

# Study 2 Called to Trust

Our second study looks at the times when we find the journey hard going and want to turn back.

## My Story

Our eldest children are twin girls, Grace and Ellen, who weighed 5 lb. 11 oz. (2700 g) and 6 lb. 10 oz. (2980 g) at birth. My wife is not a large person, and I vividly remember her discomfort as the twins approached full term (as well as my relief that it wasn't me who was carrying them!). There were many times when she wished that the birth would all be over as soon as possible. Our nine months of waiting was a time of mystery, wonder and hope. At the same time, there were many moments of tiredness, discomfort and pain. And in the end we were rewarded with two wonderful daughters.

## Discuss

- *Have you ever begun a new journey or a new task, and ended up having second thoughts about it? eg. a long trip, a new job, renovating a house.*
- *Talk about your experience. What struggles or difficulties did you face? Did you ever want to give up? What helped you to get through?*

## God's Story

**Read Exodus 17:1-7.**

### The Israelites at Rephidim

A hot day. A heated argument. "Whose idea was it to come here?" "You're going to get us all killed!" "We were better off back where we started!" Our second episode in the Israelites' journey is not starting out well for Moses, their leader. Let's rewind to Episode One. Abraham and Sarah's journey took them first to Canaan and then on to Egypt, where their descendants



ended up in slavery. It was a later generation that had to take up the call to follow the God of Abraham and Sarah to this Promised Land. The book of Exodus tells the saga of the journey of the people of Israel from captivity to a new home in Canaan.

No sooner have Moses and the Israelites begun their journey to freedom than the going gets really tough. First, the water in the desert is too bitter to drink (chapter 15), then there is nothing to eat (chapter 16), and now there is nothing at all to drink (chapter 17). The people quarrel and complain, blaming Moses and God for their plight. "We were better off back in slavery. We want to go back to the good old days."

Throughout the Old Testament we find a recurring theme: God promises a hopeful future; the people rebel and refuse to trust in God's provision; the situation gets worse; God remains faithful and provides for the people. When the going gets too tough, God always provides what is needed - manna from heaven, fresh water from a rock. Unfortunately, the Israelites always come to their leaders with complaint and lack of trust rather than patience and faith. Moses is the meat in the sandwich. Yet God remains faithful to the covenant promise to bless the descendants of Abraham and Sarah.

## **Discuss**

- *Imagine what it was like to leave Egypt and then get stuck in the desert. What feelings would you have had in their situation?*
- *Put yourself in Moses' shoes. How would you have reacted to the complaints of the people? What does Moses learn from this experience?*
- *Does God require trust or obedience in order for us to experience the benefits of covenant love?*
- *What does the story say to you about trusting in God and trusting in Christian leaders?*

## **Read John 4:5-42.**

### **Jesus and the Woman at the Well**

What is most remarkable about this familiar story?

We are not surprised that Jesus speaks to someone

whom he should steer clear of - she's a foreigner and a woman. After all,

Jesus associates with lepers, tax collectors, prostitutes, troubled people and other social misfits.



Are we surprised that Jesus uses an everyday conversation to speak of spiritual matters? Imagine yourself doing the same at the drink fountain in the local park. Jesus always looks to our deepest needs and speaks words of compassion and invitation.

Perhaps we are disappointed that Jesus takes note of the woman's marital situation without casting judgment. Instead, his words and presence invite her to a more hopeful future. The story presents Christ as one whose life-giving Spirit is available to all people. This is good news for those who feel far away from God because of their background, circumstances or lifestyle.

### **Discuss**

- *What surprises you most about this story?*
- *Which people in your town might the Samaritan woman represent? What does Jesus Christ offer to them today?*
- *How would your church need to change in order to connect better with these people?*
- *When our lives are a struggle, God's grace comes to us like a stream of refreshing water. What has been your experience of this?*

## **Our Story**

It has been said that in this century the world has seen the greatest change in all human history. Change affects our world and our church.

### **Discuss**

- *Make a list of some of the changes you have seen in the world and in the church in your lifetime. Which changes have been for the best?*
- *What feelings do you have about these changes? Do you wish you could go back to the good old days?*
- *How do people in your congregation respond to change? How do they treat those in leadership when change is suggested?*
- *What do these Bible stories say to you about how God responds when we are faced with difficult times and hard choices?*
- *We can imagine that Moses encouraged the people to keep travelling to the Promised Land by reminding them of how great it was going to be. What gives you encouragement when you think about the future of your church and your town?*

# Wellsprings

## Chorus:

*Like the woman of old  
Each day - we go to the  
Wellsprings of life to find Jesus there*

1. Some days the well seems dry  
We can't reach the water - it's too hard  
Some days our legs won't take us  
Our hearts are aching - crying

## Chorus

2. Some days our minds are reeling  
There's too much happening we need to stop  
Some days our souls are parched  
We need the water - so thirsty

## Chorus

3. Some days there's no escape  
Life's routine and madness  
Some days we don't want to go  
We can't see the rhyme or reason

## Chorus

4. Some days we're resurrected  
We feel new life inside us  
Some days our faith moves mountains  
We feel life's glory - earth and heaven

## Chorus

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## Read this prayer together.

Lord, when we want to look back,  
help us to give thanks for the past  
and to look ahead with new hope.

You promise to walk with us

when we feel overwhelmed by changes taking place.

You love and provide for us even when we fail to trust you.

Fill us with courage, patience and peace. In the name of Christ. Amen.