

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church



Weekly Sermon Series

Taking Root: Walking Wet ...Water of Promise Genesis 9:8–17; 1 Peter 3:18–22

Let's talk about water. Water is essential to all of life. Most of our body weight is water. If we become dehydrated, not having enough water in our body, we become sick and may die. So "walking wet" is a good idea.

Take some time to reflect on water as you've experienced it. Think about experiences with thunderstorms, snowstorms, ice storms, foggy weather, fishing on a lake, walking on the ice covering a lake, spring flooding, fresh water from a spring, polluted water, water in the basement, etc. Take time to remember and then think about your reaction to water in the various situations you recall.

What were your memories? Were you ever afraid of water? Were you ever so thirsty for water that you cried when water finally touched your lips? Were you ever injured because you slipped on water in the form of ice? Have you ever seen wilted flowering plants perk up after a rain storm? Take time to share your experiences with someone.

Water is essential for life, yet water, in some situations, can threaten life. In the biblical account of Genesis, Noah experienced a flood that destroyed. He heeded God's warning and prepared so he could survive the devastation. And God promised Noah never to use water again to destroy the earth. The rainbow, a natural phenomenon of light reflected in raindrops, is declared to be the sign of this covenant. After the experience of a massive flooding of water, "God said to Noah, 'this (the rainbow) is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth'" (Genesis 9:17). This is known as the first covenant between God and the earth.

So, in Christian faith there is a new covenant. "Baptism...now saves you," according to 1 Peter 3:21a. Baptism, which uses water, is the new covenant that functions like the ark Noah built while God waited patiently. Baptism saves you through the suffering of Christ "for sins once for all... in order to bring you to God" (1 Peter 3:18a).

So let us recap. Is drinking water essential to our daily life? Yes. Is not water also essential for the existence of all life? Yes. Was Noah's ark that he built at the command of God essential to the salvation of Noah and his family from the great flood? Yes. Is Christian baptism not also essential to our salvation as it brings us to God? Yes. There you have it. We take root in Christ, walking wet in the water of God's promise.

O God, bless us with water as we need it for our very existence on this earth. And through the promise of baptism by water bring us to you, that we may receive life and salvation. Amen.

-- Week of March 1, 2009