

HARRINGAY UNITED CHURCH-BAPTIST  
SUNDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2009.

**Theme: Breaking the Barriers**

Text: John 4:1-20

***Introduction:***

Today is the celebration of the Men of favour of this Church and on behalf of the Church and myself I want to congratulate you and pray that God will make you stronger, bless you more, and anoint you all to fulfil the purpose He created you for.

I want to remind you that God has placed you in a conspicuous position. Position of influence, position of leading and position of making difference in peoples' lives and therefore it is important that you grasp that and tune in to God and cooperate with Him so that he will lead you to your destination successfully.

The reason why I am saying this is that if we fail to tune in we would miss the point for which we are here at such a time as this.

Today also is the Racial Justice Sunday throughout the Country and it is an opportunity to promote equality among people and men should be in front of his.

***Text overview:***

The text that Tony read to us is an interesting one and one that clearly demonstrates the commitment of Jesus to His call and mission on earth. He was committed to bring good news to all people, the wise and the simple, the powerful and the weak, the rich and the poor, the minority and the majority, the dominant and the dominated, the honoured and the despised.

It is one of my favourites because I have found myself as one of the minority, the weak, the poor and the dominated, hence I relate very well to the passage.

In this passage, the Scripture tells us that after Jesus learnt that the Pharisees had issues with Him, He had to leave for Galilee.

Traditionally there are three routes from Judea in the south to Galilee in the North. The Eastern route is by the Jordan River, the Western route is by the plain of the Mediterranean Sea and the central route takes the hills and valley of Samaria. The central route is the shortest but for the hatred of the Jews for the Samaritans, they would rather take the pretty routes of the east or the west rather than the shortest one.

***Why the hatred?*** The Samaritans were the mixed race that came out of the conquest of the northern kingdom in 722BC by the Assyrians who took the Jews captive and resettled the land with captives from other countries. Hence intermarriage and importation of other religions and cultures were inevitable. So when the Jews returned from exile from Babylon in 539BC to re-start the worship of the living God, they met with different kind of worship and gods. They received great opposition to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem by the Samaritans in the time of Nehemiah (Neh. 2:1-2).

From then, the hatred had grown and continued till Jesus' time. And this cannot continue, the barrier must be broken, and who is to do it, Jesus the messiah who came to rescue the whole world from their sins, the Jews, the Samaritans and the whole world.

**The Barriers broken:**

***1. The barrier of hostility – He travelled the unusual way***

The expression 'he had to go through Samaria' seem to be compelling because of what He wanted to achieve. He was sent break the barrier of hostility that has existed for

several centuries before him and He could not shy away from that, He had to do it hence the expression 'he had to go through Samaria'.

The prince of peace broke the barrier of hostility; he crossed the border to bring peace and reconciliation between the Jews and the Samaritans. He, being a Jewish Rabbi went to the territory of the despised Samaritans to bring about peace between the two.

### ***2. The barrier of racism – He went to Samaria***

Racism is the prejudice that members of one race are intrinsically superior to members of other races. Racism is not God's intention, it is developed by humans and it is intended to suppress a group of people perpetually. The way the society is organised, the rules and their interpretations favoured a group over the other. They sometimes justify this outrageous behaviour by the scripture.

Racism is covert and right in the mind; hence our thought, words and action follow what are in the mind.

The issue of racism is not white against black alone, it involves South against North of England, West of London against the east and you know the way the government has gone about this is yielding negative result as the white majority are now becoming increasingly marginalised and discriminated against. We almost excuse anything and get away with the most outrageous behaviour on the excuse of racist accusation.

If we see everyone as human being created by God and treat them as such, we would value each other.

Jesus set the example he went to the outcasts of his time and brings them hope and gave them a future, called them a people and valued.

### ***3. The barrier of sexism – He sat and talked with a Samaritan woman***

From time women have always been subjected to discrimination and constantly put down. They have always being treated as second class citizens. It is unfortunate that the Church is caught up in this aspect as well. In some Churches, women are not given chance to exercise their God given gifts, they are to be seen but not heard, they are to make the numbers and bring revenue and not allowed to be part of the body of Christ fulfilling their potentials. Jesus calling of the twelve as apostles is not an excuse for that. If it would be, He would not have taken time having conversations with this woman and this is a good example that we should not discriminate against women.

God did not create them as servants but as equal. Jesus first empowered this woman to proclaim Him as the Messiah in Sychar, and then He commissioned Mary to proclaim the good news of His resurrection to the Apostles and the disciples to proclaim his good news to the world starting from Jerusalem, to Judea, Samaria and to the end of the world.

There is no excuse to discriminate against anyone because they are women.

### ***4. The barrier of religion – He offered the living water***

The Samaritans have been caught up with syncretism after the Assyrian have taken them captive and resettled their land with people from other countries who brought with them their various religions and gods, hence they became polluted in thought and religion.

Jesus did not join other Rabbis; he took the true worship to Samaria by offering the woman living water who is the Holy Spirit. Though the woman misunderstood Him but she got it later.

### **5. The barrier of class – He revealed Himself as the Messiah to a despised Samaritan woman.**

This is the climax of this divine pre-planned meeting with this woman. It appears that this woman knew her Scripture. After Jesus' statement that God is spirit and those that worship must worship Him in Spirit and truth, she responded, 'I know that Messiah (called Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us'.

Then Jesus declared to her, 'I who speak to you am he.' This is a Whao! experience, amazing and wonderful. This woman, a Samaritan, despised and who is socially bankrupt was the beneficiary of the Lord's revelation of Himself. God is definitely no respecter of anyone and He is sovereign.

Christ did not say or thing she is despised, He revealed himself to her and thus she became the first woman evangelist to proclaim Christ as the Messiah to the People of Samaria, hallelujah.

### **Conclusion:**

The challenge to the men of favour and the Church is that we should follow in the steps of our Lord, Jesus Christ. The Yorubas will say 'you resemble the one who gives birth to you' God is our Father; therefore we have no choice than to resemble Him.

Our situations today are not too deferent from Jesus time. There is hostility and discrimination everywhere and is even getting worse.

The ethnic minorities continue to be discriminated against and even now the ethnic majority are also becoming marginalised and discriminated against.

There are much difference in wages between men and women, there are limits to the level a woman can reach in some organisations and even the church is not an exception, in some churches women are not allowed to minister.

The rich are becoming greedier and are doing everything possible to get richer at the expenses of the poor.

The Challenge I am leaving with you today as men who for a very long time have enjoyed the privilege of domineering, and unprecedented favour against women, we have enjoyed the privilege of leadership both at work, the community and the Church and have always been in the fore front of these evils of discrimination of our world, we must step out like Jesus and break the barriers of race, sex, religion and class and change the curse of our society for good and to the way God intended it.

I do not want us to patronise the people from other places (race), women (sex), or people who lower in class, it should not be token treatment but a genuine breaking of barriers. God sees our hearts and He knows when we are genuine or fake and He will reward us accordingly.

Congratulations again to you, may God bless you.