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Scripture: Selection on Water
“Life-giving Water”

My scriptural selections today portray different aspects of water in the Bible. Water is so amazingly present in the Bible, being an agrarian society where one depends so much on water (as we do today) that no wonder it becomes an analogue for the spiritual life.

Listen to Psalm 32:6 and 7, from the *Psalms Anew* version of the Bible. Addressing God the psalmist writes, “The faithful pray to you in time of stress. Though deep waters rise, they shall not reach them. You are my shelter; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.”

Water gives life but it can also be a threat and a place of great danger as we see in the movie, “The Perfect Storm.” The scripture text from Psalms proved true to me when I almost drowned in the Indian Ocean in Durban, South Africa.

About two years ago, I went to South Africa. I swam in our lap pool a few times before leaving the US and after a week in South Africa, I decided to swim at one of my favorite beaches. The surf was big.

Bathers were inshore and surfers surfed at the side of them from the outer breakers. The latter breakers looked good for body surfing but the lifeguards were keeping the bathers inshore for their safety. I had been a lifeguard once and knew these beaches well because I had swam and surfed in them thousands of times. I told the lifeguard that I would be swimming to the outside to catch waves with my body, that I was a lifeguard and not to worry about me.

I ran in confidently and made my way to the outside breaks 50 yards from the surfers. I caught some awesome body rides and each time swam to the outside and waited for the next wave treading water while the ocean heaved up and down.

I was outside when suddenly I felt I had no more energy. I could not stay afloat. I ran out of breath. I felt my body weakening and I was super worried. As experienced as I am, I panicked and prayed to God for help.

I didn't want to wave to the lifeguard and be embarrassed with a dramatic rescue so I called out to a surfer who hastily paddled towards me – an angel – and I rested by hanging onto his surfboard. While doing this a huge wave propped up and hurtled towards us. The surfer turned into the wave and both

he and I pushed our way through. I knew how to do it so I helped. By this time, the wave surge pushed us closer to the shore and I was rested and said I could take it from there and thanked him profusely.

He paddled out, caught the next wave, and was locked in the tube on a well-deserved ride. I made my way to the shore and was super grateful. I heard the songs of deliverance.

The psalmist writes, "The faithful pray to you in time of stress. Though deep waters rise, they shall not reach them. You are my shelter; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance." Yes, indeed.

Recently, my daughter, Anna, wanted to go surfing with me. Neither of us is ocean-ready so we are swimming laps and treading water until we are ready and then we will go surfing. Scouts call that "being prepared." I need to "be prepared" so I do not get even close to drowning. ☺

The next biblical reading is John 4:14. Jesus says, "...those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."

When we lived Florida, we would tube down the Ichetucknee River. Like many rivers in this part of North Florida, the Ichetucknee is fed by natural springs which boil up (in various holes) from the aquifer. On a hot Florida day, the water was beautifully cool and clean and you could drink it while you swam in it. It came directly from the source.

The life-giving water of God and Jesus is the water we drink from the source. God is seen as refreshing and sustaining. In every worship service, we are refreshed and sustained by God in Jesus. We are refreshed and sustained when we pray. We are refreshed and sustained in good company like the church and scouting. We are refreshed and sustained in service, in doing good works. We are refreshed and sustained during trips in nature and by participating in all kinds of natural activities, like surfing.

"...those who drink of the water that I will give them," says Jesus, "will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."

Water in eternal life is water in heaven. My family had a heavenly experience in the Sequoias. We hiked way up to a glazier pool and in the midst of the most gorgeous environment; we swam in the crystal clear, super cool water. We were refreshed, cleansed, and brought so close to God that we felt as if we were in heaven.

I am sure that every scout has experienced what we experienced. Continue to enjoy nature and God's many waters and know that when you do you come close to God and you drink from the waters of life.

Finally, Isaiah 41:17-18. The prophet says, "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I the LORD will answer them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers on the bare heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water."

God encourages us to us, as God's agents, to share water with those who do not have enough just as Anne Lamott says on the cover of the worship bulletin. As Christians, we collaborate with God to feed the poor and supply water to them. This is one of the biggest challenges today and in the future.

Let us do just that as good scouts and good citizens of God's pristine globe. Let us ensure that the earth is healthy enough to sustain everyone with food and water and let us drink God's life-giving water and share that water with every one we meet. Amen.