

# “Water from Heaven and Earth”

March 5, 2023  
King City United Church  
Rev. Padre Andrew K. Lee

## **Prayer for Illumination**

Living God, through the reading of the Scriptures and by the power of your Spirit, may we hear for ourselves the good news and believe, because of your Word, that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. **Amen.**

## **Scripture Readings**

### **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 for 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 121 (VU p. 842)**

### **John 4:13–15**

<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.”

This is the Word of God.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## < Children's Time >

Have you ever walked in a desert where there is no water and no trees of green? When? If not, can you imagine that you are walking in the desert under the scorching sun and a robust sandy wind? It must be tough. But you know what? It must be much more challenging if you don't know how long the trip is. In other words, the desert trip could be a week but it could also be much longer than you expect, like a month, a year, or YEARS! That must be really frustrating! Here, today, I brought a story of the travellers who are travelling the desert and don't know when the travel will end. There were so many people travelling in the story. The Bible says there were about 600,000 people. There were both men and women and infants and children like you and even donkeys and lambs. They felt really hot and thirsty under the sunlight, although the clouds covered the sky most of the time. Their leader, Moses, decided to stay in Rephidim. The thing is, there was no water in that area. No oasis was found. Israelites, including the animals, were so thirsty and disappointed. And instantly, they were furious with Moses' leadership, who brought them to the desert. They approached Moses and shouted. "No water! There is no water! We need it! Give us water or else!" Moses was scared and perplexed because giving water was beyond his ability or knowledge. In fact, the people knew that: you know, it was beyond the leader's ability. He was not the creator of water but just a messenger of God, who saved them from the slavery of the Egyptian Empire, and who mediated the covenant between God and the people. They knew that. But he was the only one they could approach and tell their difficulties because at least Moses had a channel of communication with God.

Moses found a sacred and quiet place and prayed. "O God, help us. We need water, and I cannot quench their thirst." And God said to him. "... 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." So Moses did what God asked. Do you think it makes sense? Do you expect water by striking a rock? Really weird! The thing is, Moses did that. Moses did what God asked. He grabbed the stick and whacked it on a rock. Then, all of a sudden, water came out from the rock! People were amazed at the scene, and they were able to drink as much water as they wanted.

And they learned again that God is the only one who gives the water of life. Since then, although they were tempted more than several times, they always remembered the miracles that they experienced and stuck to God throughout their lives.

My friends, God gives a good source of life. And God is the giver of water so we can quench our thirst. Therefore, stay with God always. God is watching over you and will protect you always. May the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God and the abundance of the Holy Spirit be with you today.

**Hymn: "Three Things I Promise" MV176 v.1**

**Three things I promise, Holy God,  
in age and youth, in life and death:  
to bless your Name, and cling to Christ,  
and listen for the spirit's breath.**

**<Reflection>**

A few years ago, the news reported that the "Perseverance" rover landed on Mars after seven months of travel in space. And it started sending

videos and pictures of the surface of Mars. I do not know the gravity or temperature of it, but it was amazing to see the trace of streams on Mars. Actually, that trace of water on Mars was already known to us in 2006. But the earlier pictures were not from a landed device but from a satellite telescope of Mars by NASA. Now the Perseverance Rover has been exploring at a place called, "Jetro Crater" for three years: I've checked it with a live camera.<sup>1</sup> What an advanced technology! We can watch a video from Mars in real-time.



So far, NASA's Perseverance Rover was fortunately able to find a trace of water, but it has not been able to find water itself. No life has been detected, unfortunately. If they find some proof of life or tiny living creatures, they would exclaim universal joy to everyone all around the world. Finding life is that important. Still Perseverance Rover is thoroughly searching in order to find water and life on Mars.

Without water, can we survive? Without hydration, can we be happy? Can this earth be beautiful? Without water, I can't survive, I can't be happy, the earth can't be beautiful, and... I can't play curling on Monday morning because there is no ice on the playing surface!

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<sup>1</sup> This image of the floor of Jezero Crater was taken by one of the Navcam imagers aboard NASA's Perseverance Mars rover on Feb. 5, the 698th Martian day, or sol, of the mission. Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech.

