

John - Commentaries by Grandma Smith

God's Wonderful Stories: Volume 2, Pointing a Finger

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Jesus had spent all that dark and chilly night on the Mount of Olives, and early in the morning He went to the temple where His people came to worship.

It seems that many of them were out of bed early too that morning. They had something special on their minds. They had a duty to do. It was a chance to show how right they were. It was a chance to show how wrong somebody else was.

I think we understand that very well, and we might have been up early too to join the stone-throwing crowd against one bad woman. She was a married woman who had been found in the night with someone else's husband.

Her accusers were good, religious people who knew the ten commandments well. They were sure that this woman had broken a commandment and were quite sure she should be stoned to death. The law of Moses said so. They asked Jesus what should be done.

God Himself was the One who gave those ten commandments, and God was there that early morning in the person of Jesus, His eternal Son. The same God whose finger wrote those ten commandments on tablets of stone long ago was standing there, and God does not change His holiness to suit our sins.

They waited for His answer, and I can imagine the poor, scared woman held her breath. But Jesus did not speak. He stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground.

What did He write? We are not told, but some of the most wonderful words of Jesus are written down for anyone to read, words such as, "[You] shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). The Bible is God's personal message for you.

These accusers were so busy finger-pointing and fault-finding that perhaps they missed the wonderful words written by the finger of Jesus Himself. And you - DON'T MISS IT TOO!

But the accusers kept right on asking what should be done about this woman's great sin against the law of Moses. Jesus stood up and said to them, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Then He stooped down and wrote on the ground again.

That brought silence. Everyone in the presence of that Holy One began to search his own heart, and everyone found the same thing. Sin. Search your own heart and you will find it there too. Sin. And God knows all about it.

The gray-haired ones among them were the first to feel their guilt. They had been sinners a long time, and their lists were long and ugly, even if no one else knew about them. The oldest one there quietly slipped away. He could not throw a stone. And so it went on, right down to the youngest and strongest who could have lifted a boulder to throw at her. But each one knew that his heart was sinful too, and each one slipped away.

Gone. All gone! But why did they go? Why didn't they come to the feet of Jesus and tell Him that they were sinners too? Listen, you who are reading this story, don't go away. Don't go away from the only One who can save you. Jesus knows your sin far better than you do, but He loves you, and that's why He died for you. He wants to cleanse you from those sins that make you guilty in His sight. There is no salvation for you anywhere else. Don't go away!

Now the poor woman had her chance to escape. She was no longer in a ring of accusers pointing fingers who had the right to stone her to death. The only One left was the sinless, holy Son of God. She stood silent, but she did not go away.

Jesus said to her, "Where are . . . thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?"

She said, "No man, Lord."

And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

How could Jesus leave her uncondemned? Is that fair after what the Word of God had said in the Old Testament?

The only way He could let her go free was to bear the punishment for that sin Himself. And not only for that one sin, but for all the black history of her life. He did this during the hours of darkness on Calvary's cross. Only Jesus had a right to throw a deadly stone at her, but only Jesus could take the total punishment upon Himself.

Will you go away from Him too? Will you carry your own sins down into eternity with you, or will you come to Him now - the One who offers you total forgiveness, at the cost of His own precious blood? "Who can forgive sins but God only?" (Mark 2:7). "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

There was a great crowd - thousands of people, and they were hungry. We have seen pictures of hungry crowds like that, and perhaps some of you have suffered from little or no food. Most of us don't know very much about being hungry. We wish we could help those who are, but we don't know what to do.

The Lord Jesus looked up and saw a crowd like that. They had followed Him because they saw how wonderfully He had healed sick people, and they wanted a share of His miracles. There were a few disciples close to Him who were there because they loved Him and had answered His call to follow Him. One of these was Philip.

In the heart of Jesus there is perfect wisdom, love and power. He wanted Philip (and you and me too) to know this, so He asked a test question: "[Where] shall we buy bread, that these [people] may eat?"

Philip's idea was to buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and with this maybe everyone could have a little. Philip didn't even have the money, but this idea was the best he could think of.

When you have a problem, do you offer God the best idea you can think of to solve it? Like Philip's, your own plan is so tiny that it is no good at all. Have you stopped to think that you are speaking to the same Jesus who has perfect wisdom, love and power? Answer His test question by telling Him you don't know the answer, but you are sure He does. Philip didn't have the right answer. He could have said, "Show us, Lord." When you don't have the answer, trust Him and say, "Show me, Lord."

There was another disciple there - a quiet man named Andrew. He spoke up and said to Jesus, "There is a lad here, [who has] five barley loaves, and two small fishes." He seemed almost ashamed of such a suggestion, so he added, "But what are they among so many?" Maybe that was not a good question, but he was asking the right Person. Give the problem to Jesus, and give Him what you have. See what His hands will do!

