

EXODUS: RESCUED BY GOD – Exodus 15:22-17:7 “God Satisfies.”

People in the restaurant business have one of the most challenging objectives before them, what is it that you ask? Pleasing people. If you have been to a restaurant you understand what I am talking about. Of all the employees in the restaurant the servers have the toughest job before them because they will be on the frontlines of the restaurant experience. Think about it, they are the ones who bring the customers their food and drinks and if you don't show up on a regular basis what happens, the customers complain. If the food doesn't taste good what happens, they complain to the server who then has to go and take the food back to the cook, where what happens, the cook probably complains. When the customer is done with their meal and they are ready to go but the server doesn't show up with the bill in a timely manner what happens, they complain. After finally getting the bill, they complain about the price, even though they choose the restaurant and ate all the food. At the end of the night, the customer may even fill out a comment card, which should really be called a Complaint Card, “How many people actually put positive things on those cards?, then they leave a lousy tip, and may even have some parting shots for any employee that is within listening distance. The funny thing is this same person or persons will probably show up next week and do the same thing all over again. Sound familiar? Now, there are times when the food maybe bad or the service maybe bad, but I would suggest to you that most of the time, it's not the restaurant that has the problem it is the customer. They had issues going in their life even before they walked in the door and took a seat. The slightest miscue of what they perceive should be the outcome the restaurant experience sends them into orbit and out flies the complaints. Now in contrast, when we offer a complement what we are saying is that we enjoyed our experience this is usually followed with kind words and a generous tip. So let me ask you a question, which do you do? Do offer compliments or complaints? Our response reveals our level of satisfaction. Compliments communicate satisfaction. Complaints communicate dissatisfaction. Today, we will see the hearts of the Israelites, a people who complained, who were not satisfied. “A complaining heart reveals a heart not satisfied in Him.” Understand, that God has been gracious with His provisions and promises. God Satisfies.

I. Be satisfied by remembering what God has said and done (Exodus 15:22-27)

²² Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea and they went into the Desert of Shur. For three days they traveled in the desert without finding water. ²³ When they came to Marah, they could not drink its water because it was bitter. (That is why the place is called Marah!) ²⁴ So the people grumbled against Moses, saying, “What are we to drink?” ²⁵ Then Moses cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became fit to drink. There the LORD issued a ruling and instruction for them and put them to the test. ²⁶ He said, “If you listen carefully to the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you.” ²⁷ Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees, and they camped there near the water.

Let's set this up for you, God has delivered the people from over 400 years of slavery, saved them from a seemingly hopeless situation by parting the Red Sea, and has judged their enemies (The Egyptians.) Now, they are beginning the journey and what happens, complaining (grumbling). They complain to Moses (I'm thirsty) and in turn Moses cries out to God, who graciously provides a solution their problem. After providing, He lays out His promise and His expectation for the Israelites. What are His expectations? Listen Carefully, Do What's Right, and Pay Attention to my decrees and commands because I will take care of you. As a parent, these words all so familiar in our household right now. Being the parent of a 2 yr old I have learned this so far, they have short attention spans and lose interest/satisfaction in things very quickly. One minute she wants this, one minute she wants that, ultimately she does not know what she truly needs, so as parents it is our responsibility provide parameters for her to follow, so she will learn to trust us and understand we want what's best for her. (Brushing her teeth and using the aspirator) both of these events are met with great resistance, crying, whining, and complaining. The whole time we are doing this we are explaining why we are doing it, but she does comprehend why we are doing it and how it will benefit her. All she sees is an apparatus being stuck up her nose and in her mouth that is causes a temporary inconvenience to what she wants to do. In time, she will begin to understand our words, actions and the benefits of what in her eyes is a tortuous event, hopefully even one day she will thank us because we were faithful to continue to do this. Do you remember the words of the Lord when we are met with inconveniences/interruptions? Do you remember how He has been faithful in your life? When things go wrong at work, when a bill is overdue, when our bank accounts are low, when our health is failing, when you have car trouble, the kids don't sleep at night, or you bomb a test do you have the end of the world or glass half empty mentality? God sees what we think as inconveniences/interruptions, as an instrument to teach us about His character and reveal to us our character.

