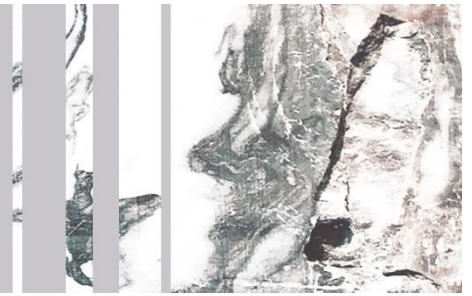


EXODUS

Daily Devotions Week 8: Exodus 15-17



DAY ONE

Read Exodus 15:22-27.

The Israelites had witnessed God do miraculous things that no other generation had since the beginning of time. Deuteronomy 4:34 sums it up nicely:

“Has any god ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation, by testings, by miraculous signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and outstretched arm, or by great and awesome deeds, like all the things the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes?”

Since we know all of this, it's challenging to understand Exodus 15:24, isn't it? The people "grumbled" against Moses. It's important to realize that grumbling doesn't only mean having a grouchy moment. Consider what the NET Bible notes say about grumbling—The Hebrew word is a much stronger word than "to grumble" or "to complain." The Hebrew word is used almost exclusively in the wilderness wandering stories to describe the rebellion of the Israelites against God.

They were not merely complaining, they were questioning God's abilities and motives. It's hard to believe that after all they had seen and experienced, they thought the God who split the Red Sea had led them to die of thirst in the wilderness.

Has God done something in your life that left no other explanation? If so, describe your experience.

Have you experienced seasons of doubt after seasons of belief? If so, describe.

God led His people to Marah for a reason. When Moses cried out to the Lord, He directed Moses to a piece of wood; some translations say a "tree." Why would God lead Moses to a tree? **What does 1 Peter 2:24 say about a tree?**

When Moses cast the tree into the waters at Marah, it soaked up the impurities that caused it to be bitter, allowing the Israelites to drink of its life-saving sweetness. When Jesus hung on the tree at Calvary, by His death, he "soaked up" all our sins. Jesus makes trading bitterness for sweetness possible by giving us sweet water to drink – living water.

If you have experienced Jesus' power to turn bitter into sweet in any area of your life, describe.

"I am the Lord, who heals you." *Exodus 15:26*

DAY TWO

Read Exodus 16:1-3.

It's been less than a month since the Israelites experienced God changing the bitter water into sweet; how easy it is to forget what the Lord has done. The Lord led His people by a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day, yet only two months after their dramatic rescue from Egypt, they wished they had died in the land of slavery.

Based on Exodus 16:3, describe how their memory of Egypt did not coincide with reality.

Do you remember the definition of "grumble" from yesterday's lesson? The Israelites weren't just complaining about not having food; they were questioning God's ability and motive. They had convinced themselves it would have been better to die in Egypt because things were better the way it used to be. It's easy to point the finger at them and accuse them of being ridiculous, ungrateful, and forgetful. However, if we take an honest look at ourselves, many of us would have to admit we have acted similarly.

Describe a time when you have questioned God's motives. Perhaps you obediently followed God's leading and, as a result, faced extreme hardships, suffered disappointments, or felt forgotten. How did the experience affect your faith and belief in God?

We have quite an advantage over the Israelites. We have the whole story available to us; therefore, we know why God did what He did. Read Deuteronomy 8:3 for a greater understanding of why God allowed the Israelites to experience hunger.

The next time we find ourselves in a situation that feels like God has forgotten us or that He won't provide, we can remember that He never allows anything into our lives without reason. We may not always understand, but we can always trust that His motives are good and right. God is for us, not against us.

Read Exodus 16:4-18.

The Lord told Moses He would do two things in verse 4. What were they?

From that day forward, morning after morning, until the Israelites entered into the Promised Land, God provided them with manna. Not only did they have the visual assurance that He was with them through the pillar of cloud and fire, now their bodies would be physically sustained with literal bread from heaven. However, the Israelites did not rise from their comfy beds greeted with manna served on china. **What was the responsibility of the Israelites?**

Look again at verses 4-5 and glance at verses 15-23. How many times do you see the word "gather" or "gathered"?

The Israelites experienced physical hunger, and the Lord provided food to satisfy their needs. God tested them to see if they would follow His instruction. Every morning the Israelites participated by leaving their tents, walking outside, bending down, and picking up their daily sustenance. When the Israelites were faithful to gather what they needed, they were satisfied.

A good rule of thumb to remember when studying the Old Testament is this: What was true for the Israelites in the physical sense is often true for New Testament believers in the spiritual sense.

Read John 6:30-35. Describe the spiritual parallel between this passage and the Israelites gathering manna.

Consider the following –

God provided sustenance to a rebellious and sinful people.

We have seen the unbelief and heard the Israelites grumblings on numerous occasions. God could have shown them that He is the Lord by striking them all dead. Instead, God, in His loving kindness and patience, met their needs. God has done the same for us in Jesus. **Write out Romans 5:8.**

The manna fell right where the Israelites were.

The Israelites did not have to travel to find the manna, nor did they do anything to deserve it. All that was required was to gather what they needed. Likewise, there is nothing we can do to earn the bread of life.

Each person was responsible for gathering their manna.

The Israelites' stomachs were not filled by watching others gather and eat it, or by admiring it from their tent windows or hearing others talk about how it satisfied their hunger. Their stomach rumblings quieted only when they gathered the manna for themselves. Likewise, each of us must eat the bread of life for ourselves. Our Bible study teachers may teach us about the bread in such a way that causes us to realize our hunger, and our pastors may talk about how the bread will affect our daily lives, but they will never be able to gather it and swallow it for us. The responsibility falls on us to feed ourselves, and no one can do it for us.

