**Home Service Sheet for 12th March 2023**

**Call To Worship                  Psalm 95:1-6**

Oh 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.
In his hand are the depths of the earth;
    the heights of the mountains are his also.
The sea is his, for he made it,
    and his hands formed the dry land.

Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
    let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

**Prayer**

Creator God, we are amazed by the beauty and extent of this world that You have made. In its details we see something of Your majesty and love, and it inspires us to give You praise. Help us today to remember not only Your greatness, but also Your salvation which You have revealed to us in and through Your Son, Jesus. Draw us closer to You in worship and empower us to live in grateful obedience to You each day. As we read Your Word may Your Holy Spirit enable us to understand it and apply it in our lives. Lead us into all truth and help us to live with hope, love, and grace towards others and ourselves. This we ask in the precious Name of Jesus, amen.

**Hymn                                     Let us sing to the God of Salvation**by ***Richard Bewes***

<https://youtu.be/KU3yTLEX6LQ>

1 Let us sing to the God of salvation, let us sing to the Lord our Rock;
Let us come to His house with thanksgiving, let us come before the Lord and sing!

**Praise our maker, praise our saviour, praise the Lord our everlasting King:
Every throne must bow before Him - God is Lord of everything!**

2 In His hand are the earth's deepest places, and the strength of the hills is His;
All the sea is the Lord's, for He made it; by His hand the solid rock was formed.

3 Let us worship the Lord our maker, let us kneel to the Lord our God;
For we all are the sheep of His pasture; He will guide us by His powerful hand.

4 Let today be the time when you hear Him! May our hearts not be hard or cold,
Lest we stray from the Lord in rebellion as His people did in time of old.

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Bible Reading                    John 4:7-29**

A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) 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.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.” Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again,but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”

Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.” The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”

Just then his disciples came back. They marvelled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you seek?” or, “Why are you talking with her?” So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?”

**Reflection**

Today’s Bible reading is one that will be very familiar to all of us, I’m sure. The Samaritan woman, who Jesus meets at the well, is quite the character. She appears to have held great fascination for the late English medieval writer, Geoffrey Chaucer, in his Canterbury Tales. His ‘Wife of Bath’ seems to hold up the original sinful woman, before she met Jesus, as her example in life. By doing this, Chaucer’s fictional character rather misses the point of why the Samaritan woman’s story is told in the pages of Scripture! Her life was characterised by many marriages, and ultimately sexual immorality, which led to her being ostracised by her own people – seen by the fact that she had to go to draw water from the well during the heat of the day.

To quote the Apostle Paul, the reason why the details of this woman’s life are recorded for us is that “such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” (1 Corinthians 6:11) In other words, this is typical of our lives before we had faith in Christ, but now we are different because of what Jesus has done for us! Paul was not, of course, talking about the Samaritan woman, but rather about Christians in the Corinthian church. What both passages show us, though, is this – we cannot truly meet Jesus and recognise Him for who He is and stay the same!

In meeting Jesus the woman was faced with at least two questions, and they are both questions that we need to ask too if we are to live as Christians today. Who is Jesus, and who are we, or perhaps who will we be, having met Jesus? At first glance she knows that Jesus is a Jew, and as such is different from her, a Samaritan. In fact, John provides us with a brief explanation of why it is odd for Jesus to even talk to her – “For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.” (John 4:9) Yet, despite this, Jesus has a lengthy conversation with the woman, which draws out some interesting observations, not to mention the bewilderment of His disciples (v.27).

Over the course of their exchange, the Samaritan woman learns more about Jesus. She progresses from simply recognising Him as a Jewish man to calling Him a prophet (v.19). Ultimately she comes to the recognition that He is the promised Messiah (v.29), as Jesus reveals more of the truth to her (v.26). For many people this coming to recognise who Jesus truly is takes much longer than a few minutes, though with God nothing is impossible! The experience of the Samaritan woman points us towards the way in which faith in Christ is ultimately a gift from God.

Not only did the woman discover who Jesus was, though. She also came to understand who she was too. Jesus knew everything there was to know about her, as we read in verses 17 and 18. Although the woman would have known that she had been married five times and was now living with a man to whom she was not even married, it would have come as quite a shock to her that Jesus knew this too! John shows us how the woman tried to divert the conversation away from her personal life to theological debate (v.20), but ultimately this tactic didn’t work. Jesus knew that the Samaritan woman was a sinner, as we all are. He also knew that she was genuinely seeking God and needed forgiveness and salvation.

Over the course of the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman she realises that her life and identity are sinful. She also realised that this was not the way that she wanted things to be, and so it should be for us too. In recognising that we are sinners who have disobeyed God’s law, we come to realise that we need someone to step in and save us from ourselves and our sins. By recognising who Jesus is, we come to realise that He is the Saviour we need. By having faith in Him we are transformed into new creations, our sins are forgiven and our life begins to head in a different direction (repentance). May we all see Jesus as who He reveals Himself to be through the Scriptures. Let us also recognise who God’s Word says that we are so that we may come to God by grace, through faith in His Son and, by the work of the Holy Spirit, become more like Jesus, just as the Samaritan woman likely did. Amen!

**Prayer**

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your Son, Jesus Christ, who humbled Himself by becoming a homeless, travel-worn, exhausted, and despised man, even to the point of death on a Cross, in order to save me. Thank You that You have become in us a well of water springing up to eternal life, just as You did for the woman at the well. Use us, we pray, as channels through whom Your living water may be poured out to all we meet. We thank You too, O Lord, for this beautiful story of the woman and the lovely way that Jesus explained the Scriptures to her in order to reveal His person and work. Thank You that Jesus has revealed Himself to each of us so that by faith in Him we drink of His living water and receive Your wondrous gift of everlasting life. Amen.

**Benediction**

Gracious God, help us to know You better and love You more each day. May we each truly recognise who Jesus is and place our faith in Him and walk with Him every day of our lives. This we ask to Your praise and glory, amen.