

# Exodus 17:1-7

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[ 0 : 00 ] Amen. Well, good evening, guys. Good evening. It's a joy, as always, to be gathered with you. I'll ask you, which promise of God are you standing on tonight?

Anybody want to share? Man, I hate it when a pastor asks a question, right? Seeing that we're standing on the promises of God, I want to ask you, which promise are you standing on today? Anyone? Anyone? Quiet in the church house, right? All right. Well, okay, then. We'll move on. I trust that you are reading those promises and hearing them. There's one for every season of our life and one for every step we take, so nothing better than to know which promise we're standing on.

Take your Bibles, turn with me to Exodus 17. In Exodus 17, just continue to make our way through the Bible. We've made it to Exodus 17.

[ 1 : 02 ] We're going to look at the first seven verses, verses 1 through 7. Exodus 17, verses 1 through 7. The last song we sang, Trust and Obey, Obey.

Trust and Obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey. And it's amazing that we are studying this portion of the book of Exodus as we sing that.

Where he sins, I will go. What he commands, I will do. And we're seeing the nation of Israel do that as they're making their way through the wilderness, really just getting into it.

By way of introduction, you remember that many have called this God's school in the wilderness or the wilderness testings. This is a time where God has set his people free.

He has completely delivered them. They are no longer bound to slavery in Egypt. They have crossed the Red Sea. And now he has got them out of Egypt and trying to get Egypt out of them.

[ 2 : 02 ] It doesn't take long to get to the promised land from Egypt to Israel. If you look at it, or Canaan. If you look at it on the map, not that many days journey.

We know they're going to stop at Mount Sinai, which where we're at tonight will kind of get us to that place. But God is trying to prepare them for a life in the promised land.

Preparing them to live according to his statutes and to his purposes. And we have seen how that applies in our own lives. We are saved by grace. We are redeemed not by works of our own, but by the things that he has already done.

Freely forgiven. Completely redeemed. And then he takes the time to prepare us for eternal life. To fit us to live eternally with him.

We call it instantaneous salvation. Saved in a moment. Progressive sanctification. Worked on for a lifetime. God saves you in a moment.

[ 3 : 03 ] He redeems you in an instant. The moment you cry out to him, you are set free. But it does not mean he's through with you. Really, that means he is beginning in you. Jesus called salvation a new birth.

And when a child is born, you don't leave it alone. You grow it and you raise it and you mature it to what it is to be. And that's what sanctification is. And we are thankful that that's what trust and obey is.

God sanctifies us. He fits us to be in his presence. And that's what we're seeing here through the wilderness. The testings are three great tests.

I'll kind of go over them again. One, where they got there and the water was tainted. Remember that? There was no water to drink because there was water there. And the water was bitter and they couldn't drink it.

So they got upset. And then God says, cast this tree into the water of this branch. The water becomes clean. Second one, they're hungry. They need something to eat. We should have been in Egypt. There we had meat to eat.

[ 4 : 01 ] There our pots were always full. And God said, okay, you want meat? You'll eat meat. I'll bring you quail. And then I'll give you bread from heaven. And now we'll come to the third great

testing of it tonight.

But before we get into it, let's just pray together. Lord, we thank you so much for this day. God, we thank you that we've had the opportunity to come. And Lord, to worship and rejoice today. We've had the opportunity to fellowship over your word. And Lord, you give us yet another chance to get into your word. And we pray that we would be able to hear it as it is, to receive it as the word of God, not the thoughts or intentions of man.

And Lord, that that word would penetrate us. Lord, that it would grow inside of us, that it would swell up inside of us to mature us and to your people. To becoming who you called us to be in the world you've placed us in.

Lord, we thank you for every opportunity. We look forward expectantly to what you're going to say to us. And God, we are so thankful for this chance. And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen.

[ 5 : 04 ] Exodus 17, starting in verse 1 and reading down to verse 7, says this. Then all the congregation of the sons of Israel journeyed by stages from the wilderness of sin, according to the command of the Lord, and camped at Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink.

Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said to them, Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord? But the people thirsted there for water, and they grumbled against Moses and said, Why now have you brought us up from Egypt to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?

So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, What shall I do to this people? A little more, and they will stone me. Then the Lord said to Moses, Pass before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand your staff, with which you struck the Nile, and go.

Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. He named the place Massa and Meribah, because of the quarrel and the sons of Israel, and because they tested the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us or not?

[ 6 : 27 ] The third great test we see, again, is another test revolving around water and thirst. We've already seen the one where the waters of Marah, or bitterness, were there, and they became very bitter.

And we saw how shocking that was, right after God did such an amazing work as parting the Red Sea, causing the nation to walk through on dry ground, completely delivering them from the enemy which had held them captive all of their life.

And just a couple of days, literally, they get to a place, and they get bitter, they get mad. They already want to go back, because it doesn't seem to be going right for them. God gave them clean water.

