

(PPx1) The Way x20. Sunday 19 May_2019.

Wells and water on the Way. – significant places and encounters.

READ: Jeremiah 2: 9 - 13 and John 7: 37 – 44. (PPx2)

This year through our Sunday study and reflection on Scripture we aim to see a clear thread of teaching and revelation about God showing **a way forward and a way through** that we can **follow individually and as a people (*)**. JESUS declared himself to be **the Way** (to the Father *John 14: 6*) and his followers are described as those who ***belonged to the Way.*** (*Acts 9: 2*) Those who follow Jesus in everyday life and throughout life are on the cammino - the walk, the journey, the way – we are on daily pilgrimage.

(*) **Isaiah** who passed on God's promise ***to make a Way in the wilderness*** (*43: 19*) continues to describe the blessing of the Way: *44: 2- 4 I am the LORD who created you; from the time that you were born, I have helped you. Do not be afraid: you are my servant, my chosen people who I love. I will give water to the thirsty land and make streams flow in the dry ground. I will pour out my Spirit on your children and my blessings on your descendants. They will thrive like well-watered grass, like willows by streams of water.* (Promise of Pentecost – last days).

We have begun considering the importance of WELLS and WATER as part of journeying in life and said that **our relationship with Holy Spirit and places of refreshment are central to a journey of FAITH.** Walking and moving on to places of refreshment and rest at the right time and **encountering new people – new challenges and situations is also significant in life's faith journey.**

Last week Question: what are the significant meeting places/ events in your community? (John 4: 1 – 42. Jesus at Jacob's well on West Bank). What are the "wells" or watering holes as far as leisure and work go? Where are your front lines? Where are the places where you meet and can have conversations like Jesus did with the woman at the well in Sychar (Shechem – we've discussed Jacob recently and this well is part of what he bequeathed to the Samaritans)? Recognising that Jesus broke new ground here – a rabbi talking to a woman, a Jew asking a Samaritan for a drink.

Women still carry most of the world's water. WHY? (PPx3)

2.1 billion people around the world face that challenge every day of obtaining safe, clean water according to UNICEF and WHO. And the task of providing water for households **falls disproportionately to women and girls**, especially in **rural areas**. Uneven burden of water work. **Water is heavy** and many injuries and stresses are caused.

Collecting water takes time. Simply to get water for drinking, bathing, cooking and other household needs, millions of women and girls spend hours every day traveling to water sources, waiting in line and carrying heavy loads – often several times a day. This time could be better used for other things.

Fetching water can also be very dangerous for women and girls. They can face [conflict at water points](#) and the risk of [physical or sexual assault](#). Many of these dangers also arise when women do not have access to [safe, clean and private toilets or latrines](#) for urinating, defecating and managing menstruation.

Social messaging affirming the idea that water work belongs only to women must be abandoned.

Luke 22: 10 Man carry water jar? Probably a celibate Essene near Gate of Essenes.



Every long journey (and life is a long journey) is interspersed with **encounters with people and new relationships** challenges and consideration needs to be given as to how we can share the good news of Jesus as **the spring of fresh water – eternal life**. In *Jeremiah 2: 13* God describes himself as “the spring of fresh water”. **Wells, cisterns, and springs represent in the Bible** – spiritual refreshment but also meeting places and encounters. (PPx4)

In the arid places of the world **water is as precious as gold**. **WELLS** and cisterns were and remain the subject of fierce disputes for generations (Genesis 21: 25). They are **also the place where daily people meet and chat, and travellers and strangers arrive and seek refreshment and hospitality** – as did Jesus who visited Sychar.

