

May I have a drink?

Welcome to the third Sunday of Lent. During Lent we look at taking a journey where we draw ourselves closer to Christ and remember the suffering he went through for us – so we could be forgiven for our sins.

So during this 40 day Lenten journey we packed our bags and we are taking with us something called the Means of Grace.

The Means of Grace are ways for us to reflect on God - through prayer and fasting, fill ourselves with His Word - through our daily devotions, we come to church and participate in functions to keep ourselves in a Christian Community, and we remember to take care of ourselves during this journey.

Keeping to all of these things helps us experience God's grace in our lives.

So in thinking about taking care of ourselves and since we are taking a journey, let me ask, "How many hikers do we have?" For those of you who hike, what must you take with you?

So since this is such a long journey, 40 days is a long time, I am going to make sure I carry plenty of water with me so I don't get thirsty.

The Camelbak allows me to take a lot of water with me – keeping me from getting thirsty!

But then I get thinking, 40 days is really a long time. My Camelbak will run empty by then. And 40 days in a row seems to be like a long time to focus on God. Sure, there are only 24 days left, but still. Life is going on around us. Things are happening. Stopping all the time to remember that God is in the world can be hard.

Let's be honest, life isn't easy and placing our trust and faith in God sure can be difficult. And then sometimes we might ask ourselves if we really need God anymore – we might think that, "I have everything I need." Okay, we can give credit to God for giving us what we have, but what can God really offer me now that I don't have already?

Our second scripture is about a woman who might have felt this way. It seems that she had lived a hard life up to this point. The Bible said that she has had 5 husbands and is now living with someone that may eventually be husband number 6.

The Bible doesn't tell us if she just had bad luck picking husbands, or if they all died, but either way, there have obviously been some problems in her life. And in those days, being a female just compounds those problems.

So here she is walking down the path to the well she visited every single day – maybe several times a day, and here is a man sitting at the well. She recognized Jesus as a Jew and then she probably simply ignored him because Jews and Samaritans didn't even look each other in the eye, let alone have civil conversations.

So here she is tossing her bucket in the well, she heard the splash, felt the tension of the rope tighten up, and then she pulls the bucket up full of water and then this man says to her, "Give me a drink."

So she looks up at this man, who has obviously been on a long journey, so I am sure she realized that he was probably really thirsty, and then she probably wondered how long he had been sitting by that well waiting for someone to come with a bucket.

So, seeing how thirsty he was, she did the only proper thing a good Samaritan would do. She told him no. Actually what she said is, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?"

She looked at Jesus and thought, "Sure I've had a hard life, but now, I have everything I need, he has nothing I want. He doesn't even have a bucket. So what if he has been on a long journey and is thirsty, he can just sit here and wait for the next person to come along or he can just journey himself off to the next town."

This woman thought she had everything she needed, but it turns out she was spiritually empty. So Jesus, being who he is, doesn't get mad or upset with her for not giving him a drink.

Instead he said, "If you knew who I was and you asked me for a drink, I would give you Living Water."

Of course she had absolutely no clue what he was talking about. She still thought that she had everything and he had nothing, so she said to him, "You have no bucket and the well is deep – how are you going to give me this Living Water? Is this some kind of a trick to get me to give you a drink?"

Jesus simply looked at her and said, "Everyone who drinks of this water (meaning the water in the bucket) will get thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I give them will never be thirsty. The water that I give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."

Now she is interested. She doesn't quite understand yet because she is thinking that she could drink this special type of water and never get thirsty. She didn't understand that Jesus was really talking about spiritual faith. The type that, if we truly have it, can become like a spring of water gushing up out of us.

What I love most about that story is that she basically told Jesus he could just sit out there and die from thirst, pretty much laughed in his face because he didn't have a bucket to get water, and then, despite her gentle rudeness, He still talks to her about the Living Water and offers her a message of hope.

As we journey with Christ these 40 days of Lent, we come to church every Sunday and drink the water. We get a glass full of praise, worship, and scripture. During that Sunday we might help out by picking up the hymnals or folding up the pews. But the question is, what kind of water are we really drinking?

Are we drinking the kind of water that the next day we become thirsty again, remembering that the last glass satisfied us for a little bit, but now we have other things to worry about?

Maybe we give into temptation, or we start thinking about ourselves before everyone else, or we don't really want to give of our time to help others or to even go to a church-related activity. If we aren't drinking the Living Water, we might begin to think that one hour a week is enough to really think about God.

But if we open ourselves up to God and ask Him to give us a drink of His Living Water, our lives will be changed.

If we truly open ourselves up to hear His word, if we truly open ourselves up to worship Christ, if we truly open ourselves up to share in His love, the endless spring of Living Water will flow out of us.

Many of you here have water coming out of your ears, but many of us still have to open our hearts up to allow God in. When we truly open ourselves up to God's grace, when we ask God to fill us with the spring of His Living Water, our lives will be changed forever.

If we open ourselves up and put our faith in Christ, we will always have the Living Water inside of us. But to keep it gushing like a spring, we need to keep the Means of Grace in front of us. We need to remember to focus on God, need to remember to read the Bible or daily devotions, need to remember to pray, and need to keep ourselves involved in our Christian Community.

The beauty of this is that when we truly open ourselves up to Christ's love, if we truly give ourselves over to him, if we take a drink from the spring of Living Water we will want to focus on God more, we'll want to read His Word, we'll want to be an active part of our Christian Community, we'll try to honor Him in all we do.

And then, because we are keeping close to God, we won't give into temptation as easily, no longer will we always put ourselves first and everyone else last, no longer will we think that one hour a week is enough for God.

When we have that Living Water, our lives are more fulfilled. Sure we have hard times, sure we still need to take care of ourselves, but our lives are that much more complete.

By growing in our faith, by truly believing in Christ's message, by taking a drink of Christ's Living Water, our lives become transformed.

So we are about halfway done with our Lenten journey and I am sure most of us are getting thirsty. Up ahead in the road are two glasses. One is filled with tap water and the other is filled with Living Water. My question to you is which glass do you want to take a drink from?

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