

Exodus 14-16 • Deliverance and Unbelief

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Exodus, chapter 14. We get in some pretty dramatic stuff. This is the stuff movies are made of, with Charlton Heston and stuff like that. Anyway, let's pray.

Father, as we get into Your Word tonight, we just pray for Your Holy Spirit to minister that Word to each heart. We pray that You would speak to us. We pray that You would minister grace to us and that You would help us to apprehend what is here, what is in the Word and what is needed for our lives.

Father, we believe that spending time in the Word like we do, nourishes us spiritually, and emotionally, and Lord, even physically. And we just pray for that nourishment that comes from the Scripture, the bread of life.

We look to You, Lord, to feed us this day. We lay these things at Your feet. In Jesus name, amen. Amen.

Chapter 14 begins by saying, “*Then the LORD said to Moses, ² “Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea.” (ESV)*

Now, you might remember, those of you that were with us last week, I put a map up on the screen, which I'm not going to do tonight. But I showed my guess on the way the Israelites made their way out of Egypt, toward the Red Sea and that sort of thing. And I told you that it was just a guess because we don't know exactly where all these things took place, precisely. Even though we've got in verse 2, you'll notice 3 geographical markers. Did you catch that?

I mean, we're told here that they were, the Lord told Moses “*to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-hahiroth, (and) between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon;*” And you might say, well, wow, with all those markers, you should know, you should be able to figure out exactly where this is.

Well, the problem is all three of those places no longer exist. And archaeological digs have been inconclusive as to the precise location. And we've

been able to identify some, in fact many of the biblical locations. But others are still unknown, and these are unknown. But I mean, think about it, we're talking like 3,500 years, and that's a lot of time for something, a city, or an area to come and go. And so we're not exactly sure where these things are located, but we just know it's somewhere around the Red Sea.

But even the Red Sea, in ancient literature, there's whole areas around there that are referred to as the Red Sea that are no longer called that today. Anyway, it's challenging.

But anyway, verse 3 goes on and says, *“For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, ‘They are wandering in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.’⁴ And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, (that means the army) and the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD.”* (and then it says) *And they did so.”*

We talked in detail about the whole issue of Pharaoh's heart being hardened, so if that's an ongoing challenge for you, I would encourage you to go back over some of those original studies.

Verse 5, *“When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, ‘What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?’⁶ So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him,⁷ and took six hundred chosen chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them.”*

Apparently you had chosen chariots and then just the regular chariots. I suppose it was last year's model or something like that. I don't know exactly, but you have to remember something about ancient warfare at that time, chariots at this particular point in time, were what made an army strong. So if you had chariots, it was like today, countries who have the bomb, who have nuclear weapons are considered, the tough guys on the block. And it was chariots back in that day.

It goes on in verse 8 and it says, *“And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the people of Israel while the people of Israel were going out defiantly.⁹ The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.*

¹⁰ *When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly.”*

We're going to talk about this as we go on here tonight, because this is one of the first of many statements that is given to us here concerning the nation of Israel, related to their time in the wilderness, where they speak words of unbelief and fear.

And truly, this is a time of testing. Verse 11, *“They said to Moses, “Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? (and listen to this) ¹² Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.””*

This is a pretty incredible statement, but it tells us quite a bit about just I think our human nature, when we begin to fear. We lose the perspective of understanding our circumstances in a true and rightful way when fear begins to overtake us. And don't think that people don't realize that, whether you're talking about the government, or Satan himself, or whatever.

When fear begins to rise up, we will do all kinds of crazy things. Do you guys remember just 4 years ago when the circus came to town? Fear rose up all across the world, and all across our country, and people were willing to give up anything for the sake of their fear. And they will lose all perspective. They will lose all faith and trust in God.

Here are the Israelites, they had watched God do all of those incredible miracles in Egypt. Every plague that was brought against the Egyptians, and here they are facing a difficulty to be sure. I mean, you turn around and you see all of Pharaoh's army with all of his chariots rumbling across the wilderness, kicking up all that dust and whatever, and they're coming this way. And yeah, that can be a very frightening sort of a picture.

