

## Here Today, Gone To Marah

### Exodus 15:21-27

Pastor Arlyn

Message Transcript

[00:00:00] In our live stream message last week, I took Exodus Chapter 15 verses 1-21, and I hope you caught that at some point this week. That section teaches us that worship is a response to God, that worship is surrender to God, that worship is active and expressive, it can involve the entire body, as we saw in those first 21 verses, and worship, though it doesn't have to be can also be musical. That's right, the very First Congregational worship service ever involved the playing of music. Now, granted, it was just tambourines, but that's a start. And it shows us something that the Lord does love when we add music to our worship because it aids us in worship. Music is a powerful thing, a very powerful thing. And by the time we get to the psalmist, David, we're going to see the psalmist David take this concept of music and worship and he's going to add a full orchestra, a full ensemble to the worship ministry there in the tabernacle with wind instruments and string instruments and even percussions, even the drums. So when you come across those churches that say no music in church worship, it's sacrilegious. Well, folks, they just need to read their Bibles. It's there from the beginning. The Lord loves it really anyway, from a pure heart in an appropriate manner that we worship the Lord. The Lord is going to receive it. So those were our lessons from last week, but now this Hebrew congregation is on the other side of the Red Sea. Their worship service is over, I would imagine they were all quite content to just stay put right there on the shore of the Red Sea, beachfront property, toes in the sand, beach chairs reclined with nothing to do but sit back and sip on coconuts and reflect on the goodness of God, what he had just done for them. But as a matter of fact, the Lord determined that it was time for the congregation to move on. There was more for the congregation to learn. God had more stops in this little camping trip that he had set up for the nation, stops that would be arduous and unpleasant, but nonetheless very vital to their spiritual learning and spiritual growth. And just to tell you a little bit about what God is up to in the remainder of this chapter, he is cultivating hearts. He is still working in them to get Egypt out of their hearts. Remember, they left Egypt, but Egypt hasn't left them yet. So the Lord is still working on those things, working in the hearts of the people. And again, he figures this should take about one year, this one year camping adventure, seven different spots that the Lord had mapped out. And the Lord figures that within that one year period, he should be able to teach the Hebrew nation everything that they need to go to successfully head into the promised land and through conquest, claim the land that God has selected for them. But as it turns out, we know the truth. We know the full story that it would end up taking 40 years and even that 40 years would not be enough time for this particular group to get the lessons down and be prepared and be ready to go into the land of promise and by conquest, lay hold to what the Lord had promised them. Let's not be like that group. Let's not repeat that same sordid history. But let's take full advantage of every Bible study that we come to. Even if you think you're pretty sure you could do it better than the guy up front, let's take advantage of these opportunities to really learn and then to really apply what we're learning and place it into the flow of our lives so that whatever it is that the Lord has prepared for us up in the future, we won't miss out on it. I don't want to miss out on what the Lord has for me. So Exodus chapter 15, verse 22. That year of training is well underway. They have already hit three of those seven spots that the Lord had designated for them. Stop one was Sukkoth. This is recap, stop one was Sukkoth, which means the place of tents and the lesson that they were to learn there is just as their ancestor, their their forefather in the faith, Abraham, they too were to be sojourners, pilgrims traveling through in order to get to the land of promise. They were to have a heavenly divine perspective and not an earthly and a material one. Stop two was Etham, which meant the edge of the wilderness. And the lesson that they were to learn there was that even at the brink of disaster, even on the very edge, they were to know and to understand that the Lord was nonetheless with them. And

then stop number three, which we covered last, was that pickle that they were in between Pi Hahiroth and Migdal with the Red Sea to their back, well, first to their face. They ran straight into it and it was impeding their egress. And so the Lord turned them and now with Pi Hahiroth and Migdal on either side and the Red Sea at their backs, there was nowhere to go. And the lesson to be learned there was that even when you feel like you're boxed in or pinned down or locked up, you got to know, you got to trust, you got to understand that the Lord can make away where there is no way. And now we come to stop number four, stop number four on their camping adventure with the Lord, or if you prefer to call it their desert seminary training. Fine with me. Both of those metaphors, both of those expressions work. So let's begin reading at verse 22. Let's finish out this short chapter and see what we can learn and see what we can take home with us and apply in our lives from this section. Verse 22, 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. So between versus 22 and 23, they are in between destination points. [00:07:07][427.3]

[00:07:08] They're just out somewhere out there in the wilderness of Shur, and sure enough, there was no water in that desert. Go figure. Who would have thunk it? A desert with no water. Shock of shocks. Big surprise. This was the Sinai Peninsula, actually a north western section of the peninsula. It's that pie shaped plot of land that is sandwiched between the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba. And we actually have a visual aid to help you with this, Maggie if you could throw that up and if you would like a copy of this image for your computer notes, just let me know after the service and I can get that to you. It is a handy graphic because it lists out, as you can see, all seven campsites. At verse 22 they are somewhere between the last two spots and we don't know for sure where they crossed on the Red Sea. We're kind of taking a guess at that on this graphic, but they have them plotted to cross right here and they have this listed as Pi Hahiroth, and here's Morreau where we're headed. So there's somewhere in between here, in verse 22, somewhere between those two spots. And there really is no water there. Do you see that? Look at where they came from up there in Goshen. You see the tributaries here of the Nile River, fresh water. The nation was nestled right in the midst of all of that water. It was lush. It was teeming with life because there was water everywhere. But would you take a look at this Sinai Peninsula from Google Maps, from the Google map perspective? Do you see water anywhere in that peninsula? Now, of course there is water, but there's nothing substantial enough to see from, say, Google Maps. So it really is a dry desert. As a matter of fact, that region has been known at all points in time to only gather about one inch of annual rainfall, one inch of annual rainfall for the year. [00:09:29][141.3]

