

## What if I Could Have a New Life?

Clergy Column, *The Centre Daily Times*, January 18, 2015

by Rev. Jeremiah Montgomery

How many of us have ever wished that we could have a new life?

It's not that we meant to mess up our current life. For a time, things seemed to be going well. But then... we lost a job we were banking on. The relationship we had such high hopes for fell apart. We failed to meet that goal we were aiming at – or even worse: we met the goal, only to find that it did not satisfy.

Nobody consciously sets out to make themselves miserable and unhappy. Yet so often, miserable and unhappy is exactly where we end up: alone on the bus, riding home in the dark, tired of living yet afraid to die – wishing we could wake up to a better life tomorrow.

What if this were actually possible? What if there was some way that we could restart? What if, despite all my flaws and misfortunes, I could find a new beginning?

There is a very moving story in the New Testament about a lady whose life was a mess. Her relational mobility had left her isolated by her community. Things were so bad that she couldn't even risk going to get water at the same time as her neighbors. The only safe time for her to go to the town well was at noon – when everybody else was indoors.

But one day, she arrived at the well to find a strange man waiting. After asking her for a drink, this man made an extraordinary promise: "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water," (John 4.10). As their conversation unfolds, it becomes obvious that this man knows all about her relational problems. And though he doesn't excuse her misbehavior, he also doesn't chase her away or increase her isolation. Instead, he offers her a new beginning – if she will just begin to be honest.

The man who met the woman at the well was Jesus Christ. Some time later, while attending a feast in the city of Jerusalem, Jesus repeated his extraordinary promise: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water,'" (John 7.37-38).

What kind of person says this sort of thing in public? Was Jesus insane? Was he lying? Some might say so. But that wasn't the reaction of the woman Jesus met at the well. Her reaction was quite different. She didn't think Jesus was a fraud. She suspected he was telling the truth! She ran to her neighbors (the people she had been avoiding) asking, "Can this be the Christ?"

What if Jesus was 'the Christ' – the Son of God sent to rescue broken people from the ruins of our own self-worship? What if it was actually in his power to give new life to broken people? What if it is still in his power today?

*Jeremiah Montgomery is pastor of Resurrection, a congregation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in State College. Visit Resurrection online at [resurrectionopc.org](http://resurrectionopc.org). He quotes the English Standard Version of the Bible.*