And you all know what it's like to have frightening pictures come into your life, whether it's a... Anything, you know what I'm talking about, I don't have to give you examples. The question is when that happens, what is going to be your response?

This is a classic case of allowing their sight to be fixed upon the threat rather than the Lord. And that's the key, that's really what it comes down to. Because we've all faced fearful things in our lives, all of us. And the question always comes up. Are you going to stare that threat in the face, and sit, and fixate on it? Or are you going to turn your eyes to the Lord? That's the question, that's what it comes down to. And I want you to notice, so there's the people's response.

Now notice Moses's response, verse 13. *“And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, (boy that’s important) and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. ¹⁴ The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.”* Or as some Bibles say, *“you need only be still,”* the Lord is going to do this.

What is Moses response? At least somebody has taken into consideration all that the Lord has done up to this point. And is absolutely certain that God is not, hasn't brought them this far just to release them into the hands of Pharaoh and his army.

And notice verse 15. Now, apparently, Moses had begun to intercede in prayer regarding all these people, freaking out. And it says there that, *“The LORD said to Moses, “Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. ¹⁶ Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. ¹⁷ And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. ¹⁸ And the Egyptians shall know that I am (YAHWEH) the LORD, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.*

¹⁹ Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, ²⁰ coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night.”

During the night, the people are passing through the water or what is the divided seas, and the whole Egyptian army is unable to move because there's a fiery barrier, if you will, as God is holding them back.

“²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. ²² And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.”

Can you imagine what that must have been like? I mean, that alone is going to take some faith. The Lord begins to separate the waters and you see this wall of water on both sides, and you're thinking, okay, we're going to go through here. And we got a lot of children, we got a lot of animals, we got a lot of elderly and they aren't moving too quick. And we know the group is only going to go as fast as the slowest member. And so here we go. We're going to say, who knows?

They probably took all night to go through there. But what a step of faith that is to just say, Lord keep holding this back here because we're coming through.

Verse 23, *“The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. ²⁴ And in the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, ²⁵ clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. (they're not moving very quickly at all) And the Egyptians said, “Let us flee from before Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians.””*

I find this a little bit humorous, I have to tell you. That this is the point where they're thinking, maybe this isn't such a great idea. They have to get in the midst of the thing where their chariots aren't working very well, the wheels aren't turning, they're getting slowed down. I don't know about you guys, this looks like a big fat mouse trap to me. But yet, they don't have any problem with this big, huge wall of fire that separates them from the Israelite people all night long.

They have no problem looking at the Red Sea that has been parted, and there's a wall of water on each side. And they're just thinking to themselves, well, we're going across, too. And nobody stopped to say, I don't know, guys, what happens if their God decides He's not going to hold back the water once we get in the middle? It's really kind of funny that when hardness of heart takes over someone, it's kind of just like fear, you all perspective and rational thinking just seems to go out the window, but there you go.

And it says in verse 26, *“Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.” ²⁷ So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the LORD threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. ²⁸ The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained. ²⁹ But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.*

³⁰ Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. ³¹ Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.”

And they never ever doubted again. Oh, wait, that's not in there, is it? Wouldn't that be, I mean, it's the way we'd love to read it. And after a miracle like that, you would expect it to say something like that. All we have to do is get into the next chapter.

“Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the LORD, saying, ‘I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.’” Anyone have a song going through their head? Yeah, me too.

I remember those early days, when we'd be singing every song we sang in church, I'm talking back, this is just after Noah got off the ark. And we would, all the songs we sang in church, I think every single song, was right out of the Scripture, right out of the Word of God. And even if the words didn't rhyme, it didn't matter because we were just singing the Scripture.

And so this is what you call, singing a new song. The Psalms talk about this, sing to the Lord a new song. And what that means basically is just sing a word of praise and it's whatever praise is going on in your life. Whatever's happening right now. Just sing it out to the Lord, make up the lyrics and sing. Some of you can't sing to save your lives. That's okay. God won't..., He'll still accept it, I promise, even though you can't carry a tune in a bucket. But they're just, they're singing away.

