

Lenten Devotional March 9, 2021

Scripture

John 7:37-52

37 On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, 38 and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" 39 Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified. 40 When they heard these words, some in the crowd said, "This is really the prophet." 41 Others said, "This is the Messiah." But some asked, "Surely the Messiah does not come from Galilee, does he? 42 Has not the scripture said that the Messiah is descended from David and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?" 43 So there was a division in the crowd because of him. 44 Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him. 45 Then the temple police went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, "Why did you not arrest him?" 46 The police answered, "Never has anyone spoken like this!" 47 Then the Pharisees replied, "Surely you have not been deceived too, have you? 48 Has any one of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him? 49 But this crowd, which does not know the law—they are accursed." 50 Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus before, and who was one of them, asked, 51 "Our law does not judge people without first giving them a hearing to find out what they are doing, does it?" 52 They replied, "Surely you are not also from Galilee, are you? Search and you will see that no prophet is to arise from Galilee."

Devotional

The Rev. Alyce Weaver Dunn '88

Growing up, I frequently attended summer camp at Jumonville, one of our United Methodist camps in the Western Pennsylvania Conference. An annual highlight was stopping by Moses' Rock on a hot, summer afternoon. I would hold my hand for a moment over the water that was gently bubbling up from the rock. Then, as I would release my hand, the water would gush up! I would lean over and drink from the fountain of water. Nothing was more satisfying to my parched mouth than a drink of cold, mountain spring water!

Nothing is more satisfying to a parched soul than a deep drink of the living water offered in our scripture lesson! Jesus said, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'"

Jesus spoke these words to believers on the final day of the Feast of the Tabernacles, a joyous festival that remembered God's provision for the people of Israel as they wandered in the wilderness. The image of a priest drawing water out of the pool of Siloam and pouring it into a bowl in the temple would have been fresh on the peoples' minds. The prayer of the priest for God to send rain would have been ringing in their ears. The remembrance of God's gift of water in the wilderness when Moses struck the rock would have been burning in their hearts.

As the Festival neared the end, the people wanted the joy to continue. They did not want to wait until next year to experience again the joy of God's presence flooding their lives. They did not want their Spirit-saturated hearts to become parched again as they went home to an arid existence.

So Jesus' offer of living water was captivating. Although there were detractors who did not want dependency on ritual and hierarchy to end, the invitation to be in relationship with the God who daily provided the satisfaction of living water was powerful. The opportunity never again to experience a

parched spirit was a gift to those who were oppressed, beaten down, broken, and in need of resuscitation. They craved such living water!

As we journey through the wilderness of Lent, many of us realize our spirits are parched, our joy has run dry. Bitterness and brokenness have beaten us down. We need our conviction of faith revived! We need our thirst for justice quenched! We need the aridness of our hearts saturated anew with Jesus the Christ!

As you pray, fast, read Scripture, and worship during Lent, may you discover anew the living water of our Lord Jesus and never be thirsty again!

Prayer

My heart is dry, O Lord, and my spirit is arid. Joy and hope have been wrung out of my life by disappointments, misunderstandings, tension, and pain. I need your living water to refresh my heart, to saturate my spirit. Come, Lord Jesus, come. Amen.