

The Covenant with Moses

Sunday, March 7, 2021

*"So Moses took the staff from the LORD's presence, just as he commanded him.
Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff.
Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank."*

Numbers 20: 9, 11

Hope does not disappoint. Really, even this year? Hope does not disappoint? Wildfires scorch the earth. A virus disrupts the world. Friends reject us. Families fall apart. It can be hard to hear the words, 'Hope does not disappoint.' Bad things happen that can't be stopped or reversed. How does hope not disappoint? What kind of promise is this?

The Israelites are not overly enthused with the results of the promises that have led them out of slavery. Surely, they were not expecting to wander thirsty, hungry and tired in a wasteland for years on end. Similarly, in this endless pandemic season, we have been called to let go of our expectations: we settle for more screen time, more faces disguised by masks in hallways, more changed holidays and traditions. Perhaps like our own, Moses' frustration is clear: "What shall I do with these people?" What are we supposed to do with this reality? When the next step makes no sense or the solution is murky at best, it is only reasonable to feel disappointed, abandoned. Moses struggles with a people who expect their exodus from slavery to look different, too: to have less wandering and, to simply have water to drink. How does one find water, sustenance when there simply isn't any? How can you trust you won't die of thirst if you don't even know where to find what you seek?

Except, we don't always know everything God has placed in front of us. Truthfully, who in a million years would expect water to flow from a rock? Perhaps Moses hoped for a roadmap to a well or a spring. Instead, he is told to strike the rock and, sure enough, water. In the Gospel, we see Jesus and the Samaritan woman at a reliable source of water. Jesus says to the woman at the well, "If you knew the gift of God" — if only you knew what God knows. The conversation is nothing she expected, and like her, God gives us what we need, whether we know it or not. Be it water to nourish our bodies for a journey for which we don't know the end, or perhaps not water at all, but Living Water



Reflection for the Third Week of Lent

— hope for eternal life. God finds ways to provide us what we need to nourish our hope, always, and hope has a longer view than sometimes only one person can hold.

Moses never made it. Hope is not always just ours to hold. It is always bigger than us as individuals. Indeed, hope is a shared load – held collectively by families, communities and care teams. We share in it, and we take turns holding it for one another in times when real hope seems lost. Moses carried hope for the Israelites that eventually got them to the Promised Land, even if he never made it himself. Even as we hand hope to another in the depth of our despair, we might still find within ourselves a dull glimmer of it in spite of ourselves. Hope for hope's sake: this, too, serves a purpose. This, too, points us toward eternal life — our promised land.

Do we know when the gift of God is right in front of us? Who can hold your hope when you can't see it for yourself?

Brief daily reflections for the remainder of the week:

Monday, March 8, 2021

"Hope does not disappoint", can be a difficult phrase to take to heart, because disappointment can sometimes feel like a constant these days. Reflect on the ways in which hope might be a struggle for you in this season.

Tuesday, March 9, 2021

It can be difficult to be present when every day feels the same: more screen time, more sick patients, more overtime, or more time furloughed. When have you felt like the Israelites this Lenten season, wandering aimlessly in the desert?

Wednesday, March 10, 2021

Even still, God provides, as God does for the Israelites when water comes from the rock. When has God given you what you needed, whether you realized it or not?



Reflection for the Third Week of Lent

Thursday, March 11, 2021

In the depths of despair, it can be difficult to hold onto hope, when have you had to hand hope off to another to hold for a while? What did you discover about yourself? About your relationships?

Friday, March 12, 2021

Hope is held collectively by communities, families, and care teams—it is and should be a shared load. Who has been a gift of hope and of God for you?

Saturday, March 13, 2021

Hope for hope's own sake: sometimes even when it seems that all hope should be lost, we find within ourselves a dull glimmer of it. This, too, points us toward eternal life. Have you experienced hope for hope's own sake?