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Hawaii 8.3.2026

Food for thought

It is interesting traveling
and meeting new people.

Neither of you know much about each other
and you each have a clean slate
and a new start.

you can reveal as much or as little
as you feel like.

After all you are on holiday.

Some interesting relationships can spring up.

I can't help thinking about a time

Alf and I were setting up house
in Opuu.

It was a grey dull day

And Alf was putting down lino
in our small laundry.

It was a very awkward space

and some of the glue from the lino
got stuck on the cupboard doors.

So soon Alf went down to the Opua store
and bought something to remove the glue.

He was a while, and when he came back
he said he had invited 2 ladies to afternoon tea.

By this time it was 2 o'clock

So we and our toddler had lunch
and I made a chocolate cake for afternoon tea.
Alf went down to the store and picked up the ladies.

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There was a cruise ship tied up at the wharf and the ladies were from it.

But the day was so grey and miserable they had gone to the Opua shop to look around and Alf had chatted to them.

When they came to our home for afternoon tea we learned that one was 80 years old.

She was on a world cruise to celebrate her birthday and her retirement from a job as Matron of a boys school hostel in South Africa.

The other lady was quieter but of a similar age. She had some ~~new~~ medical news from her doctor and decided on an adventure, to have a world cruise before returning to England.

The ladies were very appreciative of Alf's invitation to our humble home and invited to next day visit the ship.

Next day my toddler and I visited the ship -
- had a nice afternoon tea at the dining room
- then visited their cabin.

The English lady, Mrs Montgomery showed us she was painting a picture of each port they visited.

She was encouraging, and said I should try I did try, and Yater posted her samples of my progress.

She sent me paintings in return - a historic stone church, - her home called "The East House" in a setting of trees.

She began an interest in me that last through the years I still meet friends who draw and chat.
today.

But what about our faith walk -
- can you remember special people
or special moments
that are landmarks along the way

I'm sure you can.

As a young child I remember Miss Smith.

We thought she was old -

- but one thing we knew -

- she loved telling little children about Jesus.

She had a dried pressed leaf in her Bible
she used for a book mark.

One of the more curious children
asked her why she had the dried leaf in her Bible.

She said a special friend of hers had been traveling
and visited Israel, and sent her the leaf
from a tree on the "mount of olives" - an olive leaf.

And I thought "Wow - Israel is a real place
and Jesus was really in that place"
not just a ~~story~~ story to imagine

As a teenager we had a lively Bible Class leader.
One day she asked us
"If Jesus came to your town
what would you do?"

On my long walk home later, I thought
"What would I do?",
I pictured Jesus at the cross roads at Kams
with a crowd of people round him - listen
I was a quiet child so I imagined creeping closer.

Our Sunday School teachers remark made Jesus seem
so much more approachable, and likeable.

We all have memories of special people and special times

In our Bible story today there is ~~that~~ ^a element that emerges.

~~you might call it~~ cultural differences
or cultural changes
~~the~~ changes in historic background

or simply changes in upbringing

Changes whose history ^{maybe} is forgotten but the differences remain.

The well where Jesus rested is called "Jacob's well".

So we know there is history here.

Nicodemus came to Jesus at night to have a conversation with Jesus

Jesus has a good conversation with him
"That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" John 3:6

The woman who comes to the well comes in broad daylight.

At first it seems as though her culture and her history are enough for her.

They have something in common - they look forward to enjoying some water from this particular well where they are stopped at.

(5)

I imagine it is a nice day
and all is going well - it seems.

Did she think Jesus might be a threat to her?

Did she think of threatening Jesus first
- you are on my ground

Did Jesus replies to her convey forgiveness

- or put the discussion on a whole new level
that touched her, and interested her.

We are reminded of David's words
in the 23rd Psalm -

- He restores my soul
and later - my cup runneth over.

There is a well known phrase we use -

- The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
- the Love of God -
- and fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

There is no doubt God loves us

there are so many lovely things in this world
- prepared for us

The fellowship of the Holy Spirit

is a precious thing
watching and caring each one.
when we may not even know it.

Romans 8:26 puts it

The Spirit helps us in our weakness
for we do not know how to pray as we ought,
but Spirit himself intercedes for us
with sighs too deep for words.

