

Study 5 (Week beginning June 4th)

An inclusive community: Roms 10 v 5-14 & Jn 4 v 1-27

- Jesus is passing through Samaria (Jn 4 v3). For historical and religious reasons the Jews and Samaritans were enemies (2 Kings 17 v 24-41). Yet, at His initiative, Jesus shares a cup with a Samaritan - to her clear surprise (v9). What does this teach us about God's new community?
- Not only is this an encounter between Jesus and a Samaritan but between Jesus and a woman. Culturally and socially a number of boundaries are being crossed. What was the disciples' reaction (v27)? What does this teach us about God's new community, and the attitudes of those who are already members of it?
- Further, Jesus deliberately engages with an immoral woman (v17). We know her immorality has excluded her from the community. For she has to draw water in the heat of midday (v6) at the time when no-one else is at the well; other women came in the cool of the morning and evening. What does this teach us about the inclusive nature of God's new community?
- Jesus engages with an immoral, Samaritan woman. He invites her to come to faith in Him (v26). The impact of this invitation is enormous – look at the details in v28-9, 39-41. What does this teach us about the sort of engagement God's new community should have with those on its borders, and the effect it should be seeking?
- Who might be the equivalent for us of this Samaritan woman? Think broadly and constructively about how it is possible to engage with those who are not already a natural part of our networks and community.
- Paul is in no doubt that incorporation into the Christian community demands Gospel proclamation and personal confession of faith in Jesus (Roms 10 v9-14). What does this teach us about the sort of inclusive community we are called to be? Give practical suggestions about how this sort of community might be more fully realised in Childwall.
- We live in a society where a particular notion of inclusion is being promoted. The result is that there can be a blurring of boundaries that many Christians would want to maintain; for example, legislation promoting different models of family life which seems to undermine and disadvantage heterosexual marriage. In such a society, how can Christians live inclusively but distinctively?
- As a Small Group think how you can engage with those on your borders. How might those folk be included and incorporated into God's new community? What part can you play in that? Commit your answers to prayer and resolve to do something as a result.