If you remember that, God showed them His presence. He spoke to Moses, told Moses to put the tree into the water. The water became clean. He led them from there to a place where there were many springs of water.

He gave them a time of rest. And then we read they travel a little bit more, and all of a sudden they become hungry. Now, we just read right here, they had livestock with them, right? Remember that. They were hungry.

[ 7 : 27 ] We have nothing to eat. We don't have meat to eat. Well, if they didn't have meat to eat, then why did they say our livestock are going to die? I don't know if you've ever caught that or not. I don't know how many times I went through the book of Exodus, but I had failed to catch that.

They were worried about their livestock dying, but it wasn't just a few days before that. They were saying they didn't have any meat to eat. Well, the meat was walking around them, but it was their possession. It's what they wanted to hold on to. And God says, well, I can take care of this too.

They get real upset, and Moses tells them, this is in Exodus 16. You're not mad at me. You're not arguing with me. You're mad at God, and you're arguing with God. Why are you testing God? And God says, tell the people to stand and see the provisions of the Lord.

And now we come to the place where you have this third testing, again, that revolves around water. But I want you to see tonight how the nation of Israel, though delivered, though free, though clearly seeing the hand of God as he has worked his ten judgments or ten plagues upon the nation of Egypt, though beyond a shadow of a doubt, walked through on dry land across the Red Sea, knew God's presence was there, have drunk of the water that was once bitter and now it's pure, have eaten of the quail in the middle of the wilderness, and are eating the bread of heaven, the angel's

food, if you will.

They are eating of the manna. The word manna literally means what is it, something they can't even explain. Every day it's there. Every day God is keeping his word. How they are doing what so many believers do today.

[9:02] Tonight, I want you to see how they were following in doubt. They were following because God said to follow me. He was leading them. At this point, he was leading them through the wilderness.

You remember in the daylight, he was leading them by a pillar of clouds. And the cloud would go before them. And when the cloud moved, they would move. At night, it was a pillar of fire. And when the fire moved, they would move.

We see this through the 40 years of wilderness wanderings. We see even after they build the tabernacle. When the tabernacle was set up, that the Shekinah glory of God rests upon the Holy of Holies.

And they would stay in that place until the Shekinah glory was lifted up. And when it would lift up and move, then they would say, Well, I guess it's time to pack up and move because God's moving. So they would move wherever the Lord was leading them to move.

They were following. God had led them out of captivity and called them to follow him. But the whole time, they were doubting. And friend, that is the position of so many believers today.

[10:02] We follow because Jesus says, Follow me. And I will make you fishers of men. We read in the Gospels where they come to Jesus and they say, Jesus, where are you staying?

We want to stay with you. And he says, what? Come and see. Jesus, we want to follow you. But let me go there. And Jesus says, forget about that. Just follow me. Jesus, we want to do this. But first, let me go finish this.

And Jesus says, don't worry about finishing that. Just follow me. And we read how multitudes, even at times, were following Jesus. I mean, he fed 10,000 at one time. He fed probably 8,000 at one time.

You said, I thought that was 5,000 and 4,000. It was, counting the men. That wasn't counting the women and children. So you're looking at probably 10,000 to 12,000 and 8,000 to 10,000. Okay? So that's the amount of people that were going out, following him into the remote places.

And then we see how many of them, though they were following him, they were also doubting him. Because when it got difficult, they left him to the point that when they are gathered in the upper room, in the first chapter of the book of Acts, you have 120.

[11:04] So he dwindled his crowd down from somewhere around 10,000 to 120. And we see that many followed him, but they were following in doubts.

That's why the Bible tells us to be careful. James says that a man cannot doubt God because a doubting man is like waves of the sea being tossed to and fro and is never really settled on anything.

That we must trust him without doubting him. And we see here the nation of Israel doing the same thing. The grand question to this passage, is it really just about water? Is this another test about water?

No, not really. I don't think so. The grand question here is found for us at the end of verse 7. The nation of Israel was testing the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us or not?

And this is the great question that plagues so many people, even in our churches today. So many people, we would say, are followers of the Lord. These people were seeing the pillar of cloud go before them, seeing the pillar of fire go before them, and they were walking because they knew something amazing happened back there.

[12:12] They were born into slavery. They were raised into slavery. They were slaves all of their life. Things weren't going good. All of a sudden, this man, Moses, shows up. He intercedes on their behalf. God miraculously delivers them.

He does this supernatural work. And now they're just on this journey. But the great question that's really plaguing them, Is the Lord among us or not? Today, we would say that there are people who hit a low point in their life, and they realize their own unworthiness.

They realize their own captivity to sin. They really begin to understand that Romans 1 through 3 principle, that though they want to do right, they can't do right. There's nothing in them. And they really begin to be suppressed by that.

And they come to this place where they say, You know what? I just give up. And they hit this crossroads. And they have to make a decision. Either they're going to just do it, throw all caution to the wind, and live however they want to live, or they're going to go this way and try Jesus out and give their life to Christ and surrender their life to Christ and walk in the ways of Christ.

