Devotional Reflection, Thursday, August 13, 2026
Proper 14, the week of the eleventh Sunday after Pentecost.
The Rev. David W. Perkins, Th.D.

A Place That Has to Be Believed to Be Seen

Key phrases for reflection from today's reading:
39Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I have ever done.' 40So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. 41And many more believed because of his word. 42They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world.'

You will find the full text of today's Gospel at the end of this reflection.

Daily Office Lectionary Readings (*BCP*, 979)
AM Psalm 102; PM Psalm 107:1-32
Judges 14:20-15:20; Acts 7:17-29; John 4:43-54

Today we celebrate the Feast of Jeremy Taylor. (See below).

David's Reflections

On their hit album, "All that You Can't Leave Behind," U 2 sings these words in the title song:
"You're traveling to a place none of us has seen.
A place that has to be believed to be seen." +

The woman who had come to draw water, as reported in today's Gospel, journeyed to a place neither she nor her villagers had seen. She came to faith in Jesus. How could she invite them to begin that same faith journey? They had never seen that place to which she now had journeyed?

She returned to the village and invited them to go to the well where Jesus had remained. She could not not share. She could not not try. She could not not invite. They responded to her invitation and came to faith in Jesus for themselves. Then, they said to her, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe." They had begun their own journey to a place none of them had seen.

Because of our faith in Christ, we are making our own journey to a place we have not seen, a journey that our friends, coworkers, and relatives who do not share our faith could not possibly understand. For you to desire that they share in the love and forgiveness and life that Jesus is giving you is natural and right. To invite them to "come and see" is the essence of being a Christian witness. We cannot not share. We cannot not try. We cannot not invite.

You may fear making that invitation. You may have no clue how to do so; but, you can resolve within yourself not to rest until you have begun finding ways to share what Christ means to you. You can seek to do so in a natural and nonintrusive way. Stories like this one abound in Holy Scripture, stories of people bringing others to Jesus. The writers obviously are trying to tell us something.

One of our chief ways of sharing as Episcopalians is to invite others to worship with us. In the service of the Word and Communion, the story of God's salvation in Christ is told and then is presented visually and in tactile fashion in Holy Eucharist. People often come to faith after exposure to Christ's love in the liturgy.

Sara Miles, an atheist, awakened to Christ's presence receiving Eucharist at St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church in San Francisco. She said about that moment, ". . .someone was putting a piece of fresh, crumbly bread in my hands, and saying, 'The body of Christ,' and handing me the goblet of sweet wine, saying, 'the blood of Christ,' and then something outrageous and terrifying happened. Jesus happened to me," * She journeyed to a place that had to be believed to be seen.

Our journey keeps taking us to places we have not seen; that's what following Christ is all about. One of those places for you may be the natural sharing and inviting of others to come and see. Trust that Christ will take you to that place. It's a place that has to be believed to be seen. Believe that Christ will get you there and resolve to follow along.

"You're traveling to a place none of us has seen.
A place that has to be believed to be seen." +

+ U2, CD "All That You Can't Leave Behind." (Universal International Music, 2000.)

* Sara Miles, *Take This Bread: The Spiritual memoir of a twenty-first century Christian*. (New York: Ballantine Books, 2007), pp. 57-58. See her web site at https://sara-miles.squarespace.com/.

Collect of the Day, Proper 14, the eleventh Sunday after Pentecost
Grant to us, Lord, we pray, the spirit to think and do always those things that are right, that we, who cannot exist without you, may by you be enabled to live according to your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen*. (BCP, 232)

Today we celebrate the Feast of Jeremy Taylor, bishop and theologian (died 13 Aug 1667 CE).
http://satucket.com/lectionary/Jeremy_Taylor.htm
https://livingchurch.org/church-life/jeremy-taylor-contentedness-in-hard-circumstances/

Collect of the Feast of Jeremy Taylor
O God, whose days are without end, and whose mercies cannot be numbered: Make us, like your servant Jeremy Taylor, deeply aware of the shortness and uncertainty of human life; and let your Holy Spirit lead us in holiness and righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

For the Sick (written by Jeremy Taylor)
O God, whose days are without end, and whose mercies cannot be numbered; Make us, we beseech thee, deeply sensible of the shortness and uncertainty of human life; and let thy Holy Spirit lead us in holiness and righteousness all our days: that, when we shall have served thee in our generation, we may be gathered unto our fathers, having the testimony of a good conscience; in the communion of the Catholic Church; in the confidence of a certain faith; in the comfort of a reasonable, religious,

and holy hope; in favour with thee our God, and in perfect charity with the world. All which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*.

For those in the Armed Forces of our Country
Almighty God, we commend to your gracious care and keeping all the men and women of our armed forces at home and abroad. Defend them day by day with your heavenly grace; strengthen them in their trials and temptations; give them courage to face the perils which beset them; and grant them a sense of your abiding presence wherever they may be; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (BCP, 823)

In the Morning
This is another day, O Lord. I know not what it will bring forth, but make me ready, Lord, for whatever it may be. If I am to stand up, help me to stand bravely. If I am to sit still, help me to sit quietly. If I am to lie low, help me to do it patiently. And if I am to do nothing, let me do it gallantly. Make these words more than words, and give me the Spirit of Jesus. Amen. (BCP, 461)

A Collect for Mission
Merciful God, creator of all the peoples of the earth and lover of souls: Have compassion on all who do not know you as you are revealed in your Son Jesus Christ; let your Gospel be preached with grace and power to those who have not heard it; turn the hearts of those who resist it; and bring home to your fold those who have gone astray; that there may be one flock under one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*. (BCP, 280)

<u>Daily Office Gospel, John 4:27-42</u>
27 Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a
woman, but no one said, 'What do you want?' or, 'Why are you speaking with her?'
28Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the
people, 29'Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot
be the Messiah, can he?' 30They left the city and were on their way to him.
31Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, 'Rabbi, eat something.' 32But he said to
them, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.' 33So the disciples said to one
another, 'Surely no one has brought him something to eat?' 34Jesus said to them, 'My
food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. 35Do you not
say, "Four months more, then comes the harvest"? But I tell you, look around you,
and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. 36The reaper is already receiving wages

and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together.
37For here the saying holds true, “One sows and another reaps.” 38I sent you to reap
that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into
their labor.’ 39Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the
woman’s testimony, ‘He told me everything I have ever done.’ 40So when the
Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two
days. 41And many more believed because of his word. 42They said to the woman, ‘It
is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves,
and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world.’

Daily Offices in the Book of Common Prayer

Morning Prayer, Rite 2, page 75, *The Book of Common Prayer*
Noonday Prayer, page 103, *Book of Common Prayer*
Order of Worship for Evening (Vespers), p 109, *Book of Common Prayer*
Evening Prayer, Rite 2, page 115, *Book of Common Prayer*
Compline (Night Prayer), page 127, *Book of Common Prayer*
Daily Devotionals, page 136, *Book of Common Prayer*