

**Third Sunday of Lent**  
**March 8, 2026**

Water is amazing, isn't it? It is as gentle as a sip of water to a child or to the lips of a dying parent, and yet if you stand before the ocean waves its power is overwhelming. If defeated by heat, water will evaporate or escape as steam but then re-form as water as it cools. Water will seep through soft earth but when confronted by rock, given enough time, it will carve its way right through it. Water will appear to give way to obstacles but will somehow, somehow, always find a way to get around and through. Water always wins the last battle.

It is no wonder, then, that so much of what God does speaks to us in water. And no wonder so much of what we know of God was taught with water.

It was more than the physical thirst of the Israelites that was quenched in the desert; it was their thirst for God. Where was He? Why would he lead us all the way out here to die? Sure, they were afraid of dying, but more afraid that God had abandoned them. Then, from a lifeless rock, water flowed. In empty hope God found a way to assure his people He had not abandoned them.

The woman who came to the well knew abandonment. Five times she had been abandoned by love, now coming to that well as a stranger to Jesus and as an outsider to her own people. She came believing that the God in whom she had once placed all her trust had long ago abandoned her. Jesus taught her in a language that she could understand that there was nothing that would keep God from getting to her; nothing that put her on the outside of God's love. This shocking inclusiveness is the message of Jesus Christ.

We might think we can decipher the limits of God's love, but God's love, like water, will find a way to go beyond our understanding. God's grace will flow from the most unsuspecting places in our lives and world. God will find a way to be present to those who find themselves in the desert, washing away the dirt of our sins and shame, carving through the hardest of hearts.

God's love cannot be extinguished. It may seem absent in the fires of hatred and war in our day, but it will return, flowing and full of life. The love of God might seem to yield, to give way to the hardness of hearts and closed minds, but only to find another pathway to our hearts, another pathway to heal our wounds, another pathway to flow beyond the obstacles we place in the way.

Like water, the love of Christ always wins.