And some will just throw all caution to the wind and live. Matter of fact, the Bible says, a multitude will just say, Forget it. If I'm going to be bad, I might as well be bad all the way. And I don't judge people for that, by the way, because if you don't want anything to do with Jesus, then don't have anything to do with Jesus.

[ 13 : 30 ] Don't play the fence. Jesus said, I wish that you were either hot or cold. Don't be lukewarm. Don't kind of tread the middle road. Don't try to be wild and be the child too.

Don't try to live my life, but try to be a part of his life. You've got to go one way or the other. It's a crossroad. So some will just go this way and live however they want to live.

Some will go this way and follow Christ. But the main question is still the same. Is the Lord among us or not? Though I'm walking this journey, though I'm on this path, is he really here?

And my friend, I dare say that each one of us have asked that same question. We have all been in a place in our life, at a time in our life, where we thought we were following the Lord.

And that question plagues us still. Is the Lord among us or not? Braden's among us. I don't know if y'all noticed that or not.

[ 14 : 34 ] We have all been in that position where we chose to go in the way of Christ. We chose to go in the way of the scripture.

And it doesn't always seem to make sense. And we ask, is the Lord among us or not? So tonight, I only have two points. Don't get too carried away because I'll break those two points down into various sub points.

I'll give you two things. The first one is, the reason for the questions of man. I'll go ahead and tell you what my two points are. The reasons for the question of man. Why do we ask that?

And number two, the reassurance of the Lord's presence. Number one, the reason for the question of man. Why do we all come to this point? Why have we all reached this point?

Why does the nation of Israel reach this point? At this time, to ask the question, is the Lord among us or not? Why is it even after you have chosen to follow Christ in your life and you've chosen to get into the word of God and to be involved in church?

[ 15 : 40 ] I'm sorry, my brain is out. That's great, man. It's awesome. Woo! Boy, he's tired, isn't he? Sorry, it looked like a pen's dispenser behind some of you guys and I just kind of lost it.

So, we're all in. I'm so sidetracked sometimes. I don't mean to be. The lesson's already. So, Dad, would you just be quiet? I'm just trying to sleep. You don't have to leave. Please don't leave. He was just like, Dad, stop.

I'm sorry. I got so sidetracked because I had another adult tell me this morning how he accomplished sleeping during my sermons. So, it just totally messed me up.

So, I mean, I was just like, all right, he's not taking that guy's advice. But anyway, get back on track, Billy Joe. Why is it that even though we've come to this crossroad and we said, you know what?

I'm not going to go that way. I'm going to start living my life for Christ. I'm going to do the work of the Lord. Why is it that we always come to this question? Is the Lord really here?

[ 16 : 41 ] What reasons do we have for the questions of man? The first reason we have is an unexpected circumstance. An unexpected circumstance.

Look at what the Word of God says. It says, Then all the congregation of the sons of Israel journeyed by stages from the wilderness of sin. Now, the by stages meant that it wasn't a direct path. They stopped somewhere along the way, right?

The wilderness of sin doesn't mean that's the place where they did all the bad stuff. That just happens to be the name. Okay? That's its name translated to English. It doesn't mean that's the place where they did all that, you know, like sin city.

That's not what it means. Okay? It just happens to be the wilderness of sin. And they left that place and they went by stages making stops along the way until they came to the place at Rephidim.

But it says, All the sons of Israel journeyed by stages from the wilderness of sin according to the command of the Lord and camped at Rephidim. Now, I'm in the habit of underlining in my Bible. I don't know if you are or not, but I try to point out like main line of thought and sentences.

[17:41] Sometimes when you get in the Word of God, they kind of get run on, kind of run on sentences. Paul is real notorious for this. When Paul got excited, he was kind of like your pastor and he just didn't know how to stop and his sentences would just run on and run on and run on and run on.

And most of the sentences of Paul, in the original language, there's no punctuation. Like, he didn't end his sentences. They had to insert those when they translated them to English so that we could make sense of them because Paul was just carried away.

But this is what I get from this, okay? The sons journeyed according to the command of the Lord. I hope you see that. The people of God journeyed according to the command of the Lord.

That simply means they moved when he told them to move. Okay? We're talking here, why are the reasons we ask the question is the Lord among us?

The first reason we see from this scripture, we're just maintaining it according to these verses, is because of the unexpected circumstances. They moved where God told them to move.

[18:46] They followed him completely. God said, stop here, they stopped here. When God said, go there, they went there. When God said, okay, go here, go here, they did that until they got to Rephidim and they were exactly where God wanted them to be.

Now, you and I know the line of thought is this, if I am following the Lord and I am exactly where he wants me to be, then what should I expect?

blessings, peace, comfort, security, ease, right? Follow the Lord and things will go well for you.

Follow the Lord and everything you need will be there.

