

Sunday, March 23, 2014
Third Sunday in Lent
Holy Communion

INTRODUCTION

In today's gospel the Samaritan woman asks Jesus for water, an image of our thirst for God. Jesus offers living water, a sign of God's grace flowing from the waters of baptism. The early church used this gospel and those of the next two Sundays to deepen baptismal reflection during the final days of preparation before baptism at Easter. As we journey to the resurrection feast, Christ comes among us in word, bath, and meal—offering us the life-giving water of God's mercy and forgiveness.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, the well of eternal life, the light of the world, the breath giving life to dry bones. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Gracious God,

we confess that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. Forgive us and give us strength to turn from sin and to serve you in newness of life. Amen.

By water and the Holy Spirit, God gives us new birth, and through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God forgives us all our sins. Almighty God strengthen us in all goodness and keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN: *What Wondrous Love Is This* (ELW 666)

1 What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul! What wondrous love is this, O my soul! What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul, to bear the dreadful curse for my soul?

2 When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down, when I was sinking down, sinking down, when I was sinking down beneath God's righteous frown, Christ laid aside his crown for my soul, for my soul, Christ laid aside his crown for my soul.

3 To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing; to God and to the Lamb I will sing; to God and to the Lamb, who is the great I AM, while millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing, while millions join the theme, I will sing.

4 And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on; and when from death I'm free, I'll sing on; and when from death I'm free, I'll sing God's love for me, and through eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on; and through eternity I'll sing on.

GREETING

ELW p. 203

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

KYRIE

ELW p. 203

Have mercy on us, Lord, and hear our solemn prayer. We come to hear your living word; it saves us from despair.

Have mercy on us, Christ, and wash away our sin. Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may begin.

Have mercy on us, Lord, make sin and shame depart. Renew us with your saving pow'r; create in us new hearts!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Almighty God, consider the worthy desires of your humble servants. Reach out to defend us from evil by the word and work of your majestic right hand. Grant this, we pray, through the same Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

FIRST READING: Exodus 17:1–7

A reading from 17TH CHAPTER OF EXODUS.

Because the thirsty Israelites quarreled with Moses and put the Lord to the test, Moses cried out in desperation to the Lord. The Lord commanded Moses to strike the rock to provide water for the people. The doubt-filled question—“Is the Lord among us or not?”—received a very positive answer.

¹All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the Lord, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ²Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?” ³But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” ⁴So Moses cried to the Lord, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.” ⁵And the Lord said to Moses, “Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.” And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the Lord by saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 95:1-9

L: Come, let us sing to the LORD; let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.

C: Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.

L: For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

C: In his hand are the caverns of the earth, and the heights of the hills are his also.

L: The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands have molded the dry land.

C: Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, and kneel before the LORD our Maker.

L: For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand. Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!

C: Harden not your hearts, as your forebears did in the wilderness, at Meribah, and on that day at Massah, when they tempted me.

L: They put me to the test, though they had seen my works.

SECOND READING: Romans 5:1–8

A reading from _5th chapter of Romans.

Though we often hear that God helps those who help themselves, here Paul tells us that through Jesus' death God helps utterly helpless sinners. Since we who had been enemies are reconciled to God in the cross, we now live in hope for our final salvation.

¹Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

²Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

⁶For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION ELW p. 205

We are turning, Lord, to hear you; you are merciful and kind— slow to anger, rich in blessing, and with love to us inclined.

GOSPEL: John 4:5–30, 39-42

The holy gospel according to _____. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus defies convention to engage a Samaritan woman in conversation. Her testimony, in turn, leads many others to faith.

⁵So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.

⁶Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.

⁷There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." ⁸(For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) ⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) ¹⁰Jesus answered her, "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." ¹¹The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?" ¹²Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." ¹³Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever

drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”¹⁵The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”

¹⁶Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.”¹⁷The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; ¹⁸for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.”¹⁹The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.”²¹Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. ²²You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. ²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”²⁵The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.”²⁶Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”²⁷Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you seek?” or, “Why are you talking with her?”²⁸So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, ²⁹“Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?”³⁰They went out of the town and were coming to him.³¹Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.”⁴⁰So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. ⁴¹And many more believed because of his word. ⁴²They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY: *Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me* (ELW 623)

1 Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee; let the water and the blood, from thy riven side which flowed, be of sin the double cure; cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r.

