

3 S. in Lent 3/15/20
John 4:5-26 A

“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 WILL GIVE HIM WILL BECOME IN HIM A SPRING OF WATER WELLING UP TO ETERNAL LIFE.”

One of my favorite all-time shows was a prank show that played upon our fascination with various forms and configurations of bottled water. It featured a make-believe, wonderfully decorated water bar complete with brilliantly colored menu, which the customers would be shown when they came in to select their water of choice. Some were advertised as coming from a pristine glacier. Some, from some kind of double, triple reverse osmosis system. And, on and on it went, including the house specialty.

Now this one will probably offend you. So, I'm going to give you the opportunity to cover your ears so as not to be offended. Ready? **3-2-1:** if you haven't covered your ears, it means the Pastor has your promise not to be offended. The water par excellence, it was advertised, was made from ... **cat urine**. They went into great detail about how they were able to utilize a highly-technical process -- and again, don't lose sight of the fact that this was all make believe -- to synthesize a highly valuable protein out of the cat urine and infuse back into a very special water, which, quite literally, promised to turn back the hands of time. There it was -- the fountain of youth in a bottle of water!

And, people fell for it. They would drink and proclaim they were so refreshed. They would drink and declare they felt so invigorated.

Then, the folks doing the show would pull out their e-tablet and show them a video clip of them – literally -- filling that very bottle with water from the garden hose in their backyard.

Now, at first glance, this may seem like I am contradicting the message of Jesus in our Gospel lesson this morning. Jesus is teaching us that if we drink the “living water” He gives, we will never thirst again. And it may sound to your ears that Pastor is saying any old water -- even out of a garden hose -- will do. No, My Dear Friends in Christ, I am not trying to compare waters this morning. My point is this: How quickly and easily we are dubbed and fall for the lies of the world, the devil, and your own sinful nature.

Maybe I can make my point this way: What do you thirst for in life? The thirst Jesus is getting at with this woman is the same thirst that affects each and every one of us in our earthly lives, and it is a thirst that goes far beyond the body’s natural calling for hydration. What causes you to thirst in this life? Is it power, control, so that you can lord it over others? Do you have a thirst to be popular, to be liked? Do you thirst for more money, more material goods: a bigger house, a newer, faster car, those right brand of jeans that all the other kids are wearing? Maybe your thirst is for that woman in the magazine.

All of these things, and many other things I haven’t named, all contribute to our sinful thirst. And what do we naturally do when we get thirsty? We try and quench that thirst. Maybe “more” money will quench our problems in life. Maybe “more” stuff or “more” power and control will quench our selfish thirst. Maybe “more” Facebook friends will quench our parched palates.

What do you thirst for in your life? The terrible reality is that each and every one of these things we try to quench our thirst with; that we drink to try and give us peace and assurance in our sinful life, **will not do the trick.** Sure, we may find things that temporarily fill the need, but the thirst still comes back, doesn't it? More often than not, it comes back worse than before.

None of the worldly things that we seek to quench our thirst can **ever** give us the peace that surpasses all understanding. We're going to the wrong source in an attempt to quench our thirst. We're not drawing Christ's water of life. None of these things we sinfully thirst after can ever see us through into eternal life. St. Augustine, the great early church theologian, put it best when he said, ***"The soul created for God, by God, will not rest until it rests in God."***

Do you know who thirsted for you and for your salvation? Jesus. He came from heaven above to take on our human flesh, and all the pains, temptations, and thirsts that belong to our mortal frames.

And yet, Jesus did what we could never do. He led the perfect life that is demanded by God's law. He never gave in; not once, to temptation. He never gave into the thirsts of the flesh that plague each and every one of us from cradle to grave. That is Good News for you, Dear Child of God, because Jesus gives you His perfect obedience to the Father's will to be your very own.

And, that same Savior cried, "I thirst". He thirsted, because our sinful thirsts and pains hung on Him as He was nailed to the tree of the cross. All your sins are on Him and He bleeds and dies on that cross. And because of His bloody death upon that cross, the Good News for you is that all of your sins are forgiven.

III. “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I 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,” Jesus says (vv. 13-14).

What sweet comfort this is for us who walk by faith through this valley of the shadow of death. On this side of heaven, all of us, at one time or another, in one way or another, find ourselves in a situation like that Samaritan woman. No one gathered in God’s House this morning is unscarred, unscathed from life in a sinful world. There are those who have been used or terribly hurt by others. There are those who suffered and been rejected for the right reason; and those who suffer regret for doing the wrong thing; haunted by past mistakes, weaknesses and failings - not to mention ongoing mistakes, weaknesses and failings. There are those who have tried to do everything to save a relationship, only to see another selfishly destroy their efforts. There are those whose property has been stolen. There are those whose names and reputations have been ruined by wagging tongues. The devil, the world and your own sinful flesh have a way of just beating you down.

In our Old Testament lesson, the Israel tested the Lord by saying “Is the Lord among us or not (Ex 17:7).” There is no need for us to put the Lord our God to the test, because He is with us, just as He was with the Israelites in the wilderness. Just as He came to the Samaritan woman at the well, He comes to us.

At the font of baptism, Jesus creates faith in you so that you trust, rejoice, and find comfort in Him alone; and gives you the power to overcome sin. In the word of the Gospel, Jesus comes to you to say, “Be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you.” At His table, Jesus comes to

you with His true Body and Blood to forgive you of your sins, and give you life and salvation and strength to live a godly life in Him.

The 7th chapter of Revelation gives us a most beautiful, comforting picture of the Church Triumphant in heaven. The saints who have come out of the great tribulation of earthly life stand before the throne of the Lamb, wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands, forever ever and ever singing the praises of the Lamb who was slain. And, God tells us in those most joyous words, "Never again will they thirst." Never again will we thirst, saints of God, for Jesus has come and given us the Living Water of forgiveness, life, and salvation.