

### FIRST READING: Exodus 17:1-7

<sup>1</sup>From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. <sup>2</sup>The people quarreled with Moses, and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?" <sup>3</sup>But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" <sup>4</sup>So Moses cried out to the LORD, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." <sup>5</sup>The LORD said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. <sup>6</sup>I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. <sup>7</sup>He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

### PSALM 95

<sup>1</sup>Come, let us sing to the LORD; let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation.  
<sup>2</sup>**Let us come before God's presence with thanksgiving and raise a loud shout to the LORD with psalms.**  
<sup>3</sup>For you, LORD, are a great God, and a great ruler above all gods.  
<sup>4</sup>**In your hand are the caverns of the earth; the heights of the hills are also yours.**  
<sup>5</sup>The sea is yours, for you made it, and your hands have molded the dry land.  
<sup>6</sup>**Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD our maker. R**  
<sup>7</sup>For the LORD is our God, and we are the people of God's pasture and the sheep of God's hand. Oh, that today you would hear God's voice!  
<sup>8</sup>**"Harden not your hearts, as at Meribah, as on that day at Massah in the desert.**  
<sup>9</sup>There your ancestors tested me, they put me to the test, though they had seen my works.  
<sup>10</sup>**Forty years I loathed that generation, saying, 'The heart of this people goes astray; they do not know my ways.'**  
<sup>11</sup>Indeed I swore in my anger, "They shall never come to my rest." **R**

### SECOND READING: Romans 5:1-11

<sup>1</sup>Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand;

and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup>and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, <sup>5</sup>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.

<sup>6</sup>For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. <sup>8</sup>But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup>Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. <sup>10</sup>For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. <sup>11</sup>But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

### **GOSPEL: John 4:5-42**

<sup>5</sup>[Jesus] came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup>Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

<sup>7</sup>A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." <sup>8</sup>(His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) <sup>9</sup>The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered 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." <sup>11</sup>The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?" <sup>12</sup>Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" <sup>13</sup>Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup>but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." <sup>15</sup>The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

<sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." <sup>17</sup>The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; <sup>18</sup>for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" <sup>19</sup>The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup>Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to her,

“Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup>You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup>But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. <sup>24</sup>God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” <sup>25</sup>The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.” <sup>26</sup>Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.”

<sup>27</sup>Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you want?” or, “Why are you speaking with her?” <sup>28</sup>Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, <sup>29</sup>“Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?” <sup>30</sup>They left the city and were on their way to him.

<sup>31</sup>Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, “Rabbi, eat something.” <sup>32</sup>But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” <sup>33</sup>So the disciples said to one another, “Surely no one has brought him something to eat?” <sup>34</sup>Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. <sup>35</sup>Do you not say, ‘Four months more, then comes the harvest’? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. <sup>36</sup>The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup>For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ <sup>38</sup>I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”

<sup>39</sup>Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I have ever done.” <sup>40</sup>So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. <sup>41</sup>And many more believed because of his word. <sup>42</sup>They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world.”

P: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

## **Sermon, Stay Thirsty For God, My Friends**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the one who offers you the water of eternal life, amen.

Have you ever been thirsty? I don't mean an average thirst where a drink of water sounds good after a long walk or after working in the yard on a hot summer day. I mean really, thirsty where your tongue sticks to the roof of your mouth and you have to peel your lips off your teeth, and all you can think about is water. I've lived in the desert for a good portion of my life. We were stationed in Arizona for 3 years and I deployed to both Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Here's the insidious thing about being thirsty, by the time you feel thirsty, you're already dehydrated. When I was deployed, it was mandatory we always carry a full canteen of water on our belts. Most of us didn't drink from those nasty canteens, we had an abundant supply of bottled water, but the requirement was there in case we were away from our workplace and didn't have access to good clean, fresh tasting H<sub>2</sub>O. When I was stationed at Luke AFB in Phoenix Arizona, I played a lot of Racquetball and I ran a lot. The desert air is so dry you never get wet from sweating. You still sweat, but it evaporates so fast you never get rings of sweat like you do in the summer around here. Instead all you saw on your clothes was rings of salt left behind after the sweat evaporated. By the time you noticed the salt on under your arms you were already dehydrated. Sometimes after a really hot game of

racquetball in the summer I'd be so thirsty I would drink a gallon or more of water. Occasionally I would drink so much I would get sick from too much water...

Have you ever been thirsty to that degree? So thirsty, your soul longed for a fresh drink... I am not talking about "H<sub>2</sub>O". We all thirst for something. We long to feel loved, to experience happiness and joy. We desperately search for meaning, purpose, and significance for our lives. When we come to church, to worship, we're surrounded by an ocean of "Living Water." During worship when we sing, we're quenching our souls. When we hear the Scriptures, they hydrate our lives. Yet many in this world still have a Sahara Desert dry soul.

Why? -- Why do so few drink from the well that never runs dry? Why are so many souls in this world shriveled and dehydrated? To understand let's look at physical thirst. Thirst is something we experience when the pituitary gland secretes two hormones into the body. One causes a physical reaction in the kidneys and the other causes the more complicated activity of the hypothalamus. The hypothalamus sends signals to the Salvatore (Sal-va-tor-ee) glands to reduce secretions. I discovered many years ago that just thinking about thirst could make you thirsty. Just thinking about thirst can cause hypothalamus to begin its work in the body. Physical thirst can be excruciating and dangerous. Dehydration can get you into serious difficulty in a hurry.

