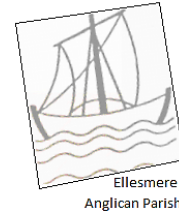


**Northwest Christchurch,
Ellesmere & Hororata Parishes**

**Church@Home Service
12 March 2023 – Healing Service
3rd Sunday of Lent**



This is the day that the Lord has made:
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Our Theme today is:

DON'T TALK TO STRANGERS – TRUE OR FALSE?

Take a moment or two to be still and ask God to be present with you as you worship.

The gathering of the community

We have come together to acknowledge God's presence with praise and affirmation, to seek reconciliation, and to pray for healing and wholeness.

The Lord be with us.

The Lord bless us.

Jesus said, "Heal the sick and say to them, the Kingdom of God has come near to you."

Affirming that God is the source of healing and wholeness, we open our lives to him in praise and in prayer for ourselves and others.

Call to Worship:

O come, let us sing to the LORD;

let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;

let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

For the LORD is a great God,

and a great King above all gods.

O come, let us worship and bow down,

let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

For he is our God,

and we are the people of his pasture,

and the sheep of his hand.

Psalm 95:1-3,6-7

Opening Song

Mighty to Save

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3bRz2NwIi6w>

A time of confession

Happy are those whose sins are forgiven, whose wrongs are pardoned.
I will confess my sins to the Lord. I will not conceal my wrong doings.

A time of silence as we brings our sins and the sins of the world to the Lord.

God forgives and heals us:

**We need your healing, merciful God: Give us true repentance.
Some sins are plain to us; Some escape us, Some we cannot face.
Forgive us;
Set us free to hear your word to us; Set us free to serve you.**

God forgives us. Forgive others, forgive yourself.
Through Christ God has put away our sin; approach our God in peace.

Sentence and Prayer for the day

Show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

Hebrews 13:2

Prayer for the day:

O God, teach your Church always to honour the presence of the Lord in strangers so that we may learn to recognise each other as brothers and sisters gathered together around Your table. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen

1st Reading Genesis 18:1-8

18 The LORD appeared to Abraham^[a] by the oaks^[b] of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. **2** He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. **3** He said, 'My lord, if I find favour with you, do not pass by your servant. **4** Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. **5** Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.' So they said, 'Do as you have said.' **6** And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, 'Make ready quickly three measures^[c] of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes.' **7** Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. **8** Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Thanks be to God.

⁵ So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

⁷ A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink'. ⁸ (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.)^[b] ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink", you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.' ¹¹ The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?' ¹² Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' ¹³ Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' ¹⁵ The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.'

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come back.' ¹⁷ The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, "I have no husband"; ¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!' ¹⁹ The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you^[c] say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.' ²¹ Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. ²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' ²⁵ The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.' ²⁶ Jesus said to her, 'I am he,^[d] the one who is speaking to you.'

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?' ²⁸ Then 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,^[e] can he?' ³⁰ They left the city and were on their way to him.

³¹ Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, 'Rabbi, eat something.' ³² But he said to them, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.' ³³ So the disciples said to one another, 'Surely no one has brought him something to eat?' ³⁴ Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. ³⁵ Do 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. ³⁶ The reaper is already receiving^[f] wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. ³⁷ For here the saying holds true, "One sows and another reaps." ³⁸ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.'

³⁹ Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I have ever done.' ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days. ⁴¹ And many more believed because of his word. ⁴² They 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 Saviour of the world.'

This is the Gospel of Christ.

Praise to Christ, the Word.

Sermon – Don't Talk to Strangers – True or False? xxx, John 4:5-42

(An audio recording of this sermon is available at the following link:

<https://www.northwestchchparish.org.nz/sound>)

Rev Margaret

John 4: 5-42

The Samaritan woman at the well.

There are just so many things wrong with the picture we are presented with here. The trouble is that this story is filled with so much we could do with it that we could have a whole preaching series on it. So this morning I am going to look only at the context and purpose by looking at what is wrong with the picture – because it is by presenting this apparently confused picture that we are confronted with just how revolutionary Jesus' message is – from so many points of view.



