

Delight Yourself in the Lord..., Psalm 37:4, Pt. VIII

We must also note that this woman's gratitude towards Christ stems from her new identity in Christ. This truth is the epistemic context and content of her actions towards her Lord. That is to say, her salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ had instilled in her a new understanding of Christ, the world and of herself. Because of Christ's saving work on her behalf and in her place, she no longer regards herself as her neighbors did, that is, as a loose, immoral woman incurring the judgment of both man and God. Now that she was saved she was beginning to know without any hesitation, doubt or uncertainty, the implications of the reality of her salvation. She once was lost but now she was found. She once viewed Jesus according to the flesh, 2 Cor 5:16, as the rest of society, as an ordinary prophet and teacher, a good moral person and a miracle worker. Yes, the public viewed his teaching and his signs and wonders with great skepticism. After all, was he not the carpenter's son with whom they were very familiar, whose mother and brothers they knew very well, and with whom they had grown up? On this account, had they not questioned the source of his knowledge and his authority to perform miracles? Further, had they not taken offense at him and his teaching. Mt 13:55, 57; see Mk 6:1-3? Most assuredly, these were the perceptions she had of Christ prior to her salvation.

However, when the Lord God commanded his saving light to break through the darkness of her sin and to shine in her heart - similar to the sovereign manner in which he commanded the light to break through the primeval darkness in creation, Gen 1:3 – she began to have a new worldview and a new self-understanding according to “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Cor 4:6. From this point onwards, Christ was no longer a controversial and problematic itinerant teacher whose words and works were worthy of disputation. Now, through spiritual eyes, he was the Savior of the world and particularly, her Savior, by whose death and resurrection alone she could be saved.

Now she saw him as the Messiah, in whom alone there is salvation, “.. for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12. The veil of darkness covering her heart was lifted and, being granted eyes to see, she now firmly rejects all previous earthly and human judgments concerning him and begins to see him as the promised Messiah, the Son of God whom God the Father sent “in the likeness of human flesh,” that he may condemn sin in the flesh, Rom 8:3. Armed with this powerful, saving insight, she responds to the revelation of Jesus Christ in the best possible way. What shall she render to the Lord for all of its benefits towards her in Christ? Ps 116:12. The most expensive items at her disposal.

Thus, she breaks into this dinner with great boldness and begins to shower Jesus Christ with the most expensive gift upon which she can lay her hands. It is therefore not presumptuous for us to consider anachronistically that she was singing the words of Isaac Watts, “Were the whole realm of nature mine/ That were an offering far too small;/ Love so amazing, so divine, /Demands my soul, my life, my all.” From “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross.”

Her open attitude and actions demonstrate a profound gratitude towards Christ and must be understood as a sincere expression of worship. In her person, she fulfills the apostolic principle of presenting “.. your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” Rom 12:1. Her free expressions of lavish gratitude are joyful celebrations of her redeemed soul in praise and thanksgiving to her Redeemer.

We will develop this thought the next time we meet.