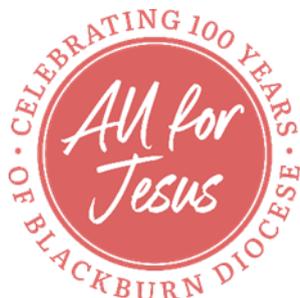


+WEEKLY SERMON

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“...Is the LORD among us or not?”

Exodus 17:7

My children are incredible at Hide-and-Seek. They're still quite small, so they can stuff themselves into corners of the house that I'd never think to look in.

Crockery cupboards, washing baskets, toy boxes – you name it. And, whilst I'm fairly sure I trust them not to do anything too irresponsible I can think of at least one occasion when, after about five minutes of looking, panic has set in and I've started to wonder: “Are they still here or not?”

It doesn't take much to prompt the anxious mind of a parent into visions of a child letting themselves out of the front door and pottering off down the road unaccompanied and the awkward conversation I'd have to have with my wife when she got home. Thankfully, they are always still there. Usually curled up under a towel in the wardrobe.

In *Exodus 17*, the Israelites are having similar trouble. Despite having only recently witnessed God parting the Red Sea, they find themselves in the wilderness with nothing to drink and they begin to question: “Is the LORD among us or not?”

Sometimes, the situations we find ourselves in lead us to forget the ways that God has taken care of us in the past. Sometimes, we can feel like we've hit a dead end and we begin to feel frustrated, or angry, or doubtful. Sometimes, in spite of everything we have seen Him do, we begin to question: “Is God with me or not?”

The good news for the Israelites (and for us) is that God is, of course, always among them. Just as he brings Moses to the rock so that he can pour out water for his people, so he invites us to come to Him – the Rock of our salvation – so that he can pour out his living water: “God's love...poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.” (*Romans 5:5*)

When we're feeling stuck, frustrated or doubtful, we do not need to doubt God's presence in our lives like the Israelites did; rather, fixing our eyes on the Rock and remembering His work, we can have confidence in the promises of a God who offers his people living water, “gushing up to eternal life”.

Sam Lee, Ignite Project Manager

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES