

Surprised by God

We heard 2 stories about water.

First – what do we know about water?

What do we need water for?

Where do we get water?

Where do other people get water?

Let's talk about the first story we heard.

It is a story from the time when God and Moses were leading people from Egypt to the Promised Land.

Remember Moses –

he was born at a time when the Hebrew people were slaves in Egypt. They were building Pharaoh's cities and were very unhappy. Moses' mother put him in a basket and he floated down the Nile. He was taken from the water by the princess and raised to be a prince of Egypt. When he learned he was a Hebrew and not an Egyptian, he left the palace and went and became a shepherd.

One day while he was tending the sheep, he met God. Where was God? In a bush that was on fire but didn't burn down. God told him – "Take off your shoes – you are on holy ground!" And God told him to go to Pharaoh and tell him that God had heard the cries of his people and Pharaoh must let the people go so they could worship God. Pharaoh said, "NO!" So God sent 7 plagues to Egypt and after the last, Pharaoh said, "OK, Moses, take your people and go away!"

So the people packed up all their things – their clothes, and food, their sheep and donkeys, and they took water with them – and followed Moses out of Egypt. BUT – Pharaoh changed his mind and sent his army after them. God saved the people – they crossed the sea safely and Pharaoh’s army was tossed about by the water. God led the people – he appeared to them as a pillar of cloud in the daytime and as a pillar of fire at night.

Now today we heard they have been walking a while and they run out of water. They were walking in a desert – no water anywhere they can see – no rivers, no wells, and no faucets. And they knew that without water they will die and their children will die and their sheep and goats and donkeys will die. They said to Moses, “Why did you bring us into this desert? There is no water! And we are thirsty! We should go back to Egypt – where there is water.”

Moses doesn’t have any way to get water for them. He doesn’t know if there is a river up ahead or if it might rain. Moses is in a fix and the people are angry at him.

Moses went to God and says, “Help me! The people are frightened and angry.” God said to Moses, “Go. I will be with you and I will stand on a rock and you will hit the rock with the staff (a staff is a thick walking stick) – and there will be water.”

Have you ever seen water come out of a rock? Does Moses say to God, “What!! Water from a rock? That can’t happen!”

No, he did just what God tells him to do, he hit the rock with his staff and, guess what!! – it’s a miracle - water came out – lots of water, clean water, enough water for all the people, all the children, all the sheep, and the

goats, and the donkeys. Enough water for everyone to drink and cook and wash their faces and hands and brush their teeth. Everyone was surprised – they never ever expected water to come out of a rock!

What did the people learn? They learned again that God listens to them – that God wants what is best for them. They learned again that God takes care of them. They learned again that God was with them. They learned something more about following God, about trusting God.

God wants us to know the same things. He wants us to remember that he will take care of us, that he listens to us, that he is with us.

Sometimes when we ask God for something, we get it and it is just exactly what we expected. But sometimes, God gives us what we need from an unexpected place or person.

When we trust God, we have faith. Sometimes God wants us to try something we don't think will work, – just like Moses getting the water – Moses had to hit the rock with his staff – he had to believe that water would come even though he had never ever heard of water coming out of a rock.

So let's listen to God and be ready to try new things – unexpected things – and let's be ready to be surprised by what God will give to us.