

Third Sunday in Lent Sunday, March 15, 2020

The Collect: Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament: Exodus 17:1-7 read from The New Century Version Bible

17 The whole Israelite community left the Desert of Sin and traveled from place to place, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water there for the people to drink. 2 So they quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink."

Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why are you testing the Lord?"

3 But the people were very thirsty for water, so they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt? Was it to kill us, our children, and our farm animals with thirst?"

4 So Moses cried to the Lord, "What can I do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me to death."

5 The Lord said to Moses, "Go ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you. Carry with you the walking stick that you used to strike the Nile River. Now go! 6 I will stand in front of you on a rock at Mount Sinai. Hit that rock with the stick, and water will come out of it so that the people can drink." Moses did these things as the elders of Israel watched. 7 He named that place Massah, because the Israelites tested the Lord when they asked, "Is the Lord with us or not?" He also named it Meribah, because they quarreled.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 95 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

1 Come, let us sing to the Lord; *

let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.

2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving *

and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.

3 For the Lord is a great God, *

and a great King above all gods.

4 In his hand are the caverns of the earth, *

and the heights of the hills are his also.

5 The sea is his, for he made it, *

and his hands have molded the dry land.

6 Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, *

and kneel before the Lord our Maker.

7 For he is our God,

and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand. *

Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!

8 Harden not your hearts,

as your forebears did in the wilderness, *

at Meribah, and on that day at Massah,

when they tempted me.

9 They put me to the test, *

though they had seen my works.

10 Forty years long I detested that generation and said, *

"This people are wayward in their hearts;

they do not know my ways."

11 So I swore in my wrath, *

"They shall not enter into my rest."

Epistle: Romans 5:1-11 read from The New International Version Bible

5 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 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. 3 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! 10 For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! 11 Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel: John 4:5-42 read from The New Living Translation

5 Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. 7 Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." 8 He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.

9 The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?"

10 Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water."

11 “But sir, you don’t have a rope or a bucket,” she said, “and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water? 12 And besides, do you think you’re greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?”

13 Jesus replied, “Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. 14 But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.”

15 “Please, sir,” the woman said, “give me this water! Then I’ll never be thirsty again, and I won’t have to come here to get water.”

16 “Go and get your husband,” Jesus told her.

17 “I don’t have a husband,” the woman replied.

Jesus said, “You’re right! You don’t have a husband— 18 for you have had five husbands, and you aren’t even married to the man you’re living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!”

19 “Sir,” the woman said, “you must be a prophet. 20 So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?”

21 Jesus replied, “Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. 23 But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. 24 For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

25 The woman said, “I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

26 Then Jesus told her, "I am the Messiah!"

27 Just then his disciples came back. They were shocked to find him talking to a woman, but none of them had the nerve to ask, "What do you want with her?" or "Why are you talking to her?" 28 The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, 29 "Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?" 30 So the people came streaming from the village to see him.

31 Meanwhile, the disciples were urging Jesus, "Rabbi, eat something."

32 But Jesus replied, "I have a kind of food you know nothing about."

33 "Did someone bring him food while we were gone?" the disciples asked each other.

34 Then Jesus explained: "My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work. 35 You know the saying, 'Four months between planting and harvest.' But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest. 36 The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike! 37 You know the saying, 'One plants and another harvests.' And it's true. 38 I sent you to harvest where you didn't plant; others had already done the work, and now you will get to gather the harvest."

39 Many Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus because the woman had said, "He told me everything I ever did!" 40 When they came out to see him, they begged him to stay in their village. So he stayed for two days, 41 long enough for many more to hear his message and believe. 42 Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not just because of what you told us, but because we have heard him ourselves. Now we know that he is indeed the Savior of the world."

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: On March 21st we remember Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury and Martyr. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.

Thomas Cranmer was born at Aslockton in Nottinghamshire, England, on July 2nd, 1489. At fourteen, he entered Jesus College, Cambridge, where by 1514 he had obtained his BA and MA degrees and a Fellowship. In 1526, he became a Doctor of Divinity, a lecturer in his college, and examiner in the University. During his years at Cambridge, he diligently studied the Bible and the new doctrines emanating from the continental Reformation.

A chance meeting with King Henry VIII at Waltham Abbey in 1529 led to Cranmer's involvement in the "King's Affair" – the annulment of Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon. Cranmer prepared the King's defense and presented it to the universities in England and Germany, and to Rome.

While in Germany, Cranmer associated with the Lutheran reformers, especially with Andreas Osiander, whose daughter he married. When Archbishop Warham died, the King obtained papal confirmation of Cranmer's appointment to the See of Canterbury, and he was consecrated on March 30, 1533. Among his earliest acts was to declare the King's marriage null and void. He then validated the King's marriage to Anne Boleyn. Her child, the future Queen Elizabeth I, was Cranmer's godchild.

During the reign of Edward VI, Cranmer had a free hand in reforming the worship, doctrine, and practice of the Church. Thomas Cranmer was principally responsible for the first Book of Common Prayer of 1549, and for the second Book, in 1552. But at Edward's death he unfortunately subscribed to the dying King's will that the succession should go to Lady Jane Grey. For this, and also for his reforming work, he was arrested, deprived of his office and authority, and condemned by Queen Mary I, daughter of Henry VIII by Catherine, and a staunch Roman Catholic. He was burned at the stake on March 21st, 1556.

Cranmer wrote two recantations during his imprisonment, but in the end he denied his recantations, and died heroically, saying, "Forasmuch as my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, there my hand shall first be punished; for if I may come to the fire, it shall first be burned."

Let us pray. Merciful God, through the work of Thomas Cranmer you renewed the worship of your Church by restoring the language of the people, and through his death you revealed your power in human weakness: Grant that by your grace we may always worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**