“The LORD (verse 2) is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him. ³ The LORD is a man of war; the LORD (YAHWEH) is his name.

⁴ “Pharaoh's chariots and his host he cast into the sea, and his chosen officers were sunk in the Red Sea. ⁵ The floods covered them; they went down into the depths like a stone.”

Wouldn't it have been fun to hear the Israelites singing these things? Just the tune, it's like, yeah, catchy tune. You can dance to it. I like it. It's good. They go on. They're not done yet.

“⁶ Your right hand, O LORD, glorious in power, your right hand, ...” Your right hand, and by the way, the right hand is always the hand of power. Right. Always. Well, the right anything. When a man would have his firstborn son, he would call him the son of my right hand because he was the first sign of the father's strength again. Okay. Where is Jesus seated? At the right hand of the

Father. At the power of the throne of God, so those things are consistent through the Scriptures. This is what they're talking about.

He says, we're at the end of verse 6. “...*O LORD, shatters the enemy.*”

⁷ In the greatness of your majesty you overthrow your adversaries; you send out your fury; it consumes them like stubble. ⁸ At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up; the floods stood up in a heap; the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea.

⁹ The enemy said, ‘I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my desire shall have its fill of them. I will draw my sword; my hand shall destroy them.’

¹⁰ You blew with your wind; the sea covered them; they sank like lead in the mighty waters.”

You might be wondering if in the Hebrew, these lyrics rhyme. But they don't because you know why? Hebrew poetry didn't have to rhyme. That's a more modern sort of a thing. In Hebrew poetry, rather than things rhyming, they would use a feature called parallelism where they would make a statement and then repeat that statement with just different words. That was poetic. And so this is what you're seeing and you see it, of course, repeat through the Book of Psalms and even the Book of Proverbs. Yeah, all right. Am I at verse 11?

“Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders? ¹² You stretched out your right hand; the earth swallowed them.

¹³ “You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed; you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode. ¹⁴ The peoples have heard; they tremble; pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia. ¹⁵ Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed; trembling seizes the leaders of Moab; all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away.”

Now they're saying this really before the fact, but the fact of the matter is when they get to the promised land and they begin to spy out the land for the second time, they're going to find out that the people of Canaan still remembered this very event. And so it was true that this message had gotten throughout that entire region and everybody knew.

¹⁶ Terror and dread fall upon them; because of the greatness of your arm, (remember, arm is always strength) they are still as a stone, till your people,

O LORD, pass by, till the people pass by whom you have purchased. ¹⁷ You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain, the place, O LORD, which you have made for your abode, the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established. ¹⁸ The LORD will reign forever and ever.” And there's the end of the song, that particular song.

And then we're told in verse 19. *“For when the horses of Pharaoh with his chariots and his horsemen went into the sea, the LORD brought back the waters of the sea upon them, but the people of Israel walked on dry ground in the midst of the sea.”* That's given to us as a redundancy there.

And then we find out that *“²⁰ ... Miriam the prophetess, (she is called) the sister of Aaron, (obviously also the sister of Moses) took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and dancing. ²¹ And Miriam sang to them:*

“Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.”

²² Then Moses made Israel set out from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur. They went three days in the wilderness (uh oh) and found no water.”

How long does it take to go from singing songs of praise to an attitude of unbelief? Well, it takes 3 days and no water. And now we know, now we know. Here we go.

Verse 23, *“When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter; (and that's what that Marah means) therefore it was named Marah. ²⁴ And the people grumbled against Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?” ²⁵ And he cried to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a log, and he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet.”*

You might say, well I want to get me one of those logs. No, there wasn't anything special about the log at all. It was just happened to be the symbol or the touch point of faith. We talked about touch points of faith many times throughout the years. Remember the woman who came to Jesus with the internal bleeding and she said, if I just touch the hem of His garment, I will be healed.

Well, what was special about the hem of His garment? We talked about that. Nothing. What was special was her touch point of faith. She said, if I do this, I

will be healed so that was her touch point. She could have created any touch point. In fact, she could have created a point of faith that developed no touch at all.

