

## Comments on October Outreach Meeting in Rotorua

Speaker: Rita Peterson

Isaiah 44:1-8. Rita chose to focus on verses 3 and 4, because there is a mighty promise there and we really need to hear this promise.

**“I WILL GIVE WATER TO THE THIRSTY LAND AND I WILL MAKE STREAMS FLOW ON THE DRY GROUND. I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT ON YOUR CHILDREN AND MY BLESSINGS ON YOUR DESCENDANTS AND THEY WILL THRIVE LIKE WELL WATERED GRASS, LIKE WILLOWS BY STREAMS OF RUNNING WATER”**

Many of us have probably read through Isaiah many times but have we really heard the Lords promise.

We can't exist without water. God spoke, this promise to the prophet Isaiah eight hundred years prior to Jesus coming and He told Isaiah to tell the people of the Old Testament. Today the same words apply to us. So all through the scriptures this Theme of water is given to us again and again because water is life. Where does this living water have its origin? I believe it flows from the merciful heart of God through Jesus. The people of the Old Testament knew that they would die without water and we also know that too. I also think we have been spoiled; technology has become so much a part of us we over look the mercy of God. Some people recognise it and some don't. If God withheld His mercy there would be no living water. I can speak about mercy because I have experienced it. Some of you know that two years ago I died, my heart stopped and I died. He decided to give me back my life and so I am talking about His mercy. I couldn't do anything. I received His mercy to have my life back. I also see God's mercy working in the people that Roger and I are called to help. Most people are offered this live giving water and His mercy, but often they just don't recognise it. As God invites you to bring this flowing life giving water to other people, People who are suffering. I ask the question, “How can we refuse to do that, how can we be so selfish as to not offer it to other people with love who are suffering.

I have a story; I had a lady come to me during the year and she has no church back ground at all. I happened to say to her one day when we were ending a session, “do you know that God loved you when no one else did, you are alive today because you were and are important to Him,” And she went home. The next day I got a phone call and she said, “Rita I couldn't get out of my head what you said. I think that is a lesson for all of us to speak God's mercy in truth then His mercy does the rest. So in just speaking the word in love, all I said was you are important to God then and now, that's the truth. We need to encourage people with the truth. I was looking through the scriptures with the miracles of God and the reference to water. I thought about Moses in the desert when the people moaning that there wasn't any water, God told him to strike the rock and out came the flowing water. Then Moses parted the red sea, Noah survived the floods, Jesus' baptism by water, and the man by the pool. He was into self pity and excuses. Jesus asked him what he wanted, “No

one will help me get into the pool.” I wonder if we do that when the Lord wants to offer us a miracle we are so busy feeling sorry for ourselves that we miss the miracle when it is offered. The woman at the well drew life giving water. The first recorded miracle, changing water into wine at the wedding. For us the Eucharist, do you know that that tiny drop of water that priest adds to the wine that is us? So at the consecration we become totally immersed with the precious Blood and the church inclusive use of water.

Come whoever is thirsty accept the water of life as a gift whoever wants it. Whoever wants it? It is a choice. Some want to accept that living water and some choose not to. So let's look at the water that is available to the thirsty land and what about our land. Most Christians in NZ say this is a spiritually thirsty land. I wonder how many these days look to the scriptures for the answers to what is happening all over the world. How much attention do we as individuals give to that thirsty ground which is our personal ground? It is easy to agree at a meeting like this, but when we have to act do we say to the Divine Mercy “I Trust In You”! When times get hard do we go from one person to another looking for the answers? God is talking about this thirst which is ours and He wants us to come to Him. The promise, I will make streams flow on dry ground, when we speak of a stream we mostly think of gentle flowing water, non threatening and it would perhaps make it easy to imagine Jesus with us standing by a stream..

I will pour out my spirit on your children and on your descendants isn't that a wonderful part of the promise, that will mean your children, grandchildren and for some of you it may mean great grandchildren, Praise God. They will thrive like well watered grass like willows by the streams of running water. I think that is part of the promise that I really love about our children. I hear some of you probably saying, “I can't see it with my lot,” and maybe we won't and maybe you will have to wait until you are with the communion of saints until we see the promise fulfilled. Some of our grand children and children will never know how many hours of prayer go into them on a daily basis. So years and years from now the promise you have heard today for your children and your descendants will come into be. Those of you who are distressed over your children repeat this promise and remind God about it, He doesn't mind, remind Him that He promised you that for your family. Don't worry it is such a wasted emotion. Put worry time into pray time. We don't often deserve mercy it is beyond our human understanding but in His mercy come all kinds of healing. Today as we said the Chaplet “JESUS I TRUST IN YOU”

Word of knowledge

We may be able to understand a God who would forgive sinners who come to Him for mercy. But a God who tenderly searches for sinners and then joyfully forgives them must possess an extraordinary love! This is the kind of love that prompted Jesus to come to earth to search for the lost people and save them. This is the kind of extraordinary love that God has for you. If you feel far from God, don't despair. He is searching for you.