

# Exodus 17-18 • Learning to trust the Lord

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Good to see you here tonight as we get into some more Exodus this evening, so open your Bible there to the Book of Exodus.

As I was going through and just studying out these 2 chapters that we're going to be covering tonight, I was thinking about all the things that the Lord was teaching the nation of Israel through these events. And there's just, there's a lot going on because God really had the nation of Israel in school. This is a time of learning. This is a time of figuring things out.

They've been 400 years in a pagan nation and they've gotten away from just their understanding of things. And frankly, the revelation that God had given up to this point was pretty meager. And they have not yet been given the law, the understanding of just the place of God in their lives.

You can't expect people to figure this stuff out on their own. And there was a great deal of just growing, and learning, and understanding also their response to Him in whatever circumstance they happen to be going through. And that's another thing that we as Christians also have to learn.

Now we usually pick it up, well, we pick it up largely from the people around us who are walking with the Lord. We see it in the Word of God obviously, but to see it exemplified is a very important thing to learn.

But as we get into chapter 17 here of Exodus, we're going to see the nation of Israel coming back around to experience a test that they've already experienced and have failed miserably. And let's see how they do this time and what the Lord wants to teach them through it, cause there are many lessons.

Chapter 17 begins by saying, *“All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the Lord, and camped at Rephidim, ...”* (ESV)

You can imagine that was a very lengthy experience just for the whole camp to move out when you've got a couple of million people and they go out in stages

according to their tribes. And we'll learn about that later. But this had to be just an enormous undertaking to move this incredibly large group of people.

And it says that when they came to that area of Rephidim and set up camp, “... *there was no water for the people to drink. <sup>2</sup> Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?”*”

But here's the question I have for you, as you're considering this passage, did the Lord know that there would be no water at Rephidim? Yeah, of course He did. Next question, why did the Lord lead them to Rephidim if He knew there wasn't water to take care of this group.

Well, the reason is obvious I think. This is a test of the emergency faith system and here we go, this is where we learn to rely on the Lord.

The reason I'm sharing this with you is because I want you to understand that there are going to be times when the Lord is going to lead you in a particular direction that He knows once you get there, there's going to be some lack. And He does that on purpose so that you will learn to trust in Him, to rely on Him.

The Bible tells us very clearly, the Lord tests us. And I know you probably don't like tests. Neither do I. I didn't like him in school. I don't like them ever since they got out of school. It doesn't matter, but the Lord tests us, and it's important that we understand those tests.

Verse 3, it says, “*But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?”*”

And that's a brazen thing to say, especially when God has shown them so many times and in so many ways His grace, and deliverance, and mercy. To say, “*Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children...*” I mean, that's just really in your face.

You'll notice Moses's response. It says, “*<sup>4</sup> So Moses cried to the LORD, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.”*” He was concerned, it looks like he might've even been afraid for his life.

“*<sup>5</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, “Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. <sup>6</sup> Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at*”

*Horeb, (and then He gives him these instructions) and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.” And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel.”*

And then we're told in verse 7 that, “...he called the name of the place *Massah and Meribah, ...*” And *Massah* means testing and *Meribah* means quarreling. Isn't that a great, he named that place, testing and quarreling?

And it says, “*because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the LORD by saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”*” And so what we have here, frankly, is another wholesale failure on the part of the people in terms of their response to this particular test of faith.

How do we see God responding to their failure? Well, we see Him being gracious. We see Him being faithful. We see Him being merciful, and we see Him bringing water for them quite miraculously.

I want you to notice how He went about this whole thing. Did you see, look again with me in verse 5. It says, “...*the LORD said to Moses, “Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. <sup>6</sup> Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, ...*”

This is what you may not know. Interestingly enough, *Horeb* means, the desolate place. Isn't that interesting? So He's got this double thing going on, this double sort of a test going on. They've already been without water. They've been complaining, and grumbling, and arguing, and saying all kinds of things that are frankly evil in and of themselves.