She could have said, the moment my eyes are laid on Him, I'll be healed. It didn't matter, you see, because God is not limited to touch points, our touch points. They're for us. Those are for you and me. We do those things and God honors them.

He didn't have to have Moses throw a log in the water. There wasn't anything... He could have just said, Mo, just wave your staff over the water and it'll be fine. The people probably wouldn't have gone for it because you've got to see something, they have to see something happening. Anyway, it happened and it was..., and it happens later on in the Bible too, I think with Elisha.

We're in the middle of verse 25 and this is interesting because it says. *“There the LORD made for them a statute (your Bible may say, decree) and a rule, (and look at this) and there he tested them,²⁶ saying, “If you will diligently listen to the voice of the LORD your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, (this is a preamble that we often hear when the law is given, He says) I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, your healer.”*

What is it that God is saying to Israel here? Well, it's very simple. He's simply saying obedience to commands and statutes, which He is, of course, going to lay out for them when they get to Sinai. He's saying He will bring healing to the community of Israel, but it is obedience here, right? That's the deal.

The whole course of the Sinai Covenant or what we call the Law of Moses was all based on obedience. God said, obey Me, follow My laws and statutes and I will, and then He laid out these things.

But remember we told you, and we've said this many times over the years, every element of the covenant promises that God made with Israel was physical. Whether it was physical healing, like He's mentioning here, or it was physically the land. It was the produce of the land. It was their children in the land. It was enemies who would come against them and threaten them in the land. These were physical promises.

If you obey Me, I will keep the locusts from your crops. If you obey Me, I will keep the hail and the drought from, you know, dah, dah, dah. And everything was physical. It was all physical. It was geographical and physical, right?

But this is where Christians Really mess up. We want some of this. And so some Christians, some groups within Christianity have developed a theological position, where all of the promises that were made to Israel become part of what is promised now to the church. Okay.

In other words, the church or the body of Christ, if you will, supplants or replaces Israel. And that word, replaces, is key. And that's where we get this idea that we call Replacement Theology. Okay. The body of Christ replaces Israel.

Well, it's just not biblical. It's just not biblical because what that theological position states is that we have a covenant that is made through Jesus Christ, which of course He inaugurated at the Last Supper. But we also have all of the benefits, and all of the promises, and all of the blessings of the Mosaic Covenant as well. We have all of them. We get..., because we're the body of Christ, we've taken over for Israel. We have this, we have that, it's all part of, so they...

You got Christians who read passages like this and they'll say, well, this is just as true for the body of Christ as it was for Israel. You walk in obedience to God and He will always heal you. None of the diseases that were to happen to the Egyptians or whatever will come upon you because you're a believer in Jesus Christ and this is a covenant promise.

And what they ignore, and have ignored since the very beginning is that when God prophesied the new covenant in the old Testament, Jeremiah chapter 31. God very clearly said, I'm going to make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. And it will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers.

God spelled it out and said, the new covenant is not going to be like the old covenant. It's not going to be a physical geographical covenant.

Christians, we don't have physical promises baked into our covenant. Now, am I telling you God never promises physical things? No, I'm not saying that. God can make all the promises he wants to you and me that are of a physical nature. My point is, they're not baked into the covenant. In other words, they're not general promises for all time for all people in the body of Christ. That's what replacement theology teaches, and it's wrong. It's just flat out wrong. Okay.

People always get, you know, whenever I say this, I say that our covenant is not a physical covenant. People get angry with me and they write me nasty notes

and they say, well, but God promised my mother that He was going to physically heal her and He did it. And you're saying those physical promises aren't ours. I said, no, that's not what I said. I said, they're not in the covenant. Do you understand the difference?

God can single out anybody He wants to and make a promise that is unique. He can speak to any person. You're praying for a family member or whatever. He can speak to you and say, I promise I'm going to do this, and it could be a physical thing or I promise that you're going to be able to purchase this house. That's a physical thing.

God can say that if He wants to, but it's not a general promise for all people in the body of Christ. That's the point of this whole thing, right? There's a difference between promises, and covenant promises, very important. If you don't make that distinction, you're going to get sucked into false teachings in the body of Christ that make these sweeping general sorts of statements and it just draws people away.

