

**September 13<sup>th</sup> 2020**  
**Creationtide.**

**Let the waters be separated!**



**Reflection by Revd Becky**

*Eternal God, give us insight to discern your will for us, to give up what harms us, and to seek the perfection we are promised in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

This morning the World Wildlife Fund's 'The Living Planet Report' was made public. It opens with this statement *The health of our planet is in freefall – but we have a comprehensive prescription to turn it around. The population sizes of mammals, birds, fish, amphibians and reptiles have seen an alarming average decline of 68% since 1970. Seventy-five per cent of the Earth's ice-free land surface has already been significantly altered, most of the oceans are polluted, and more than 85% of the area of wetlands has been lost.*<sup>1</sup>

The Hungarian biochemist and Nobel prize winner Albert Szent Gyorgyi describes water as the 'Hub of Life' and yet we know that our water eco systems are being destroyed. In the Ganges, 8 out of 10 freshwater species have been wiped out.

How does this relate to God who made this world to be teeming with life?

Lack of access to water is just one of the major problems for the human population. 60% of the world's population live in areas of water stress where the amount of water available cannot meet the need in a sustainable way. And yet we also have floods, sea levels rising and extreme weather events – increased rainfall, typhoons, and cyclones.

There are 722 verses in the Bible about water- water is sacred. Our world is sacred. Our planet is calling out to us- change your habits! In the gospel story today Jesus offers hope to a woman whose life appears to be stuck. His conversation with her is refreshing. As he challenges her with his insights into her current life, he also offers her new life, refreshment from God, a chance to change. Her old habits and patterns of being are transformed as she tells people of Jesus.

As Jesus speaks of unending life – so may we work to ensure that the life of this planet does not end.

Genesis 1 v 6-8

And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

Psalms 63 (extracts)

1 O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

<sup>2</sup> So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.

<sup>3</sup> Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.

<sup>4</sup> So I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on your name.

John 4 v 1-26 (extracts)

*"Give me a drink."*

*"Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."*

*"Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty..."*

Let us hear the cries of those whose lives will be affected by climate change by drought or flooding and take action:

- How do you ensure you treasure the water you use?
- Think about the water you 'consume' – not only how much we use our washing machines or what we flush down our toilets, but also what we buy- a pair of cotton jeans costs 9500 litres of water to produce!
- Why not watch Thabo Macgoba Archbishop of Capetown's reflections about water use on [www.spckpublishing.co.uk/saying-yes-resources](http://www.spckpublishing.co.uk/saying-yes-resources)

## **HYMN REFLECTION MS**

Today's hymn is based on three passages from the Bible, including John, Chapter IV, today's reading. The others are Matthew XI and John I. Each of the three verses is in two halves, a "problem" half and a "solution" half, the solution in each case being Jesus. It has a distinctly old-fashioned feel to it, but nevertheless it is included in the new A & M hymn book.

The interesting bit is the tune. There are the new tune and the old tune, except that the new one is older than the old one. Those of us brought up on the original black A & M will know the tune *Vox Dilecti*, which is what I am referring to as the old tune. Those reared on *Songs of Praise* or the *English Hymnal* will have learned *Kingsfold*, my "new tune". *Vox Dilecti* was written specifically for the words in 1868; *Kingsfold* was published twenty five years later, in 1893, but is in fact a much older folk tune, noted and used by Ralph Vaughan Williams in the hymn books he edited. *Vox Dilecti* is not used for any other words, whereas *Kingsfold* has been published with lots of different words; Horatio Bonar's words feature in only one sixth of the publications using the tune.

So which tune to use nowadays? Most people would probably choose *Kingsfold*, but when I played it at Stapleford one old man asked why we couldn't have the "proper tune", and we used the "proper tune" from then on. It does sound old-fashioned, but I like it. I like the way it differentiates between the two halves of the verses, and has a better climax, whereas *Kingsfold* just goes on the same, and still ends on an unsuitable minor chord. Both tunes can accommodate the slight changes of rhythm in verses 2 and 3 with equal ease.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"Come unto me and rest;  
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down  
Thy head upon my breast."  
I came to Jesus as I was,  
Weary, and worn, and sad;  
I found in him a resting place,  
And he has made me glad.

***I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"Behold, I freely give  
The living water, thirsty one:  
Stoop down, and drink, and live."  
I came to Jesus, and I drank  
Of that life-giving stream;  
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,  
And now I live in him.***

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"I am this dark world's light:  
Look unto me; thy morn shall rise,  
And all thy day be bright."  
I looked to Jesus, and I found  
In him my star, my sun;  
And in that light of life I'll walk  
Till travelling days are done.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://f.hubspotusercontent20.net/hubfs/4783129/LPR/PDFs/ENGLISH-FULL.pdf> Reflection based on ideas in Chapter 2 of the Book *Saying Yes to Life* Ruth Valerio