And God tells Moses to go stand on a place that means, the desolate place. And that's essentially where He has brought them, to the desolate place. And yet in the midst of the desolate place, this is where the Lord is going to provide, right?

Guys, don't miss this. In the midst of the desolate place, the Lord provides. Can I say that again? In the very midst of the desolate place, there the Lord provides. So many times we're looking for a recreation of the Garden of Eden, in answer to our prayers, whatever they may be. We want the circumstances to be just right, and to come together in just the right way, and to look all good, and promising, and so forth.

And God says, I want you to go stand in the desolate place and there I will provide. And so what happens there? He brings water out of a rock. And in case

you're wondering, here's a pro tip. Water doesn't come out of rocks, okay. You can try. Go split any rock you find, I guarantee you there won't be any water in there. This is a miracle.

God is supernaturally moving in the desolate place and in the midst of their desperation. Have you ever been desperate? Have you ever been going through a desolate place? I think we probably can all say yes.

When we get to the Book of Deuteronomy, we're going to read about this, and actually we're going to read about the song of Moses where he talks about the rock. And we're going to, when we get there, we're going to see these lyrics. Let me put these on the screen here for you, from Deuteronomy 32, it says,

**Deuteronomy 32:4 (ESV)**

*“The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.”*

*“The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. (who are we talking about? We're talking about) A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.”*

Now, why did I share that with you? Well, because we see here who the rock is, and that's important for you to see. God didn't tell Moses to go stand on a bush and the bush would bring forth water or something like that. He had him go and stand, on the mountain, and He brought water out of a rock.

Now you probably know, and I'm going to connect this for you, okay? Because here's the deal. Let me..., I'll just, spoiler alert. It all connects to Jesus. It all connects to Jesus.

You probably know that one of the annual feasts of Israel was The Feast of Tabernacles. And during that feast, they would commemorate their time in the wilderness and God's faithful provision for the nation of Israel during that entire 40 years.

But what you may not know, is that during The Feast of Tabernacles, there were certain rituals that they began to do during that feast to commemorate God's faithfulness. And one of the rituals was a daily progression of the people and they would go from the temple, they would go to the spring Gihon. And there, the priest would gather up some of the water from the spring in a golden pitcher, and they would all make their way back to the temple. And by the way, they're singing songs during this time taken right out of Isaiah, and that is significant.

In fact, let me show you this on the screen from Isaiah chapter 12. This is what they would sing. They would sing,

**Isaiah 12:3 (ESV)**

*With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*

With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

That was part of the lyric that they would be singing as they're joyfully making their way back to the temple. And once they got back to the temple, the priest would take that water that was in the golden thing, and he would pour it out on the altar. And it was a reminder of how God had brought water miraculously out of the rock. Okay, cool, right? Well, so there's the reminder.

Here's the cool part. Jesus found Himself in Jerusalem one time during The Feast of Tabernacles. And He had something to say to the people about Himself, not only during The Feast of Tabernacles, but also during the time of this demonstration of the pouring out of the water. It's recorded for us in John chapter 7 on the screen.

**John 7:37-38 (ESV)**

*On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"*

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And you see, that was well timed, because Jesus is the rock. And He is the rock who brings the living water in the greatest moment of desperation and desolation of our lives.

And I know that there are many of you who could stand up right now, and you could tell about a time in your life where you were going through the driest, dustiest, most desolate time of your entire existence, and God brought you to that place. He brought you to that desolate place and what He did is He opened up His heart, and He poured out living water, and you were born again. And what a beautiful thing. Is a wonderful testimony, but God is teaching this to the nation of Israel that He is their source.

I told you before that they sang from the Book of Isaiah, interesting. Here's a verse that's right next to the one that I showed you before. This is part of that same passage.

**Isaiah 12:2 (ESV)**

*“Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.”*

*“Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.”*

My deliverance. Isn't that beautiful? It's a wonderful testimony. It's a wonderful declaration. *“I will trust, and will not be afraid.”* The nation of Israel was failing on this point on several tests, but yet they're learning, they're in school. They're going through this educational process where God is training them to have faith and to trust in Him.

