

# Exodus 15:22-27

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[ 0 : 00 ] Anyhow, take your Bibles. We're going back into the book of Exodus. Go with me to the book of Exodus, chapter 15. It's been some time, been a number of weeks since we've been there. December is kind of a hectic schedule on Sunday nights, but I'm so thankful for every opportunity we've had. We're going to pick back up where we were, I think now it's been like four weeks since we've been there.

Exodus 15. We're going to finish up the 15th chapter tonight, so I'll start in verse 22. Not very many verses, just reading verses 22 through 27.

I'll kind of help us get it in context here in just a minute when we open it up, but Exodus 15, verses 22 through 27. Let's go to the Lord in prayer, and then we'll just move forward from there. So let's pray together.

God, we thank you so much for this night, Lord, with so much thanksgiving and rejoicing. We come this season of the year to celebrate your birth. God, we come to worship, to fellowship, Lord, and to learn.

And pray, oh God, that your word would resonate its truth within our lives tonight. Lord, that we would learn more of you and more of the glory of our redemption and salvation. Lord, we pray that you would speak to us now. Lord, speak to our hearts and minds.

[ 1 : 12 ] Over the next few days, God, may the truths that we grab a hold of today be that which resonates throughout our lives for your glory. And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. It's been some time since we started the book of Exodus, and I kind of get us caught up in a nutshell.

I believe it was, there's a book, and the name just totally went blank, called Preaching and Preachers, which is a great book for preachers. And he speaks in there about going through portions of Scripture.

And he says, you know, it's good to go through them, but every message needs to be a standalone message. But you also need to let everybody know how you got there. So I'm going to kind of do that for you, throw it together really quick.

Remember, when we first got into the book of Exodus, we stated the truth that we cannot rightly understand our salvation without a proper understanding of the Exodus event.

Not the book, but the Exodus event. That God looked upon his people, saw them in their distress, saw them in their misery. The people were not looking for God, but God looked upon them.

[ 2 : 17 ] He heard their moaning. He heard their groaning. He heard their pain. And God intervened. God chose a man to that point to go deliver them, that man being Moses.

We saw Moses at the burning bush. It was all of God, God's plan, God's man, sent to the people in need of redemption. He led them out. God showed himself to be Lord of all gods.

He defeated the thought of the Egyptians, God, with what we call the ten plagues or the ten judgments. He redeemed his people. Not only did he redeem them, he enriched them, and he led them out of slavery.

Now, that is such a beautiful picture. That's Exodus chapters 1 through 13 in a nutshell. And that gets us kind of this beautiful picture of our own redemption.

God looks upon us even when we are not looking towards God, not looking for God. God looks upon us in the misery of our captivity of sin. Meaning that we are all enslaved to sin.

[ 3 : 19 ] We do not have to choose to be enslaved to sin. By nature, we are slaves of sin. We do the things which we do not want to do. And we cannot do the things that we want to do.

No man can be good no matter how hard he tries. We are held captive by Satan to be sin because of our nature. We see that in the book of Romans. And God looks upon us and says, this is not who I created them to be.

And being the great merciful God he is, he looks upon us in our misery and he chooses to act. He chose a man, not Moses. He chose to become a man, that is Jesus Christ, to come and to lead us

out of that sin, that slavery of sin.

And he chose him to come and to be our deliverer. And he has shown himself over and over. Then we come to the Exodus event where they observe the Passover. Remember that? The beautiful pictures of the Passover.

God leads them out. They plunder the Egyptians simply by asking. They are wondering. They are celebrating. They are going out in martial array. And then Pharaoh has a change of mind.

[ 4 : 22 ] I do not know how many times you have noticed it. But in the book of Exodus, Pharaoh seems to always be changing his mind. Pharaoh decides that, what have I done? I have let all my slaves go. Now how am I going to build my cities? How am I going to do all this?

And he decides to pursue them. God leads them in a way that they normally would not have went. And they end up between the Red Sea and the Egyptian army. Which gets us to Exodus 14. And here they are at the Red Sea.

And God says, why did you stop? Move forward. Moses, stretch out your staff. You have the parting of the Red Sea. The nation of Israel passes through on dry ground. That is so important.

Not muddy soil. Not damp soil. Not mucky soil. On dry ground. Not only did he part the water. He dried the ground in the bottom of the river. Which is pretty cool. Of the sea.

They went through on dry ground. The Egyptians came through. And they are destroyed. So now we see, completely redeemed. Not only free from sin. In theory, now they are free from that which held them in slavery.

