

The Rev. Emily Dunevant

John 4:5-42  
Exodus 17:1-7  
Psalm 95  
Romans 5:1-11

March 15, 2020  
The Third Sunday of Lent

---

What are you thirsty for? My kids would answer...Root Beer, Cheerwine, or an iced caramel coffee with cream no sugar. That would be a typical response on any typical day. However, I bet in another two weeks if I ask that question of them, "What are you thirsty for?", they will most likely answer...School, friends, sports, the movies, anything to get me out of the house.

I know that to be true because in our home, we are already planning that during this time of social distancing, online meetings and virtual school, we want to be sure that the kids get the most out of their seclusion. This is no extended vacation to be sure. This isn't a time for extra TV and video games, although I am sure there will be plenty of that. So, being the dutiful parents that we are, Dwayne and I plan to keep the chores rolling and the yard work plentiful. There will be lots of good meals cooked (with the help of three pairs of teenage hands) and an abundance of joyful family bonding time. What kid wouldn't appreciate that? And, I promise I will stock plenty of Cheerwine and Root Beer to keep them happy.

What are you thirsty for? Our perspective of that question changes drastically depending on our circumstances, doesn't it? And, now, we are faced with a time like no other, a time that most of us have never seen in our lifetime. We are uncertain, maybe fearful, trying to navigate a virus that we don't fully understand. We are probably a little frustrated at all of the closing, at not being able to go about our daily routines. We are worried about the financial impact this will have on our investments, our businesses, our paychecks.

A week ago, we would have answered that we are thirsty for an upcoming vacation, ready to get some much needed rest. We are thirsty for March Madness and getting together with friends. We are thirsty for a family reunion or a neighborhood gathering or dinner out with a loved one.

This week, everything has changed. Our perspective has shifted. Our needs are different. The things we are thirsty for may no longer be about ourselves. We are called in this time of thirst to care for one another, to be patient and kind, to remain faithful, to work for the common good and seek out those in need. It's one of those times that our thirst for normalcy can only come to fruition when we realize that we are all in this together.

Notice when Jesus meets the woman at the well. He asks for help. He builds community and trust. He takes time to communicate. He humbles himself and in essence says to the woman, I need you. He names his own thirst and relies on her to help him. It's a beautiful moment.

It reminds me that our Christian journey isn't about independence and self-sufficiency. It isn't about selfish needs or personal gain. It's about a shared journey of abundance, of giving what we have so that others' thirst may be quenched...whatever that thirst may be.

In Paul's letter to the church in Rome, Paul reminds us that God is with us even in our most difficult moments. God is working for peace. Of course, there are some days when that reminder feels trite or like a cliché. When we are suffering or in pain, when we are scared or afraid, it can be so difficult to trust in God's peace. In fact, it may feel impossible especially when the world feels like a chaotic mess.

But, as Paul delivers those beautiful words, ..." suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us..." we are reminded that God's love is sufficient for each of us, especially in times like these.

Let us at now thirst for endurance and character and hope. Let us thirst for one another's well-being. Because God's love has been poured out into our hearts and through that love we will find peace.

Thanks be to God. Amen.