How many times has the Lord taken you through that same school of training? Where He's been teaching you to trust in Him and to hope in Him, no matter how desolate, no matter how difficult the situation, or the circumstances may be in your life.

All right, so we move on here. The people here, they've witnessed, God's powerful providential care for them in the midst of the wilderness, and yet another test is on the horizon.

Verse 8 says, *“Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim.”* And you should probably know the Amalekites were a nomadic people who lived in the southern desert region of Canaan. They were descendants of Esau through his son Eliphaz.

And it says here in verse 9. *“So Moses said to Joshua, (and by the way, this is the very first biblical mention of Joshua) “Choose for us men, and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.”<sup>10</sup> So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. (and it says)<sup>11</sup> Whenever Moses held up his hand, (and that means, held up the staff of God in his hand above his head, it says) Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed.*

<sup>12</sup> *But Moses' hands grew weary, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the*

*other on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.* <sup>13</sup> *And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword.*

<sup>14</sup> *Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, (isn't that interesting that God wanted Joshua to hear this prophetic declaration, and here it is) that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven."* (and it says) <sup>15</sup> *And Moses built an altar and called the name of it, The LORD Is My Banner,* <sup>16</sup> *saying, "A hand upon the throne of the LORD! The LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."*

And that obviously carries with it the idea until such time as he wipes them out. And by the way that didn't happen until, king David actually wiped out the remainder of the Amalekites. There you go.

And this reference in verse 14 that we read here about the instruction Moses was given to write this down as a memorial in a book, this is the very first reference in the scripture to recording the events of their sojourn.

All right, we're going to get into chapter 18 here. Now, this is an interesting chapter to that once again, is going to talk about the hands of Moses becoming weary, but in a different way. Because this chapter gives us some very practical, Biblical guidelines for church leadership. And yes, it even applies to today, and you're going to see that here in terms of how churches, and how even we here at Calvary Chapel Ontario operate in our leadership structure. And so we'll point that out as we get into it.

So chapter 18, *"Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel his people, how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt."* <sup>2</sup> *Now Jethro, (who you'll remember is also known as Reuel) Moses' father-in-law, had taken Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her home,* <sup>3</sup> *along with her two sons."* And then it's going to tell us their names.

But you might be thinking, well, I never heard that, that he sent Zipporah home. Well, we weren't told. We were told that she went with him initially, but we were not told that he sent her home, but obviously he did. And so now her father is bringing her and their two sons back.

It says, we're in the middle of verse 3, *"The name of the one was Gershom (for he said, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land"),"* And Gershom has a similar sound to the Hebrew for the word, sojourner.

*“<sup>4</sup> and the name of the other, Eliezer (for he said, “The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh”).”* And Eliezer means, God is my help and so forth.

Here comes Jethro. He's coming out to meet Moses to reunite Moses with his wife and his sons. And it says, *“<sup>5</sup> Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness where he was encamped at the mountain of God.”* And that is Horeb, or if you will, Sinai.

*“<sup>6</sup> And when he sent word to Moses, “I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her,””* And so these first 6 verses that are given to us in chapter 18, really just set the stage or the setting, if you will, for Jethro's visit.

And now in verses 7 through 12, we're going to learn how Jethro both recognized and responded to all that the Lord had done for Israel, because remember Jethro was a priest of Midian. And what that means essentially is that he was a pagan priest. Right. I mean, all the peoples around that region were pagans so this is interesting, the recognition that he has.

