



## Pause to pray - week 3 - 24th April

*"The Samaritan woman said to him, 'You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?' (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) [John 4:9]*

How do we begin a conversation about Jesus? For many of us it may well be a daunting prospect. What do we say? What if we get it wrong? What if we appear too pushy? These are reasonable and realistic concerns. But does evangelism always mean having to persuade people of our point of view, steer conversations towards our agendas and the like?

The conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman did not begin with some great religious discourse, or by putting her on the spot with a contrived question about her eternal destiny. It began with something far less daunting, far more natural and far more profound. Jesus refused to conform with the prejudices and judgements of his contemporaries and had the humility and acceptance to ask a lonely stranger for a drink.

There are many people in our society who are left feeling as though they are on the outside. Many are left feeling lonely and second-best by the assumptions and judgemental attitudes of others; made to feel inferior and unworthy by the social conventions of our day. And if we are honest, even though we are Christians, we can often buy into the same stereotypes and attitudes. Jesus reached out to this woman not because he was an opportunist, but because he was willing to see beyond any divisive narrative and to recognise her as a human being, loved and made in the image of God.

Being "Good News" might simply mean following that example. Refusing to conform to the damaging narratives that prevail in our society - refusing to see anyone as anything other than a person of worth and dignity. It was the woman who took the conversation forward; simply because she was shocked and surprised at the respect Jesus had for her. Who are those we encounter who are marginalised and left feeling "second best" by society? What prejudices do we need to challenge - even within ourselves? How might our decision to act differently towards those that others shun, become Good News?

### **Creator God**

**Who declared our world into being**

**And fashioned our humanity in your image.**

**Forgive us when the narratives and prejudices of our world**

**More easily define our attitude to others**

**Than the truths and values of your Kingdom.**

**Help us to see things differently**

**To act and speak differently;**

**And through our words and behaviour**

**To be your Good News.**

**May we see everyone whose pathways cross with ours**

**As those who are made and loved by you.**

**AMEN**