

Gospel Meditation: *John 7:25-44*

Individually or as a group, watch the Lenten devotional video and work through the following meditation.

³⁷ On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." (vv. 37-38)

REFLECT—*Sink into this passage for the next seven days using the following prompts:*

- Find a comfortable place and empty your mind of its many thoughts.
 - Recall the wandering in the wilderness by the Israelites.
 - How would you have responded?
 - What would you desire and need?
 - What is your wilderness in this season?
 - How does it feel to hear Jesus' word to come to him amid this season?

REPENT—*Take next steps to change your mind and behavior through the following prompts:*

- Where do you hunger?
 - What are your needs in life and how are they different than your wants?
 - How do you differentiate?
- Where do you thirst?
 - What are your deepest desires and how are they different than idols?
 - How do you navigate the desires of your life? Shame? Gluttony? Ignorance? Why do you respond to desire the way that you do?
- Where is your anxiety?
 - How do you differentiate between precaution and panic in this season?
 - What does it mean for you to "hunger and thirst for righteousness" in this season (Mt. 5:6)?

PRAY—*Be embraced by the friendship of the crucified God.*

"[God] thirsts for you. He loves you always, even when you don't feel worthy. When not accepted by others, even by yourself sometimes—He is the one who always accepts you.

"The devil may try to use the hurts of life, and sometimes our own mistakes—to make you feel it is impossible that Jesus really loves you, is really cleaving to you. This is a danger for all of us. And so sad, because it is completely opposite of what Jesus is really wanting, waiting to tell you. Not only that He loves you, but even more—He longs for you. He misses you when you don't come close.

"It is true. I stand at the door of your heart, day and night. Even when you are not listening, even when you doubt it could be Me, I am there. I await even the smallest sign of your response, even the least whispered invitation that will allow Me to enter.

"I know what is in your heart – I know your loneliness and all your hurts – the rejections, the judgments, the humiliations, I carried it all before you. And I carried it all for you, so you might share My strength and victory. I know especially your need for love – how you are thirsting to be loved and cherished. But how often have you thirsted in vain, by seeking that love selfishly, striving to fill the emptiness inside you with passing pleasures – with the even greater emptiness

of sin. Do you thirst for love? "Come to Me all you who thirst ..." (Jn. 7: 37). I will satisfy you and fill you. Do you thirst to be cherished? I cherish you more than you can imagine – to the point of dying on a cross for you.

"I Thirst for You. Yes, that is the only way to even begin to describe My love for you. I THIRST FOR YOU. I thirst to love you and to be loved by you – that is how precious you are to Me. I THIRST FOR YOU. Come to Me, and I will fill your heart and heal your wounds. I will make you a new creation, and give you peace, even in all your trials I THIRST FOR YOU. You must never doubt My mercy, My acceptance of you, My desire to forgive, My longing to bless you and live My life in you. I THIRST FOR YOU. If you feel unimportant in the eyes of the world, that matters not at all. For Me, there is no one any more important in the entire world than you. I THIRST FOR YOU. Open to Me, come to Me, thirst for Me, give me your life – and I will prove to you how important you are to My Heart.

"Whenever you do open the door of your heart, whenever you come close enough, you will hear Me say to you again and again, not in mere human words but in spirit. "No matter what you have done, I love you for your own sake Come to Me with your misery and your sins, with your troubles and needs, and with all your longing to be loved. I stand at the door of your heart and knock. Open to Me, for I THIRST FOR YOU."

-A letter from Mother Teresa (1910-1997) to her "spiritual family" written in 1993.