Sermon TEXT: **“Is the Lord with us or not?”** (Ex 17.7)

There is a fad today for carrying and using water bottles. Thirst can be all embracing.

Seems wholly reasonable for Israel to complain. Moses seems uncaring. Further, TEXT seems reasonable.

Naturally they were thirsty, concerned about children & animals (v3). Yet in the story this is portrayed as unreasonable. Why?

They do not appear to believe that Moses and God care. Almost as if Moses and God are against them, despite all the evidence to the contrary.

TEXT can mean **[1] ‘Is God there?’**

Has God abandoned us? Has God brought us out of Egypt to let us die in the wilderness?

The plagues to release them, the Red Sea crossing and quails were in the past.

But the pillar of cloud was still present. The manna still fed them. Seems ridiculous to think God had abandoned them. Yet how easily do we do the same.

It is easy to discount the past help of God when faced with today’s issues.

What are our ‘cloud’ and ‘manna’? What sense of God’s presence and refreshment do we have?

TEXT can also mean **[2] ‘Is God on our side?’**

Not just about God’s presence, but about God’s commitment. After all God might be there but not *for* them!

You would have thought that past help would have proved this, but the present issue was too sharp.

What kind of issues would make us question God’s loyalty to us? It is easy to *say* God is on everyone’s side.

A deeper question which no one asked which reverses the TEXT:ie **Are we with God or not?**

Not so much about our presence, but about our loyalty. God needed/needs to know ‘Are you on my side?’

We can only answer that positively as we drink God’s water (accept God’s refreshment) – through prayer, Bible study, support of others when in need, music, experiencing nature, etc. And go where God leads.

Like thirst, this desire to be refreshed and led needs to be all-embracing.