

Sermon Notes

27th October 2019

Exodus 15:22-16:15a

Exodus – a picture of the Christian life

- Firstly about Israel, but also understood as being about our story.
- Slavery in Egypt, like being enslaved to sin, without hope.
- The Passover, like Jesus the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world.
- Parting the Red Sea, like God saving his people from sin and death through Jesus.
- Now they're crossing the desert, heading for the promised land.
- Picture of our pilgrimage through life, heading for heaven.

Complaining

- The Israelites came from a wet, fertile part of Egypt. They weren't desert people.
- 3 days crossing the desert, no water. Things are getting tough.
- Then an oasis – but the water is bitter!
- Complain to Moses, why have you and your God brought us here to die?

What about the Psalms?

- When we looked at the Psalms, didn't we see psalms of lament – people complaining to God? Wasn't that OK?
- In the Psalms, the person brings his complaint to God. He trusts that God hears. That God intends something better for him. This complaint comes from faith.
- Here the people just moan about God to someone else. They don't talk to God. They don't trust him.
- All the difference in the world between those 2 sorts of complaint!

Testing as training

- Each time, God graciously rescues them – despite the complaints.
- Even takes them to Elim – the 5 star oasis!
- But Elim isn't the end of their journey, they need to move on. Start complaining again (16:2)
- In 16:4 it says God is testing them to see if they will follow his instructions.
- What does testing mean? Is it someone waiting to catch you out? To punish you?
- Here God is rescuing them. He gives them everything they need. What's his testing for? It's to see if they've learned the lesson to trust and obey.
- God is training them. Making them his people. They have to learn to trust him and follow his commands.

Appetites

- Philippians 3:19 describes worldly people as those who are ruled by their appetites.
- Our society is like that. Don't let anyone stop you doing whatever you want!
- We're driven by our desires for food, money, sex. They tell us it's the only way to be happy.
- We aren't used to saying no or denying ourselves.
- The Bible picture of true happiness is (Philippians 4:11-13) being content in every circumstance.
- Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:31-33) tells us not to worry about these things. Seek first his kingdom.
- Fasting isn't just about helping our prayers, its also practising saying no to our appetites – not to be ruled by them.
- The world offers us spiritual junk food – something that can't satisfy our hunger in the long term.
- Jesus is the bread of life (John 6:35) who alone can satisfy our hunger.

What's the aimpoint?

- Our life is a pilgrimage towards the promised land.
- We may go through the desert, but use it to learn.
- God wants to teach us to trust and obey him.
- Our aim is to be 'conformed to the image of Christ' (Romans 8:29).

Other passages

- Psalm 95:8-11
- Numbers 11 (a later incident where God loses patience with their complaining)
- Hebrews 3:7-4:13 Taking a warning from their example

Space for your notes

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