Anyway, here are the people once again. This is test number 2, I suppose, with the waters of Marah. Verse 27 ends the chapter by saying, *“Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they encamped there by the water.”*

Chapter 16. *“They set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the people of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, ...”* Interesting name, isn't it, for the wilderness? Well, it has nothing to do with sin, S-I-N, as far as things that are done against the Lord. In fact, you can just correctly translate this as the wilderness of Zin, Z-I-N and some Bibles even do. But as we keep reading, we're going to find out that the wilderness of Sin is actually a fairly appropriate name. And it tells us that this was located *“...between Elim and Sinai, (so they're on their way to Mount Sinai) on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt.”*

Verse 2 says, *“And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, (which means, here we go again) ³ and the people of Israel said to them, “Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, (in other words, you're saying, would that God had killed us while we were still in Egypt) when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”*

Here we go. Test number 3. *“⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not. ⁵ On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily.” And that's so that they don't have to go out on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath.*

“⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, “At evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, ⁷ and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against the LORD. For what are we, that you grumble against us?” ⁸ And Moses said, “When the LORD gives you in the evening meat to eat and in the morning bread to the full, because the LORD has heard your grumbling that you grumble against him—what are we? Your grumbling is not against us but against the LORD.”

I want you to consider, if you're the kind of person who underlines things in your Bible and doesn't mind doing that, you might consider underlining that last statement. *“Your grumbling is not against us but against the LORD.”*

I looked up this Hebrew word and it's just what you expect it to be. It's also translated, murmuring. And all the occurrences of this word, believe it or not, except one, take place in the Books of Exodus and Numbers. And only one of them appears in the Book of Joshua.

And I want you to know something about the references to mumbling, and grumbling, and murmuring, is that it was never without reason. They had reason to grumble. Okay. The reason was they were fearful, they were thirsty, and there was no water, or they were hungry. That was the reason, okay?

When you say, well, they had no reason to, to grumble. Well, actually, they did. But, the sin of grumbling wasn't necessarily that they just grumbled. The sin of grumbling was the cause of the grumbling. What was the cause of the grumbling? It was unbelief. It was unbelief.

When they saw the Egyptian army coming at them, they freaked out and they chose unbelief over faith. And they started crying out and saying all that they did, we're going to die! When they found no water. But they gave into unbelief instead of putting their faith in God saying, hey, He's brought us this far, He's not going to abandon us now. They chose unbelief and that's the point. The people grumbled because they doubted God and they doubted because they

were not convinced of God's goodness or His power. Do you get that? They doubted because they were not fully convinced.

How many miracles does it take for somebody to get convinced, become convinced of God's power and might? How many miracles? The psalmist wrote about these very statements related to unbelief. I want to show you this on the screen from Psalm chapter 95. Now this is interesting.

Psalm 95:7-11 (ESV)

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness, when your fathers put me to the test and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work. For forty years I loathed that generation and said, "They are a people who go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways." Therefore I swore in my wrath, "They shall not enter my rest."

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness, when your fathers put me to the test and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work. For forty years I loathed that generation and said, "They are a people who go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways." Therefore I swore in my wrath, "They shall not enter my rest."

Wow. And then, you know, the author of Hebrews actually used this very Psalm when he wrote this on the screen.

Hebrews 3:12-19 (ESV)

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, (look at this) unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence (and that word confidence is just another word for faith) firm to the end.

And he goes on,

Hebrews 3:12-19 (ESV)

As it is said, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

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It all comes down to unbelief. You see, grumbling has a cause, has a root cause, and the root cause of grumbling is unbelief. Again, a refusal to recognize and embrace the truth, the power of God.

I had to address this from time to time. Remember when the Sadducees came to Him and they started telling him a story about some guy who'd been married to a woman and they didn't have any children. And then, because of the Jewish laws, the man's brother then took the woman and married her and who knows if this story was true or not, but they might be making it up.

Anyway, the point is that the end of the story says that she was married to all 7 of the brothers in this family and had no children by any of them. And then you remember they asked Him, they said, whose wife is she going to be in the resurrection?