<https://www.jpl.nasa.gov/news/nasas-perseverance-rover-set-to-begin-third-year-at-jezero-crater>

This morning, I woke up to a barking sound on the pedestrian road. The dog was peeing in my front yard, and the guy holding the leash was shushing his dog and dragging the dog closer. I was a bit frustrated while watching the yellow pee but was overall okay because I re-discovered that we all are living on a miraculous, amazing, and thrilling planet, earth. We can walk on it; we can see every creature; we can breathe fresh air, aka oxygen and nitrogen, and, with abundant life and gratitude, we can spiritually notice the presence of God, who created and is creating all things, and who is establishing his covenant with humans and all creatures in Genesis.

That God, who created and is continually creating the universe and the earth, makes a covenant with God's people in today's Scripture. They've just experienced the divergence of the Red Sea, but soon the repeated and famous murmuring stories occur.

They can't find a water fountain. It's like they were cast into Mars. Being hot in the daytime, cold in the nighttime, and walking on the sandy ground with strong winds, and they are deadly thirsty. Under these conditions, they are going to die soon. They cry out at their leader Moses, meaning that they are so vulnerable and they cannot manage the situation. Neither does Moses know what to do. When God gives power to Moses and freshwater spouts from the dry and heavy rock, people exclaim joyfully. The water from the earth makes them shout with joy. Strangely enough, the Israelites who already experienced God's miracle still repeatedly complain against God. Why can't the Israelites be patient and trust God silently? Why? Do you know why? Because they haven't drink the water from heaven, spiritual water yet; because the Israelites are spiritually thirsty although being bodily hydrated by the water from the earth.

Seeking water from the earth, a Samaritan woman, who had five ex-husbands and a boyfriend, meets a Jewish man named Jesus. They step over a cultural boundary. I'm not judging that she had five men in love; however, we need to understand that the people in her time thought differently, judging she was unethical. Due to the cultural boundary, they are not supposed to make conversation, but they do at Jacob's Well. The woman in Sychar openly asks life-long questions to Jesus and gradually finds that Jesus is an outstanding prophet, or at least his answer quenches her thirst in mind and spirit. He has no exaggeration or show-offs: Jesus is like plain yogurt that I like, giving deep satisfaction. Later she becomes an active truth-bearer, not just a passive listener. Owing to her brave and energetic evangelization, Jesus is able to open a new door. Breaking or expanding the contemporary cultural boundaries also impacts Jesus' ministry towards non-Jews.

That conversation is about water; first, water hydration,; and later, Jesus mentions the spiritual water, which is beyond the water itself. He says,

"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>2</sup>

It was such a poignant point of the conversation. Certainly the material is important. Our level of hydration is important; however, when we are materially fully prepared or equipped, are we happy? I mean, totally happy? Are we fully human? No, happiness is more than material satisfaction.

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<sup>2</sup> John 4:13-14.

We need more than bodily satisfaction. If we only focus on physical thirst, we can't underestimate spiritual things. We need happiness on more profound levels; we need love and hope; we need genuine soul; we need authentic spirit; we need God. Jesus knows that, so he says the water of eternal life. And Jesus is coherent when he says;

"<sup>48</sup> I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup> Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. <sup>50</sup> This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever, and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."<sup>3</sup>

Jesus is the bread of life and the water of eternal life. That water gives spiritual hydration. We are spiritual; we are not just a mass of protein. Water from the earth is the source of survival. The water from the earth is precious because we cannot find it anywhere else besides the earth. Water from heaven is the source of eternal life. This heavenly water quenches us spiritually and is greatly precious because it flows only from God.

Sisters, brothers, and friends! God gives water both from the earth for hydration and from heaven for eternal life. We cannot make or create them, just as Moses is not able to make water from the rock. God opens up the rock; God gives us the precious waters. Knowing the mystery of water, the universe, life, and the life beyond, let's be still to sense the divine mystery of our body and soul, earth, the universe and the life beyond. Let us pray silently.

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<sup>3</sup> John 6:48-52.