

BITTER SWEET

Exodus 15:22-26

SUMMARY...

After 400 years of being enslaved in brutal bondage to the many Pharaohs of Egypt, God has rescued His people. He not only rescued His people through the Red Sea in the most miraculous of ways, but He rescued His people into right relationship with Him. Fresh off of signing songs of praise and adoration for all He had done for them, the people begin the journey towards the promise land. But the path towards the promise land is through the desert. After being without water for 3-days, the people of God expressed bitter complaint towards Moses, asking him 'What are we going to drink?'.

Rather than 'cry out' to God, the people of God choose to 'complain' to Moses. Thankfully, Moses models what the response of a 'rescued person' shall be when he cries out to God for help. And in God's grace, He miraculously provides sweet water for a people that bitterly complained.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER...

1. How do 'rescued people' live? What characteristics do you envision being present in the life of one who has been 'rescued' by God into right relationship with God?
2. Why does the process of sanctification {growing to look more like Jesus} often require us to go through the desert? What is it about 'desert seasons' that refine and purify us? How has God used the 'desert season' to help grow and mature you?
3. Complaining seems to come naturally to us. It's often our first response when something happens that we don't like – why is this? If we know complaining does not accomplish anything for anyone, why do we do it?
4. When the people complained against Moses, rather than join in the complaining, Moses 'cried out to God' for help. What will it take in our lives to see that 'crying out' to God will always be better than giving voice to our bitter complaints? What are the things you complain about most? And how might you begin 'crying out' to God in these things rather than complaining about them?
5. What do we learn about God – who He and His character - in His response to Moses's prayer for help? How should God's response (really, His character) shape how we live our day to day lives?
6. Why is our memory of God so crucial to our ability to 'cry out' to God? What practical things can you do to remember all that God has done?

BIBLICAL TEXTS CITED...

*“I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously... The Lord is my strength and my song; he has given me victory. This is my God, and I will praise him. Who is like you among the gods, O Lord— glorious in holiness, awesome in splendor, performing great wonders?... With your unfailing love you lead the people you have redeemed.” **Exodus 15:1-2, 11, 13 (NLT)***

*“I don’t want you to forget, dear brothers and sisters, about our ancestors in the wilderness long ago. All of them were guided by a cloud that moved ahead of them, and all of them walked through the sea on dry ground... These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age.” **1 Corinthians 10:1-2, 11 (NLT)***

*Then Moses led the people of Israel away from the Red Sea, and they moved out into the desert of Shur. They traveled in this desert for three days without finding any water. When they came to the oasis of Marah, the water was too bitter to drink. So they called the place Marah (which means “bitter”). Then the people complained and turned against Moses. “What are we going to drink?” they demanded. So Moses cried out to the Lord for help, and the Lord showed him a piece of wood. Moses threw it into the water, and this made the water good to drink. It was there at Marah that the Lord set before them the following decree as a standard to test their faithfulness to him. He said, “If you will listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his sight, obeying his commands and keeping all his decrees, then I will not make you suffer any of the diseases I sent on the Egyptians; for I am the Lord who heals you.” **Exodus 15:22-26 (NLT)***

QUOTES...

- “Going through the wilderness was not necessary for Israel’s salvation, but it was necessary for their sanctification.” Philip Ryken – Saved for God’s Glory
- WHEN GOD IS FORGOTTEN, COMPLAINING WILL BE PRESENT
- GOD MADE BITTER WATER SWEET FOR A BITTER PEOPLE

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