



A Picture of God's Guidance for Our Lives

Considering a Message from Exodus 17:1-7

For the Week of July 15th, 2018

The Bible compares our life in the world to life in a barren wilderness. In such a place life, and what is needed to sustain life, is lacking. Because of sin death reigns around us and within us. As Paul explains: "The wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:19-23). But into this wilderness world came Jesus the Messiah. Having compassion on the weary multitudes, He granted an abundance of bread to the 4000 (Mark 8:1-9). So also our Lord Jesus, having endured the burden of sin now shares the Bread of Life with His people. We receive this as we hear His Word—also as we receive the Sacrament of the Altar, He is giving you His very body and blood for your forgiveness. What a wonderful blessing: "the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." In our Old Testament Lesson and Sermon Message, we also hear of our gracious, merciful God who provides for the needs of His people in the Sinai wilderness as He provides for those who thirst (Exodus 17:1-7). Likewise He graciously satisfies our spiritual thirst, giving us the refreshment of Christ through Word and Sacrament. We can rejoice to know that God guides our way; with patience, with His providence.

Opening Prayer: We thank You Heavenly Father for bringing us together. Send Your Holy Spirit to help us grow in faith and love, especially as we gather together with our fellow Christians. Help us to always acknowledge that You are present with us and guiding us. We ask you to be with us throughout this journey of life; be patience with us as we struggle; and provide for our many needs here in this world. Turn our hearts always to where we may find You and Your guidance—in Your Holy Word and Sacraments. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

CONNECT to Each Other

For this first session, take a few moments to get to know each other better—especially anyone who might be new or unfamiliar to the people in your group. In @ a minute each, have every person introduce themselves with: first/last name, immediate family, where you work(ed) how long you've been a member of Mt. Olive, and one thing you like to help others remember you: *"I'm the guy or gal who likes to..."*

1. Have you ever been in a situation where a lack of food or water was threatening your welfare or life? (...if so, please share...) What are some feelings and emotions that people in such situations would have?

CONNECT to the Word—*Read the Bible text together (also consider its context): Exodus 17:1-7*

2. The people of Israel who had been miraculously liberated from Egypt were now led into an arid place, and they panicked at the prospect of having no water and dying of thirst. Do you find this reaction of the Israelites to be surprising, only natural, or both? Explain your answer...

3. Finding themselves in this predicament, how did the Israelites react? Who took the brunt of their anger?

4. How do each of the three main parts of the sermon answer the Israelites' panicked concern and show us God's guidance over His people? How is God's Guidance shown in...

A. ...the way He leads us?

B. ...His patience along the way?

C. ...His providence along the way?



CONNECT to Life

5. When we face seemingly hopeless situations in our lives, how have we reacted? In what ways (in retrospect) has God's guidance been shown through that situation?

6. In what specific ways can this account from Exodus 17 help and comfort you when you face such an occasion in your own life? How would you use this Bible account to offer comfort and encouragement to a friend or family member who is struggling?

7. How did the hymns, other lessons, parts of the service, etc. fit together with the Sermon message and overall theme for the day?

CONNECT in Prayer—*In closing & throughout the week!*

- PLEASE OFFER PRAYERS that God continues to guide us as we face the struggles of this life. Pray that we might recognize and see His hand leading our ways, with patience, providing for our needs of body and soul.
- Pray for Dennis Davis and Gail Blilie—who are both in poor health and have been hospitalized recently.
- Pray for the family tragically killed in a traffic collision in Goodhue County—who were relatives of some fellow Mt. Olive members.
- Prayers of thanks for another successful Camp Indianhead for our youth this past week—that the Word shared, along with Christian fellowship, may prove to be a blessing to the young people that attended.
- Pray for the continued success of our outreach efforts—especially our parade floats and the advertising we are doing through that.
- Prayers for God's guidance and blessings as we wait to hear back from our architects & contractors concerning the next steps of our building project.
- Prayers that God would bless another season of Connect Groups—and that this program might continue to be a blessing to people.
- Offer any other prayers for those in your group who have any requests.

