

**Lessons for the Third Sunday in Lent**

**March 19, 2017**

Psalm 95:1–9 ~ *This call to worship, praises to the God of creation and calls for our faithful response.*

Exodus 17:1–7 ~ *Even when the Israelites doubted God's care, he provided water in the desert.*

Romans 5:1–8 ~ *When we needed it the most, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

John 4:5–26 (27–30, 39–42) ~ *Jesus provided living water to the woman and many others in the village.*

**GATHERING THE TEXTS:** God is With Us in Our Trouble.

The Israelites had crossed through the Red Sea on dry ground and found themselves in an arid land. Without water they would soon die, but even though they complained and blamed God, He provided water miraculously from a rock. God sent his Messiah to rescue us from the greatest trouble of sin and death, and by his death for us turns even our suffering into hope! At a well outside a Samaritan village, Jesus was thirsty, but in his asking a woman for help, he gave her, and many of her neighbors, the living water of faith and life.

**PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE:** Lord Jesus, you are an ever-present help in time of trouble, always more ready to answer our needs than we are to ask. Your ready help is like a drink of cool water to me, giving me life in place of death, and hope instead of despair. Amen.

**STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT:** We give, and choose to give even at a cost to ourselves (which is to say, sacrificially!), not to receive a reward, but because it is our loving response to Christ's love for us.

**OFFERING PRAYER:** In all Your gifts, O Lord, we see Your gracious love  
And find Your greatest love in Jesus' powerful name!  
Accept the gifts we bring and bless them from above  
That all we say and do may glorify Your name. Amen.

**CONVICTION AND COMFORT:** We have an ongoing emptiness, a need to be filled and refreshed. It is represented by our thirst and dependence on water. It is experienced in our sufferings. It is a result of our sin and alienation from God, but it is restored and reconciled by Jesus' death for us while we were still sinners. Jesus is the source of our life and the means of our access to the Father.