[ 5 : 22 ] Which is the Egyptians. And that leads us to Exodus 15. Moses' song of praise. They come through that. And verses 1 through 21 of Exodus 15.

Is this great song of praise. The nation of Israel as a whole. Moses and the men are singing. And then Miriam and the ladies are singing. And they are all singing. And there is this praise hymn. If you remember.

I know it will be hard to remember back. Because it has been several weeks. But if you remember. We saw that the reality of this. Is this hymn was sung. Right after they went through it.

But it was probably something that was built upon for the next 40 years. It was just their chorus of praise. Because there are things mentioned in it. That would have been more applicable.

Later on in the wilderness wonderings. And you say. Well how can he do that? Well because Moses didn't write the book of Exodus. Right after they crossed the Red Sea. Remember that. Okay. They wondered for 40 years. And it was later on in their wilderness wonderings.

[ 6 : 17 ] That God moved them to write these books. And they would have continually wrote these songs. Adding to them. And we see that they are praising God for what he's done.

Praising him for who he is. And they even praise him for what he will do. That is bringing them into the promised land. One of the great themes through Exodus. Is that God sets his people free.

Not just to set them free. But he sets them free to bring them in. Okay. That is important. God sets us free. To bring us in. He doesn't just set us free to let us be.

He sets us free to bring us in. We are always redeemed for a purpose. And that's good. And that is to be with him forever. Which gets us to where we are tonight. And now we are about to make a great shift.

And as we read this we'll see this is just like man. As Pharaoh always changes his mind. You'll see the actions of man always seem to change. How quick it is we can praise him now. And three days later we can complain.

[ 7 : 17 ] Because we are about to go from praising to complaining. And we are about to get there really quick. Okay. So Exodus 15 starting at verse 22 says. Then Moses led Israel.

Then what? After they sang the song of praise. After they went through the Red Sea. After they saw the Egyptian army washed upon the shore. After they had glorified God. After they had left. After they had plundered them.

Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea. And they went out into the wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness. And found no water.

When they came to Marah. They could not drink the waters of Marah. For they were bitter.

Therefore it was named Marah. Marah literally means bitter. So the people grumbled at Moses saying.

What shall we drink? Then he cried out to the Lord. And the Lord showed him a tree. And he threw it into the waters. And the waters became sweet. There he. That is God. He made for them a

statute.

[ 8 : 12 ] And regulation. And there he. That is God. Tested them. And he said. If you will give earnest heed. To the voice of the Lord your God. And do what is right in his sight.

And give ear to his commandments. And keep all his statutes. I will put none of the diseases on you. Which I have put on the Egyptians. For I. The Lord.

Am your healer. Then he came. Then they came to Elam. Where there were 12 springs of water. And 70 date palms. And they camped there.

Beside the waters. We'll just stop right there. I really kind of had in mind. To go on into the 16th chapter. But I think we really need to stop right here. Exodus 15. 22.

Brings a shift. From what we have just seen. A number of things have happened in a number of days. They have celebrated the Passover feast. They have seen the death of the firstborn. Of all those without the blood.

[ 9 : 06 ] Over the doorposts of their hearts. I mean the doorposts of their houses. They have seen God deliver them. They have seen the Lord lead them. The pillar of cloud by day. The pillar of fire by night. They have seen God defend them.

On the Red Sea. Where the pillar moved between them and the Egyptian army. On one side there was light for travel. On the other side there was darkness of opposition. They have seen God part the Red Sea.

They have seen him lead them through the dry land. They have seen him defeat the Egyptian army. And they have praised him. And now they start their journey. Completely free.

Completely released. Completely redeemed. But following. Some have called what we are about to read in the remainder of chapter 15.

And then in chapter 16 and chapter 17. The wilderness university. Charles Spurgeon when speaking of these chapters. Refer to them as the Oxford and Cambridge universities of the Christian life.

[ 10 : 05 ] That we learn our lessons in the wilderness. It is in the wilderness that there is sanctification. Now there is a big difference between salvation and sanctification.

Salvation is in a moment. Whenever you put your faith and hope in Jesus Christ. You shall be saved. Whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord. Shall be saved. At the moment. An individual. At the moment.

Someone calls upon the name of Jesus Christ. At that moment. He is completely saved. When the death angel went over Egypt. And when God led his people out through the blood of the lamb. Which is the Passover lamb. At that moment. They were saved. That is salvation. But. They were not. What they were supposed to be.

