Third Sunday in Lent- March 14-15, 2020

Title- “Life Giving Water”

Texts: Ex. 17:1-7, John 4:5-26

Prayer

Salutation

**Bridge**

**Water. “Life Giving” water. Without water, we would die. Undisputedly, besides oxygen, is it the most precious thing on earth. And we have come a long way since the time of Moses and the woman at the well in the methods used to treat and collect it. It has been my privilege to serve God and man in a vocation for 45 years to help accomplish those tasks. As a plumber, I have helped protect the health of the nation. Without clean, potable water, people get sick. Without it being available at your tap, life becomes difficult. And without plumbers, it would be like living at the time of Jesus. Literally. Have you ever gone to a third world country? That is what it is like. There, you are blessed to even have a well, much less a clean well. And when you do, you don’t have to walk to the shared well, like the Samaritan woman did in today’s Gospel. Or the Israelites on their journey in the dessert of Massah, where there just wasn’t *any* water. It is a modern miracle that we are so blessed to have treated, relatively safe and pure water at our disposal, 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Don’t take it for granted! It comes with a price. You should know that, because plumbers are not cheap! And neither is “Life Giving” water.**

**Law**

**In the OT lesson for today, the Israelites are in the wilderness of Sin. Appropriate name. They are walking along with their herds. Let me say that again. Walking in the wilderness with their herds. Not much for shade. And it’s hot. What do they need? Yup, a drink. Everybody and their animals need a drink. Any kind of a drink and they aren’t getting it. And they get irritated and start to fuss- at Moses and ultimately- God. Reminds me of our young children. They will fuss until they get that drink, or we will soon know about it. They cry out! And so did these babies in the wilderness. Gimmie, gimmie, gimmie. They only cared about the most present need- water. Without it, they knew they would die.**

**In the Gospel text, the physical need for water is there, but there is so much more veiled in this conversation. For this woman, another kind of water is necessary. “Life Giving” water, spiritual water which only Jesus can provide. How so? Well, her sin was much different than those of the Israelites. Surprisingly, it is not much different for many people today. Or maybe it is not so surprising. She came to the well at noon. So what? Well, it’s hot at noon. All the women had already come to the well that day, in the cool of the morning and to catch up on all the gossip for the day. Huh? Well, they didn’t have cell phones! And they didn’t go out in the summer to chit-chat in the heat of the day, and most physical labor was done in the morning. This woman had a special mark upon her. And the women knew it and so did Jesus. So, she avoided the other women. Out of shame? Possibly. Or maybe she just didn’t like the hassle. We don’t know, but I have to tell you that many today are in her position.**

**What position? She had no husband and had had five before. In the past 50 years, we have gone from serial marriages to serial partners. There should be shame. But there is not. There should be hassle, but there is not. Sin is no longer shameful these days and many, many people live in sin. To take it a bit further, there isn’t even gossip about such things anymore, because even WE accept it as the norm. These people thirst for something to fill them, but they search at wells that are unfulfilling, and most times, unhealthy. Caustic in fact. So caustic people die in their trespasses and their sins. The sin produced in such affairs affects everyone, their families, their children and everyone they come into contact with. And don’t get offended if it looks like I’m picking on just the women! Men are just as guilty as the other half of the story! They do their part, too! But until the Lord reveals it, they hide it like dirty linen, even though everyone knows it. Sin shows up like a white shirt in a coal chute when the Lord shows you your sin! What do you do with dirty clothes? You go to the well for water and wash them!**

**The Israelites didn’t know how good they had it. Their merciful God listened to their plea, even though they were just like our babies, and knowing their great need, provided the cure- “Life Giving” water. He actually came and stood before Moses on a rock at Horeb so that when Moses struck the rock as instructed, water would flow. God provided in a very big way the remedy and cure to put off death! In this miracle, they believed that God was amongst them. They had faith in God.**

**Likewise, in Jesus, the woman received something from God that she didn’t plan on either- “Life Giving” water that didn’t save her body from thirst and death, but her very soul. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” Pure irony here. Jesus, without a way to draw the water, is totally dependent on her to quench His thirst. But that is not what is important, nor the fact that she was surprised and put off that He spoke to her. What is important is the water- “Life Giving” water that only Jesus provides. He said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.” And sarcastically, because she thinks He’s arrogant, she asks Him, “Sir you have nothing to draw water with and the well is deep. Are you greater than Jacob our Father? Where do *you* get that water?”**

**Ouch! If there *would have been* others there to hear this conversation, it would have looked pretty testy. In fact, I think I would have left the well! If you think about it, she is acting just as badly as the Israelites did. And Jesus, even though He knows everything about her, is patient enough to keep talking to her. Just like He did years before in the desert with Moses.**

**Gospel**

**He replied, “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 I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life!” She then asks HIM for a drink! The irony! She asks Him for plain old H2O! She doesn’t get it. He’s wanting to give her the free gift of eternal life through Him. And she doesn’t get it.**

**Jesus then rolls His eyes. No, scripture doesn’t say that. But I wonder what His physical reaction to her comment was. When something gets to me, before I say something with impact, I move or roll my eyes or -- *something!* Actually, from the next verse, it appears He may have wanted to bring the conversation to a close, so He cuts to the chase and asks her, “Go call your husband and come here.” He tries to focus not on the physical water she thinks He’s offering, but on the Spiritual water He know she needs. So, after she says she has no husband, He tells her all about her life. He lays on the Law. But He does this in love, as we would our children. As God has done time and time again. She sees something in the Lord she didn’t see before, and after His comments, is *still* unsure about Him. And she gets defensive and changes the subject to talk about worship on the mountain or at the Temple in Jerusalem, which was a point of contention between the Jews and the Samaritans. Ever tried that “change the subject” strategy? Doesn’t work with Jesus. He knows about that tactic, because he had practice with Adam in the garden long before that! So, He tells her the Good News in all of this. You’ve been waiting for that haven’t you? You’ve been thinking, “When is he going to tell us that Jesus is the Messiah of Living Water?” Right now.**

**What she doesn’t understand is that all along, in His Words is the offer of eternal life. For the hour is coming when true believers will worship in Spirit and truth. How? Through His Word and the waters of Baptism, the “Life Giving Water” of the Godhead as expressed in these words, “I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Finally, she says, “When Messiah comes, He’ll tell us all we need to know.” And after sticking with this messed up, clueless, sinful Samaritan woman all this time He says, “I who speak to you am He.” He is the Messiah of “Living water”.**

**He had come to that well to save her. By simply asking her for a drink. To help her understand it was time for a reset of her life. To receive the water that wells up to eternal life. To be counted as one who worships in Spirit and in truth. All of this accomplished by her just listening to the Word of the Messiah that washed her with “Living Water” one hot noon day in Samaria at Jacob’s well.**

**Conclusion**

**And He did this for all of us. WE are all baptized with “Life Giving” water. (If you’re not come on down here and let’s get it done!) If not accomplished at this well, most certainly at one of the thousands of wells just like this one. From them wells up eternal life. The Father seeks people to worship Him and being filled with the Spirit, in faith, we rejoice with the saints in heaven!**

**Water. “Life Giving” water. Without it in this life we would die. Without it for the next we would also die. Listen to Jesus, for it is He, the Messiah, the sinless One who gave His life on a tree, that He might give us life! Let us ever walk with Him towards Jerusalem this Lenten season, listening to His Words, receiving the sacraments, and worshipping Him in Spirit and truth.**

**In whose name we pray. Amen.**