

Speaking to the soul

Living water

[The Lord says:] “For my people have done two evil things: They have abandoned me— the fountain of living water. And they have dug for themselves cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all!” Jeremiah 2:13

In a country like Palestine, cisterns are a vital way of storing water for the long, hot and dry summers. The porous limestone rock needs to be lined with plaster in order to make them watertight. A cistern with a cracked lining is completely useless, and Jeremiah used this powerful image to tell the people that the gods they were worshipping were a complete waste of time. They could never satisfy their needs, unlike the fountain of living water that God offered to provide for them. This reminds us of Jesus’ encounter with the woman of Samaria (John 4). He offered her living water which could completely satisfy her deepest needs. She would never be thirsty again.

Our society is full of cracked cisterns. Each one offers the lure of possessions, philosophies and entertainments which have the power to entertain us for a while, but which can never ultimately satisfy us. They are not necessarily bad in themselves, but they have no power to give us the long-term satisfaction that we all crave.

The apostle Paul reflected on his own distinguished background. On the face of it, he had every advantage, but all of these things were just cracked cisterns for him, alongside the wonder of knowing Jesus. He concluded: “Everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as rubbish, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him” (Philippians 3:8-9).

Our job is clear. If we have found the life-giving water which Jesus brings, we need to do everything possible to point people to him, and to warn them not to waste their lives on things which will inevitably, sooner or later, prove to be cracked cisterns.

QUESTION

What would you identify as the most popular cracked cisterns in the UK today?

PRAYER

Loving God, I praise you because you are the fountain of living water. Help me to drink your life-giving water today and every day. Amen

