



My Beloved Ones,

ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ!

Christ is Risen!

I give thanks to our Lord, for having allowed us to celebrate Mid-Pentecost this week, as we continue to observe our Lord's Resurrection, while looking ahead to His Ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit. This week's Gospel offers a unique glimpse, as our Lord shares the reality of the Holy Spirit with the Samaritan Woman.

For us to understand the importance of this event, we must first know the difference between Jews and Samaritans during Christ's ministry. Each group thought about and worshiped God in different ways. Jews, of course, worshiped Him in the Temple, but Samaritans worshiped Him on Mount Gerizim. It is for this reason, and many others, that the Jews and

Samaritans considered each other an anathema. This is why the Parable of the Good Samaritan makes such a strong point; Jesus uses the Levite and the Priest, as examples of Jewish people who fail to demonstrate God's mercy to the wounded man. Instead, it is an enemy of this individual, who shows us how to act towards our brothers and sisters in need.

Jesus demonstrates this openness personally, when, sitting alone at midday near a Samaritan well, he greets a passing woman, by asking her for a drink. Knowing only that He is a Jewish stranger, she answers, *"How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?"* (John 4:9) Jesus responds with a beautiful figure of speech, that He is the living water, and *"...whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life"* (John 4:13-14)

Now, thinking as a person, she asks, *"Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."* (John 4:15). He reveals His knowledge of her life as a sinner, but speaks His Word to her compassionately, *"The hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 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."* (John 4:21; 23-24).

Here we have a woman, who, like the Myrrh Bearers and so many saints throughout the ages, believes in our Lord, and testifies to the Truth of the Divine Law, rather than the earthly Law. She returns to her home, and to her village, enthusiastically preaching His Gospel. The people were so moved and amazed, that they forget about her sinful life, and instead came to Him. Here we are shown yet another group of people, strangers and outcasts, who are brought together as one by the Word of God.

I hope and pray that this message serves as an example that we as believers, also have an obligation to share the Good News with others; and not only our non-Orthodox brothers and sisters, but even our Orthodox friends who need understanding and support as well. I greet you once again with *ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ!* wishing you all health, peace and safety, during the happiest time of our Ecclesiastical year!

+ALEXIOS

Metropolitan of Atlanta