

Sermon for March 8, 2026, Third Sunday in Lent

Texts: Exodus 17:1;4-7: Romans 5:3-5; John 4:9-14;25-26

Title: "From Parched Hearts to Living Faith"

Introduction

Beloved in Christ, Lent is a season of thirst. Not just physical thirst, but spiritual thirst, i.e., a longing deep within the soul, a sense that something in us and something in this world is not as it should be. We feel the dryness in our struggles, in our doubts, in our disappointments. We may not always name it, but we know it is there.

Today we move from the wilderness of Moses to a well in Samaria. At first glance, these seem like two separate stories, one from the Old Testament and one from the New. But they are actually one unfolding story: the story of God restoring His broken Kingdom through Jesus the Messiah. From parched ground in the desert to living water at a well, God is revealing how He brings life to dry and weary hearts. The followings are today's lessons.

First: The Wilderness Reveals a Parched Kingdom

In Exodus 17, Israel is wandering in the wilderness, and there is no water. The people are afraid, and fear quickly turns into complaint. They ask Moses, **"Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?"** Then the deeper question rises to the surface: **"Is the Lord among us or not?"**

This is not merely a crisis of hydration; it is a crisis of trust. They had seen the Red Sea part. They had eaten manna from heaven. They had witnessed the power and faithfulness of God. Yet in the moment of thirst, their hearts dried up with doubt. Their question reveals something far deeper: the Kingdom of God — His reign of trust, peace, and communion — had long ago been fractured by sin. Ever since Eden, humanity has struggled to trust its King. So, the wilderness exposes that brokenness. Israel's physical thirst mirrors the spiritual drought that began when humanity turned away from God. The Kingdom was broken, and the human heart became dry ground.

Yet God does not respond with abandonment. He instructs Moses to strike the rock, and water flows out for the people. Not judgment, but mercy. Not rejection, but provision. Even in their doubt, God provides. Therefore, we are called to repent of our own sins of doubt and fear. We are invited to renew our trust in God's unfailing mercy. For He is not a distant ruler but He is the King of restoration.

Second: The Well Reveals the Restoring Messiah

Centuries later, in John 4, Jesus sits beside a well in Samaria. A woman comes at noon, and in that ordinary moment history changes. When she speaks of the coming Messiah, Jesus declares clearly, "I who speak to you am He." The long-awaited Anointed One is not distant. He is present. The

Restorer stands before her. And she recognizes who He is. The woman who came quietly and alone leaves her water jar behind and hurries back to her village. She becomes a witness. **"Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?"** And many Samaritans come to Him. Many believe.

This is the restoration of God's Kingdom unfolding before our eyes. The Messiah crosses human boundaries — ethnic, moral, and religious — and gathers people who had long been divided. The Kingdom is no longer confined by walls of hostility. **Through Jesus, God restores what sin had fractured, drawing outsiders near and turning the overlooked into messengers.**

Here is the lesson for us today: when we truly recognize Jesus as the Messiah, we cannot remain silent. Restoration is not only something we receive; it is something we share. The Kingdom spreads as ordinary people testify to what Christ has done.

Third: From Suffering to Living Hope

Paul writes in Romans 5 that **suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.** And hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Cross. So, the ultimate act of restoration happened at the cross. The Messiah took upon Himself the full weight of our brokenness.

On the cross, Jesus cried out, **"I thirst."** The One who gives living water entered fully into our dryness. He stepped into the wilderness of our sin and bore it Himself. This is why suffering can produce hope. Because even in dry seasons, we know the King is restoring what was broken. His Spirit is at work within us. Through His suffering, the broken relationship between God and humanity began to be healed. Therefore, only when you participate in the suffering of Jesus' Cross, you can be the completer of hope.

Conclusion:

We return to the question from the wilderness: **"Is the Lord among us or not?"** At the well in Samaria, the answer is clear. Yes. The Lord is among us. He sits beside us. He speaks to us. He offers living water. The Kingdom that was broken long ago is being restored through Jesus the Messiah. And the restoration begins in the human heart.

So, this Lent, we must ask: **Where is my heart dry? Where have I doubted? Where have I asked, "Is the Lord really with me?"** Christ meets us in that very place. Not with condemnation, but with living water. Not with rejection, but with restoration. He restores trust. He restores dignity. He restores communion. He restores His Kingdom — one heart at a time. Therefore, let us come thirsty. Let us drink deeply. And let the living water of the Messiah turn our parched hearts into living faith. **Weekly.**