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Devotion for February 11th, 2022

*"But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.
The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up
to eternal life."*

- John 4:14

For the Loughran family it is very hard to imagine that we have lived in Florida for over 15 years, for me even more difficult that I've passed my 15th anniversary of service at Grace and am forging on towards 16. Much has happened in that time: births, baptisms, graduations, weddings, deaths, funerals, and then yes, more births as a new generation of congregants and school scholars emerges from the one that was here when I was installed as senior pastor.

Remarkably, despite the passage of time I can still remember my first visit to St. Pete. From landing over the Gulf to driving across the bay, I was impressed by two things: the amount of water everywhere, far more than dry land, and also the fact that everyone whom I met was carrying a bottle of water to drink. It seemed strange to me that despite there being water everywhere, hardly any, if any, was potable.

And yet far too often that is the case, isn't it, that what God has created very good rebels against Him, becoming unsuitable for its intended use. This is especially true of we people who were made in God's image.

Consider for a moment the woman whom Jesus approached and asked for a drink by that well in Samaria. In her multitude of sins against the Sixth Commandment she had no clue who she was talking to. Interestingly, although a foreigner, she was aware of the faith held by God's people of old and she

was waiting for the Messiah's coming. She even said, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ). When He comes, He will tell us all things."
To which Jesus replied, "I who speak to you am He."

What a revelation that was for her, that God's word about Israel being a light to the Gentiles, was true. In that moment these people who for generations had been the sworn enemy of her people became the blessing through which His Messiah came and true to His word came directly to her.

Likewise, He comes for you, first in the water of Holy Baptism where you were bathed in His blood shed from the cross and clothed by the bright light of His Spirit, filling your heart, mind, body and soul, giving to you the rebirth Jesus promised to that woman, making you into one who worships the Father in Spirit and Truth. Further He comes to you each day that you meet Him by the well of His word that is the font of every blessing.

So, head to that well often so that you might never thirst but rather have the strength necessary to complete your weekly journey from altar rail to altar rail and then from Baptismal font to the bright heavenly courts. Along the way marvel at the things the Lord is doing for you in your life, the family He has given you whatever it may consist of and most especially the family of God at Grace that is your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Praise be His Holy Name forever. Amen.

*God's blessings,
Rev. Kevin Loughran, Senior Pastor
Grace Lutheran Church & School*

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