For those of you who access the Internet, by now I’m sure you have either seen or heard of the ***“Ice-Bucket Challenge”*** that has gone viral globally across the Social Media these days? Perhaps some of you might have even been challenged by your friends too. If you don’t know what I’m talking about, it’s a stunt that one would pour a bucket of ice water over one’s head and challenges his or her friends to do likewise, if not, they would have to make a $100 donation to an organization for ALS research.

 ALS stands for *Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis* which is a degenerative neurological disorder…commonly known as the Lou Gehrig’s Disease. This disease affects over 30,000 Americans and their families right now and many more globally. Approximately 6,000 of new cases are being diagnosed each year here in the US alone. With each passing day, the ALS patients would get weaker and weaker until the patients can no longer stand up, sit up or even get out of bed. It is a slow and painful degenerating process of the muscles, especially when you see someone you love who are suffering in that condition and that there’s no cure for it at this time. It may suppress the progression from getting worse.

 Some considers this stunt as nothing but a social media blitz, a fun-and-game, or even a total waste of people’s time, energy and more importantly our precious, most abundant (yet scares) natural resource (water!). Close to $15M have been pledged so far for the research foundation…and that number is expected to continue to climb. Although it is great that this debilitating disease is getting so much attentions and awareness that affects so many people, unfortunately this also came under some criticisms that millions of buckets of clean and potable water are being wasted while many parts of the world are thirsty and dying for clean drinkable water.

 Many (especially in many developing countries) are forced to consume unsanitary water and have gotten sick from it every day. Accordingly to the latest statistics, nearly 1 billion people (1 out of 7) do not have access to clean water.[[1]](#footnote-1) Annually over 3.5 million people and a child died every 20 seconds from water-related diseases.[[2]](#footnote-2)  These are quite alarming statistics.

 Water, as you know, plays an important role in our everyday lives. Although it is the most abundant compound elements on earth, but only 3% of the world’s water is freshwater. Out of those 3% of freshwater, only 1% is available for our everyday usage for drinking. The rest are either too salty, industrially polluted or radio-actively contaminated and released into ocean.

 Even still that 1% is not fairly and adequately shared among the habitants of this earth. Those who “have” are wasting it away in buckets while those who “have not” are dying and thirsty for every drip collected in their buckets. Remember our last week’s text reminded us that even the dogs deserved to be fed by the crumbs being tossed from the Master’s table?

 Water is one of the precious commodities on this earth that we must cherish. We cannot have too much or too little of it and certainly we cannot live without it. We need water to sustain life because it is the basic building block of our everyday lives. Every breath that we take in and breathe out contains water…so in essence, water IS life.

 Accordingly to Genesis, before life even began, the universe was filled with water both above and below.[[3]](#footnote-3) God spoke and separated the waters and created dry land for the living things to co-habitat with one another.  **Throughout the history of humankind, God has brought chaos into order. God has sprouted water out in the desert and calmed the violent and stormy sea**. **Through the Great Flood, for 40 days and 40 nights, God has rescued the human race from sinful disobedience to a sign of new beginning and a new covenant. Through the parting of the sea, God has brought the Israelites out of the bondage of slavery into freedom, restoring their new hope and promise for the future.**

 **Through the water of our baptism,** **we are being challenged by God not only to navigate through these turbulent times but to restore the message of peace and hope in our troubled world.** Like Peter who attempted to walk across the rough sea, Christ stood by Peter’s side waiting to rescue us out of the sinking water, in case we lose our faith and fail to fix our eyes on Jesus.

 In the scripture that we read earlier from the book of Exodus, we traced our steps back to the riverbank of the Niles, in which for 430 years Hebrew enslavement had been flown in the hands of the Egyptians. Memories of painful suffering were flowing from one generation to the next with no hope of ending in sight. Many of the Hebrews were yearning that someday God will bring a deliverer (a Messiah) out of this troubled land and set them into a free and promise land once and for all. Well, this Yehweh God heard the people’s cries and delivered someone who was “***drawn out through the water***” as his name suggested. And his name was Moses.

 It was of no coincidence that baby Moses lived while others were innocently slaughtered, under the Pharoah’s decree to kill all of the Hebrew boys. It was of no coincidence that Moses was released into the river by his own mother while entrusting his future destiny into God’s hands, and being “drawn out” of the river by the Pharoah’s daughter. It was of no coincidence that God spoke to the heart of the Pharoah’s daughter and reunited the baby Moses with his birth mother to be nursed and raised into childhood. Growing up in the Pharoah’s palace, this Egyptian prince awakened to his own senses, of who he was and who he was called to be – a deliverer.

 Despite his physical flaws and struggles with speech impediment and self-confidence, Moses placed much doubts upon himself of his leadership ability. But instead of confronting his situation head on, he chose the easy way out, like most people would do. He ran away from his own problems hoping that they may just go away. Let someone else do the dirty work. I’m just gonna sit back and watch on the sideline. Just leave me alone, God. I’m happy to be a shepherd, watching the sheep all day, eating their grass, live happily ever after for the rest of my life. But God would not allow that to happen at all. **God has God’s plan in each of us to fulfill.**

 God had a plan set aside for Moses and for all of us since the day when we were drawn out of the water and delivered out of our mothers’ womb. God had set before Moses series of challenges up until now, **Moses was hesitant about accepting the biggest challenge yet that God has set before him. The question we must ask ourselves is, are WE, as God’s people, up for God’s challenges in our lives today?**

 **When we are baptized into the body of Christ, we have been invited to accept God’s challenge for us all - to be God’s witnesses and to share our faith journey with others. We have raised awareness of our own sins and made a life-long commitment to hold one another accountable.**

**Through our baptisms, we are embraced by the warmth of God’s love in the community wherever God has placed us in.**

 **In a moment we will be acknowledging God’s blessings upon one of God’s children through baptism. This is a communal act of receiving and giving thanks of God’s blessings and grace. Both the parents, in the witness of this community of faith, will be dedicating this child of God into the hands of God for God’s use. We also remember and rededicate our own baptism and the vows that we took when we said YES to Christ.**

 **Our own baptism raises our awareness of who we are and who God is…and the human sins that separate us from God. These sins perpetuate and escalate once they are embedded in our lives. They rob us of our resources of time, energy and imaginations invested onto ourselves rather than onto others through God’s mission. Through our confession, we acknowledge that we are deprived of God’s love and are in need of God’s grace and a Savior in our lives.**

 **So, are we ready to accept this challenge to live out our lives each day as God’s disciples – commissioned and sent out….to be God’s witnesses of peace, justice and love in a world that is so desperately in need of right now.**

 **What does the Lord require of you?.....but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God?” (Micah 3:8)** Let us go and accept this challenge…to be Christ’s disciples and to serve God’s people in all that we say in words and in all that we do in deeds! In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, Amen.

1. *United Nations. "Water for the World." UN News Center. Accessed February 25, 2014,* [*https://www.un.org/en/sustainablefuture/water.shtml*](https://www.un.org/en/sustainablefuture/water.shtml)*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *"MILLIONS LACK SAFE WATER." Water.org. Accessed February 25, 2014,* http://water.org/water-crisis/water-facts/water/. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Genesis 1:7* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)