The story is told of a young student who went to his spiritual teacher and asked the question, “Master, how can I truly find God?” The teacher asked the student to accompany him to the river which ran by the village and invited him to go into the water. When they got to the middle of the stream, the teacher said, “Please immerse yourself in the water.” The student did as he was instructed, whereupon the teacher put his hands on the young man's head and held him under the water. Immediately the student began to struggle. The teacher continued to hold him under. The student was thrashing and beating the water and air with his arms. Still, he held him under the water. Finally, the student was released and shot up from the water, lungs aching and gasping for air. The teacher waited for a few moments and then said, “When you desire God to the same level you just desired to breath, then you shall truly find God.”

As dehydration draws the whole of our physical being to a longing for water, so a spiritual void will draw our spirit into a search for a deeper meaning of life. In today's Gospel Jesus tell the woman at the well, “... those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” Thinking about the relationship between physical and spiritual thirst led me to searching through the Gospel of John and then the larger context of all scripture to see what God has to say about being thirsty. Just a few chapters after our text for today, in John,

Chapter 7, Jesus stands up at the high point of the biggest celebration feast of the Jewish year, the Feast of Tabernacles, and shouts to the large crowd who were singing and dancing in the streets, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.” John tells us Jesus was speaking during the Feast of Tabernacles. This was a high, happy, holy day in the life of the Jewish People. The Feast of Tabernacles was like Christmas, Thanksgiving, and the Fourth of July all rolled into one. During this feast the High Priest would go to the Pool of Siloam, take a golden pitcher, dip it into the water, and carry it back to the temple. There in the temple, he would pour the water out on the altar of sacrifice. At that moment the Levites would blow the trumpets and the great crowd would cry out with a loud voice: “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation,” which is a quote from the prophet Isaiah chapter 12, verse 3. There would be leaping, dancing, shouting, and singing. It was right at this climax of this great Feast when the Lord Jesus stood up and with that royal voice, cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.” Jesus realized the people were drinking from the river of ritual and after celebration feast was over, they would go back to their same old fears, their same old faults, their same old failures, their same old frustrations. My friends, what was happening with that crowd is what is happening with many people today. Many drink from the worldly well instead of from the well of eternal life. The well of eternal life is found only in Christ Jesus. If you would like to gain a spiritual

thirst than listen to our Lord's words once again: "If anyone is thirsty, let them come to me and drink."

In order to gain spiritual thirst, we must desire God's water. Notice the condition that Jesus lays down. "If anyone thirsts..." Then let them come to me and drink. Now I thank God for that word "Anyone." If anyone wants God, if anyone wants a relationship with God, they can have it. If anyone wants spiritual living, spiritual water, they can obtain it. If anyone seeks God, they can find Him. Yet notice, this is specifically addressed to those who are thirsty. The problem is, many people are not thirsty, at least they're not thirsty for God... They're not thirsty for a spiritual life. Many thirst for the things of the world and you can bet the world will do whatever it can to satisfy those desires.

There was an advertisement on the airways promoting a beer called Dos Equies that was very catchy. The Ad features Jonathan Goldsmith as "The world's most interesting man." The ads for Dos Equies feature Goldsmith and the now famous line, "I don't always drink beer, but when I do, I prefer Dos Equies." At the tale end of these ads, Goldsmith would reappear and cajole us to, "Stay thirsty, my friends." Both Satan and the world understand human beings are seeking fulfillment. Satan and the world are trying to control what we thirst for. Before we can have a close relationship with God, comes a thirst for God. To draw closer to God requires us to stay thirsty, my friends, we must stay thirsty for God. It's not



a law in the sense like one of the ten commandments, it's more like a law of natural consequences. We will never have a close relationship with God unless we thirst for Him. Even Jesus, who is the living water that came from the rock, as told in our first lesson this morning, was thirsty for God. One of his seven last sayings from the cross, while the Savior of the World hung, dying, He exclaimed, "I thirst." His entire life, Jesus demonstrated a zeal, a thirst for God and Jesus never backed down from that continuous thirst until He was satisfied. His relationship with God didn't get him out of trouble. It didn't save him from going through torture, humiliation, and even death on a cross, but it did give him the strength and the moral courage to know he was doing the right thing. Jesus' soul was quenched by the spring of living water that gushed up in him because Jesus nourished his soul with the water that came from God. That kind of confidence, that kind of ability to go through the fires of hell, without being burned can only come when you quench your thirst at the well of Jesus Christ. Jesus shares this promise from our Gospel Text "...Those who drink of the water that I will give them will never will never be thirsty."

Jesus' promise to that woman at the well is also for you today. May you find water for your soul in God's Word, Jesus Christ. When I'm physically thirsty, I don't always drink Dos Equies, but when my soul is dry and parched, I always come to Jesus' well of life-giving water. Stay thirsty for God My friends. Amen!