Water sources from rivers, wells, springs and cisterns are key places for events to happen as I have said. They feature throughout the biblical account of human history. Water, rivers, wells, springs and cisterns become metaphors for metaphysical refreshment and spiritual satisfaction and indeed the work of the Holy Spirit. We read **John 7: 37 – 39 On the last and most important day of the festival....**

Cisterns: Jerusalem was well supplied with these subterranean reservoirs where the Spring rains were gathered to become a constant supply throughout the year. On this basis it could withstand sieges. These cisterns were cut out of the rock and then lined with impervious masonry and lime cement. BUT if the cement gave way the cistern became broken and was abandoned. **It was Jeremiah’s constant cry that from God’s perspective the people of Israel had dug cisterns that were broken and didn’t hold water. Jeremiah 2: 13.** (Dry cisterns were used as dungeons or holding cells as in the case of Jeremiah (38:6) and Joseph (*Genesis 37: 24*). These cisterns would have probably been shaped like “huge bottles” with narrow necks to slow down evaporation. (PPx5)

Jeremiah began his prophetic life 627/626 BC – the 13th year of Josiah’s reign. He was a Benjamite and has been nick named “the weeping prophet” and he was a reluctant

prophet – saying he was too young and not a good enough speaker. (Huldah was a relative and contemporary prophet and *Zephaniah* and *Isaiah* were his mentors). He was based in Jerusalem and he prophesied until the destruction of Solomon's Temple in 587BC. This spanned the reign of 5 kings: Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. He spoke out against the false prophets who prophesied peace when there was no peace.

He condemned Israel for their behaviour and choices and prophesied their destruction from the North. They had forsaken God and God's Laws and turned to worshipping Baal and burning children in the fire as offerings to Molech. Jeremiah prophesied that famine, plundering and exile awaited them as a consequence. *Jeremiah 2: 11 - 13* – he said that this ***exchanging their relationship with him for gods that could do nothing for them*** as...***my people have committed 2 sins: they have turned away from me, the spring of fresh water, and they have dug cisterns, cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all. (PPx6)***

Jeremiah underwent various beatings and persecutions especially when he prophesied that the Babylonians would take Jerusalem. The royal officials including *Pashur* the Priest convinced King Zedekiah that he should be put to death as he was undermining the confidence of the army and people. The King did not stop this, and Jeremiah was taken and lowered into a cistern – to sink into the mud and be allowed to starve to death – rather than officially shedding his blood. A Cushite/ Ethiopian called *Ebedmelech* pleaded his case with the King and lifted him out of the cistern with ropes, and rags to protect under his arms in his weakened state. He was imprisoned in the courtyard until Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians. (*Jeremiah 38:6*)

ON the journey we will face choices as to who we walk with – who we worship and relate to: God *the spring of fresh water* or gods who do not satisfy our inner human thirst?

The Bible story says that the human story is one of people making good choices and also bad choices. JESUS continues this same message when he declares to the woman at the well that he is a source of water that springs up eternally, and when he invites everyone who is thirsty to drink of him. He also affirms that he is the authentic speaker on what is true worship in the Spirit and that all the human debating about worship are settled in him.

Jeremiah's message more than 6 centuries before the coming of Jesus expresses that the pain of God is in 2 parts:

- 1) Humans have turned away from The true *spring of fresh water* – there is only One and
- 2) Humanity has suffered because *the cisterns we have dug* are broken, they do not hold water.

Cisterns we have dug for ourselves:

- False gods including –
- Religion and rules
- Loving money and wealth
- Numerous destructive relationships e.g. woman at well and her 5 + men

- Idolatry of family relationship
- Popularity as a goal
- Work
- Sports/fitness/ image – all in one

Call – invitation to come back into relationship with Trinity God and drink.

*1 Corinthians 12: 12, 13. Christ is like a single body, even though it is made up of different parts. In the same way all of us whether Jews or Gentiles, whether slaves or free, have been baptised into one body by the same Spirit, and we have **all been given the one Spirit to drink.***

ARE you drinking of the Spirit or are you still trying to satisfy yourselves with things that do not hold water and do not satisfy?

Wealth and money, relationships and family and friendships, work, leisure, fitness and body image **all have their place** BUT it is seeking and choosing God's Kingdom that keeps them in their right place and brings inner satisfaction. (That is the message of all the Bible teachers including Jeremiah and of Jesus himself).