

Devotion on the Devotion on the Underground River at Shechem as a Type of Holy Ghost for Friday after the Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity, 28 September 2012, Anno Domini



The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.

The Collect.

O LORD, we beseech thee, let thy continual pity cleanse and defend thy Church; and, because it cannot continue in safety without thy succour, preserve it evermore by thy help and goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. 7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water (John 4:5-7)

It was water of Jacob's Well for which the woman came, and it was the Water of Life with which she left that Well.

Situated approximately thirty miles north of Jerusalem in the hill country of Ephraim is the ancient walled city of Shechem of the Old Testament, Sychar in the New Testament, and today known as Nablus. It is the burial site of Joseph. Beneath the foundations of Shechem there runs an Underground River which carries its nourishing waters to the distant pasturelands, and it is this water course from which the water for Jacob's Well is supplied. The waters of the river run totally unnoticed beneath the busy commercial streets and shops of flourishing Shechem during its active workday of barter and trade. But once the oxcarts and trampling feet of merchants and patrons have been stilled by the curtain of night, one can very plainly hear the gurgling ripples of the stream deep below the foundation of the city as it hurries along to its indefinite destination.

How like the still and silent draw of the deep waters of the Holy Spirit are the waters of this Underground River, and it was these waters that quenched the great thirst and convicted the woman of Samaria as she spoke with the Fountainhead of those Waters of Life.

Quite often in our busy lives of social, commercial and professional activity, we are unable to hear the soft, sweet voice of God calling to us over the tumult of life. It is at those busy times that we need Him most - and are sadly unable to hear. What must we do to enter again into the sanctuary of the Almighty? Simple! "Be still, and know that I am God." Ps 46:10. Sometimes we simply need to close our minds, hearts and ears to the rush of daily life, stop what we are doing on the computer, and commune with the

Majesty from on high. He never shouts, screams or intrudes without our invitation; because He is a perfect Gentleman (Jesus es el Senor - Jesus is a Gentleman.. as our good Spanish brothers love to aver). "Hearken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God" Job 37:14.

Remember the call of God to young Samuel? He called three times in the night. Samuel heard clearly each call, but aging and restless Eli did not hear. I Sam 3:4-15. And poor dejected Elijah, having given up all hope, God commanded to go and "stand upon the mount before the Lord." Elijah witnessed a great and strong wind which rent the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after, an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after, a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire, a STILL SMALL VOICE.

God does not speak to us in the heated shouts and elevated voices of everyday life. He speaks not through the twisted and tortured notes of heavy metal (Christian?) music. Not in the peals of drum and discordant voice. He comes softly! He resorts (as he always has) not to the sin-filled and busy main street, but to the GARDEN.

The Holy Spirit is forever that silent, bountiful stream of Living Water that courses ever near us, but which we often neglect to hear or heed.

Our present generation wants ACTION! Entertainment - even in worship! But they are a sad lot who seek God in vaunted words, music and deeds of modern society which, it seems, many of our churches attempt to emulate. Worship in many of America's churches is centered on man and his word - not the Word of God or praise to Him. What does God think of such churches?

"An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given it.." St. Matthew 12:39.

So if you want to hear the voice of God, be near Him who first loved you; seek Him in the quiet sanctuary of His Garden. Seek Him in your closet of prayer, not in the boisterous 'noise' of some modern worship services. The sound of His voice is like the Underground River of Living Water of ancient Shechem. To hear Him, OUR feet must stop, OUR voices must be stilled, if we are to hear HIS. Thoughts of the market place, the bazaar, the social gatherings, must be put aside. We empty our hearts of worldly lusts and turn them to the Source of all Mercy and Grace.

So we conclude, today, our devotions on the Three Rivers of God – the Mighty Nile river (God the Father), the Jordan River and that Giver of Life – the Zayanderud (God the Son), and the Underground River at Shechem (God the Holy Ghost). Reader, do you know these Three?