**First Presbyterian Church Tucumcari**

**Worship 11:00AM**

**Sunday, March 19, 2017, Third Sunday in Lent**

**200 RH O Jesus, We Adore Thee Accompanist Marjorie G. McKenzie**

**314 RH Christ, of All My Hopes the Ground**

**320 RH I am Thine, O Lord**

**Call to Worship (please see bulletin)**

**Prayer of the Day**

God of the living waters,

It may be dry outside, but we pray for your refreshment

To heal and comfort our souls.

Bring your holy wisdom

Bring us your living waters

Grant us peace in this busy world

That we may be challenged and renewed by your Spirit today,

That never leaves us. In Christ our Savior,

Amen.

**Call to Confession**

**Prayer of Confession (please see bulletin)**

**Assurance of Pardon**

Friends, Believe the Good News of Jesus Christ.

**In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

**Psalm 95:1-7 (please see bulletin)**

**Prayers of the People**

Lord, you say you have living water. Please give us that living water so we may never be thirsty again.

There are many who thirst and hunger – be they without running water and food, or be they thirsty and hungry souls. We lift them unto you.

There are many who seek wholeness – be they ill or be they broken in spirit. We lift them unto you.

There are many who seek life abundant – be they without strength or wherewithal to make life work, or be they empty of hope. We lift them unto you.

There are places in your creation in need of redemption, places where we have created problems, there are broken areas of your world, which we feel unable to help.

We lift them all unto you.

There are places of fear and threats of terrorism, places of confusion and distraction, places where falsehood is being borne as truth. We lift these places unto you.

Where your Word is marred by human words, where your Spirit is offended, we lift those offenders unto you.

There are many in need of your spiritual healing, not just a physical healing. We lift them unto you. For we are confident of your love for all creation, for all the world belongs to you.

Help those in need. And strengthen our hearts and spirits to find out where we can be the hands and feet of Christ in the world. For we are his Body.

Now in silence we lift up our prayers unto you….

With the confidence of the children of God, we pray, “Our father who art in heaven…Amen.”

**Time Out for Teaching: Language of Lent - Wilderness**

Lent is the season when we consider the wilderness that Jesus entered as part of his journey to the cross. Let me read to you from Mark’s gospel how that wilderness experience was.

**Mk 1:12**And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. **13**He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Mark is very short and to the point on this. He leaves out the details of what sorts of temptations Jesus experienced. But the wilderness still means the same as in the other gospels. It is like a gateway from his baptism to his ministry and then the cross. Jesus immediately starts gathering his disciples and doing the work of healing and teaching after his wilderness journey.

There is another wilderness temptation story in the Old Testament, isn’t there. It is when the Israelites wander in the desert for 40 years after they have been freed from slavery in Egypt. They encounter lots of temptations along the way, including trying to make idols. God continues to provide them manna in the desert as he leads them to the Promised Land.

Perhaps the takeaway for the wilderness experience is for us to recognize our own times of being lost and hungry. Maybe we didn’t know where God was leading us. We have all had them. Maybe it was a journey of grief. Or a time of deep questioning. Maybe it was a time when you felt seriously straying from church, or from God’s commandments. Having such wilderness experiences are normal for us. Think for yourself – what have been such moments for you? And how did God get you through it?

**Gospel John 4:5-26**

5So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.6Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

7A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” 8(His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) 9The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) 10Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” 11The woman said to him, “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? 12Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?” 13Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” 15The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

16Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come back.” 17The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’ 18for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!” 19The woman said to him, “Sir, I see that you are a prophet. 20Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.” 21Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. 24God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” 25The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.” 26Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.”

**Gospel John 4:27-42**

27Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you want?” or, “Why are you speaking with her?” 28Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, 29“Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?” 30They left the city and were on their way to him.

31Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, “Rabbi, eat something.” 32But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” 33So the disciples said to one another, “Surely no one has brought him something to eat?” 34Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. 35Do you not say, ‘Four months more, then comes the harvest’? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. 36The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. 37For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ 38I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”

39Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I have ever done.” 40So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. 41And many more believed because of his word. 42They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world.”

**Sermon: “Spring Up, O Well!”**

“I’ve got a river of life flowing out of me. Makes the lame to walk and the blind to see. Opens prison doors sets the captives free. I’ve got a river of life flowing out of me! Spring up oh well, within my soul. Spring up oh well, and make me whole. Spring up oh well, and give to me, that life abundantly!”

We used to sing that song in our youth group gatherings when I was in high school. I found it a little confusing, even though it was fun to sing. It makes more sense to me now; the first part is Jesus talking. Jesus has the river of life that can make the lame walk and the blind see. The second part is our prayer – the prayer for that river to spring up in us, make us whole and give us life abundant.

This is our prayer, especially for those times when we find ourselves in a spiritual wilderness. And it is when we are in a spiritual wilderness – be it trouble praying, trouble hoping, trouble loving others – we realize how much we need God to make us whole. We recall Jesus’ time in the wilderness. We imagine him all alone, suffering through it all, with the Devil hanging around tempting him. But we sometimes forget that – check out Mark chapter 1 – that he wasn’t alone at all, for it was the Spirit drove him there in the first place. It says, “The angels ministered to Him.”

We can be assured that no matter the wilderness we find ourselves, God’s living waters minister to us. While we are in the wilderness it can be hard for us to notice God at work. But when you get out of the wilderness, it’s good for us to look back and see that God ministers to us.

That was good news for the woman who meets the Messiah at the well. Jesus offers her the river of life. She is praying, “Please give me that living water, so that I may never thirst again!” She was in a spiritual wilderness, and it seemed like this wilderness had lasted for years. She seems lonely. When Jesus tells her to go get her husband, she says, “I have no husband,” as if she feels like she’s had so many husbands, it is as if she belongs to no one. That’s a desolate feeling. Belonging to no one.

Jesus started this conversation, for he is doing God’s work- reaping what God has already sown. He must have seen her loneliness and desperation, which lead him to speak to her, even though it is an embarrassing and socially unacceptable thing to do. A man speaking to a woman in public. A Jew speaking to a Samaritan! He had to disrupt her toil and routine to offer her new life.

And it WAS a new day. He was obviously different from any other Jewish man in the world, there to tell her that she was included in God’s plan of salvation. She belonged to God.

She matters to God. She matters to the God she had worshiped but whom the Jews claimed was theirs, not hers. Jesus tells her that even a Samaritan could be loved by the God of the Jews. Even a woman who has had five husbands. Even though God knows everything she had ever done!

This is true for anyone who worships in spirit and truth. Anyone. Whether you were raised a “cradle Presbyterian,” or just came along recently in search of belonging. Whether you have been married 10 times or never at all. Whether you made big mistakes and seek redemption, or you are confident of God’s love for you. God knows everything you have ever done. And the offer of living water is still there. Because God made you and belong to him.

These living waters will not dissolve all your problems overnight. But knowing of God’s great love for you, you can be assured that you are never alone. He provides a way through the wilderness. Notice what the woman does when she realizes she has met the Messiah. She leaves her water jar behind and excitedly begins the work of the disciples – reaping those whom God has sown. And many in her town came to believe. See what we get with those living waters, belonging to God, is our joy is infectious, life-giving.

In your wilderness, remember you belong to God, even though He knows everything you have ever done. The past is gone. A new life can begin. With new life in Christ, we can find life abundant, even while we’re in the wilderness. Amen.