

## March 8 Worship

Reader- Dan Smith, Chris Kenney

### Announcements/Joys

**Time Of Quiet Meditation-** *“Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” John 3:5*

**Opening Scripture-** Psalm 95(page 518)

**Opening Chorus-** 485- For Those Tears I Cried

### Responsive Call To Worship-

Leader: Come, all who are thirsty, says Jesus, our Lord.

**People: Come, all who are weak, taste the living water that I shall give.**

Leader: Dip your hands in the stream, refresh body and soul, drink from it, depend on it.

**People: For this water will never run dry.**

**All: Come, all who are thirsty says Jesus, our Lord.**

**Hymn of Praise-** 551- Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah

**Unison Prayer/Lord's Prayer-** God of living water, we confess the dryness of our lives: the brittle words we have thought and spoken, the relationships that are crumbling, the arid perspective that centers on self, the cracked and jagged edges of our world. Hear our confession, O Christ, and rain down your mercy upon us. Jesus says, “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 living water.” We pray as Jesus taught, saying....*Lord's Prayer...*

*“Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”*

**Gloria Patri-** Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. World without end.  
Amen, Amen.

**Old Testament Scripture-** Exodus 17:1-7(page 60-61)

## **Special Music-**

**Gospel Scripture-** John 4:5-15(page 925)

**Children's Time/Echo Prayer/Passing of the Peace**

**Hymn-** 695- Shall We Gather At The River

**New Testament Scripture-** Romans 5:8-9(page 980)

### **Message**

#### *“The Living Water”*

All through scripture, especially in the gospels, water plays an important part in the teachings of the prophets and in Jesus' messages to those whom He preached to during His short ministry. Water is mentioned 722 times in the bible and is found from Genesis through Revelation. What is the importance of water so that it is used to describe so many aspects of the Holy Bible?

In the first place, water is absolutely necessary for life on this planet. Without water, life is not possible. All living things have a large percentage of water in their makeup. The surface of the earth itself is 71% water. Our bodies contain 57-60% water. We cannot survive without water to sustain us. All civilizations, ancient and modern, were built around or near sources of water. Do you know that the earth today, contains the same exact amount of water as it did when the earth was created? The very same molecules of water that Jesus was baptized in still exist and may well be in the glass of water you drank today. Water evaporates and is drawn into the clouds and fall to Earth as rain somewhere else.

The bible refers to water as the means by which God expresses so much of His love to us and makes it the way for salvation. The very first reference to water, in the bible, is in Genesis 1:2; “The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.” Water existed before anything else. Water was the very first part of creation. Life itself came from the water; Genesis 1:20 says, “And God said, Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the firmament of the heavens.”

The bible speaks about water in many different contexts. There are 5 that I would like to touch on. The first is physical birth and water. In the passage I just read from Genesis God spoke about all life coming from the waters. In the birth process we all have gone through, the first 9 months of our lives are spent in water.

From conception to birth our bodies are totally immersed in water. If you have ever heard the saying that the natural explains the spiritual, then you will understand that physical birth comes before spiritual birth as we talked about in last week's scripture reading about Nicodemus and Jesus when Jesus explained about being born again. Jesus told Nicodemus; "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the spirit."

Water is a symbol of God's Word all throughout the bible. The symbolism of water can be understood by reading the bible and praying for God's help in applying the scripture to your life.

Water is used to purify and cleanse through all aspects of daily and religious life. Ceremonial washing with water was required before any ceremony or event in the early days of the Jewish faith. Priests were required to wash both hands and feet before entering the Tabernacle otherwise they would die if they entered unclean. The ritual washing with water signifies that we are purified from the dust and dirt of the world and pure before God. The sacrament of baptism is meant to cleanse and purify each of us when we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. It is the public acknowledgment of our proclaiming our rebirth in faith.

Water is a symbol of deliverance and rescue all through the bible. Moses was delivered from Pharaoh by being set adrift in the river Nile where he was found by Pharaoh's daughter and raised by her. The Israelites were delivered from bondage when Moses parted the waters of the Red Sea. Noah and his family were saved from the waters of the flood by his building of the arc.

Many blessing of God are symbolized by water. Jesus turned water into wine to bless the wedding feast in Cana. In the dessert, the Israelite's were blessed with water where there was none when God told Moses to strike the rock with his staff and water flowed. God promised Jacob that He would pour water on the thirsty land and make streams flow where there was no water. God has blessed humanity with water in abundance in so many cases it is hard to count them.

In the lesson we heard read today, Jesus taught us of the everlasting water offered by God to all of us who believe. Think about it, water that makes us so that we will never thirst again. Water that will give us everlasting life. What a blessing it is to have this water offered to us. How about the cost of this miracle water? Who can afford it? The answer is that anyone can afford it. All that it takes is to ask and freely it will be given to you and anyone else who asks. Jesus offers this gift to all who would follow him in spirit and truth, all who are willing to accept Christ as Savior and Lord.

We have looked at water as a symbol of birth, as God's Word, as a purifier, for deliverance and as a blessing. I like to look at water as a reminder of the power of God. Have you ever been to the Grand Canyon? If you want to see the power of

water (God), it is there in that magnificent vista. The absolute beauty that God created in that desert cannot be denied by anyone. You can say all you want about how the Colorado River carved the canyon over millions of years and all that, I tell you that without God it never could have happened. Yes, the water was the tool, but where did the power come from? Look at the falls at Niagara. The power of that river is undeniable. Once again, without God, nothing.

Water on its own is just water, it takes something else to give it the ability to cut through solid granite or other stone. Water is a blessing when you need it to grow crops or to be able to navigate on to move goods and products. Water also has a destructive power to destroy all within its path. As much as humanity has tried to control water, there are times and places when what we do is not enough. We don't have the control. I think sometimes we need a lesson to teach us about the wild power of this earth we inhabit. We need to turn to God to find the best uses for this water He has given us.

When Jesus was teaching the woman at the well, she had a hard time with the concept of water that could quench her thirst forever. Water that, when drunk, could give her eternal life. It is hard to believe but if you do believe, if your faith is strong, you will never thirst again, you will have eternal life. Do you have a hard time with this concept, come on, jump on in, the waters fine, and it's free. Amen. Praise Be to God.

**Prayers of the People-** God of mercy, hear our prayer. When your desert people cried out to you in hunger and in thirst, you gave them bread from heaven and brought out water from the rock. When the poor and needy seek sustenance and there is none; when their tongues are parched with thirst, you answer them: "I, the God of Israel, will not forsake you!" We, your people, too, hungry and thirsty for righteousness, cry out: "Do not forsake us!" But your answer comes, confounding and convicting: "Do not forsake me!" you say. "You, Lord?" we respond. "When did we see you?" Then, like a feast spread before us, you reveal your fullness in our neighbor's longing gaze. In your mercy you have created enough for our neighbor and for us, except that we desire so much. In your mercy you show us that our unbridled desire is killing both of us. In your mercy, you show us the connection between our need for righteousness and our neighbor's need for water. Free us from our greed, O God of mercy. Pound righteousness from our stony hearts, like water from a rock, that our neighbor may know no want; that our lives might once more be full. In Jesus; Holy name. Amen.

**Closing Hymn-** 508- O Love That Will Not Let Me Go

**Benediction-** With the good news of God still moistening our mouths, let us go seek our salvation with the least of these. May we be a well of hope to our thirsting neighbors; an oasis of opportunity to all we encounter. Go in peace. Amen.