

Fluid Conversations!

Exodus 17¹⁻⁷; Psalm 95; Romans 5¹⁻¹¹; John 4⁵⁻⁴²

The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life. (John 4¹⁴)

Part of the Lenten discipline of any Christian is to deepen our relationship with God. One of the marks of any relationship is the quality of the communication. So, in assessing our relationship with God, how do we communicate with him?

- ✦ Moses talks to God quite openly. The people had been walking through the desert for just a little while and were complaining as **there was no water for the people to drink**. You get the sense from the text that the people were less than polite and demanded **give us water to drink**. Moses' response was that of a good middle manager - he recognised the problem but defended his boss: **What do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?** but goes on to note that **the people thirsted there for water**.
- ✦ Moses goes back up the line - **what shall I do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me**. Only then does God call Moses, together with the elders, forward to the rock at Horeb. When he struck the rock, water gushed forth.
- ✦ The purpose of this was to answer the question **Is the Lord among us or not?**

All of us go through periods in our own spiritual life that are arid like a desert without water. Many of us get as far as the sort of communication that the people had with Moses, noting the problem and complaining about it. It is the next step that is the important one, of going to God with that simple question, **what shall I do?**

I have no idea what Moses felt like having to wallop a boulder with a stick in the middle of a desert and to do so with a group of witnesses, but he did it because he was able to trust what he perceived God to be saying.

It was the courage to face directly the question whether God was there or not! That is the courage we need to find - to be honest with God about what we think and then to do whatever it takes to prove God present in the difficulties and the solutions.

- ✦ The Samaritan woman is one of the most fascinating stories in the Gospels. In this one conversation Jesus breaks all the social taboos of the time:

- ✦ As a single and unaccompanied man, he talks to a single unaccompanied woman!
- ✦ As a Jew he talks to a Samaritan!
- ✦ As a morally acceptable person, he talks to a social outcast! Why else would a woman come on her own in the heat of the day to a well unless she was ostracised?

BUT:

- ✦ A simple request for water is turned into a conversation about things that really matter, about breaking down barriers and spiritual refreshment. **The water that I will give them will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life**. How easily that can happen when faith is real to us and we are unashamed of speaking about it.
- ✦ A conversation that begins in fairly guarded terms blossoms into directness and honesty - the exchange **go and call your husband** and the response **you have had five husbands and the one you have now is not your husband** is brutal yet clear. For a woman like that - and everyone would have known *about* her - to shout in the streets **come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done** was a powerful testimony to who Jesus was and is.
- ✦ Did you notice that great moment when second-hand faith becomes real. It begins **many people from that city believed in [Jesus] because of the woman testimony** but becomes **for we have heard for ourselves and know that this is truly the Saviour of the world**. They had begun their own conversation with Jesus.

That conversation with God is vital for us all! So many in Churches just listen in to what others are saying, but it doesn't have to stay like that. I think the rules are simple:

Be honest with God!

Don't put words into his mouth - try listening!