We don't hear any more about the lad, but we know that he was willing to give to Jesus, not part of his food, but all of it. Can you imagine how thrilled he was when he saw what Jesus did with it and had a share of that miracle supper himself !

The Bible doesn't tell us what the lad's name was, but it is enough that Jesus knows. Is there a lad reading this? Is there someone willing to give to Jesus something he would find useful for himself if he kept it?

Then Jesus said, "Make the men sit down." There was plenty of grass to sit on, and Mark tells us that they were seated in groups of fifty, men, women and children, probably at least ten thousand in all. With such a tiny supply of food on hand, Jesus' disciples really must have been trusting Him when they seated the hungry crowds for supper.

Then Jesus thanked God His Father for the food. And He divided the bread and fish so that Philip and the other disciples could pass it to the eager hands stretched out for supper.

Do you stop to thank God for your food before you eat? Every bite comes from God, and if you are hungry you are ready to eat it all. But do you sometimes grumble a bit if it's not your favorite? "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:20).

But where is Jesus now? Why is He not here to feed the hungry today? Because He was unwanted. The crowds shouted, "Away with Him, crucify Him." And He is gone. What does your heart say to Him now? We have shared lots of things with the selfish and wicked crowds, but we have turned away from Jesus while we enjoyed His gifts, and now He is gone. But He is risen from the dead and is living now in heaven, with the same wisdom, love and power that filled His heart when He was here. He is ready to forgive you - ready to make you His own. He loves you and died for you. Will you come to Him right now?

Jesus told His disciples to gather up the leftovers after everyone had eaten. They found that they had twelve baskets full of food. What did they do with it? Don't worry. He does not explain to us His full supply for our needs. But if Jesus is your Savior, you will never come to the last crumb of His wisdom, love and power. Your basket will always be full.

"My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

God's Wonderful Stories: Volume 1, Poolside Story, The

It was far more important than an ordinary swimming pool. It was a pool in Jeru-salem, and if you had been there you might have heard the bleating of sheep because there was a sheep market nearby.

Around this pool you would not find deck chairs and sunbathers; you would find sick people. The pool had five porches full of blind, diseased, crippled and paralyzed people. Some had friends with them, and some were alone. Some were sitting, and some were lying on bedrolls. All of them were waiting . . . waiting in their misery and their hope.

What were they waiting for?

God cared about their misery, and at a certain time of year He sent an angel to stir up the water. When that happened, there was great excitement among the sick and crippled who waited in hope. How they struggled to get into the pool! They knew that the first one, and only the first one, who stepped into the pool would be healed of whatever disease he had.

How we pity those poor people! If you had been there, perhaps you would have been a helper, but, of course, that would not be possible if you were crippled too. I wonder if you have ever faced the problem that you are crippled with sin - sin that you cannot erase and bad habits that you cannot break. Being tied up with sins, it is impossible to make your own way to God's home of holiness and joy in heaven. Because of your sins, you are on your way to a lost eternity in hell.

Did you notice that it was an angel that stirred up the water, and that it was only the first person into the pool who was healed? But God has not sent an angel to set you free from your sins. God has sent His only begotten Son! And the promise is not to only the first who comes - it is to everyone who comes! Better still, the promise is not for the healing of the body for those who eventually will die anyway. No, this promise is for everlasting life - forever as a child of God in the Father's house. How could anyone say, "I don't care"?

Jesus, the Son of God, was by the pool one day. He saw a man there who had been sick for thirty-eight years. Jesus said to the sick man, "Wilt thou be made whole?" Today we would say, "Would you like to be healed?"

You would think that the man would say, "Yes!" But he didn't! Instead, he began to explain about the pool and the stirring up of the water and that he had nobody to help him. Did he not know who was talking to him?

Then Jesus, who created our bodies, spoke with His authority and power and said, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." Immediately the man was healed, and he picked up his bedroll and walked.

The day on which this happened was the Sabbath, Saturday, the day which God had given to Israel as a day of rest. This quickly started an argument. It was against the Jews' religion to carry anything on the Sabbath, and the healed man had carried his bedroll. They were right about this. God had promised six days of blessing and success if they were obedient, and then they were to have a day of rest. But Jesus came to a land of disobedience and misery, and He cared so much for their sorrows that He healed even on the Sabbath day. They had lost their success and their rest because of sin. But they cared more about their religion than about the loving Savior who came to set them free.

Who told you to carry your bed? they asked. But all the poor man could say was, I don't know.

