

Life in all its fullness



Participating in his life - Study 8

Readings – John 4: 7-14 & 7: 37-39, and Ephesians 2: 1-10

Having considered 'encountering' and 'growing', the theme now turns to 'participating'. Perhaps unusually for Paul, he sets out with absolute clarity the how and why Jesus expects us to participate in his life – 'made us alive with Christ... by grace ... created to do good works'.

Read Ephesians 2: 1-10

1. In verses 1-3 Paul talks of us (Christians) becoming somehow separated from non-Christians.
 - 1a. Surely Christians are a fully integrated part of community today. So, would you say Paul was still correct today? If so, in what sense?
 - 1b. How can Christians truly participate in their community if they are also 'separate' from them?
2. Let's look at 'made alive in Christ' (verse 5). I can think of two main ways of looking at this. It might be helpful to read Romans 6: 1-10.
 - 2a. First is the sense that we are no longer 'dead in our sins' but alive (by grace). So, we start afresh with 'our slate cleaned', but is this a problem/difficult to explain to our neighbours (community)? What does the Ephesian passage emphasize about not growing any superiority complex?
 - 2b. Second, is the sense of being given new life, new purpose, new energy. We receive such incomparable kindness in/through Jesus, in whom we now live, but for what purpose? What do you believe God has prepared in advance for you to do? If there are obstacles preventing you from doing this, are you sure they are insurmountable for the Spirit living within you?

Read John 4: 7-14 & 7: 37-39

3. Jesus chooses deliberately to talk with and accept a drink from a Samaritan woman apparently of low repute. Both acts, the Jews considered, would make him ceremonially 'unclean'. He offers, using different language from Paul's, to make her 'alive in Christ'.
 - 3a. So much is being modelled by Jesus in this passage. Discuss the several aspects Jesus is asking us to absorb and then model in our lives and community?
 - 3b. verse 7: 38. 'streams of living water will flow from within'. We have been given so much, beyond measure; the stream continues and can be without end. Perhaps share with the group just one thing which you have achieved which was so clearly by the strength of the Spirit living within?