

## Third Sunday In Lent Lessons

### Psalm 95:1-9 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup>Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. <sup>2</sup>Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. <sup>3</sup>For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods. <sup>4</sup>In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. <sup>5</sup>The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. <sup>6</sup>Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; <sup>7</sup>for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, if you hear his voice, <sup>8</sup>do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the desert, <sup>9</sup>where your fathers tested and tried me, though they had seen what I did.

**Exodus 17:1-7 (NIV)** <sup>1</sup>The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. <sup>2</sup>So they quarreled with Moses and said, "**Give us water to drink.**" Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the LORD to the test?" <sup>3</sup>But **the people were thirsty for water** there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?" <sup>4</sup>Then Moses cried out to the LORD, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me." <sup>5</sup>The LORD answered Moses, "Walk on ahead of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. <sup>6</sup>I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. <sup>7</sup>And he called the place Massah and Meribah because

the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the LORD saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

### Romans 5:1-8 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup>perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup>And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. <sup>6</sup>You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. <sup>8</sup>But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

## Third Sunday In Lent

*Never Thirst!*

**The source of living water** (John 4:5-26)

**Seeking to quench our thirst** (Jeremiah 2:13)

**Satisfied with God** (Revelation 7:16-17; 22:17)

### For further study:

Read Psalms 16:11; 36:7-9; 63:1-5; Jeremiah 31:14;  
John 6:35

- What reasons do these passages give you for being satisfied with God?
  
  
- What is the result of that satisfaction?

### John 4:5-26 (NIV)

<sup>5</sup>So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup>Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. <sup>7</sup>When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" <sup>8</sup>(His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) <sup>9</sup>The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." <sup>11</sup>"Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" <sup>12</sup>Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?" <sup>13</sup>Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup>but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." <sup>15</sup>The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." <sup>16</sup>He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." <sup>17</sup>"I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. <sup>18</sup>The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." <sup>19</sup>"Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup>Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." <sup>21</sup>Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup>You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup>Yet a

time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.

<sup>24</sup>God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." <sup>25</sup>The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." <sup>26</sup>Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."

Prayer: Heavenly Father, teach us from your Word today; help us understand how thirsty we really are and how you alone can satisfy our need.

The new catchphrase in this time of pandemic is "social distancing." Don't gather in large groups and keep six feet away from another person in order to minimize the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Our congregation is practicing social distancing this morning. You are listening to this message over the internet or reading a copy of it.

I'm glad Jesus did not engage in social distancing. He did not keep his distance from our sin-infected world but came to us and lived among us. And although he never sinned, Jesus took our infection and the awful consequences of our disease, even to the point of death. In doing so, Jesus conquered the disease of sin, and death itself, in order to bring us the cure.

Our gospel lesson this morning tells us that, when it came to the Samaritans, the Jews of Jesus' day practiced social distancing. Verse 10 says that *Jews do not associate with Samaritans*. Let's take a look this morning at how Jesus overcame social distancing and discover how he satisfies our greatest longing so that we **Never Thirst**.

We have just heard how Jesus and his disciples arrived at the town of Sychar in Samaria and to the well the patriarch Jacob had dug two thousand years before (and which is still providing water today). It was noon (the sixth hour) and we are told that *Jesus, tired*

*as he was from the journey, sat down by the well*. Evidently, he was also thirsty because <sup>7</sup>*When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?"*

The Samaritan woman was surprised by his request (and his lack of social distancing boundaries).

<sup>9</sup>The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?"

Not only was she a Samaritan, but a woman, and, as would soon be exposed, a woman with a shameful past. But Jesus frequently broke through these kinds of social boundaries in his ministry in order for those who were outcasts to experience God's love and comfort and healing.

The bitter rivalry between the Jews and the Samaritans had been going on for 750 years when the Assyrians conquered the Kingdom of Israel, destroyed its capital of Samaria, carried away many of its people into captivity, and brought in other nations to take their place. The foreign non-Israelites intermarried with the ones who had remained. The new settlers brought their idolatrous religions with them which became intermingled with the worship of the true God. The Samaritans later built their own temple on Mount Gerizim. The Jews destroyed that temple in about 111 BC, further worsening the animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans.

