

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Good morning church,

Praying everyone is well this Sunday morning, I am sure many of you have heard that the cases of Covid continue to rise in Santa Cruz County -

Please continue to pray for those affected by the pandemic as well as those affected by the unrest in our country.

Pray that the Lord may bring comfort to our nation.

Open up your bible to Exodus 17,

In our study this morning, we are going to see the Lord continue to deliver the Children of Israel – He is going to do it twice.

But this time, He is going to use human instruments to deliver them.

And we will see that after both instances, He will still get all the glory.

Let's pray...

[Exo 17:1-16 NKJV] 1 Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of

the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but [there was] no water for the people to drink.

I want to draw your attention to the last portion of verse one.

According to the commandment of the Lord – but there was no water for the people to drink.

Where the Children of Israel lost? No

God was the one that leading the Children out of Egypt.

He was the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

When He moved – they moved.

And here in chapter 17, God is the one who has led them to Rephidim – which actually means resting place – the only problem is that there is absolutely no water and that is a major problem when you are wandering through a hot desert.

So the question becomes – why would God lead two million people into the desert to a place where there was no water.

It is the same reason that the Lord led them into the canyon a few chapters ago when they were trapped by the Red Sea.

You see, This was another object lesson for the Children of Israel –

The Children of Israel were led to a place where there was a lack.

They were led to a place where there was a need.

And now, the Lord is going to show them that He will supply that need.

Church, I am pretty sure that we all can look back at periods during our walk with Christ – periods where there was a lack.

Maybe it was period where we were struggling financially – a loss of a job – we couldn't make ends meet.

Maybe it was a period where we lacked good health

Maybe it was a time where we felt that everyone around us had abandoned us.

These are the times God wants to show Himself sufficient for our needs.

Always remember, He brings us into places of need: so that we will call upon Him in our weakness and He will be glorified when He delivers us.

[Psa 50:15 NKJV] 15 Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me."

Our problem is that we daily calling until we have exhausted every other means – and then we resort to complaining – just like we will see the Children of Israel do here in our text.

2 Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink." So Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?"

Two weeks ago in our study through Ch 15, the Children of Israel had come across bitter water in their travel through the desert - and God made that water drinkable and sweet by having a tree thrown into it – I stated that the tree was a picture of the cross.

One would think that because God had provided water for them already that they He would do it again if they call upon Him right???

The problem for the Children of Israel is that the circumstances are not the same as they were in Marah.

At Marah – there was plenty of water – it just wasn't drinkable.

Here in Rephidim, there is no water.

The need is the same – no drinkable water

The God is the same –

But the circumstances are more severe here – therefore, their faith is being tested a little more.

In the same way, we will find that our trials will tend to get more severe as we walk in the Lord.

Sometimes we have to go through the same trials to see if we have learned from them.

And other times, the intensity of the trial is taken up a notch.

That is the testing of our faith.

If I want to build muscles – I am not going to be able to do it lifting up a 5 lb dumbbell – I am going to start lifting the heavier ones.

[Psa 66:10-12 NKJV] 10 For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined. 11 You brought us into the net; You laid affliction on our backs. 12 You have caused men to ride over our heads; We went through fire and through water; But You brought us out to rich [fulfillment].

So the Children of Israel began to not only demand water from Moses – they also tempted the Lord and we will see what that involves later on in verse 7.

3 And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, "Why [is] it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"

Here we find the Children of Israel complaining once again.

They grumbled – they murmured.

This isn't the first time they complained.

They complained back in chapter 14 – when they were trapped in the canyon – and God delivered them.

They complained in chapter 15 when they didn't have any drinkable water – and God provided for them drinkable water.

They complained in our study last week in chapter 16 because they had no food and God rained down manna for them

And now they complain because they have no water.

Their complaints sound reasonable? They are in the desert – it is hot – they need water to survive.

But is it the right thing to do???

Listen to the words that Paul writes – in his letter to the Philippian church

[Phi 2:14-15 NKJV] 14 Do all things without complaining and disputing, 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,

Paul makes the point that it is wrong to complain.