Verse 7 says, *“Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. (obviously those were expressions of respect and honor to an older man) And they asked each other of their welfare and went into the tent. <sup>8</sup> Then Moses told his father-in-law all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had come upon them in the way, and how the LORD had delivered them.”*

He's telling, recounting all these things to his father in law. *“<sup>9</sup> And Jethro rejoiced for all the good that the LORD had done to Israel, in that he had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians.*

*<sup>10</sup> Jethro said, “Blessed be the LORD, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh and has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. <sup>11</sup> Now I know (check this out) that the LORD is greater than all gods, because in this affair they dealt arrogantly with the people.”*

Well, that's a good statement. I mean, that's encouraging I suppose that Jethro made that statement. What would you think if somebody said to you, you maybe gave a testimony of how the Lord had delivered you, and somebody you've been praying for, or even a family member said something like, well, that's really cool.



Now I see that this God that you serve, He is God. He is God overall and that sort of thing. Would you be encouraged? I mean, I would be encouraged, I suppose, but we're still not positive of Jethro's spiritual condition because it's one thing to recognize God as who He is, and it's another thing to surrender to God and who He is. And that's an important distinction to keep in mind.

James writes in his epistle, you say there's one God, you believe in God, wonderful, he says, the demons believe that and they shudder. (James 2:19) You see, just recognizing God, that isn't enough. Or, you hear people talk and you ever, do you ever get around people and they know that you're a Christian?

They put on the God talk and they start talking about... They'll bring up, they don't say things that are very biblical necessarily, and they might make reference to the man upstairs, or the good Lord, or whatever. And it's all just put on for you and you know that. And you hear that talk and you're like I get what you're doing and it's probably you're doing it out of respect, I suppose.

But have you ever thought about bowing the knee to Him? I mean, surrendering your life to him because it's one thing to recognize him as God. And that is what we see Jethro doing here.

Hey, he says, now I know He's greater than all the gods. It doesn't mean that he's going to stop worshiping all the other gods. It just means that he might put this one on the top because pagans did that too. They had a hierarchy of gods and some gods were greater and more powerful than other gods. This could just be one more God, small g, almost for, we don't know. We don't know.

One of the things that the Lord is going to say when He starts revealing himself here. We're going to deal with this next week in the 10 commandments, He's going to say, "*You shall have no other gods before Me.*" (Exodus 20:3) And He's going to specifically address that pagan propensity to embrace a multiplicity of gods.

And He's going to tell them in no uncertain terms, I am God, and you shall have no other gods before Me. And as He gets further into the revelation of Himself, He will eventually get to speaking to them through the prophet Isaiah. And you know what He's going to say through Isaiah? He's going to say, before Me, no gods were made, nor will there be any after me. (Isaiah 43:10) He's going to close that door completely and tell them that, anything else that that the people or they have ever believed in the sense of multiple gods is just, it's hooley.

Now we get to the New Testament and we find out even more. There's a greater understanding, there's a deeper revelation of these sorts of things. Paul begins to speak to the new Testament church about being involved in pagan sacrifices. And he says, we know that a pagan god is nothing at all, but when you sacrifice these things to pagans, you're sacrificing to demons. Because demons know there aren't any other gods so they're going to step in, in their place, and they're going to receive what you might otherwise give to these other deities, which don't exist but in fact, are demonic spirits. And he says, I would not have you be in partnership with demons.

You see, the revelation just goes on as you go through the scripture and we come to the understanding that there is 1 God, there aren't 2, or 3, or 10, or 100. There's 1 God and He has revealed Himself in the Word in 3 persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. How can there be 3 persons and 1 God? I don't have a clue. It is simply the way He has revealed Himself, and we must surrender to Him. Not just recognize Him. We must surrender. All right.

Verse 12. It says, *“And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.”*

And what that means is, they had a fellowship offering. So he brought a, first of all, a whole burnt offering which would mean that the entire sacrifice was given to God in its entirety. But they also sacrifice some other animals so that they might eat together as a fellowship offering before the Lord.

Now, as we get into verse 13, we're going to get into really the meat of the chapter from the standpoint of, I believe why the Lord moved upon Jethro to even come and visit Moses in the wilderness, because there was a correction that needed to be made.

