

3rd S. in Lent 3/23/14
Exodus 17:1-7 A

AND HE CALLED THE NAME OF THE PLACE MASSAH AND MERIBAH, BECAUSE OF THE QUARELLING OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, AND BECAUSE THEY TESTED THE LORD SAYING, "IS THE LORD AMONG US OR NOT?"

Can you believe he did that? Moses named the place "testing" and "quarreling". Instead of Beulah and Glen Ullin, we could be named "Testing" and "Quarreling," North Dakota. Instead of Concordia or Zion Lutheran Church, we could be No Faith Lutheran Church, or Disgruntled Lutherans' Church.

Bear with me, but thinking of our lesson in this way helps us understand our Old Testament lesson. Moses named the place Massah, "testing," and Meribah, "quarreling," because the people were testing God and were really quarreling with God by quarreling with His prophet Moses. The Israelites failed to trust in the Lord after He had redeemed them from the bondage of Egypt. Under Pharaoh, they were oppressed and afflicted. They were weighed down with heavy burdens. Their male infants were taken away from them and murdered. They cried out to God for delivery and He heard their plea for help. They saw the plagues that the LORD sent upon the Egyptians. They were passed over when all the firstborn of the land were struck down. God took them out of Egypt with a mighty hand. They saw Pharaoh and his army drowned in the Red Sea. They were rescued, they walked on dry land, and they rejoiced in their salvation.

From the Red Sea they went into the wilderness and after three days they found no water. They came to Marah and found some water that was bitter. They grumbled and complained to Moses. Moses prayed to the LORD and the LORD showed him a log and he threw it into the water and the water became sweet. Then they traveled to Elim where there were twelve springs with water. They left Elim and came to the wilderness of Sin. Again, they complained and grumbled to Moses because they were hungry. Moses prayed to the LORD and God gave them manna, the bread from heaven, and quail to eat. Then they moved on to Rephidim and again they found no water, became thirsty, and complained and grumbled to Moses. Our Old Testament text says, "but there was no water for the people to drink. Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said,

“Give us water to drink (vs. 1-2).” Moses prayed to God, and the LORD told him to strike a rock with his staff and water gushed out of it. This was the place called Massah and Meribah. Testing and Quarreling. This is the place where they said, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

When things are going well, we rejoice and say God has blessed us richly. But, as soon as things get bitter, sour, or trying we are quick to question and say, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

Our baptism has marked us as one redeemed by Christ the crucified. Jesus has promised that He is with us always. You have God’s own promised that He works good in all things for you. And yet, in the hour of trial, your feelings and emotions will make you ask, “Is the LORD among us or not?” Illness and infirmity strike our earthly bodies. You brought your child to the font of baptism and heard their confession that they would suffer all even death rather than fall away from Jesus and His Church. But now, you cannot even recall the last time they darkened the church door. You find yourself in a marriage where Satan has convinced your spouse that when God promised you husband and wife, He made a mistake. Your parents are aging, which means they are not as independent as they once were, and your advice is not always welcome. Your job, with its nice salary and benefits, now seems more like a grind, a daily grind, than making life sweet. Is God with us or not?

The Lord wants us to be certain so that we don’t question like the Israelites who were brought out of Egypt saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?” We know that God is among us in Jesus Christ. We cling to the name given to Jesus by the angel Gabriel who declared to Joseph, “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us) (Mt 1:23). Jesus is with us as He has promised at the end of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age (Mt 28:20).” God’s promise to us is not that we will have a life of ease free from adversity. Instead, He assures us that when we have sufferings and trials, He strengthens and teaches us to rejoice in them. Our Epistle lesson puts it this way,

More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and 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 (Ro 5:3-5).
God is at work in us in our sufferings.

The Holy Spirit uses this word of comfort to comfort us in our lives. He opens our eyes to see how much the Lord truly loves us. He assures us by saying, "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Ro 5:8)." God has not forsaken us. It was Jesus who suffered for us and it was Jesus who cried out to the Father, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?" He was abandoned by God the Father in our behalf so that we would never be abandoned by God and can be certain that cross of Jesus has satisfied the Father's wrath against our sin.

In the 10th chapter of 1st Corinthians, Paul teaches us that such passages as today's Old Testament text were written so that we do not lose hope, lack faith, complain, and grumble like the Israelites of old. They saw the wonders and miracles that the LORD had done, but yet they question if He was for them or against them. They set their eyes on their own bellies and took their eyes off of the heavenly prize. They soon forgot how horrible the slavery to Pharaoh really was. They began to glorify those days saying, "Back under Pharaoh, things were much better. There was plenty to eat and plenty to drink." And most of those Israelites who passed through the Red Sea waters did not reach the Promised Land.

Hearing the words of our lesson, we are forced to take a look at our heart, our lives, our faith. Are we putting God to the test by doubting that He is with us? Are we doubting that God cares for us? Have we taken our eyes off of Jesus to put our faith, love, and trust in the things we see with our physical eyes? Are we simply going through the motions of our faith and giving lip service to being a Christian?

Seeing our testing of God and our quarreling of His ways, we plead as did the father whose son had an unclean spirit, "I believe; help my unbelief (Mk 9:24)." As God was with the Israelites in the cloud by day and pillar of fire by night, God is with us Jesus Christ to forgive and increase our faith.

