

Rev. Dan Welch Wed. in Lent 5 3-24-21 Text: Zechariah 13:1-2
“The Redeemer’s Refinery”

[Slide- Oil Refinery in the Daytime] The Pine Bend Oil refinery is just south of the Twin Cities in Rosemount, Minnesota. I remember Amy and I would drive past this massive complex a lot while traveling to and from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. The jungle of tubes, pipes, valves, switches, and pumps sort of reminded me of Tinker-Toys. Remember Tinker-Toys?

[Slide- Oil Refinery at Night] Then at night with all the bright lights on the white equipment, it reminded me of some sort of fantasy snowflake wonderland the way you could see it lit up from miles away!

Well, unlike Tinker-Toys and unlike a bright, white fantasy world, the Pine Bend Oil Refinery actually does something—it processes crude oil. Crude oil is oil before it’s refined into gasoline, diesel fuel, liquefied petroleum gas, jet fuel and the like.

[Slide-Oil pit] But, there is another kind of crude oil. Do you know what it is? It’s the slime and grime in our hearts. A pandemic brings out the best in us. A pandemic brings out the worst in us. When we’re not

used to spending so much time at home we may go mad with cabin fever and then get mad at everyone else. When we're not used to so much uncertainty we may self-medicate with too much food, too much sleep or too much alcohol. When we're not used to being cut off from the world we may descend into boredom and depression. Sinful slime and grime are even more contagious than the Coronavirus! Is there a refinery for our hearts?

[Slide- *Your Kingdom Come*] Yes! There is! We're in a series on the book of Zechariah called *Your Kingdom Come*. In Zechariah 13:1, God's kingdom comes like a refinery to purify and cleanse our putrid and polluted hearts. Today we dig into Zechariah 13:1 using these questions—what, why, where, how and when. *What, why, where, how and when.*

[Slide- *What*] **What?** A fountain! "On that day a fountain ***will be opened.***" (Zechariah 13:1) The fountain is a water fountain. Zechariah 14:8 tells us further that it's a fountain of *living* water. "Living water," though, implies that there's what? Dead water. Dead water is allowing any sinful or any depressing thing lead us down dark paths and swallow us whole.

Zechariah promises a fountain of living water that refines and purifies the muck and mire lodged in our lives. What an amazing fountain!

[Slide- Fountain] “Will be opened” are three key words in Zechariah 13:1. Let’s take a look. First, “will.” The verb is a future tense verb—“will.” The fountain of living water is coming in the future; it’s on the horizon; it’s soon-to-be revealed! “Wait a minute,” you might say. “What was wrong with the animal sacrifices in the Old Testament? What was wrong with the sin offerings, peace offerings, freewill offerings, guilt offerings—slain bulls and lambs and goats and rams?”

Answer? Nothing. Nothing at all. These offerings, however, point to a greater cleansing, a greater refining, a greater forgiveness, a greater fountain.

The second key word in Zechariah 13:1 is “be.” “Be” in this case entails a passive verb—“will *be*.” Future, passive. Zechariah doesn’t say, “You need to open the fountain. She needs to open the fountain. The government bailout needs to open the fountain.” No way! “Will *be*.” This is

a “divine passive verb.” What? Say that again? “A divine passive verb.”

What’s that mean? It means God opens the fountain for us!

The third key word is “opened.” “Will be ... *opened*.” This is great news! Think of the shelter in place order we lived under a year ago. Nothing’s open! What does it feel like when you really need some Fruit Loops cereal and you can’t find a store that’s open? Or when you really need some Liquid Drano and you can’t find a store that’s open? Or when you have a hankering for a pecan pie and you can’t find a store that’s open? God’s refining fountain is *always* open. God invites us for refining and purifying as often as we need it—24-7, 365.

[Slide-Why] What? A fountain will be opened! **Why?** Why? Picture it this way: You’ve been working in the yard on a hot summer day. You’re caked with slime and grime and you need to attend a wedding that afternoon, so you go inside, put on your best clothes, and head out the door.