Reread v.5-26

- a. The cultural problem: the woman recognises it when she asks “How is it, that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a Samaritan woman?”
- b. Actually two cultural disconnects: the Jew lowering himself to speak to a Samaritan, let alone a woman!
- c. A man alone would not risk being seen with an unattended woman
- d. What is she doing there unattended? And incidentally, she should not be there at this time. The well was a place where both men and women went, but at different times. A woman’s place was in the kitchen and home. She would only go to the well at morning or evening. Knowing this the men would go in the middle of the day.
- e. And notice what she did at the end – she went to the marketplace to tell the men about the man she had met and who he was. Women did not enter the marketplace.
- f. There is also the conversation that takes place between Jesus and the woman – a woman did not discuss politics or religion, and yet she challenges Jesus, asking if he thinks he’s greater than Jacob, she is the one who initiates the discussion about Temple worship. (You say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem). And then she is the one who mentions the Messiah – a political figure at the time, although she is showing understanding and is querying him about who he is.

This all means that if we were to do an extended study , over several Sundays we could look at

- a. Racial issues: Why was there a problem between Samaritans and Jews: she points out they have a common history in Jacob.
- b. Is Jesus anti-society? Why is Jesus depicted as ignoring the social norms (don’t speak to a woman alone)
- c. Women in Biblical times:
Is this an attempt to make us look at the role of woman in society and show that Jesus was inclusive in his message, and he chose to proclaim his message to a woman rather than the men in the marketplace?

d. Jesus , sin and forgiveness:

Why is Jesus not worried about her having gone through 5 husbands, and the fact she is still behaving in an antisocial manner - ignoring rules about where she should be and how she should be in public. Mind you, her going at that time and alone, may simply be to emphasise that the other women shunned her because she behaved so disgracefully.

e. The dialogue: Jesus does not question that she wants to have a politico=religious discussion either – he is as comfortable with her discussing worship and eternal life, and proclaiming the gospel message as he is with anyone at any other time in the gospel stories.

John Pilch in his book on the Cultural World of Jesus suggests that this is a deliberate attempt by John to show the Gentiles how subversive the message of the Gospel is; there are other characteristics in the writing we need to notice.

Jesus' dialogue with the woman is carefully orchestrated: he takes the woman from ignorance to enlightenment in 7 identifiable steps. We also see some excellent scriptwriting in the character of the woman. She begins as a woman of scorn -throwing off at the mere Judean asking her for water. By the end she is worshipping the Saviour of the World.

You see what I mean! So much is packed in here we cannot possibly do the passage justice in one measly Anglican time constrained sermon. So what to focus on?

Is it first about filling the void – we are thirsty - we need filling up; Jesus will do this with eternal water. But we need to recognise our emptiness. The woman had filled her void with 5 husbands and is now with another man.

Is it about hospitality – meeting the stranger where they are at. He was expecting her to do the work note! He didn't offer to draw water for her, he expected her to do the work –

But in telling the story we understand what a magnificent preacher Jesus is: Through his words, she and we, come to the realisation that we know who this stranger is.

And notice he initiated the discussion – it was he who broke the rules; are we too comfortable in leaving things the way they are. Do we need to overstep the boundaries somewhere in our lives, or as a parish, as a church. What lines do we need to be prepared to cross?

Jesus is the one who is thirsty after his walk – what is he doing by asking the woman to draw water for him? He gives her the chance to see the face of Christ in the stranger. He doesn't dismiss her and patiently replies to her scornful question: do you think you are greater than Jacob?

Past the portion of the story I reread this morning comes the words of the woman when she left her water jar and went back to the city. She says I met a man who told me everything I have ever done. The answer to that would surely be -so what – they would all have known her history. What is amazing will have been the joy with which she said it: why would she be that excited – its because of what she didn't say – “and he didn't care, or and he loves me anyway”; and “he was prepared to share with me” ...

She has received Christ's salvation and heard his words of hope: drink this and you will never be thirsty again. She is prepared to tell the world.

Shouldn't we all?

Response Song

People need the Lord

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_i93ysKZeR4

Prayer of Invocation

NZPB page 741

Like the first disciples before the coming of God's power at Pentecost,
we wait in faith, and pray.