Not only does he say it is wrong to complain – he says that it is harmful to complain.

Harmful to our own spiritual walk and harmful to those that look at how we respond to adversity.

You see – what Paul is telling the church is “What kind of a light can we be to people when we don’t believe that God can take care of us?” – and that is what we do when we complain.

Our lack of faith in God is revealed through our complaining.

So don’t complain -

4 So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!"

One of the characteristics of Moses is that he repeatedly took his difficulties before the Lord.

The Children of Israel are blaming him for the lack of water and their complaining has turned to anger and they are ready to kill Moses.

5 And the LORD said to Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. 6 "Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in 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.

The Lord tells Moses to use the rod in his hand – the same rod that he used to turn the Nile River into blood.

And He tells Moses to strike a particular rock in Horeb with the rod –

Now, this makes absolutely no sense to us because a rock cannot be penetrated by a rod – it doesn't matter how hard someone may strike it.

Also, it doesn't make sense that water will come out of a rock – especially in the middle of the desert.

We get a little more insight on this event in the Psalm 78 -

[Psa 78:15-16 NKJV] 15 He split the rocks in the wilderness, And gave [them] drink in abundance like the depths. 16 He also brought streams out of the rock, And caused waters to run down like rivers.

A couple of things to realize:

1. One thing is that this was no trickle of water. It wasn't like a well that you could get a pail full of water from. No, this ran like "rivers." Remember, there were several million Israelites, along with all of their livestock – all of them needed a source of water.

2. Another thing to realize is that the Israelites would be in this general region for the next eleven months or so. I asked you to make a note of the location of the rock - this is another name for Mt. Sinai.

This was supposed to be a continual source of water for about a year.

Once we get to chapter 19, they are not going to move anymore in the book of Exodus, or in the book of Leviticus – it will be until the book of Numbers that they start to move toward the Promised Land.

So Moses gathered the elders and obeyed the Lord by striking it with his rod and life giving water came out of the rock.

Now, Paul wrote about the rock that Moses struck.

Turn with me to 1 Cor 10

[1Co 10:1-4 NKJV] 1 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, 2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

The spiritual drink is what we are studying this morning and Paul says that the rock was Jesus.

So what we have here in Exodus 17, is a picture of the death of Jesus Christ who was stricken so that we can have life.

Remember that Moses' staff brought forth blood and water...

And when we read the account of the death of our Savior in the gospel of John, it says that after Jesus cries out "It is finished!",

(John 19:34 NKJV) But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

Later on in the book of Numbers, we are going to see a similar situation with the Children of Israel complaining to Moses once again that there is no water and Moses goes before the Lord and the Lord commands Moses to speak to the Rock but Moses disobeys and strikes it.

Because Moses disobeyed, striking the rock and not simply speaking to it, he and Aaron were prohibited from entering the Promised Land.

Because he misrepresented the Lord and His grace to the nation.

7 So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

The names Massah and Meribah mean testing and contention – this incident is going to be mentioned several times in the scriptures – including a few places in the Psalms -

Turn with me to Psalm 95

[Psa 95:1-11 NKJV] 1 Oh come, let us sing to the LORD! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. 2 Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. 3 For the LORD [is] the great God, And the great King above all gods. 4 In His hand [are] the deep places of the earth; The heights of the hills [are] His also. 5 The sea [is] His, for He made it; And His hands formed the dry [land]. 6 Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. 7 For He [is] our God, And we [are] the people of His pasture, And the sheep of His hand. Today, if you will hear His voice: 8 "Do not harden your hearts, as in the **rebellion, As [in] the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 When your fathers **tested Me**; **They tried Me**, though they saw My work. 10 For forty years I was grieved with [that] generation, And said, 'It [is] a people who go astray in their hearts, And they do not know My ways.' 11 So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'** "

These people knew better.

They had "seen God's work".

They had seen the miracles performed in the land of Egypt.

They had been delivered from the plague of the death of the First Born.

They had seen the Red Sea part.

