

Reflection & Prayertime: Water from Rocks and Support from Stones

May 2, 2021

Scripture Reading from Exodus 17: 1-16

Water From the Rock

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

Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the LORD to the test?"

³ But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?"

⁴ Then Moses cried out to the LORD, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me."

⁵ The LORD answered Moses, "Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶ I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ And he called the place Massah^[a] and Meribah^[a] because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the LORD saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

The Amalekites Defeated

⁸ The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. ⁹ Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands."

¹⁰ So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. ¹¹ As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. ¹² When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. ¹³ So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.

14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven."

15 Moses built an altar and called it The LORD is my Banner. **16** He said, "Because hands were lifted up against[□] the throne of the LORD,[□] the LORD will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation."

A couple of thoughts to share about this Scripture reading. First, will people always complain about things? Maybe so. But as God continues to be response, God is always helping us through the times that we appear to be the worst version of ourselves. I don't know if you've ever complained about something that later turned out to be of tremendous benefit, either because time brought a different perspective on it or just because you were able to shift to a different perspective on it, but I've had that happen more times than I care to admit. I believe that actively employing a commitment to openness and to what there may be to learn is important to keeping the relationship with God vibrant and healthy. I'm not saying accept everything as is or never complain about anything; I'm saying be open to new possibilities, new enlightenments. After all, who knew that water could come from striking a rock?!

Second, for me there's a distinct correlation between my degree of being rested enough and my grumpiness or complaining. In the Scripture I read, Moses' hands get fatigued after holding up them up to ensure victory in the battle. When he fatigued, reinforcements came in the form of his brother Aaron and Hur and put a stone underneath him to offer support for him and held his hands up for him when he could no longer do it. It's not always easy to admit fatigue or need of assistance, yet victory or accomplishment is more likely when it's a team effort. We all know the saying, "many hands make light work" and yet, many of us struggle with accepting assistance and instead will wait until we are bowed over and worn thin.

Perhaps as we go forward from this day we can be intentional about looking for water or other sustenance in unexpected places and recognizing the value of letting others care for us in times of weariness. And may we remain thankful to God for supplying the resources we need; may we honor God's gifts with our receptiveness. Thanks be to God.