

Introduction

Theme: Diversity in unity!

We all believe in the unity in Christ. We are one in him and He is our Lord.

But, then comes the diversity. People are different. This often leads to misunderstandings, prejudice, mistrust, fear and often even hatred of the other.

Grew up in apartheid society - mistrust, fear and hatred.

As a white person
prejudices - just plain misinformation.

Took people, foreign to me - different cultures and backgrounds

- break down those prejudices, still takes them
- some very wonderful people - patient
- privilege to serve in a congregation
represents the demographics of South Africa

Every day: challenged by foreigners

- xenophobia of recent years - all South Africans
- refugee crisis - Merkel is just astonishing
probably committing political suicide
See the emails about refugees
Fear, anger at them being taken up

Chosen the Samaritan Woman - Jesus to teach us about foreigners - ask ourselves where he challenges us?

John 4:3-27 (NLT)

3 So he left Judea and returned to Galilee. 4 He had to go through Samaria on the way.

5 Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime.

7 Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." 8 He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food. 9 The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?"

10 Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water." 11 "But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water? 12 And besides, do you think you're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?" 13

Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. 14 But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life."

15 "Please, sir," the woman said, "give me this water! Then I'll never be thirsty again, and I won't have to come here to get water." 16 "Go and get your husband," Jesus told her. 17 "I don't have a husband," the woman replied. Jesus said, "You're right! You don't have a husband- 18 for you have had five husbands, and you aren't even married to the man you're living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!"

Synod Message John 4.1-24 How do we meet foreigners? -3-

19 "Sir," the woman said, "you must be a prophet. 20 So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?"

21 Jesus replied, "Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. 23 But the time is coming-indeed it's here now-when **true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth**. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. 24 For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." 25 The woman said, "I know the Messiah is coming-the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." 26 Then Jesus told her, "I Am the Messiah!" 27 Just then his disciples came back. They were shocked to find him talking to a woman, but none of them had the nerve to ask, "What do you want with her?" or "Why are you talking to her?"

I. Who are our Samaritans?

To answer this question we need to understand who the Samaritans were and what actually happened at the well:

- Samaritans - after Jerusalem destroyed and Judah besieged
 - Most Jews taken into exile
 - Small group left behind - kept their religion - Jewish
 - Other people settled in Samaria
 - Brought other religions
 - Known for not being pure
- When Jerusalem was being rebuilt

Synod Message John 4.1-24 How do we meet foreigners? -4-

Samaritans offered to help
turned away
Later they built their own temple

Pure Jews had nothing to do with Samaritans - seen as unclean

- travellers often avoided Samaria
- journey to north took double the time
- good self respecting Jew - nothing to do with Samaritans

Secondly: A Samaritan woman

- Rabbi's at the time of Jesus - not allowed to be seen with woman
- Not even talk to wives or daughters in the street
- Ruin a Rabbi's reputation

Jesus sits at the well - the Samaritan woman arrives

Probably she expected dead silence
She saw that he was a Jew
did not expect anything

On top of that - near Sychar - why did she come to fetch water here - Sychar had a well

Why at midday - hide from people
Suited her not to be spoken to
Probably bruised and broken, because of her life

Jesus asks her for water

With that he accepts her as an equal
He speaks to a woman, as a Rabbi - he is on his own

Later when the disciples come back - comment on him alone with a woman.

Synod Message John 4.1-24 How do we meet foreigners? -5-

Samaritan - first boundary

Jesus really wants to bring this message of not judging the Samaritan

- good Samaritan
- one of the lepers that comes back - Samaritan calls them foreigners

Second boundary: woman

he speaks to her although they are on their own
And speaks to her as an equal

Woman with a history - reputation

story of her husbands
he did not choose wisely

Who are our Samaritans?

- many foreigners in our country
- the whites, if you are not white
the blacks, for us whites
- Muslims - with ISIS etc. Fear, prejudice etc.
- Refugees in Europe - massive protests

II. Be open to learn from our Lord when we are confronted with the diversity in our world.

Jesus speaks to the Samaritan women

elevates her to his own level
asks her for water
Has fellowship with her

Every meeting with people - different - we need to learn

do what our Lord wants us to do - in that situation
Allow the Lord - part of the situation

Synod Message John 4.1-24 How do we meet foreigners? -6-

Determine what we do - by listening to him
prayerfully being in tune with him.

After all - he created all people - to him they are not foreigners
He wants us to have diversity
Embrace the diversity

First point to learn: meet people that are foreign to me in the Name of the Lord who created them all.

Secondly: he knows me and he knows the person I meet.

He meets this foreigner - calls the Samaritans foreigners

Knows this woman
tells her about her husbands
By the way - not judging - just stating something - very open.

Muslim the other day - deep discussion

Mentioned fear of God - just said
so wonderful not to have to fear God
Deep puzzled look on his face
Foreign to him
Statement that questioned him

Our Lord knows the people we meet and loves them

- refugees in Europe (placed his servant Angela there)
- many foreigners in our country
obligation to help them

Why is Germany helping - experience after 2 WW

Taken up by many - policy of taking up refugees
If you become a refugee
How would you like to be treated

III. Jesus offers this Samaritan woman something that every person needs.

The water I will give you will become a spring of living water.
You yourself will become a spring for others.

Beautiful picture of what Jesus wants us to be
Beautiful picture of what others should experience
when they meet us

Meeting foreigners or anyone
spring - flowing with water
others can drink and enjoy

In the Drankensberg once - teenager
ran out of water - walking all day
found a spring - nicest water I had ever tasted
spring of water
people meet us - what Jesus wants to give and
bring about

Samaritan woman - Jesus gives her - she will become a spring
Relationship to Jesus - she becomes a spring

Focus of our lives in this world - relationship to Jesus
He makes us to be a spring
changes us from within

In this relationship - others will be able to enjoy
Will be able to receive

Synod - we think of the things we discuss and think about
As people who live with Jesus

Have His Spirit in our hearts
He shows us how to live in our country
How to do things in our world

Synod - lead by his Spirit - see things his way
Streams of living water - enjoy the fountains around us.
Spiritual deep Synod.