Follow the Lord and everything will be great. Read the rest of the sentence. They journeyed according to the command of the Lord and there was no water there. What? It says it.

God told them to go to a place that didn't have what they needed. Unexpected circumstances.

[19:51] The reason many believers today ask the question, is the Lord among us or not, is because following Christ doesn't always take them where they expect.

sometimes it leads to unexpected circumstances. We must accept the biblical reality that sometimes following the Lord leads us to rough waters.

Think about this. When Jesus had his disciples, two times when the disciples were following Jesus, two times, one time he told them to get into the boat, let's go to the other side.

He got in the boat with them, laid down on the bow of the boat and fell asleep. Remember that?

Jesus said, alright, let's go to the other side. You're the fisherman. You know how to do the seas. I'm going to rest.

I mean, he's in the flesh. He was tired. He goes into the bow of the boat, lays down. When he's asleep, what happens? A storm comes and it's such a bad storm. The Mediterranean Sea, by the way, is known for, or the Sea of Galilee, I'm sorry, not the Mediterranean Sea.

[20:57] The Sea of Galilee is known for this quick rising up of storms even to this day. And so they're out there and all of a sudden this storm comes in. Now this is what gets me about this storm. The experienced fishermen said, we're about to die.

This is the sea that they fished on all the time. So it must have been some kind of storm, right?

Now, who told them to go? Jesus. Who was asleep in the boat with them?

Jesus. Who is in command of the storms and the seas of the land? Go ahead and say it. Jesus. The second time Jesus is there is after he fed the 5,000.

He tells his disciples, you guys go to the other side of the sea. I'll meet you over there in a little bit.

He dismisses the people. He goes up on top of the mountain to pray. Remember that? And it says about the third watch of the night, that is about probably 2 a.m., 3 a.m.

He looked out and they were in the middle of the sea and the storm was tossing them to and fro.

Who sent them into the middle of the sea in the middle of a storm? Jesus. That's not what we expect.

[22:03] We expect that if I obey what God tells me to do, then there's going to be blessing, there's going to be sunshine, there's going to be comfort, there's going to be ease, there's going to be all of these things. But that, my friend, listen to me, is not what we find in Scripture.

One reason even followers doubt is because of unexpected circumstances. This isn't what I thought it would be.

That's why I say we always have to be both loving and truthful when we're sharing Christ with someone. Don't ever tell someone, ever.

Don't say something the Scripture doesn't say, okay? And when you're sharing Jesus with someone, don't ever say, if you'll just give your life to Jesus, everything will be better. If you give your life to Jesus, things will be better in eternity.

But the moment you give your life to Jesus here, your enemy has a reason to oppose you. You need to be careful. You say, you're telling me it's not better following Jesus? Oh, I know it's better following Jesus, but if I'm an unbeliever and you tell me my life's going to get better when I follow Jesus, then my friend, I'm going to argue with you and tell you just a few months after I gave my life to Christ, I got laid off with a pregnant wife.

[ 23 : 24 ] And I'm going to tell you just a little bit after that that all of a sudden all these physical things started happening and all these things started and then I'm going to maybe take you to history and show you the people burned at the stake who gave their life to Christ.

And I can take you to Dietrich Bonhoeffer that was imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp and he preached a message on Easter Sunday fully expecting to be delivered that day.

Everyone else in the camp was set free the next day but right after he preached that message he was taken and killed. He was one of the last people killed at the order of Hitler. Why? Unexpected circumstances.

But I will tell you this that if Dietrich Bonhoeffer had not been killed according to the order, his message would not have been proclaimed throughout the world either. His message would have been limited to Germany and it would have been limited to his book Cost of Discipleship would have never made it what it is now.

But the reason so many people follow in doubt is because things don't go the way they thought it would go. Which tells us when we come to Christ we need to come with no expectation.

[ 24 : 38 ] We come with surrender. The second reason we have for the question of man is the Lord among us or not is unmet needs. Unmet needs.

I believe in Jehovah Jireh the Lord my provider. I believe he is one who takes care and he is the one who provides every need I have. But look at this again. God don't ever lose sight of this.

Moses didn't lead them. They thought Moses was leading them. But the scripture makes it clear that the sons of Israel journeyed according to the command of the Lord. And he brought them to a place where there was no water. It says therefore the people quarreled.

It says they camped at Rephidim and there was no water for the people to drink. Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said give us water that we may drink. Now one of the most basic needs of man is water.

You can live much longer without food than you can without water. And it is one of your most basic needs. needs. And when that need is not met all of a sudden things begin to get a little hairy real quick.

[ 25 : 39 ] It begins to get a little scary. It begins to get a little serious. Things get real. Hey we're out of water. Something's not going on. I don't know what to do. And it says here that their most basic need was unavailable.

And they began to quarrel. They began to get upset. And you say well rightfully so. I mean they have a need. And you say well I thought God will meet all my needs. And now all of a sudden I have these unmet needs and I'm beginning to think and I'm beginning to wonder does God even care? Is God concerned about me? What's going on here? Is God even here? Because look at all of my needs that aren't being met. Friend I just want to stop you for a minute. You know who gave you every one of those needs?