Yet. It took God a moment. To get his people out of Egypt. I've kind of alluded to this before. It took God a moment. In time.

[ 11 : 01 ] To get his people out of Egypt. But it took him 40 years. To get Egypt out of his people. Salvation is the redemption of the individual from slavery. Sanctification.

Is the purification. Of the individual. Because of the results. Of his slavery. It is. In the wilderness. That we see sanctification.

Completely saved. Yes. Completely free. Yes. In the physical sense. What they should be yet. No. We call the wilderness. A life after salvation. Why doesn't God save us.

Redeem us. And call us to where he wants us to be. Because we are not yet. What we should be. He allows us to wander in the wilderness. Which we call life. So that he can continue to work. In us. And to mold us. And to shape us. Paul says. I'm not yet what I should be. But there will be a day. Where I will be. What he wants me to be. And in that day. I will see him as he is. We understand that.

[ 11 : 55 ] In a moment. He could save us. In a moment. If he so desired. He could sanctify us. But as I have often said. I am so glad. That God. Uses time.

To sanctify. Think about where you're at right now. Wherever you're at spiritually. If you have been saved. More than a day. Then you have made progress. Some of us. Have been redeemed.

For a number of years. Some of us. Have been saved. Longer than we've. Been unsaved. I haven't reached. That point in time yet. Though I'm rapidly. Closing in upon it. And I think about.

Where I'm at now. Spiritually. Versus where I was. The moment he called me. And I think that if God. Had put all of that on me. In a day. Or in a moment. I would not be able. To withstand it. If God

tries to change you.

If the Lord had come to me. When I was 20 years old. And I had accepted him. As my Lord and Savior. If on that night. When I was on my knees. And I cried out. And I said. Jesus I give you control.

[12:52] And I heard him whisper into my heart. Okay. I'll take it. If at that very next breath. He would have said. Now I'm going to take it. And this is what I want. I want you to be a pastor. I want you to do this. I want you to do that.

I want you to do this. Then I would have said. Never mind Lord. I'll take it back. Because I wouldn't have been able to stand it. But thankfully. And amazingly. Sanctification.

Is a process. What we see in the wilderness. Is God sanctifying his people. And preparing them. For the promised land. He tells them beforehand. I'm taking you to a land.

With houses you did not build. Wells you did not dig. And gardens you did not plant. And I need you to be. Who I want you to be. Before you get there. And my friend. I'm so thankful. I'm thankful.

First of all. That salvation. Happens in a moment. That sanctification. Happens in a lifetime. But what we see. In this. Few verses.

[13:47] That I've read tonight. And what we see. In chapter 16. And what we see. In chapter 17. Is that sanctification. Comes with these. Three tests. All of them. Revolving around food.

By the way. Food and water. Water. The first one. Is the bitter water. The second one. Is the lack of food. And the third one. Is the lack of water. It is. Here at the first one. That we have the bitter waters. Of Mara. It is.

Or Mara. It is the second one. That we have the lack of food. So we begin to get the manna. And it is in chapter 17. We see a lack of water. And we see the water. From the rock. But we see. Three tests.

That come out. Of this wilderness. So for the next few weeks. However long. We can allow here. I want us to see. Just kind of a sub. Sub series. In the book of Exodus. Lessons learned.

In the wilderness. The one tonight. If I had to title it. Would be. The bitter waters. Of complaint. What they learned. Complaining. At the bitter waters. Of Mara.

[14:43] Isn't it amazing. That. They go. They go. Three days. From one of the glorious battles. That they did not fight. That they saw. God defeat. The superpower of the world.

That is. The nation of Egypt. And in three days time. They're grumbling. They will grumble again. After this. But. They'll grumble. For the next 40 years.

Really. You know. We see that. We know that. We've read it before. But I want you to see. Four things. Tonight. And I'll make my way through them. You say. Well you didn't read. But five verses. Pastor.

How in the world. Are you going to get four points. Well. I just want you to see them. The bitter waters. Of complaint. Number one. I want you to see the requirements. How God teaches these lessons.

Sanctifies us. Through a requirement. It says. Then Moses led. Then after this great battle. Then after this glorious thing. Then Moses led Israel. From the Red Sea. And they went out into the wilderness of Shur.

[15:39] And they went three days into the wilderness. And found no water. We see first of all. That God is going to minister to them. And show them. Sanctification is all about God showing us.