II. Be satisfied in what God is presently doing (Exodus 16)

¹ *The whole Israelite community set out from Elim and came to the Desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had come out of Egypt.* ² *In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron.* ³ *The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the LORD’s hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.”* ⁴ *Then the LORD said to Moses, “I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions.* ⁵ *On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days.* ⁶ *So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, “In the evening you will know that it was the LORD who brought you out of Egypt, ⁷ and in the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?”* ⁸ *Moses also said, “You will know that it was the LORD when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD.”* ⁹ *Then Moses told Aaron, “Say to the entire Israelite community, ‘Come before the LORD, for he has heard your grumbling.’”* ¹⁰ *While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked toward the desert, and there was the glory of the LORD appearing in the cloud.* ¹¹ *The LORD said to Moses, ¹² “I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, ‘At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.’”* ¹³ *That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp.* ¹⁴ *When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor.* ¹⁵ *When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat.* ¹⁶ *This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Everyone is to gather as much as they need. Take an omer for each person you have in your tent.’”* ¹⁷ *The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little.* ¹⁸ *And when they measured it by the omer, the one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little. Everyone had gathered just as much as they needed.* ¹⁹ *Then Moses said to them, “No one is to keep any of it until morning.”* ²⁰ *However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell. So Moses was angry with them.* ²¹ *Each morning everyone gathered as much as they needed, and when the sun grew hot, it melted away.* ²² *On the sixth day, they gathered twice as much—two omers for each person—and the leaders of the community came and reported this to Moses.* ²³ *He said to them, “This is what the LORD commanded: ‘Tomorrow is to be a day of sabbath rest, a holy sabbath to the LORD. So bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Save whatever is left and keep it until morning.’”* ²⁴ *So they saved it until morning, as Moses commanded, and it did not stink or get maggots in it.* ²⁵ *“Eat it today,” Moses said, “because today is a sabbath to the LORD. You will not find any of it on the ground today.* ²⁶ *Six days you are to gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not be any.”* ²⁷ *Nevertheless, some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather it, but they found none.* ²⁸ *Then the LORD said to Moses, “How long will you^[d] refuse to keep my commands and my instructions? ²⁹ Bear in mind that the LORD has given you the Sabbath; that is why on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days. Everyone is to stay where they are on the seventh day; no one is to go out.”* ³⁰ *So the people rested on the seventh day.* ³¹ *The people of Israel called the bread manna.^[e] It was white like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey.* ³² *Moses said, “This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Take an omer of manna and keep it for the generations to come, so they can see the bread I gave you to eat in the wilderness when I brought you out of Egypt.’”* ³³ *So Moses said to Aaron, “Take a jar and put an omer of manna in it. Then place it before the LORD to be kept for the generations to come.”* ³⁴ *As the LORD commanded Moses, Aaron put the manna with the tablets of the covenant law, so that it might be preserved.* ³⁵ *The Israelites ate manna forty years, until they came to a land that was settled; they ate manna until they reached the border of Canaan.* ³⁶ *(An omer is one-tenth of an ephah.)*

