

“He Told Me All That I Ever Did”

By Kent Heaton

It is difficult to go many places these days without a camera watching us. Cameras record our traffic patterns, shopping, eating, sports and many times we are unaware of who is watching us and why. Consider the story of the woman at the well with Jesus (John 4). The disciples left Jesus at the well of Jacob to buy food and a woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus (although wearied from his travel) used the opportunity to show the woman the “fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14). The Lord asks the woman to call for her husband and she said, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly” (John 4:17-18). When the disciples returned the woman left and returning to the city said to the men, “Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” (John 4:29).

No man has the omniscience of the Lord. There is much we can know about one another but this can only be a fraction of the knowledge of “everything we have done.” The evidence that Jesus was God is found in His knowledge of man. Many people believed in Jesus “but Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man” (John 2:24-25). The woman at the well was astonished that Jesus knew everything about her and as a result many of the city believed Jesus was the Christ.

The irony of human frailty is that we honestly believe that no one knows what we do. As the iceberg, we only show a small portion of our true self to the world and the rest is hidden deep underneath. However, the Lord sees the whole picture of our lives. “There is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:13). The psalmist David understood this mystery in Psalm 139. “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence” (Psalm 139:7). His conclusion was there was nowhere to go that the Lord was not already there.

The woman at the well recognized the power of Jesus when she realized the depth of His knowledge. She attributed His knowledge to evidence He was the Christ. When we come to Christ we too must concede His knowledge in everything we do and everything we say. The apostle Paul explained it this way: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). If Christ lives in me, He can tell me everything I have ever done.

How wonderful to know the Lord is with us every minute and sees everything we do and hears everything we say. If this frightens us then we have things to change in our lives. If this blesses us then we are seeking to please the Lord in our lives. “For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him” (2Chron. 16:9). Our hearts reveal who we are (Matt. 15:1-20) and if we allow Christ to dwell in our hearts through faith (Eph. 3:17) then we can “be anxious for nothing ... and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6-7). How can we not be anxious? Remember – “He told me all that I ever did.”

THAT is Our Tradition!

It is said that during a service at an old synagogue in Eastern Europe, when the Shema prayer was said, half the congregants stood up and half remained sitting. The half that was

seated started yelling at those standing to sit down, and the ones standing yelled at the ones sitting to stand up.

The rabbi, learned as he was in the Law and commentaries, didn't know what to do. His congregation suggested that he consult a housebound 98-year-old man who was one of the original founders of their temple. The rabbi hoped the elderly man would be able to tell him what the actual temple tradition was, so he went to the nursing home with a representative of each faction of the congregation.

The one whose followers stood during Shema said to the old man, "Is it our tradition to stand during this prayer?" The old man answered, "No, that is not our tradition." The one whose followers sat asked, "Is it our tradition to sit during Shema?" The old man answered, "No, that is not our tradition."

Then the rabbi said to the old man, "The congregants fight all the time, yelling at each other about whether they should sit or stand..."

The old man interrupted, exclaiming, "Now THAT is our tradition!"

I wonder how many congregations have that same tradition? Seriously, though, what is our tradition? What is it that we have done over and over until it is what we are known for? Is it our posture in prayer? The number of verses in the songs we sing? Or is it our fussing and arguing with one another? Traditions of men are to be rejected when they oppose the commandments of God (Mark 7:9), but tradition is nothing more than the way we normally do things. Wouldn't it be great to have a tradition of loving service to God? Or a tradition of unity?

The church in Thessalonica had a great tradition. Paul speaks of it as he opens his second letter to them. 2Thes. 1:3 - "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other." 2Thes. 2:15 - "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle."

What's your tradition? Or rather what do you contribute to keeping the traditions of peace, love, strength, and growth in this place?

I'd Throw Up

A Bible class teacher was telling her class the story of the Good Samaritan, in which a man was beaten, robbed and left for dead. She described the situation in vivid detail so her students would catch the seriousness of the setting. Then she asked the class, "If you saw a person lying on the roadside all wounded and bleeding, what would you do?" A little girl broke the hushed silence by saying: "I think I'd throw up!"

Does the parable of the good Samaritan make you uncomfortable? It teaches a very strong lesson that we can't escape. There's no way to explain this parable away, no way to come up with an interpretation that soothes the conscience. We are uncomfortable because we realize that it is easier to relate to the priest and Levite.

It is easy to help the beautiful people, the clean people, the healthy people, the people who look, dress, act, and talk like we do. The Samaritan helped a foreigner who looked upon his people with contempt; he helped a man who was the victim of criminals (the muggers could come back); he helped a man that was a mess; he helped a man without the assurance that he would be paid back. He helped him because he was a man in need!

God gives you opportunities to do good unto others, to alleviate suffering, to teach the gospel. Don't see a dirty sinner; see instead a precious soul.