

JESUS' LOVE GOES ON AND ON AND...

TRANSFORMING THE DESERT – Isaiah 41:17-20

The first part of this talk was interactive, with people offering answers to the questions; it may not have happened in quite this way, but the gist of it is here!

Can you name a famous desert?
What do you know about deserts?

The desert is not an easy place to be because it is so dry; it can be a bit like trying to grow things on the beach; there is no water, except in a place like an oasis, where there is water most of the time and trees! I have a pretend desert (*a vase full of sand!*) and there is nothing that would grow here!

Yet, look at what happens when the desert gets watered! (*A volunteer watered the vase and flowers started to grow!*) There are times when it does rain and then the desert flowers; it may not last very long, but it does happen.

The Bible takes this picture of the desert and the way in which it can be transformed and gives it to us as a picture of the way in which God helps us and changes things for us; it is a picture of the prayer-answering, life-transforming God.

We are poor and needy people at times, people who need help, but we're not sure where to find that kind of help at first; But, says God, "I will help them; I will answer their prayers" and He does and as He answers our prayers our life is changed and our prayers are answered and God has helped us. God is generous in His love; Jesus' love for us goes on and on.

So we have these two pictures that the bible puts side by side. The picture of the desert being transformed by God with water so that plants and trees grow, is put side by side with the picture of people in need who have their lives transformed when God answers our prayers. The Bible uses the first picture of the desert to show us that the other is true; the God who can transform the desert can help us and transform our lives.

Jesus knows us; He loves us; He knows what we need and He is able to help us. He is able to transform our lives from weak and helpless to being strong and full of His love. If God can make the desert burst into flower and grow trees, then He can love and help us!

JESUS' LOVE GOES ON AND ON – Mark 5:24-34

Again, the first part of this talk was interactive, with people suggesting answers to these questions:

How would you ask your teacher a question?

How would you speak to the Head teacher at High School? When I was at school we didn't want to speak to the head teacher; if he came past we stood flat against wall just in case we touched him or he touched us!

How would you speak to the local policeman?

How would you get local MP or MSP to solve a problem you have?

How would you get to speak to the Queen? You might have to write to her and then one of her secretaries might write back to you and invite you to the Palace. Then when you

do meet her there are rules: you have to call her “Your Majesty” first and then ‘Ma’am’ after that; you are not to speak to her until she speaks to you; you are not to shake her hand unless she offers to shake your hand first; you are not to leave the room before she does; or if you have to leave, you walk out backwards.

Jesus is more important than the queen; He is the King of the Universe. It must be more difficult to approach Jesus now, surely! It is scary sometimes to be in the presence of someone like the Queen and to be asked to speak to them; your tongue gets tied in knots and you are not able to speak properly because you think that these are really important people. So it must be more difficult to approach Jesus! Actually, it is really easy to approach Jesus and speak to Him. Remember the woman whose story we read: she just came to touch his coat as part of the crowd and Jesus saw her and helped her. All she had to do was ask.

It is even easier for us: all we have to do is ask. No matter who we are Jesus listens to us and loves us. Sometimes we feel as if we’re too small to speak to Jesus and that He won’t listen to us; you need to be an important person before Jesus will listen, we think. It’s not true! Jesus listens to all of us whenever we speak to Him. Sometimes we think that there must be all kinds of rules about speaking to Him, that we need to get the words right, and there are some things we can’t say. But you don’t have to put up your hand, you don’t have to make an appointment, you don’t have to speak a special kind of language; we just tell Him what we need and He will hear us and answer us. JC

The Prayer Tree has been about asking Jesus to help us and to help others. That’s all we need to say; to ask God to help... Jesus’ love for us goes on & on; it never ends and because He loves us, He is ready to listen to us and answer us when we speak to Him. Jesus’ love is rich and there is plenty of it; there is plenty of His love to go round everyone, all of us, every one in all world. His love never ends; He always loves us and other people; He never gives up and we can ask Him anytime to help us. “*God can do anything, you know – far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams*” (Eph 3:20 – *the Message*) Not only is Jesus able to love us like this, He wants to love us like this and help us in all that we need.