The one who created you. The one we're doubting if he's there or not is the one who created the very need we're seeking to have met. And they're crying out saying I don't know I need something to drink and it's not like they're saying hey we want some sun drop or we want some coke or we want some sweet tea.

They're saying we need water. That's a real need right? You know you don't need sun drop coke and sweet tea. That's not a need. That's a want. We need water. We need some water right now. And this unmet need caused them to doubt.

[ 26 : 57 ] again it's amazing how quick it happens. In our own land when a follower of Christ and those who are really seeking to follow Christ the moment a need arises the doubts creep in.

I think it was Martin Lloyd Jones who encouraged pastors who said if you ever think you're somebody doing something just read history of the people God has used. Read church history.

Read the accounts of believers around the world. Read this is why I always church if you don't read anything other than Fox's Book of Martyrs or the Tortured for Christ stuff the Jesus Freaks book short stories and I tell you what they do is they show you people in history and even in today who have real needs that are utterly living in dependence on God and they're using an unmet need for a reason to depend rather than a reason to doubt but when we are so accustomed just like the nation of Israel here we are so accustomed to having above and beyond our needs and we don't care how they're met they didn't care that the Egyptians were imprisoning them they didn't care that they were mocking them they didn't care that they were ridiculing them as long as they gave me what I needed listen Satan will give people what they need and even beyond their needs to keep them under his control but God allows us to get to a place sometimes where we really need so that he can show us who's in control but an unmet need is often one of the reasons believers follow but doubt number three an unforeseeable solution not knowing how it's going to work out scares us to death right especially in our own culture our

American culture where we have a plan for everything and some of you are planners I'm a planner in some areas of my life and some areas of my life I'm not very much so some days I'm just like let's go do something let's go do this and it drives my wife and others around me crazy in some areas of my life I'm very detailed and very planned in my office here and in my study I have to be very detailed and very planned some portions I just whatever let's go but we see here that we have built inside of us this need to see how it's going to work out now again they followed God God brought them to a place where there was no water they didn't expect that they thought if I follow the Lord everything's going to be okay all of a sudden they get to this place and it's not okay and they have this need this unmet need we need something to drink but this is so much different than when they were at the waters of Mara because at the waters of Mara they could at least see water they just couldn't drink it because God's got something to work with there right I believe in a God that's big enough to take tainted water and make it holy or tainted water and make it pure that's what they were saying if only God had something to work with here they said

God back there there was water there it was just bad water and God told Moses to throw a tree in it and it made the water good if we can only find some more bad water and in that type of tree throw that tree in it again I told you it doesn't matter what kind of tree it was there's no scientific reasoning for that there's no tree out there that takes tainted water and makes it clean it doesn't do that another thing you find in scripture is that God doesn't work the same way twice it just doesn't do that quite often as a matter of fact God always does it differently which is something we should expect from God is to see him do it differently but the problem is here now they're rephidim there's no water and they're looking around and there's not even any bad water it's an unforeseeable solution I don't see how God's going to do this and it causes us to doubt I don't even know if God's here because our mindset our human mentality says this we can make it work as long as we have something to work with as long as we have something to work with we can do it and these are looking around they're like but God doesn't even have I mean there's some rocks here there's some dirt here there's some brush here but there's no water here

[ 31 : 15 ] I mean God doesn't even have any bad water to make good there's no way around this and I want to go ahead and tell you right now that's a great place to be if you ever get to a place where you're looking around and there's no foreseeable solution to your problem that's an awesome place to be because God's about to do something you don't understand because this is a biblical principle that we need to get God doesn't need anything to work with to work God doesn't have to have a tool he doesn't have to have a substance he doesn't have to have some dirty water to make clean God can just make water okay God doesn't have to have something to work with because everything there is to work with he created out of nothing I remember the one time when I was down in Normandy and I met the guy who told me he was God and he said do you think I'm God I said no I don't think you're God I think you're crazy and he said well I can kill you if you want me to I said I'd rather you prove to me you're God and he's like okay I was like so just make something for me he's like well I don't care you can make me a flower you can make me a dog

