

## **SUNDAY 27<sup>th</sup> Sept 2020**

Call to worship Psalm 107 vs 1, 4-9

Praise 'No longer slaves'

Prayer

O T Reading Exodus 17:1-7

Children's thought

Offering

N T Reading John 7:37-39

Sermon

Video 'A drinking problem'

Prayers - World Watch & Prayer book

Hymn Mp 37 As the deer pants for the water

Blessing

**Call to worship**

**Psalm 107 <sup>1</sup> Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good!  
His faithful love endures forever.**

Some wandered in the wilderness, lost and homeless.

<sup>5</sup> Hungry and thirsty, they nearly died.

<sup>6</sup> **"Lord, help!" they cried in their trouble,  
and he rescued them from their distress.**

<sup>7</sup> He led them straight to safety, to a city where they could live.

<sup>8</sup> **Let them praise the Lord for his great love**  
and for the wonderful things he has done for them.

<sup>9</sup> **For he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with  
good things.**

**Praise Song-** *No longer slaves*

**Prayer**

**Old Testament Reading Exodus 17:1-7**

The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, travelling from place to place as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. <sup>2</sup> So they quarrelled 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?' <sup>3</sup> But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, 'Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?'

<sup>4</sup> Then Moses cried out to the LORD, 'What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me.'

<sup>5</sup> The LORD answered Moses, 'Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. <sup>6</sup> I will

stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.' So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. <sup>7</sup> And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarrelled and because they tested the LORD saying, 'Is the LORD among us or not?'

**Children's talk**- How many of you have ever played the game Rock, Paper, Scissors? Well just in case you have never heard of it.. let me explain .. after 3 we all have to make one of these signs... this is ROCK (fist shape) This is paper (flat hand) & of course this is scissors (2 fingers spread like scissors).

No when I say go you choose which of these to make... Now rock smashes scissors, paper covers a rock, and scissors cut paper... so if I make a scissors sign all you who make the shape of paper will be out... I hope you understand.. lets try.

Let's play! You can all play against me and you can keep track of how many times you win. Ready? One, two, three, go. For the first round, choose a rock.

Now normally you just stay in the game ...so even if you lose a round you can win the next.. Today, I have a real rock, paper, and scissors with me. These items are all useful in their own way.... To write a letter or do some work you might need paper... But a rock or scissors wouldn't be much help... If you wanted to cut a piece of paper, a rock or paper wouldn't help, but a pair of scissors would. And if you were really thirsty and needed a drink of water, a piece of paper or a pair of scissors wouldn't be much help, but a rock might be exactly what you need.... Wait—what?

No I haven't gone crazy... In our Old Testament lesson this morning we heard how God led Moses to strike a rock... and water flowed out for the thirsty people to drink. Water is very very important to us... we simply can't live for very long without it... So once more God provided for His people... He saved them... He was able to bring them water where everything looked dry... Our god is able to bring life even in the hardest places... Let's pray.

## **Offering**

### **New Testament Reading John 7:37-39**

<sup>7</sup> On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup> Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." <sup>39</sup> By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

**Sermon** **SLIDE 1** Spell Business ..B U S S I N E S S  
No .. thats no it..I will get it this time...B U S I N E S S  
What about ..**Definitely** .. **D E F I N E T L E Y** ... NO how about D E F I N I T L E Y ... Last time... D E F I N I T E L Y  
Ok I had better stop before I begin to look really stupid...  
Truth be told it seems that I'm not the only one who has a history of problems with spelling *definitely*... For according to one website it's one of the most commonly misspelt words in the English language...& yes I know that I have made the same spelling mistakes time & time again.. Yes I can be a SLOW LEARNER sometimes...

If you remember last week we thought about God gracious provision of food for the people of Israel in the wilderness ,even though they were grumbling & looking longingly back towards Egypt, yse though they were quick to doubt Him & thinking about deserting Him.. God, in love provided..

