stayed the course and spoke about worship from the perspective of *salvation coming from the Jews*, that is, the lineage through which Yahweh would send His Christ, *the Savior of the world* from sin. Notice His statement in John 4:23-24 → **But** *the hour is . . . now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.* Jesus comes full circle to His initial statement about the *living water* that only He can give which will become in a person *a spring of water welling up to eternal life.*

It is a reference to the Holy Spirit (cf. John 7:37-39) Who gives and sustains both faith in the Christ and obedience to God’s Word. It is He Who convicts people *concerning sin . . . because they do not believe in Jesus, the One Who has atoned for their sins so God can declare them righteous in His sight eternally* (cf. John 16:8-11). He convicts you of your sin so that you’ll face the truth that you are a sinner, repent of your sins and trust in Jesus’ atoning work for you. The purpose for the fall by

pointing out the guilt of your sin is for your rising to a new life, no longer burdened under the control of sin and guilt. Your eternal thirst is quenched in the gift of forgiveness of sins in Jesus and thus your worship is in the Holy Spirit and He Who is *the way, and the truth, and the life* (cf. John 14:6).

The Holy Spirit worked through the faith He created in this woman as Jesus took her inquiring mind through the discovery that He was the *Messiah* Whom she was expecting to come and tell her all things (cf. John 4:25-26). John 4:25-26 says *the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, "Come, see a Man Who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?"* The Holy Spirit must have worked through all of this. Why would the people believe her, a woman of ill repute, revealing the Christ to them? The Holy Spirit created more inquiring minds and faith because *they went out of the town and were coming to Jesus to find out for themselves. The result? They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."* (cf. John 4:39-42) The Holy Spirit creates minds which inquire, leading you to repentance of your sins and faith in Jesus, *the Savior of the world*. The more you inquire about God's Will for your life the more you will discover a God Who knows you so good that He also knows what's good for you. Amen.

*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find;*

*knock, and it will be opened to you.*

*For everyone who asks receives, the one who seeks finds,*

*and to the one who knocks it will be opened.*

(Matthew 7:7-8)

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