



LENT: A JOURNEY TOWARDS HOPE

Jesus Offers Hope to All Who Will Receive

“We glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.” (Romans 5:3-5)

Bible Study

15 March 2020

A Short Story:

For decades Mr. Jones had washed and waxed his car every Saturday morning. If his family had a commitment on a Saturday, Mr. Jones would awake early in order to get his task done. He loved every minute spent on caring for his vehicle. But that was not the whole story. He loved visiting with the neighbors as they stopped by for a brief visit. Not every neighbor came each week. Nor did they stay long. It didn't seem right to stay while Mr. Jones worked so hard on his car.

The conversation usually began with the weather, moved to petrol prices, and slowly shifted to things more important to the visitor. Mr. Jones was a deeply faithful man and usually found a way to weave God into the discussion. In fact, that is precisely how Mr. Jones listened. He patiently and deliberately listened for ways God desired to enter the conversation with a word of hope. Consequently, Mr. Jones was never pushy. He spoke with love and kindness.

One Monday Mr. Jones became ill and went to the doctor for some tests. The prognosis was not good. News traveled fast in the neighborhood. The neighbors knew he would not be able to wash his car on Saturday. Each neighbor independently decided to get up early and wash Mr. Jones' car on Saturday. But it was like someone had posted a sign for a car wash. Neighbors woke at dawn and went to the Jones house to wash his car. All the neighbors knew his meticulous routine.

It was as if each person who had been blessed by Mr. Jones wanted to give him something back. The driveway overflowed with people. Laughter and joy filled the air. Finally, they noticed the curtain in the bedside window pulled back. There was Mr. Jones leaning on his wife, taking a glance, and smiling at the scene.

Reflection Questions:

1. How do you explain the crowd in the driveway?
2. Read John 4:5-26. Jesus had a lengthy conversation with the woman at the well. Despite her history with men, her gender, and her Samaritan roots, Jesus took her seriously and taught her about living water and eternal life. Jesus gave her hope. Life did not have to be limited by her past but could be shaped by the grace of God at work in her through Jesus Christ. How did Jesus give hope to the woman at the well?
3. On Sunday we heard some sharing from the team who went to the Solomon Islands. How did they give hope to the people they engaged with?
4. Read Romans 5:1-5. The season of Lent has a very clear direction. It leads us to the cross, and in the great Festival of Easter, takes us through death into the joy of the Resurrection. How does the season of Lent offer you hope?