Verse 13. *“The next day Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning till evening.”* And what this means, just so you understand it, is that Moses helped the people to resolve their differences. He's going to tell his father in law that in a moment, but these were personal issues. They were, in some cases, legal challenges.

And with 2 to 2 and a half million people, roughly, we're not sure, but it's a lot of people. You can well imagine that they were bound to have issues with one another that needed to be resolved. And so Moses acted as a judge who would hear the people's grievances and then render a judgment according to whatever the Lord revealed to him as to how those things ought to be resolved.

So it says in verse 14, *“When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, “What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand around you from morning till evening?”<sup>15</sup> And Moses said to his father-in-law, “Because the people come to me to inquire of God;<sup>16</sup> when they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make them know the statutes of God and his laws.”*

*<sup>17</sup> Moses' father-in-law said to him, “What you are doing is not good.<sup>18</sup> You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone.”*

And that's what what he means when he says, what you're doing is not good. He's not saying that the dealing of making judgments and helping the people resolve their conflicts wasn't good. He's saying, you can't do this alone. This is not something that you should do all on your own.

*“<sup>19</sup> Now obey my voice; I will give you advice, and God be with you! You shall represent the people before God and bring their cases to God,<sup>20</sup> and you shall warn them about the statutes and the laws, and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do.”*

Now you look at these two verses, verses 19 and 20, and you think, oh, that's good advice. That's good advice. He says, you represent the people and warn them about the statutes and laws, make them to know what they must do.

But verse 21, *“Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens.<sup>22</sup> And let them judge the people at all times. Every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you.”* That is a key right there at the end of verse 22.

And then verse 23 says, *“If you do this, God will direct you, you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace.”* Very good and sound advice. Is it not? It's all about delegating responsibility and giving authority to others so that there is a shared responsibility.

Now you remember I said a little bit ago, we're not really sure, we're not positive just how deeply Jethro's faith in God is as it relates to really truly knowing who God is and surrendering to Him.

The question might come up, so how do you do that? How should you take advice from somebody who either you're not really sure if they're a believer or you're flat out absolutely positive they're not a believer, and yet they gave you advice. How should you consider that?

Well, we're going to see here in verse 24, that Moses is going to listen to the advice that his father in law gives him. And I think that's smart on Moses's part, regardless of whether Jethro had made a full commitment to worshipping and understanding who YAHWEH is at this particular point in his life. And the reason is because good advice is good advice.

And sometimes God can give you good advice through unbelievers. I don't know if that messes with your theology at all, but it ought not to. Listen, we're going to find out later in the scriptures, God spoke through a donkey and He can speak through men and women who don't know Him. He can bring godly insight. Good grief, He can bring it through children. Children can sometimes...

Have you ever been convicted by something your child said or did? I have. I've told you guys this story before, but we were living up in Washington. I was home with the kids taking care..., we had two kids at that time. Nellie was probably about 4 and Aaron was probably about 2 and a half. And I was watching this TV show and then of course I had it on right in front of the kids and it was pretty violent. In fact, I think at the time it was the most violent program on television. And I was just sitting in front of the tube, they were off playing or whatever. And I didn't even know how much they were picking up on this.

And little Aaron, who's like 2 and a half, he walks over to the TV, turns it off and looks at me right in the eye and he goes, we shouldn't be watching that. I was like, you're right. You're absolutely right, we shouldn't be watching that. But sometimes you got to hear it from a kid, or something like that.

But anyway, so I think that it's sound advice is something that you should always pray through. And if it's sound advice, if it's wise, then hey, go for it. And that's what Moses does.

