

Water of life

Notes on the Bible readings

- In this passage from John, Jesus meets a Samaritan woman at a well in the heat of the day. No one goes out to draw water in the hottest sun in the Middle East unless they have to. This woman had to because she was an outcast from society.
- Culture dictated that Jesus shouldn't have spoken to her for a number of reasons: because she was a woman in a male-dominated world, because she was a Samaritan (an outsider to the Jews), and because she had been in several different relationships – which was unacceptable in her community. But Jesus chose to engage with her.
- The woman already had faith in God and, instead of putting her down, Jesus chose to build her up, to help her see things differently, to dream together with her about a better future. Jesus valued her as a person, perhaps in a way that no one else ever had.
- What is surprising is that the woman really understands what Jesus is saying, in contrast to Nicodemus, the educated Jew. She becomes an evangelist as she runs to tell the village about Jesus, with people who probably ostracise her. As a result of sharing her story with her own people, some of them come to meet Jesus and find out for themselves who he is: 'the Saviour of the world' who reconciles divided peoples.
- Jesus' encounter with this woman makes us ask questions, like: how often do we share God's good news?

For reflection and comment linking this week's Bible reading to the news, current issues and events, go to www.rootsontheweb.com and click on PostScript.



Questions for reflection

- ▶ When have you been grateful – and more – for water?
- ▶ What does Jesus' 'life-giving water' mean to you?
- ▶ How does it make a real difference to your life?



A prayer of approach

We come to you, O Lord, recognising that only you can quench our thirst, only you can satisfy our hunger. As we approach your throne, may we recognise that your life-giving Spirit dwells within us. Draw us closer to you today. Amen.

A prayer for others

We pray for places around the world where there is no fresh water; for places that suffer constant drought, or where people have to walk miles to the nearest well.

We pray for those on the margins of society because of their status, age, disability, background or race; those who seem to have no voice – help us to hear their cries, to listen to their pleas.

We pray for all who take risks on a daily basis – in their jobs, for mere survival, to get food and water for their families; and for children involved in risky situations all over the world, trying to survive.

We pray for those in our communities who need your water of life, those who are lonely, bereaved, sad, or have lost all hope. Bring them your comfort, joy and peace.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

A personal prayer

Open my eyes, Lord, open my heart, Lord, open my mouth, Lord, to your life-changing Spirit, that all around me might see you in me. Amen.

Live your faith

Strike up a conversation with someone you would not normally engage with, and be prepared to listen to their story.