Is that your answer too? Don't you care to know Jesus? He is the One who came into the world to save sinners. Your health comes from Him now, and an eternal life in heaven can never come from anyone but Jesus.

Jesus had slipped away among the crowd, and the healed man did not seem to care. But Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."

It seems that with a healthy body, the man had not faced the problem of his sins. Have you? Do you know that sin is more serious than thirty-eight years of sickness, because sin can cause you to spend eternity in hell, and eternity means forever? Hell is the end of the road if you have no Savior.

The man left Jesus and then told those who had asked him that it was Jesus who had healed him. Their response was a plan to kill Jesus.

There we leave the man who was healed, in the company of the haters of Christ. This story is in John 5, but it says no more about him. As far as we know, he is still in that company. What is your company now? and for eternity? Is it Christ the Savior of sinners, or is it the haters of Christ? You may choose Him now, today. It may be too late to make a choice tomorrow.

"Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40). "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

God's Wonderful Stories: Volume 1, Who Tells Fish What to Do?

"I'm going fishing," said Peter long ago. It was evening and a good time for casting his fishing net into the sea. Peter was a skilled fisherman, and he didn't fish just for fun. It was how he earned his living. His father was a fisherman too.

Peter was old enough to have many memories stored up in his mind. Some of his were very special memories, because he was alive when Jesus lived on earth. He had been there when Jesus was crucified and buried, and he had seen the empty grave on that wonderful morning of His resurrection. He was also one of those who had seen Jesus, twice, since then.

Now Peter and six others were out under the stars with their dragnet, and he knew the ways of fish. It would be a good night.

But it wasn't. They had fished hopefully during the long night hours, but when the morning light began to glow in the eastern sky, they had caught nothing. Not one single fish.

Have you found your life to be like that? All your hard work adds up to nothing; your nets are empty and the future looks empty too? Listen to this story, because it is true. God can command the fish, and He can give you much better than you can ask or hope for. "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20).

Those seven fishermen saw a Man standing on the shore. There was no halo around His head; He looked like an ordinary man. This Man called to them and asked them if they had any food.

“No,” they answered.

Then that Man Jesus told them to cast the net on the right side of the boat and they would catch some.

How could Jesus know that? How could He tell experienced fishermen how to fish? Do you not know that our Jesus is the Creator of all things, and everything is under His control? Are you remembering that He is the Son of God? They cast the net on the right side of the boat, and it was so full of fish that they could hardly drag it into the boat.

Now there was one man in the boat who knew for a fact that Jesus loved him, and he said to Peter, “It is the Lord!”

Peter’s heart answered at once, I want to go to Him! And he put on his fisherman’s coat and jumped into the sea to go to Jesus at once. Never mind the fish . . . the others could drag them in.

As soon as the boat came to shore, the fishermen saw a nice little fire there, burned down to hot coals, and fish laid on it and bread.

“Bring the fish you have caught,” Jesus said. Peter pulled in the catch. How many fish were there? One hundred and fifty three . . . and they were big ones!

We don’t hear any more about those fish. I am sure they were not wasted, but Jesus Himself was the important One, and those men were important because Jesus loved them.

I wonder if you have learned that you are important because Jesus loves you. Never mind the failures or the successes. Jesus knows how to change the failures and use the successes to make your life what He wants you to be. What is most important is having Him in your life!

They had a wonderful breakfast that morning, because Jesus Himself cooked and served it with His own hands. And they were wounded hands, because He had already been crucified and risen from the dead. His resurrection body was not hungry, but He knew that they were hungry, and He made the breakfast for them that they liked best.

He still lives to supply our needs. There was a long, lonely, dark, hopeless night before that meal, and perhaps life is like that for you now. Be of good courage. You will see Him in the “morning,” and He will not go away as He did when He went up into heaven and left His followers here.

To be with Jesus in heaven will be far better than the best feast you ever had in your whole life. If He has put some disappointments in your life now, let Him use them for His perfect plans. But keep watching for the “morning” when He will call all those who are cleansed from their sins to His home in heaven. “He that shall come will come, and will not tarry [delay]” (Hebrews 10:37).

But I have a question for you. Have you been cleansed from your sins? If not, don’t wait! or you’ll be left behind. “The blood of Jesus Christ [God’s] Son cleans-eth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

God’s Wonderful Stories: Volume 2, Come and See

When you hear someone say, “Come and see,” do you come? I guess it depends on who says it. If it’s the right person, you probably come. This is a story about the time Jesus said, “Come and see,” and we can be sure He is the right Person!

There were two men standing with John, and it was the same day John saw Jesus walking and exclaimed, “Behold the Lamb of God!” This was very wonderful, because long ago the words were written, “God will provide Himself a lamb” (Genesis 22:8), and Je-sus was God’s Lamb. He didn’t look like it, but He was.

