

# The Leaky Bucket

**T**here was once a beautiful garden – The Gardener was very proud and cared for it with great tenderness. Every day he walked to the shed at the end of the garden and filled two buckets with clear sparkling water from the nearby stream. Then he went along the little path to the flowerbeds, carrying water for the flowers. One bucket was bright, shiny and new; the other was old and battered with a few small holes in it.

Each morning the Gardener would fill his buckets. The new bucket was so proud. He could carry water without spilling a drop. But the old bucket felt quite ashamed. He was full of holes and knew that by the time the Gardener reached the flowerbed most of his water would have leaked out along the path. Sometimes the two buckets would talk as the Gardener carried them along path.

‘See how efficient I am. It is so good that the Gardener can rely on me to get water to his flowers every day. I really don’t know why he bothers with you at all!’

The old bucket replied: ‘I know I’m not much use but I do try my best. I’m happy that the Gardener still finds some use for me.’

One day the Gardener overheard this conversation. When he reached the flowerbed he watered the flowers from the full shiny bucket and what was left in old leaky bucket. Then he picked up both buckets and said: ‘Thank you both; you have done your day’s work very well. Now I will carry you both back to the shed but as we go look very carefully at the path.

All along one side of the path, where the Gardener had carried the new bucket was just bare earth. But on other side, a row of fresh green shoots were standing tall. Soon they would become a row of beautiful wild flowers leading all the way through the garden.





# Normality

Circuit Service Message I | John 21:1-14 | Kate Trowbridge

## 1. Online Service

**This week (1st May) our online circuit service will be led by Kate Trowbridge**, local preacher from Balderton and will be broadcast on the Newark and Southwell Methodist Circuit YouTube Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/NewarkSouthwellMethodistCircuit>) why not invite a friend to watch it with you and share the link with them on your social media or by email! (Also available to watch back at any time).

## 2. 'Zoom' Opportunities

If you're feeling isolated, are not ready to be face to face yet, or can't, but are happy to meet on Zoom, there is a weekly coffee time at 3pm on a Monday run by Charles Street but open to all, email Mel Watson for more details: [mellwatson42@gmail.com](mailto:mellwatson42@gmail.com).

There is also a weekly Zoom fellowship called 'The Gathering' which is part of Southwell Methodist Church and run by Philip and Francine Holmes. You'd be most welcome, contact Philip to connect: [philipholmes8100@gmail.com](mailto:philipholmes8100@gmail.com).

## 3. Radio Services

BBC Radio 4 ([Also online.](#))  
08:10am - 17th April

Meaning Matters (John 14 .1-7)

A service from Northern Ireland in which Pastor Andrew Roycroft reflects on our need and desire for meaning in life. With the New Irish Choir. and Orchestra, directed by Jonathan Rea. Led by Bishop Ken Clarke.

## 4. Radio Nottingham

Listen every Sunday, at 8am, to a live church service on BBC Radio Nottingham. (Online or on 95.1-103.8 MHz FM for free.)

Life is marked by special or significant events. Some of them exciting – some of them unexpected – some of them disturbing. In between these events we experience 'so-called' normality, and that normality is often a great relief after what has gone before. I confess I often find myself feeling quite glad when all the visitors go home after Christmas. The decorations come down and the turkey soup and rissoles are stacked in the freezer. It's quite comforting to get back to normal routines.

During our life together Andrew and I have enjoyed travelling and have had the most wonderful holidays and though we wouldn't have missed a moment of them – we were always glad to return to the normality of our lives at home.

As we have just heard in that brilliant reading Jesus' disciples were feeling the same. Over the past few weeks they had experienced every human emotion possible. They had plummeted into the depths of despair. They had tried to come to terms with what they saw as the end of all their hopes and dreams. Then their Lord and Master came back to them and lifted them to the highest pinnacle of incredulity and joy. And now what?

Jesus has appeared to his disciples several times since his resurrection and here we have an account of another significant meeting. The disciples were gathered on the shore of Lake Galilee – their home ground as it were. We can imagine them sitting chatting – tossing stones into the water – watching the world go by – at a bit of a loose end. Then Peter makes up his mind and says, "I'm going fishing". It's his 'normality' – it's what he's always done – it's what he knows best. The seven of them go out and spend the night on the lake; but despite all their best efforts they catch nothing. What's going on? Have they all lost their touch? Imagine how frustrated they must have felt.