[Slide- Shower] Wait a minute! What’s missing? A shower! Nobody just changes their clothes without first taking a shower and washing off

their dirt and sweat. Nobody does that—except us. In fact, the entire human race reeks of sin in the presence of a holy God.

Would you believe that there's even a bigger problem? Because we all smell the same, we don't notice how much we stink. Many go their entire lives without sensing their need for cleansing from sin. Others think their good life covers the foul odor of their rebellion. Too often, you and I don't spiritually shower. Then what happens? We stink!

What? "A fountain ***will be opened.***" Why? Because we stink! How bad? Take a look.

[Slide- Seven Deadly Sins] They're called the seven deadly sins. The Seven Deadly Sins originated with Pope Gregory who made them official in 590 AD. Lust—I want what I want and I want it right now. Envy—I want what you have and I want it right now. Greed—I want more of what I have and I want it right now. Sloth—I don't want to do anything—right now. Wrath—I'm mad and angry and I'm going to dump it all on you right now. Pride—I'm better than you, richer than you, and smarter than you

right now! Gluttony—I'm going to indulge myself with whatever and I'm going to do it right now!

[Slide- Binge watching] “Binge-watching”, especially during a pandemic is a sure-fire way to invite the Seven Deadly Sins into our hearts and homes. How smart is that? Binge-watching involves stringing together several TV episodes in a row, for hours on end. Binge-watching is a pandemic in its own right, with 50% of viewers in their 20s saying they binge-watch weekly—that was *before* COVID-19. Researchers at the University of Texas found that binge-watching is correlated to depression, loneliness, obesity and loss of self-control.

[Slide- Where] What? “A fountain *will be opened.*” Why? The Seven Deadly Sins! **Where?** Where is this fountain? Zechariah 12:10 helps us. In this verse God says, “They will gaze upon *me* whom they have pierced.” God? Pierced? God pierced with what? The razor-sharp tip of a spear. Where?

[Slide-Calvary with Soldiers] Calvary. John 19:34 describes a Roman soldier taking his spear and opening up our Savior's side. “There was a sudden flow of blood and water.” Here is Zechariah's fountain! Water

flooding from the one whose body is blistered and burned. A gushing river of life surging from the one who hangs dead upon the cross. Living water flowing from the one who cried out, "I thirst." Here is Jesus—crushed and cursed by the slime and grime of the world. All for you.

[Slide- water gushing] What? "A fountain *will be opened.*" Why? The Seven Deadly Sins! Where? Mt. Calvary. **How?** How does the fountain of water, gushing from our Savior's side, purge and purify all of the gunk and goo in my heart? Two words. Holy Baptism! [Describe picture].

Like a conduit or pipe, Holy Baptism links us to the open fountain of living water. Holy Baptism delivers the gifts of Christ's cross and crucifixion. Holy Baptism announces that all guilt is gone, the debt is paid, sin is forgiven and hell is vanquished. Holy Baptism empowers us to hear Jesus calling us back, bringing us home and creating in us clean hearts.

But the fountain flowing through Holy Baptism won't do us any good if we look at it and think, "I wish my spouse and kids would get under that water!" You know how it goes. "Well! I may not be perfect but I'm a whole lot better than my mom or dad ever was!" "I'm just as good as the next

guy. I pay my taxes, coach Little League and every now and then I slip a few bucks into the offering plate.” “Me, a sinner? Come on! I get rowdy every now and then, but who doesn’t?” These are stories of lost people. Don’t become one of them!

[Slide-water and blood from Christ] What? “A fountain **will be opened.**” Why? We spiritually stink and smell! Where? Calvary. How? Holy Baptism. **When?** We’re missing when. When does this water flow? When does it come to me? When does it purify my polluted heart? It’s because Jesus loves you so very, very, very much that His life-giving, soul-renewing water flows to you, when? *Right now!* Amen.