

Sunday September 27, 2020 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church

**Bible Study – Exodus 17:1-7
“Strike the Rock**

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, have participants share a difficult time or experience in their life.

Exodus 17:1-7 Context: After complaining that they had no food in the wilderness where Moses had taken them, the Israelites turned to complaining that they had no water. Fair enough. Moses tries to turn their complaint back upon them, but the people aren't buying. Moses appeals to God to protect him from the angry people, but God's response is to meet their need. The event takes place “on the rock” at Horeb, also known as Sinai, God's holy mountain. The story is in part an explanation of place names: ‘Massah’ derives from the same word as ‘quarreled’, and ‘Meribah’ from ‘tested’. But at a theological level, it becomes another example of Israel's lack of faith in the God who has brought them out of slavery.

Read Exodus 17:1-7

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn't make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

Read Exodus 17:1-7 again

Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- How do you think the elders of Israel replied to Moses's insistence that God was telling him to strike a rock to meet the need of having water to drink? Do you think they believed because of other instances they had seen God deliver? Do you think they believed Moses had finally gone mad?
- Like last week, this passage also begins with the people grumbling. Why do you think they were nostalgic for a period of their lives that included slavery and misery (17:3)? [Why do you think many churches tend to be nostalgic for previous times instead of hopeful for what God will do in the future?
- What is missing from this story? [There is no indication of praising or celebrating what God has done!] What might that say about the relationship between God, Moses, and the people?

- Did you know that our brains are wired to remember the bad times more than celebrate the good times? This tendency kept our ancestors safe as they remembered what not to do! (Also, think about a child touching a hot stove; he/she will certainly remember not to do so again.) What practices can we put in place to help us remember and celebrate positive experiences? How is this like “striking a rock” in our lives?

Read Exodus 17:1-7 again

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Each person prays sharing their answer the following statements:

I ask God for....

I thank God for.....

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

God of resurrection and new life, we give you thanks for what you have done for our ancestors and for us. We praise you when we glimpse how you are at work in our current circumstances. We place our trust and hope in what you will do through us and those that come after us. Even during difficult days, empower us to remain steadfast in who you are and what you are and will do. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord’s Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven

hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,

on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power

and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.