What we really are. And revealing to us. The shortcomings. That we already have. Even though we are saved. He is revealing to us. Now I have to say this. At the first. Okay. James writes.

And very rightly so. Let no man say. When he is tempted. That he is tempted of the Lord. For all good things come from the Father. We know we are tempted. When we are carried away. James says what? Each man is tempted. When he is carried away. By his own desires.

And his own lust. We are not tempted. By God. But. On the other side of that. We are most definitely. Tested. By God. See a temptation is something.

That is seeking to make us weak. And to cause us stump. To stumble. A test is something. That is intended to make us stronger. And to set us.

[16:35] On the right course. And when God. Comes into our life. He saves us. Redeems us. And he begins to test us. These tests. Sometimes come through. The reading of God's word. Where we read God's word.

And we feel as if we are looking into a mirror. And we see something about ourselves. Which does not line up. With the word of God. And we are then tested by God. To see if we are going to try to change God's word. To fit our lives.

Or try to change our lives. To fit God's word. That is a test. Sometimes a test comes from. An individual. Sometimes it comes from a brother or sister in Christ. Who comes to us.

In a loving manner. Though we may not always think. That it is a loving manner. And they question us. Or they challenge us. Or sometimes they even rebuke or chastise us. And the natural tendency is.

You ain't got no right judging me. And the reality of the Bible is. Well that is completely false. We have every right to judge one another. Paul says. What right do we have with judging those outside of the church?

[ 17 : 28 ] Aren't we called to judge those within the church? Now that judgment. Judgment is not a bad thing. Judgment is a very good thing. Because judgment helps us to build one another up.

It is a test. It is not to push somebody down. If you go with judgment to push someone down. Then you are going about it all wrong. Sometimes we are tested. Based on circumstances. And God allows things to come into our life.

To show us just as we will see here. Here God begins the test. With a simple requirement. They are wandering in the wilderness. And they don't have any water. And they went three days with no water.

Now one of the first requirements of human nature. Is we have to have water. We need water. Especially when you are 600,000 men strong. Not counting the women and children.

And you don't have any water. You are in trouble. And not only do they not have any water. They are wandering in the wilderness. They are no longer in the rich delta of Egypt. They are no longer around the Red Sea. They are no longer around the Nile River.

[ 18 : 28 ] They are no longer in all of these places of provision. God has put them in a place of desolation. In a place of isolation. Without one of the basic requirements. You can go much longer without food.

Than you can go without water. But you have to have water. And God uses this requirement. To show them something about themselves. Because then they walk around.

And they find water. And if not having water is disappointing. Then finding water that you can't drink. Is even more disappointing. Because they find water. And they find Mara.

And they come upon Mara. And they soon realize why it is called Mara. Because Mara literally means bitter. Because the water is no good. So now. The requirement is not only that you need water.

You also need drinkable water. You have to have something to sustain you. And we see here that God is going to teach them a lesson and requirements.

[ 19 : 25 ] Because see we understand that God often uses our most basic needs physically. To remind us of the great needs we have spiritually. No man would have doubted when the Egyptian army was pursuing them.

And they had no weapons. No individual of the nation of Israel would have doubted that as Pharaoh and his choice chariots and his mighty army is coming. And the Red Sea is raging.

No one would have doubted they needed God then. But when you are just walking around every day in the wilderness. Who needs God there? See one of the tragedies we find in our spiritual life and even in our physical life.

Is we find people who will readily acknowledge that they need God at the moment. Where they need the miracle. But they don't realize the requirement of needing God every moment of their life. The presence of God was needed just as much on day one of walking as it was when the Egyptian army was pursuing. The only requirement that they thought they had was water.

[ 20 : 37 ] But that was not the most basic requirement. The most basic requirement was not water. The most basic requirement was his presence. And while God was with them they did not acknowledge him and they did not realize that.

Sometimes God allows a requirement to be the thing to test us. Sometimes we feel like we need the things which we can touch, we can see, we can handle.

And we feel as if we need them more than anything else when God says no. Really what you need is me. We get the same picture from another man who hung out in the wilderness not 40 years but

for 40 days.

Another Moses. See Moses going in the wilderness with the nation of Israel for 40 years really is nothing else than a type. It's nothing other than a picture. It is a picture of Christ going into the wilderness for 40 days for those people that he will redeem.

And we know that there are three great temptations of Satan and we read of those three great temptations. But we need to understand that the three temptations we read of in the Gospels are really just the three pinnacle temptations.