As Moses struck the rock and water gushed out, Jesus was pierced for us and the water flowed out that springs up within us to everlasting life. As Moses gave bread from heaven, Jesus is the Bread from Heaven that

gave up His flesh for the life of the world. As Moses put the wood log in the bitter water to make the water sweet, the wood cross of Jesus makes the bitterness of our lives sweet. Jesus assures us in John's Gospel, "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world (Jn 16:33)." Jesus has overcome the world so we know that in Him we are more than conquerors. Jesus is our beloved Immanuel. He is God with us. Amen.

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Concordia Lutheran Church

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

801 Beacon Lane

Beulah, North Dakota

Rev. Toby H. Heller, Pastor

March 23, 2014



*"The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true
worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth."*

John 4:23a

Old Testament Reading: Exodus 17:1-7 (ESV)

All 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. Therefore 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?" But 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?" So Moses cried to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." And 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. Behold, 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. And 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?"

Gradual

O come, let us fix our eyes on Jesus,
the founder and perfecter of our faith,
who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross,
despising the shame,
and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Epistle Reading: Romans 5:1-8 (ESV)

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through 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. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces

character, and character produces hope, and 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.

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

“Alleluia”: *omitted during Lent*

Holy Gospel: St. John 4:5-26 (ESV)

So [Jesus] came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as He was from His journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.

There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, *"Give Me a drink."* (For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) The 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.) Jesus 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."* The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." Jesus said to her, *"Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but 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."* The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."

Jesus said to her, *"Go, call your husband, and come here."* The woman answered Him, *"I have no husband."* Jesus said to her, *"You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true."* The woman said to Him, *"Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but You say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship."* Jesus said to her, *"Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But 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. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."* The woman said to Him, *"I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ). When He comes, He will tell us all things."* Jesus said to her, *"I who speak to you am He."*

Nicene Creed	p. 191
Hymn of the Day	# 684
Sermon	
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Distribution Hymns:	# 761, 622
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Closing Hymn	# 763

Welcome to worship in the season of Lent, the time of following Jesus to the cross. Lent teaches us that it was our sin which caused Jesus to suffer and die. As we confess our sin, our great comfort comes from the promise of God, “Whenever we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).” Visitors, please sign our guest book and worship with us again soon.

The Great Deceiver: Is Satan a real being, or just an outdated representation of evil? The Bible speaks of him as a rebel angel leading his followers against God and all of God’s children. Please join us this morning, as we continue our Bible study, “The Great Deceiver.”

Our midweek worship continues this Wednesday, March 26th, at 6:30 p.m. “The King Condemned” will be the focus of our worship. Please join us for soup and sandwiches at 5:30 p.m. served by the LWML.



Tiffany Scherer will be with us on Sunday, April 13th during the Bible class hour to share with us her experience in Kenya. Tiffany went to Kenya as part of a Medical Missionary Team with LCMS World Relief & Human Care last November.

The LWML will be collecting items to make children’s birthday cake kits to donate to Women’s Action & Resource Center. The kits will be assembled at the LWML joint meeting on April 3rd. Items needed are cake mixes, frosting, candles and foil pans. Those wishing to donate toward this project may leave the items on the LWML table in the social hall where a sample kit is on display. Thank you.



The March Human Care Project is collecting protein items for Women’s Action & Resource Center. Examples are canned chicken, beans, tuna, peanut butter, protein drinks or any item containing protein. Please put your items on the shelf unit in the entryway. Thank you.

Today we celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion in which we joyfully receive Christ's Body and Blood, under bread and wine, for the forgiveness of our sins. As we celebrate the Sacrament, we also give public witness that we are in complete agreement with the denomination's doctrinal teachings at whose altar we commune. Therefore, we ask that only communicant members of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod commune with us. All guests are asked to talk to Rev. Heller before coming to the altar to receive the Sacrament.

In our thoughts and prayers,

† Blanche Becker, George Gierke (Lacy Korbyn's grandfather), and Kyle Miller (Nona Blaisdell's brother).



Stewardship of Offerings & Attendance

Attendance: 109 Offerings: \$3,260.01

But 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?" Even the Israelites who saw miracles with their own eyes fall into unbelief and fear. From this distance we can see how foolish their worry is. How foolish will our worries appear from the distance of eternity? The Lord cared for them, and He will care for us.

We are the ND District...

Today we remember the "Annunciation." This is the day, nine months before Christmas (always during Lent), when Gabriel announces to Mary that she is with Child from the Holy Spirit. The child in Mary's womb is Jesus, the Savior of the world. In our various vocations as mother, father, student, employee, citizen, and such — we too "announce" the Savior who was born in Bethlehem, died on Calvary, and rose on Easter to rescue us from hell and take us to heaven forever. This is our Witness, and our Mercy, and our Life Together.

President Barneck

† This Week at Concordia †

Sunday	8:30 am	Divine Service
	9:30 am	Sunday School/Bible Class
	11:00 am	<i>Worship @ Glen Ullin</i>
Tuesday	2:00 pm	Bible Class
Wednesday	3:30 pm	1 st -year Catechism
	4:30 pm	2 nd -year Catechism
	5:30 pm	Soup/Sandwiches—LWML
	6:30 pm	Lenten Service
	7:15 pm	Chime Practice
	7:45 pm	Bell Practice
Thursday	9:00 am	Deadline for April calendar items
	7:00 pm	<i>Lenten Service @ Glen Ullin</i>
Sunday	8:30 am	Divine Service
	9:30 am	Sunday School/Bible Class
	11:00 am	<i>Worship @ Glen Ullin</i>

Church Office Hours

Monday – Friday 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM
Church: 873-4388 Parsonage: 873-4223
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Website: www.concordiabeulah.org

*Please use a pew card to record your worship and/or
Communion attendance this morning*