



Sunday 12th March 2023

Third Sunday of Lent

In Memory: Peter Byrom, Ann Hockin Higby, Mary Cleave, Derek Reed, John Harris, Ron Paston, Margaret Maddicott, Vernon Kerslake, Teresa Irish, Mabel Gallon and Fran Howells.

Points of Prayer: During this time of Lent we pray for those who are seeking a deeper knowledge of Jesus that through the reading of scripture and through prayer that they may gain insights which will lead to greater faith and lives transformed.

The third Lent Group based on 'The Book of Forgiving' by Desmond and Mpho Tutu is this Tuesday 14th March at 6.30pm at St Andrew's Church, Ipplepen. We will be discussing chapters 6 and 7. Some questions to ponder as you read these chapters: Why do we need to forgive others? What are the effects if we don't: on ourselves and on others? All are welcome. In our fourth session of our Lent Group will be discussing Chapters 8 and 9. Things to reflect on while reading these chapters are: Think about a time when your actions or words have hurt someone else. How have you sought for forgiveness from that person and from yourself?

Saturday 18th March, 10am - 4pm Mission Community Retreat Day (based on the book 'The boy, the mole, the fox and the horse') at The Parish Rooms and The Church of St John the Baptist, Woodland. Please sign up on the sheets at the back of our churches. **Tea and coffee will be provided but please bring your lunch with you on the day.**

Wednesday 22nd March – 'Stations of the Cross' at 6.30pm at St Mary the Virgin, Denbury. Come and join us as we walk with Jesus the way of the Cross. Refreshments to follow in Church Cottage.

Dr Paul Russell, Churchwarden from Broadhempston, is running the London Marathon for Compassion UK, a Christian charity, supporting children in extreme poverty. Please read his article in The February and March 2023 edition of The Beacon Magazine.

<https://challenges.compassionuk.org/profile/4850/paul-russell>

Readings	This week	Next week
Readings for this Sunday:		
1st Reading	Exodus 17:1-7	Exodus 2:1-10
Psalm	95	34:11-20
2nd Reading	Romans 5:1-11	2 Corinthians 1:3-7
Gospel	John 4:5-42	Luke 2:33-35

Readings for the week ahead:

Mon	13 th	Luke 4:24-30	Thurs	16 th	Luke 11:14-23
Tue	14 th	Matt 18:21-End	Fri	17 th	Mark 12:28-34
Wed	15 th	Matt 5:17-19	Sat	18 th	Luke 18:9-14

Readings can be viewed/downloaded from <https://bible.oremus.org/>

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Today - Sunday 12th March

9.30 am	Holy Communion	- St Mary the Virgin, Denbury
11.00 am	Holy Communion with Children's Activities	- Ss Peter and Paul, Broadhempston
11.00 am	Celtic Morning Prayer	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen

Morning Prayer

This week morning prayer will be said at the following times:

Tuesday	9.15 am	- St Andrew's Ipplepen
Wednesday	9.15 am	- Online Via Zoom (for the zoom password email rev.andrewdown@gmail.com)
Thursday	9.15 am	- St Mary the Virgin, Denbury
Friday	9.15 am	- Ss Peter and Paul, Broadhempston (A time of silent prayer and meditation)

Reflection

All our churches are open for private prayer and reflection throughout the week from approximately 9am to 5pm each day.

Mid-Week

Rev Andrew Down - Day off on Mondays.

Monday	3pm-5pm	'T-Pot'	- Church Cottage, Denbury
	7.30 pm	Bellringing Practice	- Ss Peter and Paul, Broadhempston
Tuesday	10.15 am	Holy Communion	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen
	1.00 pm	Funeral of Fran Howells	- St Mary the Virgin, Denbury
	6.30 pm	Lent Group: "The Book of Forgiving"	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen
Wednesday	7.00 pm	Bellringing Practice	- St Mary the Virgin, Denbury
	7.30 pm	Bellringing Practice	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen
Thursday	10.15 am	Holy Communion	- Church Cottage, Denbury
	4.30-5.30pm	Sta*x Youth Choir Practice	- Ipplepen
Saturday	10am-4pm	Day Retreat	- The Parish Rooms, Woodland

Next Sunday 19th March – Mothering Sunday

9.30 am	Holy Communion	- St John the Baptist, Woodland
11.00 am	Holy Communion and Baptism of Samuel Perrett	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen
4.30 pm	Come Holy Spirit: An Informal Service of Reflection	- St Andrew's Church Hall, Ipplepen



Reflection by Steve Sheldon

Lent 3
12th March 2023

Many years ago Sheila took part in a course about Personality Types called Enneagrams, a scheme which allegedly divides up all of humanity into nine distinct groups.