Silence

Be with us, Holy Spirit; nothing can separate us from your love.

Be with us as of old, fill us with your power,

direct all our thoughts to your goodness.

Be present, Holy Spirit; bring faith and healing and peace.

Silence

The Lord is here **God's Spirit is with us.**

Worship & Ministry song:

The Goodness of Jesus - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wsJtWJTSVTw>

Prayers of the People

Our Lord Jesus Christ, You are the true, Holy, and Just judge. You are the giver of life and Most High God.

You've got the whole world and all the power in it in your mighty hands. You are the giver of life and rule over all creatures and features in heaven, earth, and the sea.

All good things come from You and it is only in You that all good things are found. You are full of mercy and love and all nations come to You for cure, healing, freedom of pain and worry.

Embrace us as a close-knit family, bind us with your soft and tender hands and draw us near to you, O Lord, for You are the true vine and we are the branches. We entirely depend on You for our life supplies.

You are our physician, our medicine, our cure, our strength, our consolation, our rest, and our life. You care, protect, heal, and love us. Thank You, dear Lord. Heal us, if it is Your will, O Lord, heal us. Amen.

Gracious God, slow to anger full of compassion and love towards us, faithful and forgiving; touch our hearts today with a fresh awareness of your presence, assure us in a deeper way that we belong to you - we are yours.

Pour out your love into our hearts by your Holy Spirit and shine your light where darkness and sorrow linger.

We bring our brokenness to you and pray healing God-make us whole
(bring before God the things you need healing for)

We bring our sickness to you and the sickness of those we love and know and we pray – Touch us all with your healing power and presence- make us new
(bring before God your need for healing and those you want to pray for today)

We bring the brokenness of our world to you and pray – bring your healing to our broken world and turn the hearts of those who are far away from you to know you, to be set free by you and to declare you as Lord.
Reach out your hand to all creation to bring renewal, healing and peace.
(bring to God the brokenness of our world)

We pray all these prayers in the name and power of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!

The following additional prayers are adapted from [Auckland Diocese Prayers](#)

For the Church, that we may all witness to God's holy wisdom and the mystery of truth.

(Silence) We pray. Lord, hear our prayer.

For tranquillity and healing in face of illness – that you may be a beacon of light and love, at a time of struggle and recovery.

(Silence) We pray. Lord, hear our prayer.

For all people suffering from natural disasters and political unrest – that you may guide them as they rebuild their lives, serving as a reminder of hope and strength to overcome such challenges.

(Silence) We pray. Lord, hear our prayer.

For those seeking employment in our community – that they may find their calling in the world, bringing joy and purpose, and in order to support those that rely on them.

(Silence) We pray. Lord, hear our prayer.

For all God's faithful people, seeking to deepen their commitment to Jesus in this time of Lent – may we ponder over God's Word on our journey of conversion and renewal, reflecting on the death and resurrection of Christ.

(Silence) We pray. Lord, hear our prayer.

For our local community of ... (an opportunity to pray for your local parish and neighbourhood)

Concluding Prayer

Hear our prayers and graciously look upon your Church, O God, which you have refreshed from the living fountain of eternal life. By the gift of your Spirit satisfy our thirst and deepen our faith in Jesus who is the rock of our salvation, and who lives forever and ever. **Amen**

O God, our life, our health and our salvation, look with mercy on your people. Stir up in us a saving faith, that believing, we may be healed, and being healed, share your good news and worthily give you thanks. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever....**AMEN**

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven. Holy be Your name.
Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as in heaven
Give us today our daily bread
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us
Save us from the time of trial
But deliver us from evil
For the kingdom the pow'r and the glory
Are Yours now and forever. Amen

Song How Great is Your love

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4eWhYDKt6c0>

Blessing

God our healer,
Keep us aware of your presence.
Support us with your power;
comfort us with your protection;
give us your strength and establish us in your peace.
And may the blessing of our holy, healing, enabling God
be with you, and stay with you always. Amen

Dismissal Go now to love and serve the Lord.
Amen we go in the name of Christ.