

Thumpy  
Rev. Kris Whitby  
LCMS Northern Illinois District Staff

“But there was no water for the people to drink...” Exodus 17:1c

Have you ever been hangry? Hangry is that terrible combination when someone becomes so hungry it makes them angry, and it doesn’t fade away until the hunger is satisfied. A time or two, I’ve been in that predicament, and it wasn’t pleasant for me or anyone around me. God’s chosen people set out from the Wilderness of Sin in Exodus 17. They don’t become hangry but soon find themselves in a similar situation that I’d call “thumpy.” They had no water and soon became grumpy about their situation. They complain to Moses and become so upset with him that Moses believes the people plan to stone him to death.

In a way, it’s understandable. No life lasts on earth without water and when faced with the uncertainty of how they will live, the people of Israel turn their uncertain and grumpy mood toward their flesh and blood leader in Moses. Moses reminds them that their complaint is really against God. How does the Lord respond even when His people question that He’s there for them? He provides His unworthy people with the gift of life, but does so in an unlikely way.

Stones...they may be strong, they may be durable, but they’re not the usual place you’d look to for life-giving water. The Lord commands Moses to strike the rock at Mt. Horeb and from it, He would issue forth water. Moses obeys, and the Lord provides the life-giving substance to a people who didn’t deserve it.

It’s a beautiful image that God provides as He saves His people in Exodus 17. Life where there should be no life at all, freely-given water to a doubting and complaining people. A rock gushing water foreshadows where the Lord Himself would be at a place where there should be no life - the cross - and from there, Jesus issues forth the freely given gift of life with His own shed blood. And as He does so for a people unworthy of such a gift, He is the one who is thirsty that the wellspring of eternal life might fully satisfy us all.

May that blood-bought gift satisfy your “thumpy” thirst for grace, and fill us all so that His love overflows in our lives to other thirsty neighbors.