



# The Aldershot and North Camp Anchor

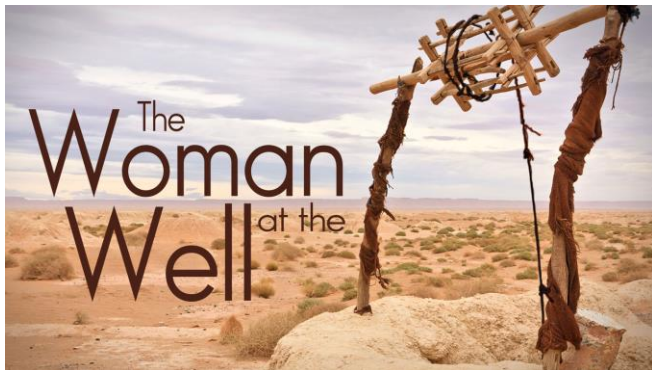
Issue 18: Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Dear Friends,

I am preparing this edition of 'The Anchor' on a day when, once again, the temperature is well above the 'seasonal average'!

Some people thrive in such heat, while others find themselves wilting and longing for the refreshment of a glass of ice-cold water.

When Jesus met the woman at the well (see John chapter 4), he was tired and thirsty from his journey and he asked her to give him a drink of water from the well.



Having our physical thirst quenched is important, but we have a spiritual thirst which is even more important. That spiritual thirst will only be quenched by the 'living water' which only Jesus can provide. I pray that, whatever the weather, you may know this living water becoming in you 'a spring of water, welling up to eternal life'.

Yours in His service,

*Chris Blake*

## Worship Reflection

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down on the collar of his robe. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life for evermore. (Psalm 133)

## Hymn (StF 685)

In Christ there is no east or west  
In him no south or north,  
But one great fellowship of love  
Throughout the whole wide earth.

Prayer: Loving God, as we draw near to you now, teach us that you are with us always, and help us to sense your presence. Remind us again of all that you have done, so that we may trust more fully in all that you will yet do, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Bible Reading (Matthew 15 v 21-28)

Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly.'



Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, 'Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.' He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.'

The woman came and knelt before him. 'Lord, help me!' she said. He replied, 'It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs.'

'Yes it is, Lord,' she said. 'Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table.'

Then Jesus said to her, 'Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.' And her daughter was healed at that moment.

Reflection: This week's Gospel reading from the cycle of readings used in the Methodist Church, is far from straightforward. Matthew's account seems to show Jesus speaking to the Canaanite woman in an aggressive or confrontational way. What is more, when speaking of his focus on the 'lost sheep of Israel', Jesus uses the derogatory term 'dogs' to refer to Gentiles. However, despite Jesus' words, the woman persists with her request for healing on behalf of her daughter and Jesus appears to make a dramatic U-turn as he not only brings healing to her daughter, but also commends the woman for her 'great faith'.

The Bible scholar R T France, in his commentary on this passage, notes that 'Cold print does not allow us to detect a quizzical eyebrow or a tongue in the cheek and it may be that Jesus's

demeanour already hinted that his discouraging reply was not to be his last word on the subject'. France then goes on to say that 'a good teacher may sometimes draw out a pupil's best insight by a deliberate challenge which does not necessarily represent the teacher's own view'.

It is a helpful insight which can enable us to see more clearly what may be going on in this conversation. What is certain is that, earlier in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus has already commended the faith of a Gentile Centurion and has spoken of how people from 'east and west' will come to take their place in the Kingdom of Heaven (See Mathew 8 v 5-13). At the very end of Mathew's Gospel this widespread invitation to all is affirmed in the 'Great Commission' when the risen Jesus commands his followers to go and 'make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28 v 16-20).

It may well be that if we were able to hear Jesus' intonation and see his facial expression, we might have an insight into his conversation with the Canaanite woman which is not obvious from the 'cold print'. What is clear is that the message of God's salvation made possible in Jesus is indeed offered to all people – to Jew and to Gentile – and to you and to me.

### Prayers of Intercession

We pray especially this week for -

- The Church Councils at Aldershot and North Camp as they meet in the week ahead to make plans for the re-opening of our buildings.
- For children and young people as they plan for their return to school and particularly for those receiving examination results that will influence their future plans.

Gracious God, we ask these prayers through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord and Saviour. Amen

### Hymn (StF 506)

My heart is full of Christ, and longs  
Its glorious matter to declare!  
Of him I make my loftier songs,  
I cannot from his praise forbear;  
My ready tongue makes haste to sing  
The glories of my heavenly King.

Final Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, live in our hearts, fill our souls and renew our minds, so that we may know and love you fully, just as you know and love us. Amen.

*The Methodist Church is encouraging us all to 'tell our stories'.*

*This week's contribution is from Rosemary Sewell from Aldershot.*

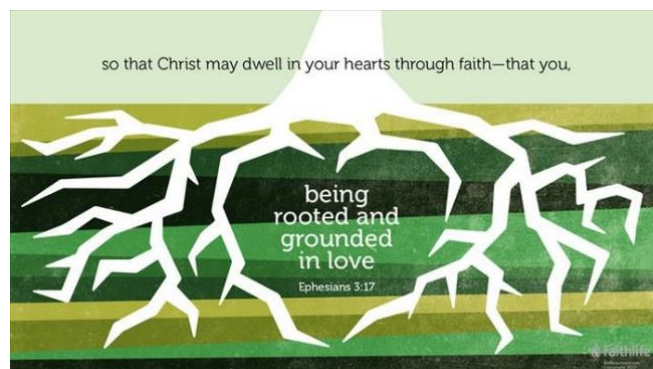


My Story dates back to the Grosvenor Road Days when it was decided, for many reasons, that during the morning service, the Prize Winning Choir would sit amongst the congregation and their families, coming forward only to sing an anthem. I was shocked to the core. I had no family present (my children were in Sunday School) I had a place in the choir - but where should I go in the vast church seating 600 - on my own?

The morning the new arrangement was to start, I actually said 'I feel up-rooted!'

I turned to my Every Day With Jesus Bible notes - and couldn't believe my eyes!

It was headed - 'You are rooted in God.' The secondary quote was 'You are rooted and grounded in love.' (Ephesians 3 v 17)



God had used His Word to key into my deep need at that very moment! I could hardly contain my joy and my relief - that He cared for me in such a personal way - using the exact word, 'rooted' as I had.

The text came into my life again, when, at my Service of Acceptance as a Local Preacher, that word 'rooted' was there again - giving me exactly what I needed to share with everyone, when asked to speak.

The Bible is precious - and it is living - a very help in times of need.