2 Not the labors of my hands can fulfill thy law's demands; could my zeal no respite know, could my tears forever flow, all for sin could not atone; thou must save, and thou alone.

3 Nothing in my hand I bring; simply to thy cross I cling. Naked, come to thee for dress; helpless, look to thee for grace; foul, I to the fountain fly; wash me, Savior, or I die.

4 While I draw this fleeting breath, when mine eyelids close in death, when I soar to worlds unknown, see thee on thy judgment throne, Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee.

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell.* On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is

seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

**Or, He descended to the dead.*

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

As we return to the waters of baptism during this season of Lent, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

Lord, we thank you for raising up leaders from among us to serve and minister in your name. We ask that you would bless [especially ... and] all those in seminary training, and we ask that you would bless their learning, so that they may continue to serve you in faith. Lord in your mercy ... **hear our prayer.**

Through the transforming work of your Holy Spirit, keep us mindful during this Lenten season of Jesus' journey to the cross. Help us to contemplate the magnitude of your costly grace, teach us to value that which is of surpassing worth, and reveal to us the new things you are doing in our midst. Lord in your mercy ... **hear our prayer.**

Ruler of all nations, we ask your guidance for our nation, grant that freedom of belief may be ensured for every citizen, and that liberty to openly practice our faith may be guaranteed. Lord in your mercy ... **hear our prayer.**

Holy God, you lead us through dark valleys shadowed by suffering. Be the strong guide and sure comfort of all who call upon you [especially ...]. Fill them with your abundant life, keep them steadfast in faith, and strengthen and bless all who care for them. Lord in your mercy ... **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, God of abundant grace, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

OFFERING

OFFERTORY: *Create in Me a Clean Heart* (ELW 186)

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with your free Spirit.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

BLESSING

The blessed, holy Trinity keep you in grace, lead you in light, and + give you peace. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN: *Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer* (ELW 618)

1 Guide me ever, great Redeemer, pilgrim through this barren land. I am weak, but you are mighty; hold me with your pow'rful hand. Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me now and evermore, feed me now and evermore.

2 Open now the crystal fountain where the healing waters flow; let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through. Strong deliv'rer, strong deliv'rer, shield me with your mighty arm, shield me with your mighty arm.

3 When I tread the verge of Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside; death of death and hell's destruction, land me safe on Canaan's side. Songs and praises, songs and praises, I will raise forevermore, I will raise forevermore.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is with you. **Thanks be to God.**

DOXOLOGY: *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow* (ELW 884)

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heav'nly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Lessons for Next Week: Isaiah 42:14-21, Psalm 142, Ephesians 5:8-14, John 9:1-41

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Listening for the Promise

Weekly Devotional

Lent 3 — March 23, 2014

“Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings...” Romans 5:3b

A screaming child approaches Mommy with a finger outstretched. Through the tears, the child manages to tell Mommy that he has hurt his finger. Mommy looks and can't find anything wrong: no blood, no scratch, no broken bones. “It hurts, Mommy!” the child barely manages to say in between sobs of pain and tears. “Honey, I do not see anything wrong with your finger,” says the mother. “But it really hurts, Mommy!” the child says, as the sobs get louder. “Let's find a bandage; it will make you feel better,” she says. So, Mommy puts a bandage on the boo-boo and the tears go away. For the rest of the day, the child tells everyone of his suffering with great joy, showing the bandage to all that will look.

The suffering of a child with an invisible boo-boo is different than the kind of suffering Paul faced when he was writing to the Romans. Paul had experienced very real pain. He had been beaten and imprisoned. He had been rejected by Jews and Christians and nonbelievers. He had his own share of illness and disability. And yet, he was able to rejoice in Christ. Paul wore the scars of his genuine suffering like the child who shows a colorful bandage from Mommy, because in a similar way, Paul's wound had been covered by his Lord and Father. Paul was not abandoned by God when he was in pain or in prison; he rejoiced that God was doing something extraordinary in and through his life, despite the hurt and pain — even, sometimes, because of the hurt and pain he had endured.

So Paul tells us to rejoice in our sufferings because of the trust and hope we have in Christ. In this world, we will suffer, but we will never be abandoned. God has claimed us as his beloved children, and in Christ we have a hope that does not disappoint. When one of us goes to God in pain, he says, “My child, all is well,” and he covers the pain with the best bandage of all: his own grace and mercy.

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