But when the Samaritan woman questioned Jesus about his lack of social boundaries, Jesus takes the conversation deeper. *"If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."*

The woman wasn't about to concede that this Jewish rabbi could possibly be greater than Jacob who had provided abundant water for two millennia.

<sup>11</sup>"Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? <sup>12</sup>Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?"

<sup>13</sup>Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup>but whoever drinks the water I give him **will never thirst**. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

<sup>15</sup>The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get **thirsty** and have to keep coming here to draw water."

The woman was thinking of her physical need. Jesus would soon reveal her spiritual need—her real thirst—the thirst of her soul.

<sup>16</sup> He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." <sup>17</sup> "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. <sup>18</sup> The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." <sup>19</sup> "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup> Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." <sup>21</sup> Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup> You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup> Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." <sup>25</sup> The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." <sup>26</sup> Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."

Jesus brought up her five marriages and her present living situation, not to embarrass or condemn her but to reveal her thirst.

Pastor and author John Piper says that Jesus did this "to expose the thirst that she didn't know she had."

"He had offered her living water—water that if she drank it in her heart by faith would become a well of water springing up to eternal life and joy and satisfaction. This water was for her soul, not her body. It's her soul that was thirsty, and she didn't know it. So Jesus revealed her need."

Most Bible commentators are quick to point out this woman's immorality (six men!) But we must remember that women in that culture did not have the legal right to divorce their husband. It was the husband who could write a certificate of divorce and send her away. I think what Jesus saw before him was a woman who was rejected five times . . . probably for not being able to have children. And now, in order to survive, is living with a man who will not even give her the security of making her his wife.

This woman was thirsty for true love and acceptance.

### **What are you thirsty for?**

I'm indebted to Pastor Brian Hedges for this insight:

"Human beings are thirsty, but not for water. The thirst we long to quench is deeper, arising from the parched places of the soul, the cracked earth of our barren hearts. We feel disoriented and dissatisfied with life. Lost and confused, we crave something more, though we know not what."

We often misunderstand what we are thirsty for. We think that if we can just find that perfect relationship, or achieve success, or realize our dreams, that we will finally feel deeply satisfied. It's not that any of these things are wrong in themselves. But they were never

meant to be the true object of our longings, and they were never meant to satisfy our deepest thirst.

Are you thirsty? What do you thirst for? What do you really desire?

One commentary rightly says, “sin is seeking relief from this thirst in something other than God.” (Inter Varsity Press New Testament Commentary)

### **The Sin of Self Sufficiency**

It is as foolish to think we can exist without God, then it is to think we can live without water. That is the Sin of Self Sufficiency—that we think we can live self-sufficient lives without the water of life.

**Jeremiah 2:13** says, "My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

**Rev. 7:16-17** tells us that heaven will be a place where I hunger is fully satisfied and our thirst is completely quenched: "They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; <sup>17</sup>for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

Pioneer missionary, Hudson Taylor, was one who was sustained throughout his seemingly impossible work to evangelize the interior of China in the second half of the 1800s by this promise given to the Samaritan woman. He lost a wife and newborn child due to the hardships of missionary service.

Hudson Taylor wrote: Who does not thirst? Who has not mind-thirsts, heart-thirsts, soul thirsts, or body-thirsts?

“Can Jesus meet my need? Yes, and more than meet it. No matter how difficult my service; no matter how sad

my bereavement, how far away my loved ones; no matter how helpless I am, how deep are my soul yearnings—Jesus can meet all, and more than meet."

“I understood why the Lord had made this passage so real to me, ‘Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him *shall never thirst.*’ (John 4:14) Twenty times a day, perhaps, as I felt the heart-thirst coming back, I cried to Him, ‘Lord you promised! You promised me that I should never thirst.’

“. . . whether I called by day or night, how quickly He came and satisfied my sorrowing heart! So much so that I often wondered whether it were possible that my loved one who had been taken could be enjoying more of His presence than I was in my lonely chamber.

Jesus said, ‘whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.’

Hudson Taylor interpreted that Scripture in this way: “‘Shall’ means *shall*, ‘never’ means *never*, and ‘thirst’ means *any unsatisfied need.*”

The invitation Jesus gives is for all of us:

**Rev. 22:17** The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." **And let the one who is thirsty come;** let the one who wishes take **the water of life** without cost.

Are you thirsty? Let Jesus satisfy your thirst.

Let us pray . . .