[ 21 : 49 ] Because when we read it as it is really presented it says he was tempted of Satan for 40 days. And he fasted for 40 days. And at the end of 40 days of fasting.

Now I've never fasted for 40 days. I've fasted for short times and I know that hunger pains can hit you pretty good. But 40 days of fasting is a pretty long time. It is then that Satan comes and says turn these stones into bread.

And Jesus says my most basic requirement right now even though I'm hungry in the flesh. He was fully man and fully God. Even though I am mildly hungry I don't need bread right now.

I need the word of God. I need to live on God's presence. And see we see the requirement that often is revealed.

We really understand ourselves more and we really begin to be sanctified more when we look at those things which we require more than anything else.

[ 22 : 51 ] And I guess when we look at the nation of Israel and we have to examine our own lives. We see even on this side of the cross even on this side of salvation. What is your number one requirement?

Well how do I know what my number one requirement is? Well if you don't have it you start complaining. Whatever you require more than anything else will be the first thing you complain about when you don't get.

And you say well what is that? I don't know. You can answer that. They thought they needed water more than anything. And God was using water to show them what they really needed. I wonder. I wonder. Not even just in our room but so many believers today. That if they were to lose the word of God. If they didn't have a Bible.

Monday through Saturday it wouldn't affect them that much. But they had to have water. If you took water away from the same amount of time that they took the word of God away.

[ 23 : 52 ] They would be very upset. See my friend what I'm saying is. That which we require more than anything else. Begins to reveal to us what we are.

More than anything else. God uses requirements. To test us. Number two. Not only are there requirements. There are reactions. Why would God lead them into a place where there is no water? I mean if you ever thought about that. God is leading Moses. And Moses is leading the people. It's this great question. If God exists. Then why does this exist? Or why does this happen?

And you fill in the blank right there. I know that thing. But here's a great question. Just from the book of Exodus. If God is God. And he is almighty. And he is all powerful. As he has shown himself.

Why would he lead. Probably estimated. Two million people. Into a wilderness. Three days with no water. And then bring them. To a place where they couldn't drink water. God just seems to be mean.

[ 24 : 50 ] How mean is that? To make you desperately thirsty. To the point of death. And then bring you to a place. And go now look at it. But you can't drink it. Why would God do that? Because the second one is.

Reaction. To see. How they reacted. Why does God allow things to come into our lives? Because reaction. And reaction. And this one gets me.

Even when I was typing this. And even when I was writing this. Really. It just. Sometimes things that I type. I want you to understand this. I preach the message to myself. Long before I ever preach it to you.

Okay. I live with it. Long before you ever hear it. And you may can forget it. But I have to continuously live with it. Our immediate reaction.

Is always an indicator. Of the heart's condition. At that moment. The initial reaction. Is always an indicator.

[ 25 : 47 ] Of the heart's condition. At that moment. And when they got to the place. Where they couldn't drink the water. What did they do? Grumbled. They got mad.

They got upset. They started complaining. And they said. Moses. Why did you bring us out here? What are we to drink? And you said. Well that's a valid question. Really? I mean. After seeing the ten judgments.

Which they saw. After seeing God. Cause frogs to show up. Nats to show up. First born children to die. The water turned into blood. After seeing all of these things. After seeing the Red Sea part. After all of these great displays. And people said. Well if I could just see God. Then I would believe in him. Well here's a case study. That said. No you wouldn't. Two million people didn't. And after observing all these things.

First hand. They get to some water. They can't drink. And they get mad. I mean. If God can turn the river now. And every water in Egypt into blood. Can't he do something about some.

[ 26 : 44 ] Tainted water in Mara. But that's not their reaction. Their reaction is. Anger. Their reaction is. Complaining. Their reaction is. Grumbling. Their reaction. Is a testimony.

To their reality. And God is showing them. Their reality. Saved. Sure. Free. Absolutely. Sanctified. No not yet. And God shows them. By their reactions. And they say. Moses what are we to drink. Now let's look at the reaction of Moses. So verse 24 says. So the people grumbled at Moses. Saying what shall we drink. We'll see later. In the 16th chapter. That though they may be grumbling. At Moses. They're not really grumbling. To Moses. They're grumbling. And complaining. Is to the Lord. They're just doing it to him.

We'll see that later. Here it is. Verse 25. Then he. That's Moses. Okay. The people's initial reaction. Complain. Grumble. Moan. Get upset. Get mad.

