

Bitter to Blessing

Exodus 15:22-24 So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. ²³ Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they *were* bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah. ²⁴ And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?"

- The Israelites have just crossed the Red Sea
- They witnessed the plagues. They saw deliverance. They walked through parted waters
- 3 days later in less-than-ideal circumstances what do they do? Complain.

How easy is it for us to complain whenever things aren't exactly as we would like?

Moses Goes to God

Exodus 15:25-26 So he cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree. When he cast *it* into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made a statute and an ordinance for them, and there He tested them, ²⁶ and said, "If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For *I am* the Lord who heals you."

- As soon as Moses takes it to God a solution is given. A miracle occurs and they are provided for
- But God even goes beyond this request and gives them a promise. That if they will listen and obey, He will remove all their diseases.
 - Just as the waters were healed by Moses' obedience, so will the Israelites be healed as they keep His statutes.
- God even gives them a new name for Himself – Jehovah Rapha

Why exactly is this a solution? Why a tree?

- The tree represents the cross of Christ.
- **Galatians 3:13-14** Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "*Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree*"), ¹⁴ that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.
- What is the answer when things in our life are bitter? The cross of Christ.
- It is the Cross that provides the means for us to obtain the inheritance of Jesus.

When we are faced with terrible situations in life, complaining has no effect.

Complaining did not give them water.

Turning to God gave them water and additional blessing.

Exodus 15:27 Then they came to Elim, where there *were* twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters.

- Israelites move from Marah (bitter) to Elim (blessing) (12 miles)
- As Israel goes to the place where there is plenty of provision, they immediately call that place blessing.
- While everything is from God, and therefore this is a blessing, I find it interesting that in the place a miracle occurs and they have to rely on the supernatural provision of God, that place is called Bitter, and the place where they do not have to rely on the supernatural provision of God, that place is called blessing.
 - Are we more inclined to feel blessed in seasons where we do not feel the need to rely solely on God than in seasons where we are desperate?
 - Do we only feel blessed when everything is perfect?

- **James 1:2-4** My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴ But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.
- **It is a great discipline to count it joy when we face trials. But the reward is even greater.**

Exodus 16:1-3 And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt. ² Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. ³ And the children of Israel said to them, "Oh, that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat *and* when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

- How long does it take to revert to old ways? The very next place they go they do the exact same thing.
- Remembering the blessing of God is key to our victory
- Remembering that He is the one that gives supernaturally is also key.

1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 11 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, ² all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³ all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. ⁵ But with most of them God was not well pleased, for *their bodies* were scattered in the wilderness. ⁶ Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. ... ¹¹ Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

What does complaining in general do to the quality of life we have?

- **Philippians 4:6-7** – Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to

God; ⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus..

- **John 13:35** By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”
 - Does complaining fit this? (complaining about others)
- **Ephesians 4:29** Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

Psalms 106:9-15 He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it dried up; So He led them through the depths, As through the wilderness. ¹⁰ He saved them from the hand of him who hated *them*, And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. ¹¹ The waters covered their enemies; There was not one of them left. ¹² Then they believed His words; They sang His praise. ¹³ They soon forgot His works; They did not wait for His counsel, ¹⁴ But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, And tested God in the desert. ¹⁵ And He gave them their request, But sent leanness into their soul.

Do we soon forget God's works? Do we forget that God is even active in our lives right now?

1. Complaining is the opposite of Thanksgiving - **1 Thessalonians 5:18** in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
 - a. Why is this God's will for you? He desires for you to walk in wholeness and blessing. This comes by thanksgiving and trusting God.
2. Complaining infects the attitudes of those around us
3. Complaining indicates that we do not trust (believe) God
4. Complaining looks at others or circumstances, but does not look at God. It is stealing attention from the only source of help.
5. Complaining is forgetting what God has done.

