

There once was a goldfish that lived in a quiet alcove along the bank of a stream. One day she was talking to some friends about water. Some fish believe in water, others don't. The fish that believe, they gather at the waterfall each Sunday in the hope of experiencing water.

The first week that the goldfish swam to the waterfall, she was sure she felt the water's presence there. As she listened to the more experienced fish, they explained that water is the source of life – and that water is very powerful. So powerful in fact, that water created the Grand Canyon in only seven days! They told her about other great water feats recorded in their water Bible. And as the goldfish swam home, she marveled at the power and might of water.

The goldfish kept returning to the waterfall on Sundays, but over time she seemed to lose the ability to feel the presence of the water there. It was probably the fault of the catfish. They are so annoying. She really wasn't sure why they even came to the waterfall. I mean, they are bottom feeders. They aren't like normal fish. Their constant catfish shenanigans at the bottom of the waterfall made it all the more difficult to experience the water.

During Bible study one week, the fish were talking about how sad it was that other fish didn't know that the water is the source of life. The goldfish wondered, if water is so powerful, why is it so hard to experience? Why was it only at the waterfall? She kept her questions to herself.

One day, while the goldfish was in her alcove and quietly ruminating about water, she thought she felt it. That was odd. What was the water doing here, so far from the waterfall? Then another day, while swimming near the rocks, she felt it again, just for a brief moment. Her friends told her it was a miracle.

The goldfish started to put one and one together and noticed that when she was quiet, when she listened for the water – well, “listen” is not quite the right word – more like when she wasn't annoyed with the catfish and wasn't concerned with what the other fish thought – anyways, when she listened, sometimes she could feel the water.

Some of the fish at the waterfall thought the goldfish was not a very good believer. They wanted her to be on the waterfall protection committee and raise money for the waterfall restoration project. She thought those activities were good, but somehow, she knew that wasn't her calling.

The goldfish started making time each day to listen for the water. She started to notice the presence of water during ordinary days. For example, one day she was helping

another fish stack pebbles and as they worked, she unexpectedly felt the water. She began to suspect that the water was always close by.

Then one day while she was just resting, the water suddenly felt like it was all around her. And as she opened her mouth to breathe, the water went into her. It was so intimate. And then she realized that it was true.

The water *is* everywhere.

It is even *in me*.

Over time she came to believe that the whole stream was filled with water – and that there is nothing in the stream that the water doesn't embrace. And then she had a terrible thought. Oh my God, even the catfish are embraced by the water. Even the snooty waterfall committee fish. Even the fish that don't believe.

The water *embraces* every created thing.

The water *is in* every created thing.

In a strange way, coming to intimately know the water really didn't change anything. The goldfish still had to protect her alcove from intruders. She still had to find food. She still got chased by the bigger fish. And she still swam to the waterfall on Sundays – funny how it really was easier to recognize the water there.

But in another way, intimately knowing the water changed everything. It no longer made sense to her to be against anything in the stream, because the life-giving water embraced everything – so she thought she should too.

She no longer worried about who was worthy to be at the waterfall, or what they believed or didn't believe. Instead, she just embraced them, you know, like the water does. On her good days, she didn't need to change anyone, or fix anything. She could just be with them.

It was quite a simple way to live, when you stop to think about it.

Other fish sometimes asked her about the water. There isn't much to say, because you can't think your way to knowing water. So, she just told them that it was closer to them than they could imagine, and that if they practiced listening, and opened their hearts, they too could know the water.

Some fish believed her, others didn't. That was ok. She knew that all of them were in the water, the source of life. And that was enough.