When we turn to this week's passage from the book of Exodus we discover that old habits die hard.. that lessons aren't quickly learnt & that there seems to be a pattern developing... For as the people travel further into the arid wilderness they grow very hot & very bothered.. Now in many ways we can understand this & perhaps we can sympathise with the people for the wilderness is an extremely difficult place to be & it's certainly no place to be without water! For if water is essential to us here in cool N Ireland just think how vital it is for people in hotter climates... So yes I think we can understand why the people were getting hot & bothered if they didn't have enough to drink in the wilderness.... However when we look further at our passage from Exodus 17 we see that it paints the people in a negative light... for once again they come across as demanding & lacking in trust.. Yes even though God had already provided for them... even though He was still providing food.. this latest, the lack of water led once more led to grumbling, quarrelling & unbelief.. So much so that Moses says in vs 4 '**What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me.**'

Yes even though God had rescued them so many times before... setting them free from Egypt.. provided water earlier at Marah... making bitter water sweet (Ex 15:25) still the people didn't trust God or Moses..

I don't know about you... but I can be a slow learner with more than just spellings! Yes I confess that I often need God to be patient with me as tries to teach me for the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> or 33<sup>rd</sup> time something important... And as we see here from this passage there is nothing more important than being assured of God's loving presence with us & His generous provision for us... Or to put it another way... we need to learn & relearn just how much God loves us..& to what lengths He has gone for us... Because only when we know that in our hearts as well as our heads will we truly surrender our wills & lives to Him... This is just so central... that God like a patient teacher will keep bringing the same lesson up for us, maybe in different ways... until we are ready to trust & follow Him...in love...

So when we go back to our passage in exodus we see that once more God would provide water for the people... Of course He would... the idea that He would spend so much effort & do so much in Egypt...then at the sea of Reeds then at Marah providing water..then miraculously providing food for them each day... ONLY to lead them a bit further on & let them die of thirst... It didn't make sense... God wanted them to TRUST...but they didn't so God mercifully helped them with BUILDING that TRUST ..Just look at the passage again & see that when God directed Moses to strike the rock so that water flowed out... God also directed Moses to make sure that some of the 'elders' of the people where there with him , so that they could see that the *Lord really was among them*... Yes God wanted to support Moses but He also wanted to help the people to take steps in faith.. Hence the miracle was done in front of witnesses...

After His resurrection Jesus tells Thomas "*Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*" Yes God desires that we all get to know Him & trust Him & He doesn't want us relying on seeing miracles all the time ...Like the best of parents God desires that His children know His heart for them...so that even if things look hard... they know they can TRUST Him .... However as with the elders in the wilderness or Jesus disciple Thomas... God will also at times move in ways to provide times of revelation & direct blessing... but maybe that's because we are slow learners..

It's quite a few years ago now...when I realised I was getting old... A friend who was a Church youth worker at the time was in need of some extra help taking a group to summer madness at the Kings Hall & I said I would go... Well after 1 night of absolutely no sleep in our leaders tent as some young people joked & chatted ... & amazingly played a trumpet somewhere not far away... I held my hand up & realised that festivals were not for me...! But still I have to admit I would have loved to have seen the Jewish feast of Tabernacles..it must have been something to experience...crowds of people flocking to Jerusalem around this time of year.. Building small structures called booths to live in for 7 nights... bringing their offerings & thanking God for what He had provided... It was a harvest festival to end all harvest festivals... & it was also more for it was also a time when the people would look back & remember how God had provided for them as they travelled through the wilderness all those years ago... And as part of that remembering, each day in the festival, the priests would

symbolically go to the pool of Siloam draw water & then they would proceed to the temple. Crowds of people would accompany the priests praising & singing to God & when they had walked round the altar the priests would pour the water out as part of their worship to God. The water would run down around the altar... running *living water*, a sign of God's generous life giving provision for His people...Each day the people would be reminded of God providing water from the rock.. & on the 7<sup>th</sup> day the priests would march around the altar not once but 7 times before solemnly pouring out the water..

While we can't be sure, many scholars believe that it may have been at this crucial point that Jesus stood to speak to the hushed crowds inviting them with the words...'**Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink... whoever believes in me, as scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.**' There in the sacred temple the place where the people believed that God was completely present...Jesus says TRUST me & come & drink...for I alone can quench your thirst.. I can meet that need in your hearts & lives...I can provide that living water.

