



**comfort
international**
a little can change a life

Sermon Resources for Harvest 2023

Callum Henderson

Water of Life

Key Verse

Jeremiah 17v7-8

“But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”

Introduction

Water is involved in so many things. For those of us who live in watertight homes with plenty of food and clean water on tap, the worst that can usually happen is an inconvenient downpour. For the Batwa pygmies in Burundi though, with their makeshift shelters of rags and leaves it means rain pouring through the roof. For the Burundi street kids project mothers who have received agricultural training, it means income generation through rice growing in paddy fields. For genocide survivors in Rwanda, the devastating floods in the spring meant destroyed homes, uprooted crops and debris covered fields, but for one of our partner communities which received a water pump, rain meant life giving irrigation for their crops. In DR Congo where our partners are wrestling with the consequences of war and hundreds of thousands are living in displacement camps, polluted water means cholera and diarrhoea, but clean water makes life saving porridge for starving orphans.

Comfort International also works in **South Sudan**, which is rated the poorest country in the world by Global Finance Magazine. Here are some facts about South Sudan:

- It is a landlocked country of around 11 million people
- It suffers from extreme weather events - high temperatures, flooding and drought - driven by climate change, exacerbating the current hunger emergency
- Over 7.1 million people (more than half the population) are living in extreme and deadly hunger
- Over 4 million people (1 in 3) have been forced to flee their homes due to the ongoing conflict which is shocking in its intensity
- Education is at a global low, with more than 70% of children out of school, and a literacy rate of only 35%
- 10% of people in South Sudan have access to basic sanitation facilities, and children, often girls, walk an average of 3.7 miles per trip to obtain water



Jeremiah's prophecy

Throughout Jeremiah, the theme of water is central. From the beginning of Jeremiah's message he is calling the people to come to the fountain of living water (Jer 2:13), to remember their God who brought them out of deserts into a watered fruitful land (2:6-7 c.f. 2:18, 3:3, 4:26, 5:24, 8:14/9:15/23:15, 12:4, 14:1ff, 31:9,12, etc.).

Jesus provision

When Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman of water (John 4:1-42), He was differentiating between two types of water – and the water He was offering He described as Living Water. He was saying – 'I am the source of something extra special that will change your life for ever'.

Our purpose

When the people of God in Jeremiah's time turned to idols one of the results was that they lost their compassion for the poor and they stopped executing justice for the oppressed - 5:28, 7:5, 21:12, 22:3, 22:16, 23:5. The people of God had stopped being fruitful. They had cut themselves off from the river of God's justice and compassion.

For the broken and the poor Jesus nourishes the soul and the body. He broke bread for the hungry but offered living bread to the spiritually empty. His heart is to plant the broken and traumatised and marginalised in the banks of the stream of His love and salvation. But it is also to share the goodness of the earth's abundant harvest with the poor and vulnerable – to provide watertight homes to Batwa pygmies, to restore the harvest of flood devastated communities, to heal the diseases of the displaced, to provide food and clean water for the starving in South Sudan.

Jesus offers for us to be part of this mission - to partake of the Living Water and know Him as our personal saviour, and to allow that knowledge to change us so that we can share this with those around us and allow the compassion of the Father's heart to move us to provide for their physical thirsts as well.