[ 27 : 39 ] We'll see later. They're going to be like. Let us go back. Why'd you bring us out here. Just to kill us in the wilderness. I mean you know. All the things that. Reveal the heart. Revealing the character of the heart. But what about Moses. Then Moses. Then he.

Cried out to the Lord. Do you think Moses wasn't thirsty? Let me think of the way to Moses. Three days. Moses hasn't had anything to drink. Three days. Moses needs some water. Moses gets to a place.

And the water is tainted. Moses can't drink this. Moses is the man in the front. Okay. He's the man with the responsibility. Moses is the one who has been leading them. Their reaction is complaining. Moses reaction is. Prayer. He's crying. He cried out. What's the difference? Moses has learned his lessons.

Moses had already been sanctified in the wilderness. Remember that? He'd already had his 40 years in the wilderness. Someone once said. God allowed Moses to live 40 years in Egypt. To make him something.

[ 28 : 34 ] And then he sent him to the wilderness for 40 years. To show him that he was nothing. So that he could lead his people through the wilderness. For another 40 years. Moses has already been on the back side of the desert.

And he was on the back side of the desert. And he walked into the presence of God. In a burning bush. And he's already seen God. And then when he got into Egypt. He complained to God one time. Remember that? God why did you send me here? They're not listening. God rebukes Moses. And we don't ever see Moses rebuked again. Because Moses has learned his lesson. What a varying reaction. The multitude of people begin to complain. The multitude of people begin to grumble.

Moses in the same condition begins to cry out. And to beg. And to pray. See God allows these tests to come into our lives.

So that he can see what our initial reaction is. And to see how we will react. Not so that God will know. Understand this.

[ 29 : 31 ] Okay. Every test that comes upon the believer. I'm talking about a believer. Is not so that God will know what you are like. God already knows. God allows the test to come so that you will know what you are like.

So that you will know you need to lean in a little bit more. Into his grace. Into his mercy. Into his goodness. That you will know that you can't.

Paul says if I boast in anything. I will boast in my weaknesses. What happened? God allowed a test to stay in Paul's life. And Paul begged that it would be removed.

Please let this thorn be removed. Please. Nobody knows what that thorn is. I don't know. I'm not even going to try to guess. But I know it was nagging to Paul. And God allowed it to stay there. And

Paul's like please let it go.

And he said three times I begged. And God says no. My grace is sufficient for you. And then Paul says I'm going to boast in my weaknesses. What is God doing? God is showing me that if he took that thorn away. I might get prideful.

[ 30 : 34 ] I might get boastful. I mean man I've been with him in the wilderness of Arabia for three years. I've been called up to the third layer of heaven. I've seen things nobody else has seen. I could get prideful really quick Paul says.

But God allowed this thorn to hinder me. To test me. To show me what I'm like. So that when I lean in on his grace. I have nothing on my own to stand on. These tests come.

So that we will know what we are like. And that's what he's doing here. He's showing them. This is what you're like. Moses cries out the reaction. God longs to see what we trust in.

God longs for us to see what we trust in. And we always see it through our reaction. Number three. Not only is there the requirements that we need. The reactions that we have.

There is the reassurance. The reassurance. Moses reacts in prayer. And he cries out. He cries to God. Same thing. He asked God the same question that the people were asking him.

[ 31 : 34 ] But he asked it in a different way. You know it's okay to ask God difficult questions. It's okay. It's okay to come to God. It's like God you know what.

You know we're kind of thirsty here. We're kind of dying. And this water in front of us. It's no good. What am I supposed to do here? That's okay. Instead of looking at one another. It's okay to come and ask him these questions.

And Moses cries out. And it says here. It reads so simple. And the Lord showed him a tree. The Lord showed him a tree.

Oh there's a tree over there. And he took the tree. And he put it in the water. And the water became sweet. Or better. Drinkable. Now I want you to understand this. There is no scientific reason.

Why a tree can turn bitter water into pure water. Some people have tried to say. Well what kind of tree is that? We need to find that tree. There's nothing to do about the tree. Okay.

[ 32 : 31 ] Nothing to do about the tree. It wasn't that this tree was some type of tree. That had medicinal purposes. Though I believe there are natural things. I think that God created plants.

And I think that those plants do wonderful things to our bodies. And I think that there are things and plants that benefit our bodies. And I think man takes that. And does things to it. And I'm saying this. And I made peanut butter fudge with Kylie today. And four cups of sugar. And I looked at that. And I said this doesn't seem to be very right. And I haven't ate any of it yet. But anyway. So you know. I know there are things that God's created that are right for our body.