Are we thirsty this morning...thirsty for more of God's presence..for God's touch somewhere in our lives? Or could it be that we feel fairly content, are we happy to fill up our spiritual water bottle at different points & just keep going sipping away... Or worse still might some of us be looking to quench our thirst for something deep & refreshing by turning to other things... God says to us this morning...

don't be a slow learner... come to me for I can quench your deepest thirst.....

### **Video**- 'Drinking problem'

Let's pray Lord Jesus You alone offer us living water.. You want to forgive & renew every human life so that we are filled & refreshed by Your Spirit..the Spirit of life every day.

Lord forgive us if we feel that we don't need that new life... forgive us if we have grown content or complacent... Forgive us too if we have turned to other things in an effort to quench our thirst & please this day draw us near so that we taste again that clearest of waters...that springs from Calvary's cross & the throne of grace... renew us this day we pray

### World watch prayers-

Prayer Book This morning we begin by praying for 10 year old **Leo** who remains in hospital following surgery for the part removal of a brain tumor. We also continue praying for **Timothy Harte & Daniel Kidson** two 13 year old boys who also have cancer. Lord of hope we ask you to bring complete healing to these young boys.

We also pray for healing & encouragement for - **Paul McDowell.... Percy Foster..... Jean Woods ... Jerry McHaffee... Sarah..... Bernie McKee..... Anna Cooper.... Trevor... George & Susanne ..**

And we bring to God all those who are experiencing great loss at this time, including - the family of George Mckee

who died on Wednesday.. we pray for His son Stephen & wife Stephanie.. & George's daughter Valerie & the whole family ... we pray too for the **parents of baby Ross & Jenny** who both died recently & the family of **Tina Donaldson** & The family of **Rhoda Nixon**. Lord surround these people in your arms of love we pray. **We finish with the Lord's Prayer**

As the deer pants for the water  
So my soul longs after You  
You alone are my heart's desire  
And i long to worship You

You alone are my strength may my spirit yield  
To You alone may my spirit yield  
You alone are my heart's desire  
And i long to worship You

I love You more than any other  
Only You can satisfy  
You alone are my real joy giver  
And the apple of my eye

You're my Friend & You are my Brother  
Even though You are a King  
I want You more than any other  
So much more than anything

**Blessing**- Lord may our souls long after You & may we know that satisfaction of drinking deep from Your well & having Your Spirit flow through us.. we share the GRACE together.



**Notes-** At this high point of the festival Jesus dramatically cries out loudly (*krazo*, as in v. 28), ***if anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink (v. 37)***. If he spoke this invitation during the revelry, he would have to shout just to be heard. But we have also an allusion to the image of Wisdom, calling out, inviting all mankind to come and drink (cf. Prov 8—9; Sirach 24:19). What Jesus offers is the fulfilment of the very things they were celebrating. Here is grace upon grace (Jn 1:16). Here the Son is repeating the offer of the Father, "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters" (Is 55:1). Indeed, he is fulfilling the role of God, who "will guide them and lead them beside springs of water" (Is 49:10). His offer shows he is far more than just a prophet or an agent; here we have God himself offering us life.

Jesus, in offering the Spirit (v. 39), is claiming to be able to satisfy people's thirst for God. The cries of the psalmists are answered. **David prayed, "O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water" (Ps 63:1)**. The sons of Korah sang, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" (Ps 42:1-2). Both of these psalms go on to speak of meeting God in the temple: David has seen God in the sanctuary (Ps 63:2), and the sons of Korah speak of "leading the procession to the house of God, with shouts of joy and thanksgiving among the festive throng" (Ps 42:4). When Jesus cries out at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles on this particular day, the worshipers meet God in his sanctuary—in the person of his Son. **The longing for God is met with God's invitation to come and be satisfied. In Jesus, God's own desire for man is expressed and the desire of man for God is met. All that the temple represented is now found in Jesus.**

In offering them the Spirit he is claiming that the age to come has already arrived. Just as water flowed out from the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:10-14), so a river flows from the eschatological temple (Ezek 47). Ezekiel's vision has begun to be fulfilled in Jesus' offer in the temple, and it will come to completion in heaven in "the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev 22:1). That heavenly water of life is already available through Jesus. His invitation at the Feast of Tabernacles is repeated in the invitation at the end of the book of Revelation: "Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life" (Rev 22:17).

