

## Sweet Water

Exodus 15:22-27

8/17/08

### Intro

At this point in our study through the book of Exodus, Israel has been set free from the oppression and slavery of Egypt, and God then led them by a pillar of the cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

He did not lead them directly to the land of Palestine, however, because there were many difficulties they would encounter on the way that they were not prepared for.

Instead, God led the people around by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea. There the Egyptian army came after them because they thought that Israel was trapped. But God showed his mighty hand, parted the Red Sea, and Israel crossed over on dry land. When the Egyptian army tried to follow, the waters returned and destroyed pharaoh's army.

God then led Israel three days into the wilderness, but they were greatly distressed because they found no water. They then came to a place called Marah where they did find water, but the water was bitter.

Here Israel was to learn some important lessons and there are many things for us to learn as well.

### **I. Don't Drink the Water at Marah**

- Israel was just getting started on a forty year journey and the first lesson that God wants them to understand is; don't drink the water.
- At least, don't drink the water at Marah. One of the first lessons that any traveler must remember is to know whether you can drink water wherever you are.
- Of course, the lesson here for us is spiritual.

### A. God teaches us on the way

- The Israelites had lived as slaves for hundreds of years and didn't know how to live as men who were set free.
- They needed a new way to live. They needed a new guidance system. God has a new way of life they had never heard of before.

**Illus- "Turn the other cheek? What do I do if he strikes me of both cheeks? What if he bites me on the ear?"**

- **The same is true of Christians in the sense that when many come out of the world, they don't yet know what it means to have a personal relationship to the Lord.**
- God was not just taking them out of Egypt; he was also bringing them into something. In other words, God doesn't just take us out of the world; he brings us into a place of life.
- And He instructs us on the way. The wilderness becomes a school of discipleship.

**Psalm 25:8-13 He instructs sinners in the way**

- God didn't bring them to Marah to punish them, or to make life difficult for them; He led them to Marah to show them what was in their heart.

### B. Some things are supposed to be bitter

- They are three days into the wilderness beyond the Red Sea and someone sees water. You can imagine the clamoring as they rush in for their

first drink, but they immediately spit it out because the water is bitter.

- The water could have been bitter from some bitter root that was growing near the edge, more than likely however, the water was salty.
- There is a reason we don't drink salty water, it will make someone sick. Instead of quenching their thirst, they actually become dehydrated.

**Illus – if someone is lost at sea with no water, their thirst tempts them to drink the sea water. What a powerful picture of worldliness.**

**App – there are so many things in this world that we think will satisfy, but they actually have the opposite effect; they leave the soul empty and unsatisfied. “That wasn't what I thought it was going to be,” many could say.**

**Illus – it's like a woman I know who goes from man to man looking for that perfect soul mate. Each time she meets a new man it seems at first that he can do nothing wrong, but after things go sour in their relationship, he can't do anything right. The relationship becomes bitter.**

**Illus – It's like the Samaritan woman Jesus met at a well. He told her of living water that springs up to eternal life...**

**John 4:15-19 that which does not satisfy**

- But if we drink of the consequences of wrong and hurtful decisions, they are actually bitter for a reason; so that we long for water that is sweet.

**Illus – When the prodigal son had received his inheritance early, he had spent it all on worldly living. But there came a time when he was left lonely, hungry, and empty.**

**He came to a place where he saw that it was better to go back to his father.**

**Luke 15:17-18, “But when he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! I will get up and go to my father,...’”**

C. Some things should not be bitter

- When the Israelites passed through the Red Sea they were overjoyed at the mighty and miraculous hand of God, but something changed in three short days.
- On day one they were dancing and singing, “The Lord is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation.”
- On day two the kids started saying, “Are we there yet?” Now they are singing with slumped shoulders.
- On day three they are murmuring against God.
- God did not bring them to Marah to make them bitter; He was showing them they were already bitter.

**App – The situation doesn’t make us bitter, it shows us what is already there.**

**Illus – When Jesus was being nailed to the cross he didn't say, "You'll pay for this! When you stand before the judgment seat of God, then you'll regret this!!"**

**No, Jesus said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." He didn't speak bitter words because he didn't have bitterness in his heart.**

- What is it that should not be bitter? Our hearts.

**Philippians 2:14-15, Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,**

<b>II. Let the Bitter be Made Sweet</b>
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- When the Israelites murmured and grumbled to Moses, he cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree; and he threw it into the waters, and the waters became sweet.
- There is a powerful lesson for us in these verses about changing that which is bitter into that which is sweet.

**A. Let God open your eyes**

- When Moses cried out to God, God opened his eyes and showed him a tree and told him to throw it into the water.
- The remedy was there and God opened his eyes to see it.

- Here we see a powerful picture of the cross of Jesus Christ. That which he did on the tree of Calvary is the remedy that we need to throw into the midst of the bitterness.

**I Peter 2:24, who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.  
NKJV**

**Galatians 3:13, Christ 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"**

- But we need to open our eyes and see that God has provided what we need so that our hearts are no longer bitter.

**Romans 8:31-32, What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?**

**B. God is the one who heals the soul**

- God opened the eyes of Moses and showed him the provision of the tree that makes the bitter waters sweet.
- But He also open the eyes of the Hebrews learn something new of God's character.
- They learned that God is Jehovah Rapha; the LORD our healer.

- God reveals Himself by His names and he has revealed something that they must always remember that God is the source of healing and there is no other.

**Illus – When I was in college, I learned the names of God on flash cards. How much better to learn the names by experiencing the power of each of God’s names.**

God gave them a statute. Here God have them a statute, a principle to help guide their lives. That if they would give earnest heed to the voice of the Lord, then none of the diseases of the Egyptians would be on them.

**Illus – In fact we know that when the Jews followed the laws given to them by God that they were kept from many diseases. They had laws about sanitation and what not to eat, about handling dead bodies, etc.**

**Jews were forbidden to eat rats, snakes and roaches, for example.**

**The countries of early Europe thought that the Jews were responsible for the plagues because they did not become affected, yet they were just living by God’s laws.**

- But is this not also true spiritually? Does it not heal us to forgive those who hurt us? If we have a thankful and joyful spirit does not that keep us from many troubles?
- They then came to a to a place called Elim where there were twelve springs and seventy date palms.

- God didn't want them to camp at Marah; He wanted them to learn that they needed to get the bitterness of Egypt out of their hearts and then move on to camp at the place of blessing.

**El Shaddai** (Lord God Almighty)

**El Elyon** (The Most High God)

**Adonai** (Lord, Master)

**Yahweh** (Lord, Jehovah)

**Jehovah Nissi** (The Lord My Banner)

**Jehovah-Raah** (The Lord My Shepherd)

**Jehovah Rapha** (The Lord That Heals)

**Jehovah Shammah** (The Lord Is There)

**Jehovah Tsidkenu** (The Lord Our Righteousness)

**Jehovah Mekoddishkem** (The Lord Who Sanctifies You)

**Jehovah Jireh** (The Lord Will Provide)

**Jehovah Shalom** (The Lord Is Peace)

**Jehovah Sabbaoth** (The Lord of Hosts)