I said just make something and I looked at him I said but here's the thing don't use anything in this world to make it because God created this if you're God you can make something out of nothing he said well I can kill you if you want to and I looked to him and I said you can't kill me and Carrie got mad at me when I told her this account he said why I said because the spirit in me is opposed to the spirit in you and you can't touch me normally I wouldn't have that kind of confidence but the Bible

the promise I was trusting in them the Bible told me as greater is he that is in me than he that is in the world and I said you can't do anything with me from that day on it was amazing I used to make a game out of it too and man he avoided me like I had to plague and I remember one day I was walking out of the church and I told Carrie I said listen there he is right here I said I want you to see this and so I rounded the corner and he was coming out of his house and he saw me and I waved and I really I just would love to talk to the man I said hey how are you doing and he took off running in a full sprint now this is an older gentleman and he if you know anything about Normandy he ran across the square ran across the tracks in the field and ran all the way up Normandy Road just to avoid being around me you know why because he couldn't touch me if he wanted to he just couldn't and I wasn't really being mean at it but the reality is this if you're God you don't need anything to work with and the problem is we begin to doubt because we don't see how God can do it because we don't see a way for him to do it and there's this unforeseeable solution and we're looking out there and we're just like them at Rephidim we're going but God doesn't even have something to give us to drink because there's nothing out here and God says isn't that great and this is where we get to the place where we're like but is God even here because if he was here wouldn't I see a way most of the time no these are three reasons for the question of man now number two

I want you to see and these will be faster the reassurance of the Lord's presence because they ask this question and they get mad and Moses for the first time Moses begins to fear for his life I don't know what you call it that Moses he's taking this and he's like why are you complaining to me and they're like Moses we've got to have something to drink and I'm putting this in everyday language right and they're like Moses we are thirsty here and you've brought us out here to kill us you're going to kill us you're going to kill our children you're going to kill our livestock we need something to drink now and Moses rather than getting mad and talking back to them we need to learn those to go get the people so you know what Moses was doing Moses and God those are your people that's your problem you say was that wrong?

[ 35 : 23 ] no absolutely not don't ever carry a load you're not supposed to carry if God has called you to do something and he's called you to be somewhere and he's called you to fulfill a purpose for him he is the one who put you there which means he is the one who bears the responsibility while you're there that's the blessing of being the servant or the slave of the Lord when the Lord told me to work in the field what happens in the field is the Lord's responsibility as long as I'm doing my work so Moses comes back and says God we got a problem I can't do it that's your problem and God says okay and Moses says in a short time they're gonna kill me they're mad they're doubting they don't even know if you're here they think I'm the only one here so they're gonna kill me and God says okay I'm gonna show you I'm here and I want you to see the reassurance of the Lord's purpose or the presence the reassurance of the Lord's presence and I want you to see it in three things number one it is shared it is shared look at what the word of God says verse 4 so Moses cried out to the Lord saying what shall I do to this people a little more and they will stone me and he just stopped right there then the Lord said to Moses pass before the people and look at this and take with you some of the elders of Israel take with you some of the elders of Israel why is this because when I reveal my presence it's gonna be a shared experience why is it so important to fellowship with other believers why is it so important to gather together with the church members why is it so important to be in the body when the body joins together is it because you need to put that check mark beside your box or is it so that you can say well I attended church

I feel better no it is because sometimes you come to a place in your life where you're asking the question is the Lord among me or not and to be honest with you Satan can put such a funk and darkness over your life you will never fully realize the Lord's presence until you get in the company of his people sometimes your darkness will close and blind your eyes to his presence and the only thing you can do is go hang out in the presence of people who are already experiencing his reality we all enter into dark times we all enter into dark seasons this is why the church is so important and I know I'm preaching to a small crowd tonight and I know sometimes these Sunday night exhortations seem to really need to be on Sunday morning but maybe you'll take these back to somebody else but this is why this is so important the reason the church is important is because your life is not always going to be buttercups and sunshine sometimes you're going to walk in the door wondering is God even here and you're going to walk up to someone and they're going to have the presence of God so on their life you'll say yes God's here because he's hanging out with

them now they may look at you and say Satan's here too because he's riding on your back but that's okay because what's in them is better than what's hanging out with you and it's a shared experience so many people say well I'm just going to hang out at home I'm going to do church by myself and

I'm not I'm not listen I'm not being upset I'm not being judgmental at this but hey when we're by ourselves we're by ourselves now I can fellowship I can preach to myself all day long in my office I can and I can get excited and sometimes I do and I can be in there I got excited in preparing this message and I you know I was studying this throughout the week and I didn't really get it in this afternoon I came in and I was still studying it and I really didn't get it and this is the mystery of sermon preparation and I went and I got onto that ugly floral couch which I mean you know I love that thing but anyhow I went and I bowed down on my face and I was praying over I was like God just show me and he began to open it up and man I started getting excited in prayer because I started seeing this passage as it really was but you know what it was just a good little hallelujah time by myself but there's more of the presence of God here now than there was then why because the presence of God throughout scripture is always a shared experience that's why he says we're two or more gathered I'm there as well and sometimes I need to hang out with you so that I can get a little bit of what

Jesus is doing in your life to shine onto my life and sometimes you need to hang out with me so that you can get a little bit of what Jesus is doing in my life to shine on your life because every now and then every one of us are walking around in a dark cloud and the reality of his presence is always a shared experience he says Moses get some of the elders and take them with you I want them to see this as well Jesus always had multiple people around him Peter James and John are considered the inner circle but there were three of them and then there were the twelve and then there were the hundred and twenty and then there were the multitude but it goes on but it was never just one never it's a shared experience number two the reassurance of the Lord's presence is simple it's so simple it's almost dumbfounding it's simple look at what he says

