

During my childhood in the refugee camp, I remember walking to the well to fetch water. I carried a cracked bucket, trying my best to hold onto every drop. No matter how carefully I walked, or how quickly I hurried, the water kept slipping through the cracks. By the time I reached my home, only a little was left.

In the time of the prophet Jeremiah, the people put other things before God. They depended on cracked cisterns that could hold no water. “They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters” (Jeremiah 2:13).

In John 4:14, Jesus tells the Samaritan woman that He will give her living water that will become a fountain springing up into everlasting life. Through Christ’s life, death, and resurrection, God has given us the fresh spring of life and love—this living water that will never run dry.

The problem is that God’s people keep carrying water in broken buckets that cannot hold it. Today, we do the same. We chase after our dreams; we put our trust in wealth, in positions, in pride and power, in our own strength. But all of these will leak away, like water from cracked cisterns.

The good news is that God never abandons us in our brokenness, our emptiness, or our loneliness. God is always inviting us to His banquet.

In Jeremiah 2:4–13, we hear how God rescued His people from slavery in Egypt. He led them through the wilderness and gave them a land flowing with milk and honey. But they forgot the good things God had done for them. They turned to false gods, trusting idols and human powers more than the living God. They turned away from the true God, digging their own wells that could not hold water.

The history of the Karen people is much like Judah in Jeremiah’s day. Karen Christians believed that God rescued them in the refugee camps along the Thailand–Myanmar border and brought them to Australia. For the Karen, Australia is a land flowing with milk and honey. Yet some no longer come to church, forgetting what God has done—from the refugee camp to this new land. They put material things first instead of putting God first in their lives. They trust in wealth, careers, possessions, and bank accounts for security. But this is like drinking water that does not last—water from cracked cisterns.

In Luke 14, Jesus says: “When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your relatives, or your rich neighbours. If you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind, and you will be blessed.”

I would like to say thank you to Australia for welcoming me into your country. I was one of the poor and the refugee. I had no place to live, no place to go, and I did not know where I belonged. But coming to Australia, I began to realise that I am human, that I have human rights, that I have value, identity, and belonging.

Let us follow God’s Word. Let us be a people who pray for a broken world, and a people who hold firmly to the hope of Christ.

Thank you, God, for giving us the New Covenant and a new hope in Christ. Thank you, God, for inviting us to Your banquet, to eat with You at the same table.

Amen