

³But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"

In the Old Testament reading the people of God are grumbling. This time they are complaining because they're thirsty. Most of the time the Israelites were not happy during their 40 years of wandering in the desert, so they complained against God.

We are good and grumbling and complaining. We cry and complain when things don't go our way. Sometimes we might feel that we are getting the short end of the stick, or life isn't where we want it to be, so we grumble and complain against God.

Or against our family and our neighbors. We grumble about all kinds of things. If you think about it for a moment, when we grumble about our circumstances, or our job, or whatever it is we grumble about, we are grumbling against God.

We confess in our catechism that all that we have, and all that we are come as gifts from God. God promises to give us everything we need to support this body and life.

It's a hard lesson to learn when we grumble. When we grumble, we are showing our selfishness! We are focusing on our own wants, and needs, and desires, instead of simply trusting in the Lord to provide what we need, as he always does.

As we take a look at Exodus 17, we see that there's nothing new under the sun. The children of Israel after crying out for more than 400 years, had been the recipient of God's great gift of deliverance and grace.

After witnessing the 10 plagues, the children of Israel are led by God through the Red Sea. After God formed the walls of water for them to pass, he closed them in on Pharaoh and the Egyptians and they drowned in the sea.

On one side slavery and death. On the other side, freedom and life.

Surely the children of Israel after witnessing God's strong and mighty arm would trust in him through thick and thin.

But how quickly they forget. How quickly we forget.

The Israelites are in and around the wilderness and they camped at a spot where there was no water. So, what do they do? Did they trust that God would provide for them? NO! They grumbled, and they complained.

In verse 7 it says: **And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the LORD by saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"**

Exodus 16:2-3 "And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, ³and the people of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meatpots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

In verse 3 the people grumbled and said to Moses: **"Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"**

So, what does God do? Does he repay them for their grumbling? Does he give them what they want because of their grumbling? Instead of giving the people what they deserve, God gives them what they need. He gives them abundant grace.

The grace of God is pure gift, not because we earn it, or deserve it, or grumble for it. Webster's dictionary defines grace as the undeserved love and favor of God toward people. Undeserved, love and favor.

The children of Israel grumbled and the Lord answered them by giving them what they needed. he knew they were thirsty; they were in a desert.

He fed them with water and food all along. But instead of trusting and praying, they grumbled. Out of grace, the lord gave them what they needed.

In verse 4-6, **So Moses cried to the LORD, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." "Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink."**

So, Moses listened to the Lord and struck the rock at Horeb and water came out overflowing, more than enough for all the people and livestock.

How would you answer the question? **Is the Lord among us or not?** When we listen to our grumbling, we might be tempted to think that maybe the Lord doesn't care.

When someone you know and love, or even yourself gets sick or dies, you may wonder where God is. When your earthly possessions seem to be running out, and there's not enough money left at the end of the month, you may worry and doubt.

When the relationships that God has given are frayed or broken, you may wonder—where is God? Why doesn't he do something? And your worry and your doubt often times results in grumbling, even blaming God for your self-inflicted sins.

Jesus tells us to repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent for all of the times you grumbled and complained against God.

We have an even greater rescue than the Israelites, we have been taken from slavery to freedom. We have been taken from death to life through the waters of Holy Baptism.

What is it that God delivered to us there? Forgiveness, life, and salvation.

God in his mercy and love sent his Son Jesus into this sin filled world. A world that didn't care, and didn't recognize him, and certainly didn't appreciate him. Jesus as true God and true man lived under the law and fulfilled it for you.

Jesus took all of your sins—every one of them, every thought, word, and deed into himself on the Cross, bleeding and dying the punishment and death, we deserve.

Jesus died and after 3 days rose from the grave, never to die again. God has given us the victory in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

He gives us forgiveness out of sheer grace. God's answer to our grumbling is Jesus. God the Father strikes his Son the rock and from his side comes blood and water, which gives you eternal life.

John 4:14 “Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

When things get difficult in our life, we can become ungrateful, and think we need to take things into our own hands, and we grumble, and are not satisfied with the gifts God gives us, but instead we are resentful.

Because of that old Adam that lives inside of us, we are all experts in grumbling.

God shows his love for us through Jesus' death. **Romans 5:8-10** "But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life."

God came to you in Baptism and gave you the gift of his Son Jesus. Through his Word attached to water you received forgiveness and eternal life.

God sends his Son to you each time you receive the Lord's Supper and your faith is strengthened and your sins are forgiven.

Today, God calls us to return to the water. Return to the rock. Return to the waters of holy baptism...

...to drown and die with all of our sins and evil desires, and all of our grumbling and quarrelling, and to come forth a new creation.

Free to serve in Christ Jesus.

To serve means to love and forgive one another, as our Lord has forgiven you. It means to joyfully give to the church from the abundance God has given you. It means to love your neighbor.

How easy it is to grumble; how easy it is to be unthankful and ungrateful of the gifts that God gives us.

Remember God's answer to our grumbling is always the same. Jesus! Today, tomorrow and forever! Amen