Verse 24 says, *“So Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. <sup>25</sup> Moses chose able men out of all Israel (and I think it's interesting Jethro is the one who gave him the qualifications) and made them heads over the people, chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. <sup>26</sup> And they judged the people at all times. Any hard case they brought to Moses,*

*but any small matter they decided themselves. <sup>27</sup> Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went away to his own country.”*

Now, we're going to talk a little bit about the establishment of this leadership style. We're actually, this is all chronicled for us also in the Book of Numbers. Let me put this on the screen. Numbers chapter 11. It says, this is Moses speaking here, by the way. He says,

**Numbers 11:14, 16-17 (ESV)**

*I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. The LORD said to Moses, “Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone.”*

*I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. The LORD said to Moses, “Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone.”*

Obviously Moses took this suggestion by his father in law to prayer. And he began to tell the Lord, this is what my father in law said, and you know what? He's right. I can't do this. I can't bear this whole thing alone. And so the Lord gave him further instructions about how many men exactly that he should raise up to help out. And there were 70 of them and these were the elders.

Now, not only was this the model that Moses implemented during this particular time in the wilderness. But it later became the blueprint for the leadership structure of Israel as we see it later on. In fact, when the New Testament comes into full bloom and we see the ministry of Jesus, He keeps coming up against the Sanhedrin. Well, the Sanhedrin was patterned after the 70 Elders of Israel that Moses raised up in the wilderness. Sanhedrin, by the way, is just simply a Greek word that means, the council, the gathering, if you will. And so we see that this is still operating even during the days of the ministry of Jesus. And it, by the way, went away in A.D. 70, when the Romans came in and wiped out

Jerusalem, destroyed the temple and that sort of thing. The Sanhedrin was no more.

But one of the reasons I wanted to also talk to you about this tonight is that in a somewhat informal manner, it is also a model for the leadership that has been adopted here at Calvary Chapel, and in the Calvary Chapel movement and among its affiliate churches.

Because, when we read through the New Testament and we read about leaders, we see that the new Testament speaks of elders, and overseers, and pastors. And yet you'll find in the new Testament writings, and I've brought this out many times, there's really no distinction in those titles, they're used interchangeably. This is referenced in several places in the new Testament where we see these things are just used.

What's interesting is that nowhere in the new Testament does God specifically line out how He wants elders, overseers, and pastors to function. And that's one of the reasons why you go to a different church and you find so many leadership styles. And I got to tell you something I almost can believe that was God's intention. I believe He gave us the building blocks and He said, here's the leadership structure.

Paul writes in Ephesians chapter 4, and he says, it was He who gave some to be apostles and prophets, evangelists, and then the pastor/teacher. (Ephesians 4:11) And we know that the pastor teacher is synonymous with the overseer and the elder. And so He gave us these and says, the church was built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, right? Well, it's been built, so the apostles and the prophet in the sense of the way they function during the time that the Bible was being written, has honestly changed because the foundation has been built. So that building block has, the function has changed.

We're left essentially with the elder, and overseer, and the pastor, but we're not given in the Word a very specific guideline to say, do it just this way. And that's one of the reasons why, you might go to a church and you find out that they are what they call themselves, elder-led. They're led by a group of elders. The Greek word for elder is, Presbuteros, and that, that form of elder led government is called the Presbyterian form of government. It really has nothing to do with the Presbyterian church, except that they do employ that form of leadership. But there are many churches that have nothing to do with the Presbyterian denomination who incorporate a Presbyterian form of leadership.

And what that means is there are elders who lead the church, the pastor may be one of them, but in a typical eldership rule church, he is not. He is considered an employee and the elders run the church. All right. This is it's common. It's fairly common. Well, you might say, well, where do they get that? Well, again, we're not given any strong sort of guideline about this is the way it absolutely has to go.

And then you've got some churches where there's a pastor who leads and there's no one who leads alongside him. And honestly, that's a dangerous sort of a leadership style. I think if the pastor isn't accountable to anyone, then you know that's it's great if he's a great guy, if he's honest and upstanding, and makes good decisions, and they never need to be, called on stuff or whatever, I suppose that could be fine. But even pastors have a sinful nature, and pride and greed and stupidity, can overtake anybody.