Well, it's, it was a loaded question because first of all, the Sadducees didn't believe in a resurrection. They rejected the whole idea. And the whole thing was just to try to trap I and make Him look stupid. But I had a very interesting response to their whole story and their whole question it's from Matthew 22. Let me show you this on the screen.

Matthew 22:29 (ESV)

But I answered them, “You are wrong because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.”

But I answered them, “You are wrong because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.” In other words, you’re not taking into consideration the very power of God.

And can I ask you a question? How often do you think we as Christians fail to take into consideration the power of God? Right? Like maybe often? Like maybe every day? Yeah, I think so. We do the exact same thing that the Sadducees did.

The Lord would speak to us and say the same thing. Aren’t you incorrect about your assumption here or your reaction to this situation? Because you’re sitting here freaking out, but aren’t you in error about all of this because you’re simply not taking into consideration the very power of almighty God and His love for you.

And that’s why Moses and Aaron would regularly remind the people that when they grumbled, you’re not expressing disfavor with us, ultimately, it’s with God. Just remember that when you’re grumbling.

And I think that applies to us today. When you’re grumbling about your job, you’re grumbling about your house, your car, that dumb thing wasn’t running at all. And we’re grumbling and complaining and these are the things the Lord has given and we are expressing our disfavor with God Himself. And I believe that’s why the apostle wrote what he did in Philippians chapter 2. It says,

Philippians 2:14-15 (ESV)

Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,

Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,

I included the last part of that passage there, because what Paul is saying to the Philippians and what he’s saying to you and me is that when we refuse to grumble and complain like the rest of the world, it’s going to set you apart from the rest of the world, and it’s going to show that you’re different, you see? And that’s why he says there in that passage, so that “*you (might) shine as lights in the world.*”

All right, back to our text. Next, verse 9. *“Then Moses said to Aaron, ‘Say to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, ‘Come near before the LORD, for he has heard your grumbling.’”* Oh boy, I think I’d stay in my tent if I were you.

“¹⁰ And as soon as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. ¹¹ And the LORD said to Moses, ¹² ‘I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.’”

And it says,

“¹³ In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp. ¹⁴ And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground. ¹⁵ When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, ‘What is it?’” And by the way, that is manna. No, I don't mean, that's what it is. The word, manna, means, what is it? And so that's what they ended up calling it.

Can you imagine? Hey, would you pass the, what is it? That's basically what the... In the morning is like, pass the manna flakes, the what is it flakes, or whatever like that.

Anyway. So they said, what is it for? *“For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, ‘It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat.’”* Now remember, this is all, this is a picture, this is all a picture of Jesus.

You remember when Jesus is doing miracles and the people are there, they're saying we want a miracle. Moses gave the people manna in the wilderness. Why don't you do something like that? And He says, well, okay, first of all, it wasn't Moses who gave them manna in the wilderness, it was My Father in heaven. Secondly, He said, I am the bread from heaven. (John 6:51) I am the true bread that comes down from heaven.

He said, that's Me. That's Me. And so Jesus gave us a beautiful understanding of the fulfillment of that whole idea of our sustenance. I love that song we sing, This is My Daily Bread, Your Holy Word, and so forth. The Word of God, Jesus Christ, the Word of God, the bread from heaven. He says, *“It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat.”*

Verse 16. *“This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Gather of it, each one of you, as much as he can eat. You shall each take an omer, (and that’s about 2 quarts) according to the number of the persons that each of you has in his tent.’*

“¹⁷ And the people of Israel did so. They gathered, some more, some less. ¹⁸ But when they measured it with an omer, whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack. Each of them gathered as much as he could eat. ¹⁹ And Moses said to them, “Let no one leave any of it over till the morning.” ²⁰ But they did not listen to Moses. Some left part of it till the morning, and it bred worms and stank. (Boy that’s God getting His point across, isn’t it?) And Moses was angry with them. ²¹ Morning by morning they gathered it, each as much as he could eat; but when the sun grew hot, it melted.”