They had tasted the bitter waters that were made sweet.

They had been fed manna in the wilderness.

So now that they are faced with another trial, what do they do?

They begin to question God's faithfulness – they accuse Him of abandoning them.

They tempt God by asking Him to prove Himself to them.

Instead of asking, trusting, and praising, they chose to complain.

So God meets their need by giving them water.

8 Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

Now, if you have been with us through our studies in 1 and 2 Samuel, the name Amalek should be very familiar.

These were descendants of Esau.

They were nomadic people who we will read in the book of Numbers that they would engage the Children of Israel by striking them from the rear.

They would attack the old, the weak and the vulnerable ones from the tribes.

Notice that they were the ones that engaged the Israelites.

The Israelites did not go into their territory – The Amalekites were the aggressors.

9 And Moses said to Joshua, "Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand."

This is the same Joshua that is going to lead the Children of Israel into the Promised Land.

Here he is just a young general and Moses commands him to gather up some of the guys to fight the Amalekites.

Now, the Children of Israel were not warriors – they had no hand to hand combat training – they had been slaves for 400 years – all they knew how to do was to make bricks.

10 So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

The implication here is that Moses has gone up the hill with Aaron and Hur to get a birds eye view of the battle that is going to take place and he is going to intercede on their behalf.

So as Moses raised his hands in prayer with the rod of God in his hands, the Children of Israel would be winning and when his arms got tired and he dropped his arms, the Amalekites would start to prevail.

12 But Moses' hands [became] heavy; so they took a stone and put [it] under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

Here in verse 12, we have an example of Godly encouragement.

Aaron and Hur they see that Moses is struggling to keep his arms up in prayer and notice what they did –

They took the stone for Moses to sit on – they didn't simply direct him to a rock to sit on or they didn't all him over to sit on their rock.

They helped Moses exactly where he was standing.

In other words, they accommodated him.

They also come along him and supported his arms – in other words, they strengthen his ministry.

You see, Moses' ministry involved holding up his hands in prayer -

They didn't discourage him to change his ministry – they helped him.

And notice that they stayed there until the job was finished – They didn't leave the job unfinished.

As believers, we know that we are supposed to pray continuously, we now that we are supposed to have fervent prayers; we know that we should be praying with passion.

And the truth is sometimes we grow weary.

But we have to remember that we can't do it alone.

We need to cultivate people who will come alongside us and pray with us, especially when we are engaged in battle.

13 So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

Despite the intercession of Moses upon the hill, notice that Joshua still had to fight.

The battle was won with prayer, but also through normal instruments – Joshua and his men.

I knew of an individual who would ask for prayers all the time.

He was having a hard time looking for work.

So, we would pray for him every week, after about 6 months, I asked if he had been submitting resumes or filling out applications anywhere and he responded with, "no"

I think sometimes we make the mistake as Christians in thinking that everything is going to be fixed by prayer and only by prayer.

This battle wasn't going to be won with just Moses standing on the hilltop with his hands up. Joshua had to take his army out and lop off a few heads.

On the other hand, victory certainly wasn't coming from Joshua's sword alone. It required BOTH prayer and action.

14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this [for] a memorial in the book and recount [it] in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." 15 And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-LORD-Is-My-Banner; 16 for he said, "Because the LORD has sworn: the LORD [will have] war with Amalek from generation to generation."

An altar usually means sacrifice, but this may have been more of a memorial.

"Banner" can be translated lifted high.

Moses thus commemorated the method God used to defeat the Amalekites - the hand lifted high holding the rod.

The war with Amalek would go on for centuries - but their ultimate defeat was never in doubt.

In Conclusion -

In Exodus 17 we see examples of God's power and man's effort working together.

Moses struck the rock; but only God could bring the water.

Joshua fought, Moses prayed, but only God gave the victory over Amalek.

In it all, God received the glory.

It wasn't Israel is my banner or Moses is my banner or Joshua is my banner; rather it was Yahweh-Nissi: THE-LORD-IS-MY-BANNER.

Amen

Let's pray...

