

## Big Picture WEEK THREE March 8 2026 *The Journey*

**SCREEN:** God is with you. I am with you.

Last weekend in church,  
as the final notes of the closing hymn were played,  
a beautiful scene unfolded here at the foot of the sanctuary.  
Members of our Prayer Ministry prayed with individuals in need.  
They prayed for loved ones who were ill,  
for people grieving the loss of someone close,  
they prayed for strained relationships,  
they prayed with young people worried about school.  
And while the hope may have been that these prayers  
would fix everything, the message our ministers gave  
to those who asked for prayer was clear:  
you are not alone, God is with you and I am with you.  
And this simple act of accompaniment provided some comfort and hope.  
It gave encouragement to those undergoing difficult journeys in life.

**SCREEN:** Big Picture main screen

This is Week Three of our Lenten message series titled, Big Picture.  
The readings in Lent reveal to us God's great plan to save humanity  
from sin and death through His Son's passion, death, and resurrection on Easter.  
Week One we heard how Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit.  
Last week we heard that God entered into a covenant with Abraham -  
promising to make of him a great nation.  
Today's first reading jumps ahead 4 centuries to the time of Moses.  
We catch up with the Chosen People in a moment of crisis.  
And just like the parishioners we prayed for last weekend,  
they too were given the message, you are not alone.  
Let's see what happened.

**SCREEN:** blank purple background

So at this point in the story,  
Moses has led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and

they're making their way to the Promised Land.

Now remember that great signs and wonders made their freedom possible, including the parting of the Red Sea which enabled them to escape Pharaoh's armies.

But now wandering in the desert, they begin to complain.

Here's what they said to Moses:

**SCREEN: Why did you ever make us leave Egypt?**

**Was it just to have us die here of thirst**

**with our children and our livestock?**

Now, during their time in the desert,

the people Moses led complained about a lot of things.

They didn't like the manna - the bread that God sent from heaven.

They got tired of eating the quail God sent them every night.

And as we heard today, they complained when they got thirsty.

Which of all the things they complained about,

the lack of water was pretty serious.

But on a deeper level, what their complaining revealed

is that they didn't really trust God.

Despite all of the amazing and miraculous ways

God had come to their rescue in the past - by sending Moses to lead them,

by sending plagues against Egypt, by parting the Red Sea -

despite all of that, they still doubted that God would always be there for them.

And what did God do?

What He always did: God heard their plea.

He told Moses to take his wooden staff -

the same one he held when he parted the waters of the Red Sea -

and use it to strike a rock.

Which Moses did and water flowed which satisfied the people's thirst.

Sadly, this wouldn't be the last time they would complain or doubt God.

And it wouldn't be the last time God would come to their rescue.

Their journey to the Promised Land should have taken mere days,

but instead it lasted 40 years.

Not because they were bad at directions, but because God needed that much time to truly form them as his people.

But it can make you wonder, why didn't God remove every obstacle from their path?

Why did he allow them to experience hunger and thirst in the desert?

Well, think back to last week's first reading.

We heard how God established a covenant with Abraham.

The promise was made that over time,

Abraham's descendants would become the Chosen People -

a people who would be a source of blessing to the world.

And in order for that to happen, God would need to work on their stubbornness, their complaining, and their lack of faith.

He would need to prove to them - over and over -

that he would never abandon them.

**SCREEN: blank purple background**

Let's be honest, we aren't all that different from them.

When things are going great in life,

our tendency can be to forget about all the ways God loves and cares for us.

We can lose sight of all the miracles and blessings God sends our way.

So we might slack off on prayer or worship and take our faith for granted.

But then a crisis comes out of nowhere, causing us to doubt and question

and suddenly we find ourselves lost,

unsure of what to do or where to turn.

It might be a health crisis, a situation with a family member,

a concern about finances or your future.

It could be something happening in our nation or the world

that's robbing your peace of mind.

And when this happens, we have to decide what to do.

We can choose to be like the Israelites: we can complain, get angry or frustrated.

Or we can turn to God for help and then be patient.

God may not answer your prayer exactly when you want or how you want

but God is listening and God will respond in his time and in his way.

God may need time to work on your stubbornness or lack of trust.

It's also important to say that when you're facing a crisis, it isn't God punishing you or abandoning you, instead it's an invitation from God to turn to him for help.

### **SCREEN: Big Picture main screen**

So let me mention a few ways you can put yourself into

this 'big picture of faith' we heard about in today's first reading.

First, if you're someone who came forward and asked for prayers last weekend,

I want to encourage you to keep bringing your concern to God every day.

It's one great way to discover that God is with you whatever may come in life.

If you didn't come forward last weekend

but have something weighing heavy on your heart,

give it over to God today, in this Mass.

In a few moments, at the very end of the Prayer of the Faithful,

we'll pause to offer our individual intentions in silence.

I encourage everyone to use that opportunity to give your care to God.

And do that every day from now until Easter.

See, prayer is how God overcomes our stubbornness.

Through prayer, God can soften our complaining

and resolve our doubts.

When we pray to God we grow in faithfulness.

And finally, it's not too late to sign up to receive

the daily emails we've prepared for this Lenten series.

Every morning you can wake up to find an email in your inbox

with a scripture reading and a few reflection questions.

It's a great way to start your day and help you prepare to celebrate Easter.

As I said, at times we can all feel like the Israelites did,

wandering through life's challenges and struggling to trust

that God cares what we're going through.

Rather than complain or give in to doubt,

let's decide to turn to God with faith and confidence

that we may experience his presence and his love. Amen. +