And I know there are things that man manufactures that are desperately wrong for our body. But that tree had nothing to do about making that water drinkable. God showed him a tree.

He picked up the tree. And put it in the water. And the water was drinking. You say well then why the tree? Why the tree? Because the Lord's answer to Moses in prayer.

[ 33 : 32 ] Was put that tree in the water. Okay. Moses is sitting here going God. I've got two million people who are thirsty. And they're dying of dehydration.

I'm pretty thirsty myself. We're surrounded by water. We can't drink. Lord what am I supposed to do? And the Lord whispers and says. See that tree over there Moses. Throw that into the water. Now.

Now there are a number of things in the Bible that make you scratch your head. And this is one of them. Because I'm sure Moses. Educated in the higher schoolings of Egypt. Knew that you couldn't make bitter water drinkable.

By putting a dead tree. Or even a live tree into it. Moses knew better than what so many people today are trying to figure out. That this tree couldn't do anything to that water.

And I don't know how big the watering hole had to be. For that many people to get something to drink. But I'm thinking it was more than just a mud puddle. Okay. And I'm thinking that if you throw in one tree. And it probably wouldn't have done it. Especially instantaneously.

[ 34 : 29 ] But here it is. God gave him an answer. He did not expect. And asked him to obey it. Just like. Hold your staff over the Red Sea and start walking.

Or just like. Hit the rock with your staff. And watch the water come out. One time. The second time it was speak to the rock. There's some great theology in that. We'll get to that later. Okay. God asked him to do something.

That didn't make sense. And to trust him. That it would help. Why? Reassurance. God was going to reassure Moses. If you take me at my word.

I will do the amazing. If I tell you to cast a tree into a dirty water. I'll make it clean. If I ask you to do something that doesn't make sense.

I'm going to reassure you. By doing exactly what I told you to do. Friend what I do. When I read the Bible. I come across a lot of things. That Jesus asked his disciples. And asked his followers to do. That just don't make sense.

[ 35 : 29 ] I come across a lot of things in the Bible. That doesn't seem to add up. By the world's standards. I come across things. That make me scratch my hand. And say. But if I do this.

This won't. I mean. It just won't work. But what I have to understand. Is the reassurance. That if God says it. And I do it. Then he'll move. Like he says he will. That's the only thing I have.

That when God said. Put a tree in water. That can't be drunk. All of a sudden. It can be drunk. When God said. Hit this rock with a staff. And water will come out. And it happened. And God has this reassurance.

That if you come to me. And you ask me. What is it that Jesus says. If you ask anything. In prayer. In my name. My father will answer you. But here's the reality. Sometimes that answer.

Doesn't make sense. Sometimes. You walk away from prayer. After asking God.

[ 36 : 25 ] Some difficult questions. And he seems to give you. An answer that doesn't add up. Like. Just throw that tree in the water. The reassurance comes.

When you throw the tree in the water. And when you take God. At his word. And quit trying to figure out. Why he told you. To throw the tree in the water. Sometimes in prayer. I remember. There was a time.

I was in prayer. And I was. And God's like. Just leave. Just resign from. This job. That people are on. Or just. You're not supposed to be here. I've got other things. I'm like. God. It doesn't make sense.

It doesn't make sense. And God's like. Just take me. At my word. And I will find you. On the other side. There is the reassurance. How do we know it? Look at this verse.

It keeps going on. Here's the reassurance. Continued of God. There he. I hope your Bible. Has the he capitalized. And the rest of verse 25. And all throughout verse 26.

[ 37 : 18 ] Because this is God. Speaking with his people. There he. That is God. Made for them. A statute. And a regulation. And there he. Tested them. He says. I'm going to give you this statute. This regulation.

This. This is how it's going to happen. And. In verse 26. It says. And he said. This is the reassurance of God. If you will give earnest heed. To the voice of the Lord your God. And do what is right in his sight.

And give ear to his commandments. And keep all his statutes. I will put none of the diseases on you. Which I have put on the Egyptians. Stop right there. Here is one of the great themes.

Of the book of Exodus. Actually it's one of the great themes. Of the Pentateuch. Which is the first five books of the Bible. Genesis through Deuteronomy. Not only is it the first five books of the Bible. It is almost a great theme.

From Genesis to Malachi. It is a great theme of the Old Testament. And here is the theme. And this is today. What the Jewish nation rests upon. Obedience brings blessings.