Those two men left John and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following Him and asked them what they were looking for. They answered and asked Jesus where He lived. And Jesus answered them with those wonderful words, “Come and see.”

We don’t know the names of both of those two men who followed Jesus, but you could pretend it was you and your best friend. Would you come? Remember, it’s Jesus who is inviting you. Let me ask again, Would you come?

The two men both came. We don’t know the street or the house, but it doesn’t matter. We know that Jesus was there, and they must have been delighted, for they stayed all the rest of the day.

After that, Jesus invited Philip to “follow Me.” Philip was so delighted that he was off to share the news with his friend Nathanael. He told Nathanael, “We have found Him,” and then he explained to Nathanael that this was the same person that God had told them about in the Old Testament. It is “Jesus of Nazareth”!

Nathanael wasn’t so sure. It didn’t seem possible to him that a man from the town of Nazareth could be the “Promised One.” He said to Philip, “Can . . . any good thing come out of Nazareth?”

How are you going to argue with a man like that? Would you tell him that Nazareth is not really so bad after all? What would you say?

Philip gave Nathanael the best answer. He said, “Come and see.” And Nathanael came and saw Jesus, and Nathanael’s heart was truly satisfied as to who this person really was. He exclaimed, “Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel” (John 1:49).

Do you see what happens when you “come and see”? Maybe you have a friend who is inviting you now to “come and see” Jesus - not to see His face, not to see a picture, not to see a big church building, but to come and see Jesus as God shows Him to us in the Bible. If you “come and see,” you will find that He will not disappoint you, and you can learn more about Him and His love for you every day.

“Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that [comes] to Me shall never hunger; and he that [believes] on Me shall never thirst” (John 6:35). “Come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live” (Isaiah 55:3).

Will you “come and see”?

God's Wonderful Stories: Volume 2, He Washed Their Feet

It was Easter time, just before the Passover. Jesus sat down at the supper table, and there were twelve men there with Him.

After supper was over, the men were watching their dear Master to see what He would do next. But not all twelve of them loved Him. There was one who had a dark secret in his heart, which Satan himself had put there. Satan knew that one man's heart was not looking to Jesus, but, rather, that he was thinking about money, and that was the very spot where Satan could plant his seed of wickedness. What do you think about when others are looking to Jesus and praising and worshipping Him?

Jesus knew Judas was thinking about money, but nothing changed the love in His heart. He took off His outer coat and then tied a towel around His waist, poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet. They were dirty feet, soiled by the unpaved roads of Jerusalem, and it was usually the task of a slave to wash and dry them. But on that day, it was Jesus, King of kings and Lord of lords, who stooped to wash off the dirt, one foot at a time, and leave them dry and comfortable. Jesus was teaching the disciples a lesson.

This was a hard lesson for Peter to learn. He said to Jesus, “Thou shalt never wash my feet!” But Peter had to learn that we cannot share the joy of the Lord's company if we cling to the dirt and filth of the world we are passing through.

Peter really wanted the Lord's company more than anything, so he said, “Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head” (John 13:9). Wrong again, Peter! If Jesus has saved you and made you forever clean, what you need is everyday cleansing from the unclean things around you if you want to enjoy the Lord's company.

That once-forever sin cleansing can be done by Jesus only, but the daily cleansing we can do for one another. Let's use the water of the Word to help one another.

“Ye are clean,” said Jesus, “but not all.”

Nobody else knew, but Jesus knew that Judas had never received that once-forever sin cleansing. Judas did not love Jesus; he loved money.

Did Jesus Himself ever have His feet washed? Yes He did. He was invited to dinner at the house of a proud Pharisee, and while He was at the table, a sinful woman came behind Him and washed His feet with her tears. Now God did not write the Bible in English. He wrote the New Testament in the Greek language, and He uses a different word for washing. It was not to wash away the dirt of the streets, but rather to refresh His holy feet. Then she wiped His feet with the hairs of her head. And she left them not only washed and dried, but she poured sweet-smelling perfume over His blessed feet.

The proud Pharisee was not pleased at all with this woman, but Jesus knew what was in the heart of that sinful woman, just as He knew what was in the heart of Judas, and in your heart too. And Jesus said, “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven.”

Why didn't Judas have that wonderful forgiveness too? Because he never repented and came to Jesus to receive it, and so he took his sins into eternity with him. Are you forgiven? And if so, do you know the joy of the Lord's company every day? And do you help others to be clean from the world's dirt and filth? This is what Jesus wants you to do.

“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them” (John 13:17). “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered” (Romans 4:7).

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