

Devotion, Week of June 8, 2025

Rev. Jeanne Simpson

I have been dealing with water issues at our lake house this week. We always turn the water off to the house in the winter to avoid pipes bursting, so after I turned it on, I realized the water heater was out. I called a plumber and arranged for service the next day. I figured I could do minimal bathing with cold water. But about four hours later, I heard water running outside, and discovered a huge gush of water running out on the ground near our back bathroom, which was added later and is not part of our crawl space. So now I had to turn off the water completely and do without until the plumber could get there the next day.

I don't know about you, but I tend to take water for granted. If I need to wash my hands or brush my teeth, or flush the toilet, no problem. But now, I had to think seriously about all of that. Fortunately, I had some bottled water to use for some activities, but I knew I was in for serious repair bills, and since the water heater is 26 years old, I was pretty certain I was looking at a new one. So there went the budget for the month!

The Bible focuses a lot on water. Israel has a great deal of desert, and the primary source of fresh water is the Jordan River, that begins at the base of Mount Hermon in Lebanon and comes out of the Sea of Galilee down to the Dead Sea. Settlers for centuries have used irrigation canals in this area to raise crops. But there are wide areas of desert remaining, and much of the surrounding nations, such as Jordan and Syria, consist of desert. One of the reasons for Middle Eastern hospitality is the danger of running out of water in the desert. Both the Jewish and Islam religions emphasize providing food, water, and shelter for travelers, due to the lack of resources in these desert areas.

We can't live long without water – some say about 3 days. And yet we don't pay much attention to polluted seas with microplastics, and fresh water rivers with industrial and agricultural run-off. Getting water is so easy for us – just turn on the tap – that we forget that it is really our most precious resource. Abraham in his travels knew it was precious, the Israelis returning across the desert from Babylon knew it, and Jesus knew it out in the wilderness. My relatives in the mountains of North Carolina went without clean water for three weeks, due to the lack of electricity to operate their wells. They had to haul up water from the river and boil it. I won't take easy access to water for granted again, and I read these Biblical texts about God's gift of life-saving water now with a different lens. I hope you will appreciate your access to clean water this week.

Jeanne