Moses I don't know what I'm supposed to do God I mean I see everything they see I see there's no water here I see that they're gonna die if we don't drink something and I see there's nothing here to do and it's so simple God says this God says okay Moses take the elders with you get some of the elders take your staff now that's something common right he's used this staff over and over again this is a thing that he uses a walking stick this is a thing that when he threw it down it turned into a snake and he picked it up and it didn't this is a thing that he used when he went into Pharaoh's court and it swallowed the serpents of the magicians this is the thing that he struck the the the red sea with take your staff that common tool that thing I've used before take it and go hit a rock so simple it doesn't make sense take this wood stick and hit that rock okay and God's going to reveal his presence through that simple act of obedience sometimes when we have an unmet need and we don't see any solution around us

[ 41 : 50 ] God does the greatest works in the simplest ways and it's always amazing how supernatural the simple can seem I don't know how many rocks I hit as a kid with a stick and my neighbor when I was growing up I had an older neighbor elder gentleman such a very wise gentleman and you men will get this he told me I was probably maybe 12 I was tilling his garden I would go help him work in his garden head like the worst garden ever had so many rocks and clay and things and he told me one time his wife was in the house and he said you know what he said every man needs a rock in the yard to go beat on every now and then and at the time as a 10 or 12 year old I had no idea what he was talking about I got older I had kids every man needs a rock in the yard to go beat on every now and right I mean let's just I mean let's just be real we do made a lot of sense now and he said and he had this big old rock and he started he said that's my rock I go hit that rock it's simple I mean there are just times where man's got to get his energy out and he's got to go beat on a rock something simple to do that seems so dumb to you ladies but it makes all the sense in the world to that man at that time is I'm gonna go beat on this rock why just because I get to beat on a rock it's simple now we our rock can be different things right there are hobbies and but God wired us that way but listen to this how many of the

Israelites had hit rocks with sticks before and it wouldn't make sense to anybody I'm sure Moses had hit other rocks with sticks probably the same staff by the way you know where they were at he said yeah Rephidim yeah but you know where he tells him he says go right there to Horeb if you go to Exodus chapter 3 you will find that Horeb is actually Mount Sinai Moses has now made a full

circle this is where he saw the burning bush this is the Mount of the Lord how many of those rocks you think he used to walk by and hit with this same staff when he was tending his father-in-law's sheep oh it's that simple just go hit a rock God says yeah that's all I want you to do hit the rock so simple it doesn't make sense but the reason the reason it makes sense is because of this one phrase behold I will go before you and be on the rock the simplest act of obedience is transformed into the most marvelous deed when he's before us sometimes God says just pray you say well God I've been praying and I've been praying and I've been praying I've been doing but nice now all of a sudden it seems like there's this compelling command he says but I'm going to meet you in prayer sometimes he says give and you're like but I don't have anything to give but I'm going to be there to give sometimes he says go but I don't it doesn't make sense it's so simple why but I'm going to go before you the simplest act of obedience becomes miraculous when he goes before us he says go hit that rock I know you've hit rocks before but this time I'm going to be there this reassurance of Lord's presence sometimes is simple and third and finally it is symbolic it's symbolic we've seen it in genesis we see it in exodus we see it all really all throughout the old testament but really what we're seeing is the great grand story of the gospel had nothing to do with the staff had nothing to do with the rock okay the story is this you see it Moses hears that says okay what I love about Moses is Moses no longer says God that doesn't make sense Moses just does it God says get some elders and take my staff and go hit a rock okay so Moses gets some elders he takes his staff he walks over to the rock he raises his staff he hits the rock and it says in the waters gushed out now the wording there is that it just like flowed forth and kept flowing forth and flowing it was like just pouring out of this thing kind of like I'm thinking like Niagara Falls right like this water was just coming out over and over an abundant and over abundant supply of water I mean there were probably about two million Jewish people out here in this wilderness and and that's a first of all it's a big rock or a lot of water I don't know but he hit the rock the water came out there was more than enough everybody had what they needed and there it is God provided the water now you say well that's a cool story about a rock a stick in a in a man that's really not a story about a man a stick in a rock it's always symbolic there are all these pictures of Christ in the Old Testament as a matter of fact when we read into the New Testament it tells us that he is the rock it says in the book of Hebrews that he was the rock who went before them in the wilderness he was the rock that was struck Moses this time is told to go forth to the rock strike it God's going to be on the rock he says I will be there before you on the rock he's going to strike the rock water's going to come out in the book of Numbers it'll be a while before we get there so I'll go ahead and spoil it for you in the book of Numbers they get to the place again where they're out of water seem like they were always running out of water right and they get to this place at the end of their journey it's kind of interesting to know the nation of Israel complained at the very beginning of their journey because they didn't have any water and they're complaining at the end of their journey because they didn't have any water they're always complaining and always seem to revolve around water in the book of Numbers they're they're right here they're towards the end of their journey they don't have any water they're complaining and Moses says what should I do and God's so faithful God says go up to the rock speak to the rock and tell it to bring forth water Moses is all right whatever I'll do it now all of a sudden we find a disobedient Moses because he's old he's mad he's been out here for 40 years I mean you know he's dealt with these people these stiff-necked crooked bent heart individuals I mean you know I don't blame him but he's man just like me God gave a command speak to the rock Moses says okay he goes up to the rock and he hits the rock twice water comes out God is faithful but then God looks at Moses as Moses shouldn't have done that I didn't tell you to hit that rock I told you to talk to that rock and because he hit the rock twice God says you can't go into the promise and you're like wow that's some big judgment Moses please I just want to go in you know I mean I have led them for 40 years God I've I've been on the mountain Lord I fasted for 80 days non-stop no food no water 80 days two 40-day stents on the mountain of the Lord because he crushed the stone tablets the first time remember that I was up there 80 days in your presence God I've I've sacrificed I've given my life for your people I just want to go into the presence land the promised land I've seen your glory like nobody else I've met with you as if face to face your glory is shown on my face I just want to go into the promised land