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Then there is the Grace of Jesus Christ
his availability, his patience, having time for others
returning soft answers to hard questions
kindness considerate peaceable

He would also know what it is like not to have a friend.
He would know what it is like to be lonely.

The woman at the well would be thinking
"Who is this Jesus?"
What is he like?"

Jesus saw her as someone capable
and able to do good.
- serving some water
- going to call her husband and bring him.

What started out as not very promising
turned out to rejoicing.

The woman left her water pot at the well.
Why did she do that?
Can you think of 2 or 3 reasons why?

In a hurry - shows she intended to come back - to get water
- it was heavy to run with -
- she had forgotten it and was excited about Jesus visit
to hear Jesus

Another sign of Jesus Grace is
as he was traveling from Judea to Galilee
by a shorter route - that is Samaria
one might think he was thinking of saving time.

However instead Jesus stayed 2 days more at Sychar
because many people gathered to hear him.

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Jesus had something to say
to his disciples also

Focus on doing the will of God.

Jesus found satisfaction in doing the will of God
even when he was weary

Countless others through the centuries
have found this to be true.

Both he who sows and he who reaps
can rejoice together.

Alf and I have been reading together
a book "My Grandfathers Blessings"
by Rachel Remen M.D.

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But there is more

The Holy Spirit can give us guidance and support
- can give us answers when we didn't

know about the problem.
We can learn a lot from Jesus
We can learn about the difference between belief and faith

Short video from 'Stories of the Bible'
'Jesus and the woman at the well'

Peoples Time
Offering Dedication

Song - I've got Peace like a river

Prayers: for the world

Hymn - Shine — How we work — Tea bags
Blessings'

we may need to know and trust one another again. To touch and be touched by those around us. Service is the way that this world can heal.

True service is not a relationship between an expert and a problem; it is far more genuine than that. (It is a relationship between people who bring the full resources of their combined humanity to the table and share them generously.) Service goes beyond expertise. Service is another way of life.

Many times when we help we do not really serve. Those who help see life differently from those who serve and may affect life differently as well. It is hard not to see the person you are helping as someone weaker than yourself, someone more needy. When we help we become aware of our strength because we are using it. Others become aware of our strength as well and may feel diminished by it. But we do not serve with our strength; we serve with ourselves. We draw from all our experiences. Over the years I have discovered that everything I know serves and everything I am serves. I have served people impeccably with parts of myself that embarrass me, parts of which I am ashamed. The wholeness in me serves the wholeness in others and the wholeness in life. The wholeness in you is as worthy as the wholeness in me. Service is a relationship between equals.

As I serve, I become aware of my wholeness and more accepting of it. In using it to serve, I may come to see and understand its power. Many times my limitations have become the source of my compassion, my wounds have made me gentle with the wounds of other people, and able to trust the mysterious process by which we can heal. My loneliness has made me able to recognize the loneliness in others, to respect that place where everyone is alone and

meet others in the dark. Most humbling of all, I have found that sometimes the thing that serves best is not all my hard-earned medical knowledge but something about life I may have learned from my Russian grandmother or from a child.

A helping relationship may incur a sense of debt, but service, like healing, is mutual. Service is free from debt. The wholeness in me is as strengthened as the wholeness in you. Everyone involved is fortunate to have had the chance to participate. In helping, we may find a sense of satisfaction; in serving, we have an experience of gratitude.

Serving is also different from fixing. One of the pioneers of the Human Potential Movement, Abraham Maslow, said, "If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail." Seeing yourself as a fixer may cause you to see brokenness everywhere, to sit in judgment on life itself. When we fix others, we may not see their hidden wholeness or trust the integrity of the life in them. Fixers trust their own expertise. When we serve, we see the unborn wholeness in others; we collaborate with it and strengthen it. Others may then be able to see their wholeness for themselves for the first time.

Perhaps fixing is only a way to relate to things. Relating to another human being in this way is to deny and diminish in some profound and subtle way the power of the life in them and its mystery.

Over forty-seven years of illness I have been helped and fixed by a great number of people. I am grateful to them all. But all that helping and fixing left me wounded in some important and fundamental ways. Only service heals.

All who serve, serve life. What we serve is something worthy of our attention, of the commitment of our time and our lives. Service is not about fixing life, outwitting life, manipulating life, controlling life, or struggling to gain mastery over life. When we serve, we discover that life is holy.