

Sermon Starter – Shaped by Thirst

Exodus 17:1-7, Psalm 95, Romans 5:1-11, John 4:5-42

Thirst speaks of longing and serious need. Without water all living things, including humans, die. In both Exodus 17 and John 4, thirst is the driving need and becomes the central metaphor for the heart-need of humans, created in the image of God—a relationship with the living God.

Answering to our thirst for God is the portrayal in Romans 5 of the love of God: “God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.” The moving of God’s heart of love in response to our brokenness and need are expressed in Psalm 95. God’s hurt and anger at the faithlessness of the Israelites at Meribah are expressions of passionate love.

Jesus’ thirst begins the story of the thirsty Samaritan woman in John 4. Here we see the God-man in his deep identification with us, thirsty humans. The dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman is a sensitive, step-by-step unfolding of God’s love and grace. She is as disqualified as she could be, according to moral and religious scruples. Yet she is the one to whom Jesus first revealed himself as “the living water.” How are our thirsts supplied through “the living water”?

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