

## Sermon May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020

### *Jesus Quenches Our Thirst with the Gift of the Spirit*

Jesus uses water as a metaphor a lot in his teachings. The reason for this is that we use water all the time. For one, we use water to cleanse ourselves and others physically and spiritually. Most religions have at least one cleansing practice that includes water within their tradition. For us Christians, we believe the baptismal waters we receive in our baptism are cleansing us from sin.

This practice of using water to cleanse us spiritually more than likely comes from our daily practice of using water to cleanse ourselves physically. Most of us spend many times each day washing the germs off ourselves. Especially during these pandemic times where we depend more than ever on water, and little soap, to keep us safe.

Another reason Jesus uses water as a metaphor is that we are so dependent on water to nourish us. Actually, we can live up to a few weeks without food, but only a few days without water.

In the last couple of years, I have chosen one day during the Muslim holiday of Ramadan to fast in solidarity with our Muslim friends. To see what they have to endure. This includes fasting from water from sunrise to sunset. And if you have ever fasted from water you know how dependent we are on water? How weak we can feel when we don't quench our thirst? How disoriented we get when we deprive ourselves of this sustenance? Daily, our bodies need water to keep it clean and to nourish it.

As the weather gets hotter, we notice this dependence on water more and more as we find ourselves heading to the fridge more often for something refreshing to drink. Like a cold glass of ice tea or a refreshing beer? Oh. Did I say beer? I meant root beer.

When I get to sundown and the breaking of the Ramadan fast the water never tastes so good as it does in that moment when it hits my lips after hours of going without it. Kind of similar to forgetting to pack water when going to the park or the golf course, and then getting home after hours of sitting/walking/playing in the sun. Heading right to the fridge for an ice-cold glass of water. "Oh! That really hits the spot."

We thirst all the time for the refreshing taste of water or at least water with some sugar in it. This is what makes Jesus' invitation to receive the living water so appealing. Ironically, many of the people think Jesus is talking about physical water when Jesus offers this living water to them.

However, Jesus isn't talking about our thirst for physical water here is he? Jesus is talking about our thirst for God. In all Jesus' touring around Galilee and Jerusalem Jesus sees something that many spiritual leaders like myself see in our world today. There is a thirst for God. There is a thirst to feel and see God's presence acting in our lives. Maybe this thirst hits us even more often than our thirst for physical water. Especially during uncertain times like this pandemic that we are living through.

We see this thirst for God in the people we hear about this morning. Like the elders of the Israelite community who thirst for God's Spirit (the spiritual water) when given the responsibility to offer guidance to the Israelite community. The Israelite community who is wandering in the desert understanding full well the thirst we struggle with when not getting enough to drink.

Or like the disciples who thirst for this spiritual water (God's Spirit) as they sit in a room doubting their abilities to continue Jesus' ministry. Wondering if they have enough left in the tank to give. Wondering if they are good enough. Needing to be nourished. Trying to remember Jesus' promise in his last words to them.

Last words where Jesus says that Jesus will provide them with this living water to keep nourishing them spiritually. To keep cleansing them from the things that separate them from God. Jesus promises them the gift of the Holy Spirit. God's presence in their hearts and in their lives every day. Giving them what they need to continue the work Jesus started.

Jesus sees our thirst for God in the here and now whenever he comes across our many sufferings, whether we are dealing with illness, poverty, broken relationships, injustice, grief, a lack of knowledge or wisdom. Jesus sees this thirst in all of us, and so, offers us this spiritual water. God's Spirit.

So, we see this thirst for the living water, God's Spirit in all of us past and present. And, we also bear witness in the scriptures and in our lives to the presence of this Spirit as it empowers the elders to guide the Israelites from

the desert into the Promised Land. As it empowers the disciples to no longer doubt their abilities to live out the gospel. Moving them to speak. Moving them to guide the new community of believers in continuing the work of Jesus in our world.

In our baptism. In the physical sign of water poured out on us in combination with the spoken Words in our scripture we witness God's presence in the Spirit. In the life-giving water. Coming down on us.

Throughout our lives we see this Spirit at work giving us faith to endure. Giving us hope to see where the resurrected Christ is touching our lives and our world. Empowering us the body of Christ to be Jesus' hands and feet in our world. Especially during these pandemic times where we have become the church in new and creative ways.

On this day of Pentecost, we stand together in our red with the Spirit of God among us knowing we are not alone. God is there with the Israelites and elders in the desert giving them what they need to endure. Leading them into the Promised Land. God is with the disciples in the midst of their doubts giving them what they need to continue Jesus' ministry. Leading them into a new age. God is with all of us in the midst of this pandemic. Giving us creative minds and compassionate hearts to keep loving as God loves. Quenching our thirst for God's presence on these hot sunny days. Giving us hope in a redemptive and renewed creation that we will witness when we come out of this pandemic.

Let us pray, loving God, we give thanks that you give us the gift of your Holy Spirit. Quenching us from our spiritual thirst. Help us see your Spirit at work in us and in the world. **Amen.**

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