

Quenching Our Thirst
Sunday, March 15, 2020 – 3rd Sunday of Lent
Texts: Psalm 95 and Exodus 17:1-7

“Let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation – 95:1

Let us come before God’s presence....with thanksgiving and raise a loud shout to the Lord with Psalms.”

With psalms it says!

We are praying the psalms. We are preaching the psalms.

We are using the psalms to strengthen our relationship with God and understand His connection with us and all he created.

Our Psalm today goes on to say:

“For the Lord is our God, and we are the people of God’s pasture and the sheep of God’s hand.

Oh, that today you would hear God’s voice.”

In a figurative sense....and often in a physical sense....
God is with you and me to “Quench our thirst.”

Sound silly?

Listen to this from St. Matthew: 6:31-34

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘what will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear’ for it is the gentiles who strive for all these things;

And indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

You might be saying what has that got to do with Psalm 95???

Everything!

Is God the rock of your salvation?

That is....does God provide life, love and freedom in faith?

And, if we are the sheep of his pasture.....God does care for you and me.

Even the writer of Psalm 95 took us back to people in Exodus who questioned the “thirst quenching” will of God.

Verse 8 says: “Harden not your hearts,

As at Meribah.....you ancestors tested me there.

People thirsted for water.....they griped and complained....

But this wasn’t the first time was it.....

Earlier in the chapter:

There was the heavenly manna. There was the fluttering of the quail.

Why would God stop now with his children...

They just stopped listening to his voice.

Their Hearts were hardened.

They believed, as many in our world.....we are on our own!

Somehow.....God is not paying attention...

Has he forgotten that we need these things?

Matthew's gospel says: in Jesus' words says no. God knows you need all these things.
Singing to the Lord and shouting for joy.....it is knowing that we can depend upon the "rock of our salvation."

(Illus.) Speaking of Rocks.....

I grew up in Joliet, Illinois.

One of my favorite memories as a young boy....
Taking the football.....to toss back and forth with Dad.

To Piltcher Park just outside the city limits.

There, near the center of the park was an "Artesian Well."

Somehow down beneath in an Aquifer, water just bubbled up and flowed in a fountain.

We would throw the football and come to the well for a drink.

I even remember there was a "tin cup" that (back then) people could use.

Cold, pure, refreshing water....a great memory.

Since that time.....now, many years ago, the aquifer became polluted and they cemented over the Artesian Well....!!!

Sad.

The water that God offers....especially in Jesus....not only quenches thirst....but is ever pure and ever refreshing.

Psalm 95 relates the hardness of hearts of the people at Meribah.....(Exodus)

Do you know why?

For they had cemented over their hearts to God's gifts...."your father knows that you need these things."

The people were even supposed to put a jar of the heavenly manna in the Ark of the Covenant as a remembrance....

BUT already they had forgotten...

Of course.....what am I saying....(remember) when they were told to gather only enough Manna for each day.....and that the last day....there would be enough to get through the Sabbath...

But some tried to hoard the heavenly host.

Some even tried to gather on the Sabbath...

Psalm 95....."In your hands are the caverns of the earth".....(I like to think of Aquifers....)

Full of life giving water...

"The heights of the hills are also yours."

God IS paying attention.

SO, Moses took the staff he used on the Nile....

Struck the rock where God was and water bubbled up.....just like Piltcher Park.....only this water will never be polluted...

The place was called Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord,

Saying...."Is the Lord among us or not?"

The two words...sharing a similar meaning:

Proving and Strife.....Massah and Meribah.

Because they questioned: is God among us or not?

But Psalm 95 says.....don't harden your heart! Sing to the Lord. Shout for joy...

God IS the rock of our Salvation.

(Illus.) Daniel Erlander wrote a pamphlet for parents regarding baptism.

But it is also about us.

He says: After the great bath your child will begin life on this earth as a Christian – one who “lives wet.”

(meaning to live as one who is baptized.)

As Psalm 95 reminds us of the history of God's people they hardened their hearts and tested God.

Their hearts dried up.....

It can be scary. It can seem like God is taking more time than we would like....or answering in a way....we don't hear.

(Illus.) When I was little, I loved going over to my Aunt Emma and Uncle Roy's house.

They could not have children....But had a wired haired terrier named Toby.

I loved to play at their house.

Except... I was deathly afraid to go down their basement!

As you descended the steps.....off to the left was a huge open “cistern”....full to the brim with “black” water. Now, it wasn't really black.....but looked so going down the basement.

I was afraid....maybe, something would rise out of that to get me!

And yet, up stairs it came out as life giving water.

My Uncle and Aunt tried to explain this to me many times...

But my fear held.

(Exodus) I wonder if the people just could not see beyond the desert...

And so their hearts were hardened.

They could not feel a reason to sing to the Lord.

They could not shout for joy....for the heat of the day held them back.

Let us come before God's presence

Says the psalm....

Sometimes life brings deserts.

Sometimes circumstances brings heat that seems unrelenting.

But God is ever with YOU.

Psalms are also prayers of REMINDERS.

For the Lord is OUR God, and we are the people of God's pasture....sheep of God's hand.

Hear God's voice!

That means you have to listen....overcome your fears.

Although I have to be honest.....I don't think that memory of the “cistern” will ever quite go away!

So I KNOW, it isn't always easy.

But then.....Jesus speaks to us AS he did with the woman at the well.

Jacob's well....giving water and life for a long time.

Jesus says: (from this well) everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again.

But

Those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty!

Water that springs up (like that Artesian well, but more)
Gushing up to eternal life.

You have **THAT** water. I have **THAT** water.

Even though the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, didn't understand....yet....she has that water. She shouted for joy!

God knows you need these earthly things....like water.

But as we drink of Christ Jesus....

Then our hymns can be like that of the Psalms...

Verse 6 Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our maker!

(Illus.)Do you realize how much time, energy and money we spend looking for water....not only on this earth...

But...."space the final frontier" (like Star Trek)

Out there.... Is there life....could there be life.

Well, is there water on....the moons of Saturn....?

The ice caps of Mars....?

Other outer planets....?

Could we go there....should we go there....Has life already begun?

"Quenching our Thirst"....for what is beyond our grasp....

BUT God is within the grasp of **OUR** folded hands of prayer.

(Illus.)I was reading my devotions from "Hope-full Living" For Tuesday March 10
Entitled: "Walking Together"

A quote from Isaiah 41

The chapter's title: "Israel Assured of God's help"

Vs. 13 "For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Do not fear, I will help you."

That is what Psalm 95 is trying to help us **REMEMBER**.

Boy, I could have used that right hand going down my Aunt/Uncles basement!
Maybe it was there, but my heart was too young.

So Matthew says: seek ye, first the Kingdom....Your heavenly knows you need all these things.

As Jesus walked the dusty roads....it is a reminder that God walks with us and will never let us go!

Amen.