So first they complain we are thirsty, now it’s we are hungry. Notice that it is the whole community grumbling against Moses. These attitudes and actions are toxic and contagious to everyone. Paul in *Philippians 2:14* says, *‘Do all things without grumbling or arguing.’ Why? v.15 “So that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.”* What we do portrays we what we believe. Complaining says, I am not satisfied, I know a better way, or I deserve this. At the root of complaining is self-centeredness which will impair our judgment in making right decisions because we will have clouded thoughts. Notice what the Israelites say, ³ *The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the LORD’s hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.”* The Israelites wanted to go back to Egypt. What?! Notice, that they were reflecting on the past, even though the past involved being in slavery in Egypt. Do we do this? Do you notice that the past always seems to be better than present when we are facing difficult days? It’s not that the past or the good old days were actually better; it is the fact that they are known to us, hindsight is 20/20. However, God does not ask us to walk in hindsight or by sight, He asked us to walk by faith, trusting in what God is doing. Again, even in their lack of faith and grumbling God shows grace. In spite of the people’s grumbling against God, not Moses He graciously grants the people a provision that will reveal the glory of God and show that He is the Lord. What is this glory of God, this provision God is referring too? In the evening God sends quail for meat and in the morning He sends to what appears to be some type of bread called, “manna” to which they said, “what is it?” For they did know what it was. Moses explained to the people that this was the bread the Lord has given you. God also gives them specific instruction to gather on (6) of the days and on day 6 to gather enough for (2) days because they are to rest on the 7th

day (Sabbath). They were also instructed not to keep any of it until morning, except on the 6th day. What happened? Some people listened and did as the Lord said and some did not listen, and keep some until morning while others tried to collect manna of the Sabbath. What was the result of not listening to God. Maggot infested, rotten bread. What can we learn from their actions? **1. Do we recognize the provision of God when we see it?** *John 6:29-42 says, “²⁹ Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”³⁰ So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? ³¹ Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’³² Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”³⁴ “Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread ³⁵ Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶ But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. ³⁷ All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰ For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”⁴¹ At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.”⁴² They said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven’?”* Here in this text, the Jews had trouble distinguishing the provision that God had given the world, which is Jesus. Much like the “manna”, Jesus was the greatest provision ever given which revealed the glory of God. When you find your satisfaction in the bread of life (Jesus) you will never be hungry again. Sadly much like the Israelites/Jews we fail to recognize God’s gracious provision because it’s not what we thought it would be. **2. Like the Israelites we too don’t listen to God’s word and try to provide for ourselves. Do we look for satisfaction in others things, trying to satisfy our hunger?** Unfortunately we seek the things of this world to satisfy, but they actually bring harm. We look for satisfaction in new jobs, new relationships, sex, food, drugs, money, or hobbies and in the end this we will leave us unfulfilled and wanting more. Some of us here today, need to be awakened to fact that God has been gracious in His provisions for you. Over the last several weeks we have seen people come to Christ, be baptized, confess sin, and give a testimony of victory over sin but still you are looking for answers and provisions somewhere else, when it is right in front of you. Just like God preserved an omer of manna in a jar so the people could remember, God continues to rain down testimony after testimony, preserving life after life, saying don’t forget me. Like the Israelites, you are saying, “What is it?” In this case, the question you should ask is, “Who is it?” It’s JESUS!

III. Be satisfied that God’s grace is greater than our faults and failures (Exodus 17:1-7)

¹ The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ² So they quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.” Moses replied, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the LORD to the test?”³ But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?”⁴ Then Moses cried out to the LORD, “What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me.”⁵ The LORD answered Moses, “Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶ I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.” So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ And he called the place Massah and Meriba because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the LORD saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

This time their grumbling had escalated into full out quarreling. Why are they quarreling with Moses? Who led them where they were? The Lord. Moses even asks why they are coming to him. Moses even tells them that they are challenging/questioning what God is doing. However, the people still grumble against Moses. Most of us read this passage and shake our heads and wonder how the Israelites could continue in such a faithless cycle after God had worked so powerfully? For the same reason it happens you and me, we get our focus off of Him, we forget His faithfulness, and we allow the desires of our flesh to direct our lives, instead of trusting in how God is leading. Moses appears to be concerned for his life and again cries out to the Lord. What happens? The Lord answers. He tells Moses to strike the rock and water comes out so the people can drink. Do you see it? Time after time Israel makes mistakes, but we see grace. God’s grace is greater than our faults and failures. When we forget, there is grace. When we sin, there is grace. Verse seven ends by sharing the name of the place where they quarreled which literally means, “Is the Lord among us or not?” I tell you this morning that He is and He offers grace. Will you trust in it? Will you believe it by faith?