We discovered that I am a number Eight, that is, I have a *challenging* personality... a fair cop. Sheila regrets having done this exercise, because I can now excuse some of my more irritating habits and patterns as just being part of my basic nature; I can't help it, it's who I am, a challenging person. But being challenging can have its uses.

My friend Jeremy, a Reader in Newton Abbot, used to conduct a discussion group in a pub he inelegantly called Chewing the Fat. I would be invited to stir things up, to challenge people, while he sat back and played the good guy, keeping people happy and calm.

It is said that Jesus (being a whole perfected human) displayed all nine personality types, and unlike me he knew exactly when to be Challenging and when to be silent. Which brings me to this morning's Gospel reading.

Travelling home to Galilee from Jerusalem, Jesus had to pass through Samaria, an area that used to be part of Israel but which was conquered by the Assyrians 700 years earlier. It now had a mixed population, where those of Israeli descent practised their religion in a different way than those in Jerusalem to the south [a bit like the Church of Scotland?]. Because they lived with foreign invaders, Samaritans were considered unclean, contaminated, off limits to good orthodox Judeans.

And so, passing through the town of Sychar, about 30 miles out of Jerusalem, Jesus stopped for a drink at the local well. Hot and tired in the noonday sun, Jesus asked a local woman if she would give him a drink of water. We then have this wonderful dialogue between them. The Samaritan woman is both an interesting individual character and also a representative of all of us, in all places and times.

At one of the Chewing the Fat session we discussed Angels. Jeremy began by asking each of us what we thought angels were, how we each understood them. Ten of us there had ten *different* ideas. I am sure that if you stood out in the Market Square of Newton Abbot and randomly stopped every 5th person, quizzing them on any one of a variety of religious topics, like what is Holy Communion, what is Baptism, who is Jesus, what is God, what are angels... if you talked with 50 people you'd get 50 imprecise and differing answers.

Religious ideas among most people in the street are pretty basic and a very low priority in their everyday lives; people are much more concerned with their immediate human needs... just like the Samaritan woman.

Her concern is drawing water and getting back home to take care of the man she is living with. Her religious knowledge is basic, made up of vague things she's picked up over the years, to which doesn't give a lot of thought.

When Jesus tries to engage her in a deeper conversation about faith issues, it goes right over her head. She hasn't a clue what he's on about. Jesus talks about life-giving water and she goes on about his not having a bucket, thinking about actual flowing water and the fact they are prohibited by custom from sharing the same bucket. Then she starts thinking about Magic Water, something that would keep her from ever getting thirsty again, so she wouldn't have to traipse down to this darn well every day... one less task in her daily life she would have to perform.

So Jesus had to cut through all this, he had to Challenge her a little and he explains that he knows everything about her, how she has lived her life, who she is. Jesus strips bare her moral condition... to which there is no possible response but surrendering to the truth.

The woman offers Jesus the truth about herself, to which Jesus responds with the truth about himself. It is **this** truth which now sets her free. She has some simple folklore idea of the Messiah to come, but to this unclean, sinful, foreign woman Jesus reveals everything: I am He, I am the Messiah, I who am talking with **you**, dear lady.

He explains there are no Judeans or Samaritans in the eyes of God. Nationality is no longer relevant. God is not to be worshipped in this place or that place. Location is no longer relevant. The People of God now includes everybody regardless of nationality or religious background or moral standing. All who see Jesus as the Messiah, who acknowledge him and receive the freely offered gift of his spirit, can worship the one true God in spirit and in truth, wherever their life's journey might take them. God does not dwell in Jerusalem or Rome, in Moscow or Athens, in Lagos or Canterbury.

Jesus said to the woman, and says to us, "If only you knew what God gives..."

How often, and at what cost, is God present in the arid places of our lives, and we do not see it, so all-consumed by our real and understandable immediate human needs.

How often do we grumble and feel abandoned like the wandering Israelites who shouted in the desert: "*Is the Lord among us or not?*" If we would just stand before Jesus as we are; if we would accept the gift God gives us through Jesus, which *is* Jesus, we too might run with joy to tell the world.