

March 14, 2021

**“Just Let Your Love Flow”
Sermon by Rev. Susan Drake**

Isaiah 49:8-12 (the Message translation)

*“When the time’s ripe, I answer you. When victory’s due, I help you.
I form you and use you. To reconnect the people with me,
To put the land in order, to resettle families on the ruined properties.
I tell prisoners, ‘Come on out. You’re free!’
and those huddled in fear, ‘It’s all right. It’s safe now.’
There’ll be food stands along all the roads, picnics on all the hills—
Nobody hungry, nobody thirsty, shade from the sun, shelter from the wind,
For the Compassionate One guides them, takes them to the best springs.
I’ll make all my mountains into roads, turn them into a superhighway.
Look: These coming from far countries, and those, out of the north,
These streaming in from the west, and those from all the way down the Nile!”*

John 4: 7-14 (The Message Translation)

A woman, a Samaritan, came to draw water. Jesus said, “Would you give me a drink of water?” (His disciples had gone to the village to buy food for lunch.) The Samaritan woman, taken aback, asked, “How come you, a Jew, are asking me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?” (Jews in those days wouldn’t be caught dead talking to Samaritans.) Jesus answered, “If you knew the generosity of God and who I am, you would be asking me for a drink, and I would give you fresh, living water.”

The woman said, “Sir, you don’t even have a bucket to draw with, and this well is deep. So how are you going to get this ‘living water’? Are you a better man than our ancestor Jacob, who dug this well and drank from it, he and his sons and livestock, and passed it down to us?” Jesus said, “Everyone who drinks this water will get thirsty again and again. Anyone who drinks the water I give will never thirst—not ever. The water I give will be an artesian spring within, gushing fountains of endless life.”

Message

“What’s in a Name?”

This Morning is The One Great Hour of Sharing offering morning. Now before some of you roll your eyes internally and think “yeah, yeah, the church wants more of my hard earned cash” I want you to know that I think you guys are more than generous, but One Great Hour of Sharing is about much more than money.

I also want you to know that this church will never make you feel bad for not being able to participate in an offering. I want to be clear that even if you don’t have two cents to rub together you are welcome here or if you are loaded but as tight as a drum with your funds, you are still

welcome here. But again, One Great Hour of Sharing is about much more than money. It is about connection.

I'd like you all to close your eyes and those of you that are old enough envision sitting cross legged around the radio in your childhood home, for the rest of us, just picture an episode of the Waltons where they sat around the radio at night.

It is an evening in Lent, March 26, 1949. The fire is going. Mom is darning socks. Dad is smoking a pipe. You get to listen to inspiring words from actors Gregory Peck and Ida Lupino. Popular Musicians of the day play the smooth sounds of the big band era.

Then President Truman comes on the Radio and makes a heartfelt plea to raise money for world relief to help those still hurting from the effects of WWII. These are his words and are still very much relevant.

“Fellow citizens: As a country, we have long understood that to help the suffering is to serve God. Through our communities and our governments as well as through our charities we have sought to carry out this Divine command to aid the hungry, the needy, and the sick.

Today, however, the words of the parable of the Last Judgment have fresh meaning for us. They make clear our duty toward those millions of people in other countries who have suffered and still suffer the miseries of war, destruction, and tyranny.

There are thousands of children in foreign lands today who have no memory of their parents, no knowledge of the meaning of the words “home” and “family,” and who have forgotten what it feels like to have enough to eat.

There are hopeless thousands who wander among the shattered towns seeking a place to rest, seeking security and a chance to begin their lives anew. There are many who pray to God only in secret, fearing persecution if they profess their beliefs openly.

It is hard for us to comprehend grief and distress such as this, because our homes are secure. We can go to our places of worship and worship God as we desire and most important of all, we know that our rights and our dignity as individuals are guaranteed to us under the Constitution.

Many of those in need and distress throughout the world share these beliefs and ideals with us. To them we should offer not only our aid in physical things, but also the sense of brotherhood in a common cause.

We cannot do this through the channels of government alone. We must also extend the hand of fellowship through our private organizations and as individuals. In this way, we can join with those of kindred faith and destroy the barriers of distrust and propaganda that divide us from our fellows.

To the millions in the world who cry in their despair for a new day of freedom and justice, we here in America, out of our strength and by our example, can give hope and comfort. I urge you to go to worship tomorrow, each in your accustomed place, to thank God for our heritage and our strength, and to ask God for the grace and power to carry out His will in this troubled world.”

Isn't that incredible how relevant his words are still today. There was no formal record kept the following morning of how much money was raised but it is estimated that around 75,000 churches participated from all denominations. Now “One Great Hour of Sharing” is a major fund raising effort for many main line churches for World Relief.

But again it isn't just about money, it is about connection. When you participate financially or through prayer, or action you connect yourself to that night in 1949, you connect yourself to the Israelites that were struggling in exile, just trying to get home, who were thirsty and hungry and refugees.

You connect yourself to the woman at the community well, that had a conversation with Jesus where he reveals to her that he can give us the “Living Water” of the spirit, to fill us to overflowing.

And you become that living water to people throughout the world. You connect yourself to people who have been struck by disasters, whose homes have been wiped out by tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, and fires. You feed and shelter refugees of war and tyranny. You help impoverished women have their own small business to feed their family.

You plant gardens, you clean water, you raise cattle, you give vaccinations, you help free prisoners of war, you build clinics and schools, and literally dig wells to water an entire village. You become the living water, the body of Christ. You make the kingdom of God come a little closer. Listen to Isaiah again, and picture this for all people

“I tell prisoners, ‘Come on out. You're free!’
and those huddled in fear, ‘It's all right. It's safe now.’
There'll be food stands along all the roads,
picnics on all the hills—
Nobody hungry, nobody thirsty,
shade from the sun, shelter from the wind”

If you don't give this morning I urge you to find a way to give in the future. Give of your time, talent, or treasure so that you can feel a part of the living water that Christ refers to. To drink deep into the well of our connection to other human beings and to God.

To participate in the flow of God's love throughout the world. When we do that the troubles of our own private lives seem smaller but our legacy and impact on the goodness in the world becomes bigger.

The harshness we heap on ourselves is greatly diminished by the quantity of grace that we extend to others. If this last year has taught us anything it is that we are built for connection. Not just with our families, and communities but with our world. May you feel that bigness in yourselves this morning.

Revel in the wideness of God's mercy. Experience that connection that extends your spirit from inside yourself to a tiny Baby born safely in a clean clinic that you helped to build in a small community in Africa. Or to a refugee on the border of Syria that you helped to shelter from the wind last night, or someone thirsty that got up this morning and drank deep from a well that you helped dig. May it be So. AMEN

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