

Homecoming!
Rev. Dr. Matthew Johnson
August 30, 2015

"Don't say, there is no water"

Don't say there is no water.
It flows there in the fountain.

Have you ever felt dried out?
Like there was no water?
Parched?

I mean figuratively, here.
Spiritually?
Emotionally?

Maybe you just couldn't find a lot of hope in the world?
Or in your own life?

Maybe you've been grieving the loss of a friend, a
loved one,
or feeling a pain from long ago,
and you've cried so many tears that you feel shriveled
up,
and there's no more water?

Maybe it was your work or at school -

you've been working long hours every day and every
time you think you're getting somewhere,
something pops up and gets in the way?
And you're just dried out.

Maybe it was your spirit?
Nothing flowing. Feeling numb and disconnected
instead of alive with wonder and love?

In your relationship?
No flow, no give and take, just the desert?

Anyone ever feel like this?
Some of you are thinking, yeah, this morning, right
now.
I'm dried out.

I tell you, we've all been there, right?
I've been there, I can assure you.

We long for water.
The water of hope, of purpose, of friendship, of
beauty, of love.
We long for water.

Don't tell me there is no water,
the fountain still flows,
giving life.

There is water!

Even when we feel dried out,
when we cry out for renewal,
there is water.

Come and drink.

Come and swim, float on the surface.

Come and be cleaned.

Come and play.

There is water!

I want you to think metaphorically.

Poetically.

Think about what renews you.

Where do you get water from when you feel dried out?

Where is your fountain of life?

Think of a time you were refreshed by living water.

For me, here are some things that come to mind:

being out in nature,

running along the path, or just sitting by the lake.

Being with friends.

A great book.

The laughter of children.

Music.

Church.

Church is living water for me, why I would be here
almost every week

even if I wasn't the preacher.

What's your living water?

What renews you?

When you are thirsty, where do you turn?

What renews you and your life?

Don't say, there is no water.

For the water is flowing, all the time.

This is not just a metaphor for those things in our life
that give us hope and joy -

evening walks and good conversation and beautiful art
and all the rest -

it's a metaphor for the spirit of life,

the holy and the sacred.

We have many different ideas, of course,

about the name, shape, and character of that spirit, of
that power.

But I often think that water is a great metaphor for this
power.

Water gives life, but you can drown in it if you don't
know how to swim.

The spirit gives life, but you need ways to cultivate it in
your life,

to not be overwhelmed.

Water is gentle, but over time, it can carve canyons
and wear away mountains.

The spirit is like that.

Water comes in many forms - snow and rain, creeks
and rivers, deltas and swamps,
oceans and ice.
Without it, we could not live.
And it is our firm conviction that this water of life, this
spirit,
flows in and around us all the time.
Not sometimes and some places.
Not for just some people.
All the time, for all people.
In all places, even the driest deserts of our lives.
The spirit is there.
Waiting to renew us when we are ready.
This year, we'll be talking about renewal.
Renewing our lives, our world, our church.
And I want to say, very clearly,
there is water.
There is life here, and joy, and hope, and possibility.
The spirit flows in and around us.
And we can come alive, we can renew our lives and
our world and our church
for this new age.

One more thing:
we can also be like Clodette,
searching for our purpose.
And when we find something we can do -
when we find that we can give water

to someone else who is parched,
whose land is dry,
why, that is good.
That is when we come alive ourselves.
When we find our meaning for our lives.
To be watered by life and to be water for others.
That's what we are for.

Don't say there is no water.
The fountain still flows.
Drink, and be refreshed.
Come, and be renewed.