That is so cool. *“²² On the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers each. And when all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, ²³ he said to them, “This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD; bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over lay aside to be kept till the morning.’”* I bet some people were like, wait a minute, it’s going to stink again.

“²⁴ So they laid it aside till the morning, as Moses commanded them, and it did not stink, and there were no worms in it. ²⁵ Moses said, “Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field. ²⁶ Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is a Sabbath, there will be none.” What do you think is going to happen.

Verse 27, *“On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather, but they found none. ²⁸ And the LORD said to Moses, “How long will you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws? ²⁹ See! The LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days. Remain each of you in his place; let no one go out of his place on the seventh day.” ³⁰ So the people rested on the seventh day.”*

Now, you know, they're learning, aren't they? This is learning time, this whole time in the wilderness. In fact, the whole 40 years was just really a collective learning period for the people of Israel. What were they learning? Well, they're learning obedience. They're learning the difference between holiness and those things which are unholy. They're learning the difference between clean and unclean and all the other sorts of things that are going on and that the Lord is teaching them.

But some of this stuff is not coming quickly so God provides a double portion on the day before the Sabbath, so that they don't have to go out on the Sabbath day. They can do as the Lord told them to do, which is to rest and do no work.

And by the way, since we're talking about the Sabbath, I regularly get the question, are Christians today required to keep the Sabbath? Because, once again, there's a lot of confusion and people try to bring elements of the Old Covenant into the New Covenant, even though God says, the New is not going to be like the Old.

But anyway, if that's a question that you have had, I would encourage you I've written about this in great detail and explained how the Sabbath affects believers today. And if you simply go to our website, ccontario.com/blog. You're going to see a search area. Just put in the word, Sabbath, hit enter, and you'll see the article that was written related to that question. It gives all kinds of scripture and information. And there you go.

Verse 31. *“Now the house of Israel called its name manna. It was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.”* See? God doesn't mind us eating sweet things. There's proof, break out the brownies. Here we go. All right.

“³² Moses said, “This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Let an omer of it be kept throughout your generations, so that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.’” ³³ And Moses said to Aaron, “Take a jar, and put an omer of manna in it, and place it before the LORD to be kept throughout your generations.” ³⁴ As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron placed it before the testimony to be kept. ³⁵ The people of Israel ate the manna forty years, till they came to a habitable land. They ate the manna till they came to the border of the land of Canaan.”

And then we're told in verse 36, *“(An omer is the tenth part of an ephah.)”* Which means nothing to you. But as I said before, it's roughly 2 quarts. So there you go. And that's where we're going to stop for tonight.

So I tell you, isn't it just amazing that God just continues to love us? I mean, we are such a piece of work because, I don't know about you, but I can relate to the people of Israel. I don't look at the people of Israel and say, what a bunch of idiots. I look at the people of Israel and I go, yeah, that's us. That'd be me right there, doubting the Lord.

I've seen God do incredible things in my life. And I will still face difficult circumstances and have my little pity party, and my little freak out, and then wonder, oh, what's going to happen?

And you know what? When I finally get around to quieting my heart, the Lord always says the same thing to me. He says, have I not shown myself to be faithful? And every single time He says it, I have to say, yes, Lord, you have, forgive me for my unbelief.

Is it possible for a Christian to struggle at times with unbelief? Absolutely. Absolutely. Absolutely. Yep. Let's pray.

Father, we thank You so much. Lord, the study through Exodus has been delightful.

We thank You, God, for all the reminders. We're so thankful for being reminded, Lord, that nothing is impossible with You. You are able to accomplish so much more than we could even ask for or even imagine.

Father, I pray in Jesus name, that as we continue to build up our faith through the study of the Word and prayer, that Lord You would prepare us for those times of testing that come to all of us from time to time when the challenges of life and just living in a fallen world, those things touch us, they affect us.

But Lord, I pray that we would do as Moses exhorted the people of Israel, stand fast and see the salvation of the Lord.

We thank You. We praise You.

We worship You, in the name of Jesus, our Savior. And all God's people said together, amen.

God bless you.

Have a good rest of your evening.