

3rd SUNDAY OF LENT**ST. PETERS ANGLICAN CHURCH BUNDOORA****Sunday 8th March 2026****Fr. Stephen Monsiegnur****Readings:**¹ Exodus 17:1-7 / Psalm 95 / Romans 5:1-11 / John 4:5-42**Theme:** *"Living Water Through Jesus"***Exodus 17:1-7**

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. ² The people quarrelled 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?" ³ 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?" ⁴ So Moses cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do for this people? They are almost ready to stone me." ⁵ 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. ⁶ 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. ⁷ He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarrelled and tested the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

Psalm 95¹ O come, let us sing to the Lord;

let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

² Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;

let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

³ For the Lord is a great God

and a great King above all gods.

⁴ In his hand are the depths of the earth;

the heights of the mountains are his also.

⁵ The sea is his, for he made it,

and the dry land, which his hands have formed.

⁶ O come, let us worship and bow down;

let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

⁷ For he is our God,

and we are the people of his pasture

and the sheep of his hand.

O that today you would listen to his voice!

⁸ Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,

as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,

⁹ when your ancestors tested me

and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.

¹⁰ For forty years I loathed that generation

and said, "They are a people whose hearts go astray,

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and they do not regard my ways.”

¹¹Therefore in my anger I swore,
“They shall not enter my rest.”

Romans 5:1-11

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³And not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. ⁶For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. ⁸But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. ⁹Much more surely, therefore, since we have now been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰For 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. ¹¹But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

John 4:5-42

So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

⁷A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” ⁸(His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) ⁹The 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.) ¹⁰Jesus 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.” ¹¹The woman said to him, “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? ¹²Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?” ¹³Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but 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.” ¹⁵The 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.”

¹⁶Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come back.” ¹⁷The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband,’ ¹⁸for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!” ¹⁹The woman said to him, “Sir, I see that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.” ²¹Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²²You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³But 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. ²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” ²⁵ The woman said to him, “I know that the Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.” ²⁶ Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.”

²⁷ 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?” ²⁸ Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, ²⁹ “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?” ³⁰ They left the city and were on their way to him.

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

³⁹ Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I have ever done.” ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. ⁴¹ And many more believed because of his word. ⁴² 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 Saviour of the world.”

SERMON

“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”².

What an extraordinary promise by Jesus, but this is not a poetic exaggeration, rather a statement of fact, of faith. It is a declaration that in Christ, God offers a source of life that renews us from within — a sustaining grace that does not run dry.

The Scriptures today reveal how deeply human the experience of thirst is. As the Israelites, escaping Egypt and wandering in the desert, cry out in fear and exhaustion: *“Is the Lord among us or not?”³*. Their physical thirst exposes a deeper longing — the longing to know that God has not abandoned them. Notice, though, how God responds not with anger but with water from a rock, showing that grace can flow even from the hardest places⁴. This foreshadows the living water Jesus offers: sustenance that meets both body and spirit.

² John 4:14,

³ Exod. 17:7

⁴ Brueggemann, W. (2001). *Exodus*. Westminster John Knox Press.

The Psalmist plea: “*O that today you would listen to his voice!*”⁵, warns us against hardened hearts, not to shame us, but because a hardened heart cannot receive living water. Lent is a season of softening — a time to let God break open the dry, defended places within us so that renewal can begin⁶.

Paul declaring “*hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit*”⁷ deepens this movement. God’s love is poured, not rationed. It offers us the opportunity to fill the empty places and restores courage, especially when we feel we have little left. The humbling part, this love is given “*while we still were sinners*”⁸. Living water is not a reward for the worthy but a gift for the weary.

This is why Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman is so transformative. She arrives at the well burdened by exclusion, uncertainty, and the quiet ache of wondering whether her life matters. Jesus meets her with dignity and truth. Her physical thirst becomes the doorway to spiritual renewal. In receiving living water, she discovers that she is seen, valued, and called — and in response, she becomes a witness whose testimony brings life to her community⁹.

What might this empowerment look like today?

That depends on your context.

For many young people, the opportunities previous generations enjoyed — stable housing, secure work, affordable education — have become increasingly out of reach. Many carry a quiet, grinding anxiety about the future. Drinking the living water Christ gives may look like:

- **The courage to believe their worth is not defined by achievement**, productivity, or financial success, but by the God who names them beloved.
- **The strength to resist narratives of scarcity**, choosing compassion and collaboration in a culture that pressures them to compete relentlessly.
- **The resilience to advocate for justice**, whether in climate action, fair work, or mental-health support, because living water nurtures hope rather than despair.
- **The freedom to imagine a future shaped not by fear but by vocation**, trusting that God can bring purpose even from uncertain pathways.

For many of us who are older, drinking the water Christ gives may mean:

- **Allowing Christ to soften places in us that have grown cynical**, choosing trust over resignation.

⁵ Ps. 95:7

⁶ Goldingay, J. (2006). *Psalms, Volume 1: Psalms 1–41*. Baker Academic.

⁷ Rom. 5:5

⁸ Rom. 5:8

⁹ Brown, R. E. (2015). *The Gospel according to John I–XII*. Yale University Press.

- **Letting compassion interrupt our routines**, noticing those who feel unseen — the isolated neighbour, the exhausted parent, the overwhelmed young adult.
- **Standing with those whose dignity is overlooked**, especially workers in care industries whose labour sustains our communities.
- **Practising generosity in a culture of scarcity**, becoming people through whom encouragement, patience, and justice flow freely.
- **Letting Christ reveal the truth in us**, not to condemn but to heal, so that our lives bear witness to God's renewing grace.

To drink this living water is to allow Christ to renew us from within — softening what fear has hardened, healing what shame has hidden, and empowering us to become springs of compassion in a thirsty world. Lent invites us not only to receive this water but to let it flow through us — as mercy, justice, courage, and, importantly, hope.

Let us pray,

Holy Jesus, pour your living water into our hearts. Renew our courage, soften our hardness, and empower us that as we step from the desert into the world, we are the source of hope, justice, and compassion to every thirsty place in our world. Amen.