



Grow, Pray, Study

Servants of Christ United Methodist Parish

— Sunday, September 27, 2020

Grow, Pray, Study for Sunday, September 27, 2020 ----- Exodus 17:1-7

Exodus 17: 2 So they quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.”

Moses replied, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the Lord to the test?”

Someone once said there are no large churches, just small gatherings of people within a big building. I don't know how much unity is possible this side of heaven, but I do know we have to own ourselves and who we are while respecting others. It is funny, not ha-ha funny, that the Church is supposed to be unified. Churches often are the last places I would look for unity. I have heard of people carrying pistols to church meetings, people carrying out church furniture donated in memory of a family member because they disagreed with a decision, police having to put a lock on the front door of a church because 'things got out of hand at last week's meeting.'

In Exodus 17, the people want some water and they don't blame God, they blame Moses, like he caused them not to have Coleman coolers and bottled water. Scapegoating, transferring... We all do it but it never solves anything. It just creates an 'ain't it awful' game that spins like a tornado. Even Moses asks God, 'What should I do with this people?' He doesn't even count himself in the number. Goodness, this is going to be a long 40 years in the wilderness, I can see it now. At the end of the day, we cannot, cannot change other people.

-----When have you caught yourself blaming others while not offering a solution?

Moses says the people 'test God.' And what is God's response? Grace and love. Imagine the child or grandchild you love and believe to be the most precious person in the world. What happens when they test you? You probably pick them up and hold them until they feel safe again. God does that with us. God stands ready to help the Israelites. The water they seek and need is already there, just

underneath the surface. The water is like grace that is always there, just underneath the surface.

-----How difficult is it for you to see God as responding with grace and love? Or is God more of the mean parent for you? How can you see yourself in God's loving eyes?

Water. Precious water (I kept a bottle of water with me every step of every hike last week because I am not as young as I once was). Grace, grace, God's grace that gives us the chance to change, gives us second chances, new opportunities. I used to love to go to services at Belmont Abbey near Charlotte, North Carolina. The baptismal font at the front of the church is unique. It is made of a stone where slaves once stood to be sold. The inscription reads: "Upon this rock, men once were sold into slavery. Now upon this rock, through the waters of Baptism, men become free children of God." Free. Children. Of God. Wow.

-----What water of God do you seek today?

Maybe the hymn 'Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me,' says it all:

*Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save me from its guilt and power.
Not the labor of my hands
Can fulfill Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All could never sin erase,
Thou must save, and save by grace.*

*Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.*