[ 48 : 46 ] God says nope can't do it you can look at it from the top of the mountain but you're not setting foot in it why because you hit that rock you hit that rock now I want to ask you is it really about the rock does God care about rocks that much somebody like I don't need a rock in my yard

to hit anymore no when Moses struck that rock twice he messed up the picture of the rock because it's symbolic that rock is Christ it's a picture of Christ who was struck once for the sins of man to provide the need of man abundantly he was struck once so that man's great need that is the need of reconciliation the need of redemption the need of salvation would abundantly flow forth from him for all people and from the time he's been struck once all we have to do is ask him

Jesus doesn't have to be crucified again once Jesus doesn't have to be ridiculed again once that's why God said Moses just ask the rock today we don't have to crucify Jesus again we just have to ask and he'll spring forth waters of eternal life he doesn't have to be stricken twice he just has to be asked for it that's the picture of the rock friend listen to me and I'm wrapping up I know I went over on Sunday night but listen to me there will be times in your life where you doubt if the Lord is there but thankfully those times can be answered by shared events by simple act and by the symbolic ways in which God works throughout history the reason we struggle so much today is because we don't have enough Ebenezers raised in our life and I know I get mocked and made fun of all the time by my kids and they poke fun at me Ethan helped me rearrange Carrie and I rearranged my office this week and he's like dad have you read all these books I said yes I have he's like looked at me like I was a nerd that's okay but you know what those you know what it does those are Ebenezers I see how God worked in this man's life I see how God worked in this man's life I see how God worked in this woman's life I see how God worked in this church and I see what God did in this church and you know what the book of Ecclesiastes says there's nothing new under the sun every problem I've ever faced this caused me to doubt has been faced by someone else and when I can see how

God worked in their life it becomes symbolic to me to encourage me that God will work in my life because if he could do it then he can do it still and it dismisses my doubt I would be lying to you if I told you I never had times of doubt praise be to God those times of doubt are always answered with his presence sometimes in other people sometimes to the simplest act of a card in the mail somebody saying you know some of my darkest moments seems like I always get a card where hey pastor I just want to thank you for what you've done or I thank you for this just a simple act somebody's shaking my hand somebody walking up to me and sometimes to seeing the way he's worked in history to know he's still working today friend listen to me be encouraged in the presence of the Lord because we're all following sometimes we follow in doubt but we don't have to let's pray God I thank you so much for this night I thank you for your word I thank you for the truth and the power that you can't and I pray that you be a resonating force in our life Lord we would follow you completely surrendering all through your war and all and living in your kingdom in Jesus name Amen if you're able would you stand and turn to page 294 sing the first second and fourth verse 294 have thine own way Lord have thine own way thou art the powder I am the clay mold me and make me after thy will after thy will while I am waiting yielded and still have thine own way Lord have thine own way search me and try me master today wider than stone whiter than stone wash me just now as in thy presence humbly I bow have thine own way Lord have thine own way have thine own way Lord have thine own way hold o'er my being absolute sway fill with thy spirit till all shall see Christ only always living in me living in me

Amen Thank you guys so much Thank you for your help you're for tonight Anyone have a word? You need to share Alright, I know we have a possibility of what we're moving in on Tuesday and sometimes days we get a lot of stories we'll be hard to pray and I'll let you know prepare for things for Wednesday night but I look forward to seeing you there as we can anything at a hallmark tonight but I'm very young to drive early before I commit that visitation at Hillcrest 30 to 12 to 2 funeral service at 2 I just feel so blessed to be here and I'm just really growing and wanting to need to work for and I'm just I'm just glad to be here daddy daddy daddy Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 57 : 34 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[ 61 : 34 ] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.