Then as the sun rose above the rim of the hills and flooded the lake with a golden light Jesus stood upon the shore. As on other occasions their sight was clouded and they didn't see who it was. The man called out to ask how their night's fishing had gone. When they confessed their failure he advised them to try one more time on the other side of the boat and the resulting catch astonished them all. In the generosity of that advice and the great haul of fish John, 'the disciple whom Jesus loved', recognised the man as Jesus and cried out – 'it is the Lord!' True to form Peter was the first to react and, gathering his outer garment about him, jumped into the water and waded ashore. There Jesus had prepared a simple breakfast for a crowd of hungry, tired fishermen. Humbly he served his friends and together they shared the food in the quietness of the early morning. A wonderful picture of their relationship which was deeper than words.

I think this speaks to us today of the relationship we can claim with Jesus. The truth of it is that Jesus comes to meet and greet each one of us just where we are. He doesn't wait until we are successful, confident or self-assured. He stands and calls to us just where we are. He stands and waits for our response. And then it's up to us of course. But the great thing is that it's not complicated.

You see we don't need qualifications – good looks – beauty – a new wardrobe – glam and glitter. We just need to be ourselves, there's no need for 'airs and graces'. Did you read the story on the front page? We are more highly valued by God than we can ever imagine. Whatever we feel like – whatever we look like – whatever we sound like. Our God is waiting to serve us breakfast in the dawn light of our worst fears and experiences. Reach out and take what he offers and give thanks.

# Just as we are

Circuit Service Message I I | John 21:15-19 | Kate Trowbridge

A few years ago following the death of Andrew's Father we faced the mammoth task of clearing out and selling his house. He had lived there with Mum for over forty years and acquired a great deal of stuff. In many ways it's a fascinating job to unravel someone else's life. We had some shocks and we had some very precious moments of discovery. It revealed to us a new part of our parent's existence which we never knew about – the little things which they kept – mementoes of the high points – and sad memories too. But one thing I particularly remember is the tea service. It was stacked at the back of a cupboard behind all sorts of familiar china and glassware. It was in perfect condition - bone china - beautifully decorated with fine flowers - and definitely not to our taste! Andrew had very little memory of it ever being used and so of course we realised that it was literally 'the best china'. Not your everyday cups and saucers but the set that came out on high-days and holidays or when the Queen came to call. Perhaps you have something similar lurking in one of your cupboards?

When I was a small child we would all spend Christmas with my grandparents. I could never understand why we were all allowed into the 'front room' after Christmas lunch. Nobody ever went into the front room at Grandma and Grandad's house. Since then I have realised that that room was only 'for best' – not an ordinary everyday room.

The second part of this story of Jesus meeting his disciples on the beach gives us a closer focus through the conversation between Jesus and Peter. Peter must have been dreading this moment. His first solo encounter with the Lord and Saviour whom he had so recently betrayed. He knew what was coming and he knew he had a lot of explaining to do. We can imagine him almost holding his breath in dread of what was to come next.

And what did Jesus do? Well – he didn't rant and rage – he didn't rake over Peter's blunders and mistakes – he didn't raise his voice in anger or disappointment. He simply gave Peter a new role. He reinstated Peter into the workforce when Peter knew full well he didn't deserve to be there.

Jesus recognised a treasure buried deep in Peter's heart. Jesus saw beyond the ordinary fisherman to a man who would become the leader of his church on Earth. Through the pure power of his love he was able to transform Peter from a rough and awkward fisherman into a courageous leader, capable of stirring the hearts of his listeners to change the way they lived their lives and become followers of Jesus.

The good news is that Jesus can do this for us. And he doesn't choose the Sunday best. He doesn't search out the squeaky clean. Jesus cuts through the shiny paint and the manicured image and honours the ordinary things of life. He chooses ordinary folk with all their rough edges and bad habits and faults and failings.

**He chooses you and he chooses me. And with the promise of great things to come he says quite simply – follow me.**

## Prayers

Gracious God, as we open our eyes to the loveliness of this world which you have created, we give you our thanks for the wonder of the universe which continues to astound us, for the beauty of the earth which enthral us, for the miracle of creation that inspires us and for the gift of life each day. We offer to you our grateful thanks for your loving kindness to each one of us: a love so great that you sacrificed your son Jesus Christ so that we might be made whole.

Heavenly Father we thank you for one another. Thank you that we are all different and yet all equally valued by You Thank you that we are each good at different things and show us how to use all these varied talents in your service. As we give you our thanks and praise we recognise the need to examine our lives and understand where we have gone wrong. There are times when we have acted selfishly and failed to be the people we were created to be. Times when we have forgotten that you commanded us to serve one another as Jesus did.

So forgive us Lord for all that we have been and help us to become better people here in your world. Jesus came into the world to save all people: he says to all of us who are truly sorry , 'You are forgiven.' Thanks be to God. **Amen.**

Listening God; hear our prayers as we turn our thoughts to your troubled and hurting world. Help us to understand that we cannot solve the world's problems ourselves. Help us to know that until the hearts of selfish men and women are opened to your love - nothing can change.