[ 38 : 17 ] Obedience brings blessings. And God is reassuring them. If you will obey me. I will bless you. If you will keep my word. I will bless you.

If you will do what I command you to do. Then I will not. Put the plagues on you. I put on Egypt. Obedience brings blessing. Now let's stop right here. Because we don't live.

From Genesis to Malachi. Okay. We live from Acts to. Revelation 2. Revelation 3 I think.

Because the rapture of the church. We are not quite there yet. Okay. We live after the cross. Acts. Before the rapture of the church. Revelation 2.

So we live in the time. Acts. Revelation 2. You know what you don't find. In the New Testament. The theme that obedience brings blessings. You know why?

[ 39 : 15 ] Because all throughout the Old Testament. God showed us we can't obey. God gave us. Here it is. If you obey me. I will bless you. Pretty simple.

Right? There's a reassurance. There's reassurance. And then God gave them a long time. To check that theory out. And guess what? We can't obey. So God came down.

Even in our disobedience. While we were yet sinners. He died for us. And redeemed us. We are now blessed. By his presence. Now obedience is still something. That we ought to seek for. It is still something.

We ought to do. It is still something. But I want you to. I want you to know something here. Okay? I want you to hear this as clear as we can. Because this is the gospel. God doesn't love you more because you obey.

God loves you. Period. There's nothing you could do. That would make him love you more. And there's nothing you could do. That would make him love you less.

[ 40 : 12 ] He loves you. That God loves me more when I obey. Is an Old Testament thing. That the Jewish people. Even today. Are clinging to. And by the way. Clinging desperately to it.

And realizing that they can't do it. If you live under that theology. That God loves me more when I obey. Then you will live with guilt. You will live with shame. And you will beat yourself up.

Every day of your life. Why? Because every day you will realize. You disobeyed somewhere. The reality is that God loves you. Period. You obey because God loves you.

You don't obey to make him love you. You obey because he's blessing you. There's the real reassurance. Reassurance. We have a greater reassurance.

Than even they had at the waters of Mara. Why? Because of this last part of reassurance. We have a name of God here.

[ 41 : 12 ] I want you to see it. The end of verse 26. God gives this reassurance. He says, If you can obey me, I'll bless you. But here it is. For I, the Lord, am your healer.

This name here is a beautiful name of God. It is the Lord, the healer. The Lord, the healer.

It is Yahweh Rapha. He says, I can heal you. Now, it doesn't just mean physical healing, by the way. It means to make you complete.

To restore you to what you should be. You know the reassurance we have? Even when we realize through the test that God brings us.

Is there is a Yahweh Rapha. When I react the way I'm not supposed to react. When I react and it shows the reality of my heart at that present time.

[ 42 : 08 ] And I react in such a way, I need a Yahweh Rapha. I need a Lord God healer. I need someone to come in and to cleanse me. And to make me as I should be. To physically, yes, sure.

Spiritually, more so. I need to be the whole person God calls me to be. And the reassurance I have is this name of God that He reveals. I am Yahweh Rapha. I can heal you.

Of all these infirmities I'm showing you. And He's showing them that in the middle of a test. He's showing them that. Now let's get to the last point.

Not only is there a requirement, reaction, reassurance. Number four, there is rest. Rest. Every temptation comes to us to weaken us.

And when temptations leave us, they leave us feeling defeated. Guilty. And tired. A test, on the other hand, comes to us to strengthen us.

[ 43 : 11 ] And when a test leaves us, we feel reassured. We feel sometimes wore out.

But we enter into rest. Look at what it says, verse 27. Then they came to Elam, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy date palms.

And they camped there beside the waters. Then they came to a place where water wasn't an issue. And dates were there. I want you to understand something here.

God provided for them miraculously by making the bitter waters of Marah drinkable. But God also provided for them miraculously by leading them to the place of Elam where there was drinkable water.

See, the provisions of God are, at times, miraculous. But the provisions of God, oftentimes, are very normal.

[ 44 : 15 ] It doesn't matter if you get it supernaturally or naturally. Bitter water becoming drinkable or being led to twelve springs of drinkable water. Both of them are God's provisions.

Because God cares. What did he do? After testing them and letting them see themselves as they were. After letting them see that though three days earlier they had worshipped him and sung praises to him.

And now, three short days later, they're complaining about him and getting mad at everybody around them. After showing them their own weaknesses, he leads them to a place where they can rest.



