

LENT 2024

JOURNEY to FREEDOM

SUNDAY 17TH MARCH

READ: Exodus 17:1-17

***'I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb.
Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.'***
Exodus 17:6

Our immediate response to this passage might be 'will they never learn?' But before we judge the Israelites too harshly, we need to remember that they were not only journeying through the desert, but they were also on a transforming life journey too. They had been used to living in cruel slavery and now they were free. It was hard to get their heads round it—no more chains and subjugation and now they had to trust in God.

It would take time to unlearn the past and live in the present. When they had no water, their immediate thought was to turn to the man who led them out of slavery—Moses. There seems little thought of God leading them out of slavery, and therefore God providing, even though they had experienced it. Moses had his work cut out for him in leading the Israelites!

This is where we read of God's compassion—Moses cried out to Him in desperation, and He answered. He didn't condemn the grumbling people; He brought a solution. He didn't immediately deal with the obvious—their seeming lack of trust in Him—He dealt with their immediate need. Does this say something to us? Do we sometimes judge people in hardship for their words and their attitudes instead of demonstrating God's compassion and provision for those who are crying out to Him right now?

God used Moses to show clearly that where He leads, He does provide. And sometimes this provision comes in unexpected ways. We could assume that God would provide 'Manna' food from the earth, and water raining from heaven. But no, He provided manna from heaven and water from a rock—His answer to our needs is not always in a way we would imagine.

During this time of Lent, many people give something up, create a sense of want. However, for some, Lent is a continuation of the reality they live in of want and need. You may be prompted by God to be the unexpected answer to need around you, and I pray those in need will know God's compassion and provision as they trust in Him.

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