The words of Jesus' invitation echo in our ears. Jesus stands at the doors of our hearts and speaks to the heart of each person on earth, offering the water of eternal life—the life that flows from God. Evangelism is a matter of our giving voice to this spiritual call. **Christians need to hold up Jesus in all his beauty, that those with a desire for God may find the God who is offering himself.**

While Jesus is clearly offering the water of the Spirit, it is not entirely clear to whom *him* refers (v. 38). Both the ancient church and modern scholars are divided over whether *him* refers to Jesus or the believer (cf. NIV text and margin). A reference here to Christ is more in keeping with John's thought. Christ is clearly described as the one through whom believers receive the Spirit; he breathes on them and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (20:22). Although John 4:14—"Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life"—refers to the believer with language similar to that in verse 38, Jesus speaks there not of an outward flow to others, but of an inward well of eternal life. Christ indeed dwells in believers and radiates from them his light and life and love, but, despite the claims of some contemporary ministers, believers do not mediate the Spirit to others. Rather, they bear witness to Jesus (4:39), and people come to him (4:40-42) and receive the living water of the Spirit (4:10) from him. This is clear in the context of Jesus' invitation, for it is to himself that he invites the people to come (7:38) and those who believe in him are the ones who receive the Spirit (7:39).

No Old Testament verse speaks of living water that flows *from within him*, him being either a believer or the Messiah. But there are many Scriptures that speak of God's provision of water as evidence of his grace and as an image of his gift of life in his presence. Indeed, many of these texts were read at this festival, such as the gift of water from the rock (Ex 17:1-6), the water from the eschatological temple (Ezek 47:1-11; cf. Joel 3:18) and the water from Jerusalem that will flow in the age to come (Zech 14:8; cf. Beasley-Murray 1987:116). In Nehemiah there is a reference to the water from the rock in the wilderness (Neh 9:15), which is followed by a description of God's gracious provision: "You gave your good Spirit to instruct them. You did not withhold your manna from their mouths, and you gave them water for their thirst" (9:20; cf. Carson 1991:326-27). In Nehemiah the focus is on the giving of the law, but the connection between the gift of the Spirit and the giving of manna and water suggests correlations in the Jewish tradition. Given John's motif of Jesus as the fulfillment of God's earlier revelation, the reference here to Scripture probably recalls a general set of images in the Old Testament rather than one particular text. Jesus provides the promised water of the age to come, which was itself a fulfillment of earlier provisions of water.

The people could not receive this Spirit until Jesus was glorified (Jn 7:39), that is, until his death (cf. 12:16, 23; 17:1). In the Son's death the glory of God shines brightest since God is love and love is the laying down of one's life (1 Jn 4:8; 3:16). One of the Spirit's roles is to bear witness to Jesus (Jn 15:26), and he could not do this until the revelation was complete. Until the Son's death, the heart of God could not be known and thus eternal life, which is knowledge of God (Jn 17:3), could not yet be experienced (cf. 1 Jn 2:20). Until the death of the Son, the life of God could not be conveyed by the Spirit.

Jesus' offer of the Spirit is both universal and addressed to individuals: *If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink* (v. 37). The first requirement is thirst. Everyone has spiritual thirst, for it is part of the human condition. Our need, our thirst, is what we bring to our relationship with God. This verse is one of many revealing, diagnostic texts in John. What do we thirst



for? What do we really desire? Sin is our seeking relief from this thirst in something other than God.

Jesus invites those who know their need, those who are poor in spirit (cf. Mt 5:3), to take the initiative and come to him and drink (v. 37). Drinking refers to believing (cf. v. 38), which means aligning oneself with him, trusting him, receiving his teaching and obeying his commands. Such faith will enable one to receive the Spirit and enter an abiding relationship with Christ after his glorification. All of this is based on who God is and what he has done for us. When we believe we open our hands to receive what his grace offers—we come and drink.