It helps to have a leadership structure in place where there is some level of accountability, and that is essentially the Calvary chapel style of leadership. We've taken the positions that God has given us in the new Testament with the pastor, the elder-overseer type picture, but we have merged it in essence with the leadership model that God gave to Moses in the wilderness where he raised up elders to come alongside and to share the responsibility. And in our case, the elders also provide that level of accountability in the church.

They do allow me to lead and that's the way it works in Calvary Chapel churches. The pastors are allowed to lead. That's the Moses style of leadership, but the elders do have that level of accountability. They have that authority.

If I were to get off base, if I were to begin to say things that were unbiblical, or immoral, or to do things that were illegal, or something of that nature the elders have every authority in our fellowship to remove me from my position. It has to be that way. There has to be that safety valve in any church. And we just..., and it's all written into our bylaws. And bylaws are basically, they're a rainy day document. It's something that you rarely refer to unless you need to. You have to because something has gone horribly wrong and our bylaws were written in such a way to protect the body of Christ.

And so we factored that into the definition of the position of elder here at Calvary Chapel. And it's also important that you guys know who the elders are. That's one of the reasons you may have noticed that we have a slide that runs before, between services, and even after, that shows the pictures and names of all of our elders. They're also on our website and their email address is there. And we want you to know who the guys are who've been called by the Lord to

function in that role. But the thing I really like about our leadership style is that they know that I am not an employee of the church. I'm not a hireling. The church did not hire me and that's important. That's important for, I believe for any pastor.

Jesus told us that the hireling cares nothing for the sheep. (John 10:13) And I think that it's important for a pastor to understand his calling before God and not to be an employee of the church, because if a person is an employee and if he can be if he can be hired by the church, he can be fired by the church.

And if he starts to say things they don't like, he might begin to worry about his position being secure, and he might back off telling them the truth. And you never want a pastor to be pressured in any way to back off on the truth. Because there's a lot of hard things that you have to say as a pastor. And it's important to speak that truth. Sure, speak the truth in love, but to continue to speak the truth.

And a pastor should never, ever be concerned about losing his position simply because he spoke the truth. And that's one of the reasons why we don't hire pastors in that way. We consider their calling before the Lord and we support them in their calling. But not as a hireling, we consider that as more of that calling from the Lord to lead.

Anyway, I thought I would take this opportunity to just help you understand a little bit about the leadership structure that we have, because we don't talk about it, frankly, unless it comes up in scripture or unless somebody comes up to me and asks me and says, how do you guys do things around here?

And I'm always happy to share that information. So if you would ever like any more information or any more of an explanation of how we do things around here please. Come up and ask me or any one of the elders be more than happy to answer those questions. Let's close in prayer.

Heavenly Father, we thank You so much for the instruction and the insight that You give in the Word of God. And we thank You for these 2 chapters. We thank You, Lord, that we can see Jesus in them, that He is the rock who brings forth that miraculous living water that becomes a perpetual spring of water in all of us who have put our faith in Jesus for forgiveness of sins.

And we thank You, Father God, that no matter what enemies come into our path, that you are the victory over the enemy. And we thank You, Father God, that You are the Lord who calls us and speaks words of great wisdom and



insight and helps us to understand how we can do what You've called us to do and to do it with joy.

And we thank You Father for the wisdom and the guidance that Your Word offers us. And we pray that You'd continue to lead us and Lord.

I want to pray specifically for those here tonight who are dealing with very specific questions that they're laying before You right now in prayer. I just have a sense in my heart that there's some people here tonight who are just really agonizing over a specific need or direction or need for direction. And they are praying and they are seeking wisdom and guidance and direction and they are resisting the temptation to step out in their own wisdom and in their own strength.

And I pray my Father God that You would meet them at the place of faith and waiting on the Lord and that You would speak to their hearts and you would bring that understanding and that direction that they are seeking even now. And I ask You, my Father, God, to do that. And I pray that You would guide and direct them in all good things.

We pray these things in the name of Jesus, our Savior, amen. Amen.

God bless you guys.