Consider the following questions.

- How are you gathering what you need?
- Have you relied on anyone else to give you the bread of life?
- What changes do you need to make to feed on the bread of life daily?

DAY THREE

Read Exodus 16:19-36.

What was the specific command regarding gathering manna on the sixth day (verse 19)?

Read Exodus 16:23 and fill in the blanks:

He said to them, "This is what the Lord commanded: 'Tomorrow is to be a day of _____ rest, a holy _____ to the Lord.'

Many of us know the Sabbath is mentioned in the Ten Commandments. Read Exodus 20:8-11. Isn't it interesting that the Lord instituted the Sabbath before giving the Ten Commandments? It's also interesting to note that the principle of the Sabbath stretches back to the beginning of time, literally!

Read Genesis 1:31-2:3.

God finished the work, then kicked back, put His feet up and rested. The Hebrew word for "rested" in Genesis 2:2 is "shabath," and it means "to cease, desist and rest" (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance).

Up until their rescue from Egypt, all the Israelites had ever known was work – every single day of their lives was spent working and toiling and striving for the Egyptians. Then the God of their ancestors intervened and not only provided for them a way of escape, but also provided water in the desert, food in the mornings, and now, rest.

The Lord taught them several valuable lessons through the manna:

- *God provides*
They never had to worry where they were going to get their food for the day. It was there, every morning as He promised.
Describe how God has provided for you in an unlikely situation.
- *God is trustworthy*
They never had to worry that God wasn't true to His Word. He said the manna wouldn't be there on the Sabbath—and it wasn't.
How do you know God is trustworthy?
- *God grants rest*
Rest in His faithfulness, in His Word, and in His provision.
Describe how you implement rest into your schedule. (*If you have a difficult time resting, consider writing a plan that includes deliberate rest sometime in the next week, and consider how you can implement it into a regular routine.*)

God gave the Israelites the gift of the manna and the gift of the Sabbath. It is the Lord who provides both sustenance and rest.

Write out Matthew 11:28.

Describe how Jesus' words reflect the story of manna and resting on the Sabbath.

How can you be deliberate about gathering manna and seeking rest?

DAY FOUR

Read Exodus 17:1-7 and answer the following questions.

Are you surprised by the Israelites' response in verses 1-3? Why or why not?

What do you find most surprising about this passage?

List some of the evidence of God's provision the Israelites could have chosen to remember that would have prevented their doubt and grumbling.

It's easy to point the finger at the Israelites for their annoying habit of quickly forgetting what the Lord had done for them. However, if we are honest with ourselves, we will admit that we, too, are capable of displaying the same level of forgetfulness and grumbling.

Take a moment and make a short list of things the Lord has done for you and write a quick prayer of gratitude. The surest way to guard against grumbling is to choose deliberate gratefulness instead.

While the people seemed to be getting quite used to grumbling, Moses seemed to be getting used to crying out to the Lord. **When Moses cried out, what did the Lord instruct him to do (verses 5-6)?**

It is worthwhile to point out the parallels between this incident and what we encounter as Christ followers. **Read the following statements, then read the corresponding verses that highlight the same truth in the New Testament.**

God provided for His children in the middle of the desert – *Philippians 4:19*.

God provided water so His children would live – *John 7:37-39*.

Describe how God has provided for you in a desert season.

Read Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 10:1-4. What did the rock in Exodus represent?

DAY FIVE

Read Exodus 17:8-16 and note what stands out to you in this passage.

The Amalekites were the direct descendants of Isaac's son, Esau. You may recall the story in Genesis of Esau selling his birthright to his brother, Jacob. The bitterness, resentment, and envy Esau felt toward his brother Jacob multiplied through the generations, and the Amalekites opposed Jacob's descendants and ruthlessly attacked them in the desert. This was the first war the Israelites fought.

For a bit more insight into the Amalekites, read Deuteronomy 25:17-18.

We can infer several essential points about the Israelites' enemy from this passage.

Consider the following:

- They cleverly snuck up on the Israelites and took them by surprise.
- They attacked those who were weary, worn, and were lagging behind.
- They did not fear God.

What does 1 Peter 5:8 tell us about our enemy? What similarities do you see in the account of the Amalekites and our enemy?

How can you become more aware of the enemy's schemes so that he can't take you by surprise?

Are you currently in relationships with other believers with whom you can confide in, pray with, and receive encouragement from so you won't become weary and worn?

When the Israelites grew weary and tired during the battle with the Amalekites, they would have received encouragement and the will to continue by simply lifting their eyes to the hill. There they would see Moses holding high the staff of God with arms reaching toward heaven. This would have been a visual reminder of all the miraculous signs and divine interventions God had already performed on their behalf. The fact that the Israelites were winning when Moses' hands were raised and losing when they were not would have proven their victory was due to divine intervention. Mere physical strength did not win the battle.

What helps you remember the battles you have won with God's divine help?

Read Exodus 17:13 and fill in the blank.

So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the _____.

The Israelites needed divine intervention to defeat the enemy; so do we.

Joshua fought with the sword; you and I must learn to fight with weapons that have divine power (2 Corinthians 10:4-5), namely, we fight with the sword of the Spirit – the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17).

It is worth noting that Moses wasn't standing on the hill alone. Aaron and Hur were there to steady his hands when he grew tired. None of us were meant to fight the enemy alone. Make it a priority to surround yourself with like-minded followers of God who will hold you up when you are tired and whom you can help in their battles as well.