

Do you thirst? I invite you to keep that thought in mind.

When I was a boy, my family used to go to the beach in the Otter Banks in North Carolina. Now being a child, I was not so possessed with patients and understanding. I was being brought to a more joyous land than I usually experienced. I should have been joyful and full of gratitude in what was being done for me, but instead I would say, "I am hungry", "I am tired" or even "I am thirsty". This "I am thirsty" is echoed in our first reading from Exodus. "Give us water to drink" is what the querulous congregation of Israelites would confront Moses and by extension our LORD GOD with. I, like the Israelites before me, was putting those that were thinking of me, making effort in my behalf and who loved me to the test. I did not have the eyes to really see what was being done for me. What I should have been doing was showing my deep gratitude. So apparently the Israelites and I had much in common. But then again, we are all as like children before the LORD. Our takeaway from this? If we are bold possibly to have eyes that see truly, ears to listen and hearts to have trust and faith. Faith, more on that in a moment.

I pause here to give some important definitions. The first is faith. Merriam-Webster says Faith is: firm belief in something for which there is no proof. The second is Justified. Justified, according to Merriam Webster is: having or shown to have a just, right, or reasonable basis. Grace, Miriam-Webster has it as: unmerited divine assistance given to humans for their regeneration or sanctification. Now, I ask you how beautiful is that?

..."since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. These words are taken from Paul's letter to the Romans. I have cancer, had a traumatic brain injury, been in a helicopter crash and been hit by a car while walking and minding my own business. Those are painful times. They are powerful memories and can be transformational, and they have been. But we all have "HARD" in our lives. Will we walk in faith knowing these sufferings can be developed into

something not just of ourselves? Humans have an amazing ability to be oblivious to happenings that occur all around them all the time. But when we have "HARD" it tends to focus our attention. Sometimes we try to ignore it, sometimes to deny it and sometimes we ask "why me"? But I suggest, and in my opinion so does Paul's letter to the Romans imply, we take it as an opportunity. An opportunity to realize who and what is around us. An opportunity to take one's eyes off your own problems and cast them upon others. To comfort pain, feed hunger and offer good water for thirst. But thirst is an affliction of which we all suffer but sadly many do not know the source of their thirst. Are you thirsty?

In our gospel reading we find Jesus entering the Samaritan city Sychar. It is important to note that Samaritans were also descendants of those lead out of slavery in Egypt, but a division occurred centuries before the time of Jesus. Next, we find Jesus entreating with a Samaritan woman in asking her for a drink of water. Now this is an unheard-of thing to do. Jews saw Samaritan women as ritually unclean and thus anything they touched equally unclean so this very much surprised the woman. He then said to her that if she realized or "saw truly" she would have asked for living water. She did not understand Jesus's meaning. She was seeking clean water but Jesus was offering Living Water. Water that would forever more sate our spiritual thirst.

Now we say we understand what living water is but do we really? Do we realize it as a symbol for salvation and a true knowledge of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. If we do, how have we employed that understanding? Have we shared that understanding? Have we moved our focus off of ourselves? Have we been moved help with the thirst of others? While these questions can be an occasion for reflection they are also a call to action. To be about the sharing of the good word and to not fear but move, and always move in faith. Knowing we are justified in the LORD and ARE in that beautiful grace.