

Friends of the Chapel Weekly Scripture Study

Third Sunday in Lent

March 8, 2026

Old Testament Reading

Exodus 17:1-7

English Standard Version Scripture Text

^wAll the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ²^xTherefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you ^ytest the LORD?" ³ But the people thirsted there for water, and ^zthe 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?" ⁴ So Moses cried to the LORD, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready ^ato stone me." ⁵ And the LORD said to Moses, "Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with ^bwhich you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶ ^eBehold, 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." And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ And he called the name of the place ^dMassah¹ and ^eMeribah,² because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the LORD by saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

Historical Context

Exodus 17 recounts Israel's wilderness journey shortly after the exodus from Egypt. Facing a lack of water at Rephidim, the people quarrel with Moses and test the LORD. God responds with gracious provision, bringing water from the rock.

Verse-by-Verse Exegetical Commentary

Verse 1 – The journey unfolds according to the LORD's command, yet the people encounter hardship.

Verse 2 – Israel quarrels with Moses, revealing distrust toward divine leadership.

Verse 3 – Thirst intensifies complaint, and the people question God's redemptive purpose.

Verse 4 – Moses cries out to the LORD, demonstrating faithful intercession.

Verse 5 – God instructs Moses to strike the rock before the elders as witnesses.

Verse 6 – The LORD stands upon the rock; water flows as an act of covenant mercy.

Verse 7 – The place is named Massah and Meribah, memorializing testing and contention.

Theological Themes

- Testing and trust in the wilderness
- Divine provision amid complaint
- Intercession and leadership
- God’s presence with His people

Epistle Reading

Romans 5:1–8

English Standard Version Scripture Text

^aTherefore, since we have been justified by faith, ^bwe¹ have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²Through him we have also ^cobtained access by faith² into this grace ^din which we stand, and ^ewe³ rejoice⁴ in hope of the glory of God. ³Not only that, but we ^frejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering ^gproduces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and ^hhope does not put us to shame, because God’s love ⁱhas been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

⁶For ^jwhile we were still weak, at the right time ^kChrist died for the ungodly. ⁷For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸but ^lGod shows his love for us in that ^mwhile we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Historical Context

Romans 5 marks a transition from justification explained to justification celebrated. Paul outlines the blessings that flow from being declared righteous through faith: peace with God, access to grace, hope in suffering, and the demonstration of God’s love in Christ’s death.

Verse-by-Verse Exegetical Commentary

Verse 1 – Justification by faith results in peace with God through Christ.

Verse 2 – Believers stand in grace and rejoice in the hope of glory.

Verses 3–4 – Suffering produces endurance, character, and hope.

Verse 5 – God’s love is poured into hearts through the Holy Spirit.

Verses 6–8 – Christ dies for the ungodly; God demonstrates His love while we were still sinners.

Theological Themes

- Justification by faith
- Peace and access to grace
- Redemptive purpose in suffering
- God’s initiating love in Christ

Concluding Reflection

On the Third Sunday in Lent, the Church reflects upon testing in the wilderness and peace through the cross. Israel’s thirst reveals human frailty and divine mercy. Paul proclaims that justification brings peace, hope, and assurance of God’s love. In seasons of trial, believers cling to the rock of salvation and rejoice in grace.

Thoughts to Consider – 03/08/26

- 1. Israel quarrels at Rephidim despite God’s recent deliverance.**
What does this reveal about the human tendency toward distrust? Why do past experiences of God’s faithfulness so easily fade?
- 2. The people ask, “Is the LORD among us or not?” (Exodus 17:7).**
How does this question surface in subtle ways in our own spiritual lives, especially during hardship?
- 3. God provides water from the rock in response to complaint.**
What does this teach us about divine patience and mercy? How does Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 10:4 deepen our understanding of this event?
- 4. Romans 5 speaks of peace with God through justification.**
How does this peace differ from relief from circumstances? What does it mean to “stand in grace”?
- 5. Paul connects suffering to endurance, character, and hope.**
How might the wilderness testing in Exodus 17 serve as a lived example of this spiritual progression?