Searching God; as a shepherd searches for his straying sheep we pray that you will search out those who have lost sight of you and live in a dark place shine your light into their lives and bring forgiveness and hope

Suffering God; Carry the pain, fear and distress of all who are ill, dying or grieving. Stay with them through the long dark nights fill them with your peace and grant courage to face the future. We remember this morning any known to us who are ill or weighed down with problems or difficulties. We pray for those recently bereaved. Heavenly Father bring your peace, healing and comfort .

Risen God; you defeated death to bring a new age to this earth. Encourage each one of us as your witnesses to work to prepare ourselves and those we meet in our daily lives for the time when all wrongs shall be put right all tears wiped away and You will reign supreme over all Listening, searching, suffering, risen God receive the prayers of our hearts. **Amen.**

### EMAIL PRAYER CHAIN

*If you would like to join a prayer chain and receive prayer requests or to submit a prayer request (with permission of the recipient) please get in touch with Colin Beckett [colin1244@gmail.com](mailto:colin1244@gmail.com). It is for those of any church or none!*

## Songs included in this week's online worship

King of Glory, King of Peace (StF 56) [LINK](#)

Be thou my vision (StF 545) [LINK](#)

Come with me, come wander (StF 462) [LINK](#)

Will you come and follow me (StF 673) [LINK](#)

*For YouTube songs click the LINK*

## Discussion Questions

**Church is best done together but we know that this isn't always possible - particularly if you're housebound, isolated or even shielding. But why contact a friend and arrange to watch the church service online or read the newsletter simultaneously and get in touch by telephone afterwards to talk about it. Below are some questions that might help you to reflect together!**

1. What are your favourite 'normalities' and routines that you miss in special or chaotic times?
2. How are you feeling at present? What emotions have been present in your life in the last week or so?
3. Which bucket, in the story, do you identify most with?
4. How might God want to use you?
5. What treasure does God want to uncover in your life, for his service?
6. Lay yourself before Jesus and ask him to reveal his plan for you, is there a new role?

## In-person worship across the circuit during the next four weeks...

March - May 2022		1st May 3rd of Easter	8th May 4th of Easter Vocations Sunday	15th May 5th of Easter Christian Aid	22nd May 6th of Easter Aldersgate Sunday
Balderton	8:30 am				
	10:30 am	K Trowbridge	LA	Bates	Dalby
	6:00 pm				
Charles Street	8:30 AM				
	10:30 am	A Trowbridge	L Blatherwick	Mathews	LA
	6:00 pm	Gibson	Bates	Hibberts	Falla HC
Collingham	10:45 am	Hall	Bates	Morley ChAid / US	Hall
Elston	10:45 am		Hibberts HC		LA
Hope Community	10:30 am	Gibson at B'gate	Falla Breakfast at H'ville / 9am	Dalby at B'gate	Falla HC / at H'ville
Long Bennington	10:30 am	LA	Dalby T	L Blatherwick	Hart HC
North End	6:00 pm	Mathews	Falla	Bates	LA
North Muskham	10:30 am		Hart HC		Hibberts
	2:00 pm	Falla Café		Hibberts Café	
Southwell	10:30 am	Falla	LA	Hibberts HC	Hardy
	Other	Adams 4pm	Hibberts PicC / 2pm	Morley HC / 4pm	Hibberts Fringe / 6pm
Sutton-on-Trent	10:30 am	Winnington	LA Breakfast / 9am	Falla HC	US at Parish Church / 10am

For full detail of service across the circuit March to May 2022 visit the circuit website: [www.newarkandsouthwellmethodist.org.uk](http://www.newarkandsouthwellmethodist.org.uk) or contact your local church.

## 'Walk to Emmaus' a 3 day guided retreat

Last week we focussed on the Walk to Emmaus and talked about how the disciples walked with Jesus. 'Walk to Emmaus' is a 72 hour retreat giving time for each participant to reflect on their faith journey to date including talks by various contributors to encourage discussion amongst those present. There is not a lot of physical walking, so walking boots are not required, it is more of a spiritual walk. The Walks are divided with men and women walks being held on separate occasions. The next Ladies Walk is on the 23rd to 26th June in Hertfordshire, Jennifer Winnington, Local Preacher from our Circuit plays an important part in the arrangements and would give a lift to lady from our circuit who would like to take part. Cost must never be a bar to anyone attending, there are small bursaries and a possible degree of financial sponsorship available, though a minimum personal contribution of £50 towards the total cost is desirable. I would highly recommend the Walk to Emmaus Retreat to anyone who would appreciate a time of reflection on their faith journey and are open to God's input. Jennifer and I would be pleased to talk to anyone who would like more details. The next men's walk is planned and Jennifer has the details.

Eddie Adams