

# Family Gospel Lesson

John 4:5—42

The Samaritan Woman at the well is known to us as St. Photini, Equal-to-the-Apostles. After her life-altering meeting with Jesus Christ and His Death and Resurrection, she was baptized by the apostles with the name Photini (meaning “enlightened one”). She proceeded to evangelize many in Africa before being brought before Nero in Rome and receiving a crown of martyrdom along with her family. Photini came to the well to fill her water pot to sustain physical life but left with something much more—living water that quenched her spiritual thirst. Jesus Christ’s interaction with the Samaritan Woman is notable for several reasons. It was considered inappropriate for Jesus, as a teacher, as a male, and as a Jew, to engage in conversation with such a person. Samaritans were considered “half-breeds” or heretics—former Jews who had apostatized from the true faith. Jesus Christ, being the second Person of the Trinity, establishes that the Kingdom of God encompasses all people proclaiming His Word. Sometimes the unlikeliest people serve as His most convincing witnesses. The Gospel account also reveals to us how Jesus is able to see into the depths of all hearts and know who truly longs for Him and belongs to Him.



## For Consideration

- What is happening in this Gospel lesson? What is the significance of Jesus Christ asking a Samaritan woman for a drink of water? What is the disciples’ reaction to this meeting?
- What does it mean to worship God in spirit and truth? Is our worship in Spirit and Truth? How so?
- What does this Gospel passage mean for our lives?

# TO DO TOGETHER

## Filled with the Living Water

St. Photini took a water pot to fill from the well but instead she was filled with *Living Water*, Christ. Find something to represent your family's "water pot." At dinner every night have everyone write down things they did to drink of the living water (prayed, fasted, read the Bible, went to church, gave charity, etc.). When done, everyone can fold up their paper and place it in. Over the days, the pot will fill—and your family will be filled with the living water.

## Family Ties

St. Photini first spread the Gospel of Christ to her family. They in turn continued to spread the Good News with her. Her five sisters and two sons were martyred along with her and are recognized as saints in our Church. Take time to research some of her family members and how they served Christ. Discuss how we as families can encourage each other to witness to Christ.

## Feasting on His Will

In this Gospel lesson Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me." How can we feast on the will of our Heavenly Father? Include in your discussion the passage from the Lord's Prayers that reads, "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

## Closing Prayer

*When through your inexpressible dispensation, Christ God, you appeared on earth, the woman of Samaria, having heard your word, full of love for mankind, left her bucket at the well and ran saying to those in the city, "Come, see the one who knows the heart: is not this the expected Christ, who has great mercy?"*

*Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Both now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.*

—from the Vespers of the Samaritan Woman

## Final Thought

The Samaritan woman goes off, leaving her water pot behind. She goes to her fellow countrymen: 'Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?' Faith in Christ has not only begun to shine in her soul, but she now takes upon herself a certain ministry, an apostleship. This apostleship is fruitful, because the Samaritans leave the city and come out to witness. Witness is quite different from preaching. The preacher says: 'Believe this' or 'Do this'. The witness says: 'This is what happened to me'. There is much greater efficacy, much greater persuasive power, in bearing witness than in preaching. We are not all called to preach, but each person can, in his own sphere, bear simple and humble witness to the graces that have been granted to him.

—from The Year of Grace of the Lord by a Monk of the Eastern Church



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