[00:09:31] So you have three million people walking the sandy desert with no water for three days. And you know what's going to happen? Everyone's going to get a little grumpy. [00:09:45][14.1]

[00:09:46] The best modern day equivalent that I have for you here is you're taking a trip to, say, Tennessee, and you're with your kids and your kids are crying in the backseat and they have to go to the bathroom and they're kicking the back of the seat and you're all hungry and you're out of gas. You're running on fumes. And the next exit is about twenty seven miles away. That's as close as I can get with the modern equivalent. But listen, even that is not close to what the nation is experiencing here, because in good conditions, with very little physical activity, you can die within three to five days without water. You can go for approximately a month and even more without food. But water three to five days in good conditions with little activity. Now, add to that the complexity of being in the desert, backpacking, hiking through the desert and having no water with you, all of that activity and the climate that condition, the heat and the sun, well, they're shielded from the cloud a little bit. We know that. But still, nonetheless, this is activity in the heat, so I think they're lucky to survive after two days of being without water. You wouldn't want to try to go any longer than that. So the point is, this situation can't be overstated. It is dire. It is deadly. But then up ahead, I can just picture it in my mind, up ahead, they see something, something promising. They see the glistening of waters. Is it a mirage, is it a desert mirage? [00:11:28][101.3]

[00:11:29] No, it's not a mirage, it's Marah. And it's not going to turn out to be any better. Let's read verse 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 because Marah means bitter. And if you just took a guess at that one, high probability that you'd get it. Verse 24, and the people complained against Moses saying, what shall we drink? They have arrived at stop number four on their camping adventure with the Lord. This place is called Marah and they are not liking this stop whatsoever from the very beginning. [00:12:19][50.2]

[00:12:21] Oh, it looks so promising from a distance. They're literally dying of thirst. And I can picture this in my mind, too. You know, Moses points up ahead and says, the Lord just spoke to me. That's the spot. And they see the glistening of the water and they hear the sound maybe of the water and they rush up ahead to get to that spot, Marah, the next spot. They're no doubt positive that this this is going to be a good spot, that the Lord is putting them with plenty of water, plenty of refreshment. And they get up there and they dive in and they gulp down and then they gag up because the water is bitter. It is undrinkable. They missed the sign when they came into town, Marah, population zero, don't drink the water or you will regret it tomorrow. [00:13:14][53.1]

[00:13:18] So tough situation. It is time to file complaints. Church secretary had a busy day that day, no doubt. Their complaint is against Pastor Moses. The best thing to do when you're frustrated with church, take it out on the pastor, right? Well, that's wrong, but that's what a lot of people think. So they're taking it out on the pastor here. There was nothing wrong with their question, their question is perfectly right. [00:13:46][29.0]

[00:13:47] It only makes sense. Moses, we had nothing for three days, you brought us to Marah, we tried the waters, they're undrinkable. So what's your plan? What's the Lord going to do? What are we supposed to drink? The question wasn't the problem, it was the attitude that was the problem. It was the murmuring and the complaining that was a problem. [00:14:12][24.4]

[00:14:12] If you don't know how the Lord feels about murmuring and complaining, do me a favor. Just go home and look up that key word on, you know, for example, BibleGateway.com or something like that and see all of the messages that you get that's connected to that word. The Lord does not like complainers. The Lord doesn't like murmurers. And I kind of get it. It's tough to put up with people that complain a lot, isn't it? Sometimes like I get into a place of complaining and I just get annoyed by hearing myself whine and snivel, so we get it. That's the problem. They're complaining. Oh man, a few verses ago, verses 1-21, this group sounded like they had arrived. Their worship service was impressive, but they didn't even make it 24 verses before that worship service, that celebration, that praise erupts into complaints. [00:15:14][62.1]

[00:15:16] I wonder how many times we do that, too. [00:15:18][1.5]

[00:15:20] We come into these church services and all the worship's good and we enjoy ourselves where expressive and maybe our worship is even impressive to others. [00:15:30][10.2]

[00:15:30] Maybe you've impressed the socks off of the person sitting right next to you and you're on top of the world. You're on the mountain peak and then you don't even get home before your worship attitude changes into another kind of attitude altogether because the guy in the jacked up dodge cut you off or you had an argument with hubby on the way home or something of the sort. And we don't even make it home before we lose that attitude of worship. That's such a shame. And it is yet another lesson in this Exodus 15 worship tutorial that we took a look at last week. There's there's more to it, I prepared you for that, I told you there would be. Here's another lesson. The lesson would be this, yes, worship is a response to God. Yes, worship is surrender to God. Yes, worship is active and expressive. It can even involve music. But here's the best worship lesson of all, I think. Worship is best experienced as a lifestyle rather than an event on your

calendar that you attend. Worship is best expressed and experienced as a lifestyle. So this is real life, practical, applicable stuff in this chapter that we're studying. [00:16:59][88.8]

[00:17:01] And what God's people were learning all the way back in Exodus 15, I want to encourage us to make sure we've already, or do real soon, learn this same lesson. [00:17:12][10.6]

[00:17:14] That blessing and spiritual ease can be here today and gone tomorrow. I mean, things can be great right now. You can be just on cloud nine with the Lord in your spiritual life, in your walk with him, but you may not even make it to the end of the day until the Lord leads you into bitter times, into difficult trials. [00:17:44][29.6]

[00:17:46] So just don't forget that when you do end up in a Marah like situation, when you do end up facing bitter situations and tough trials in life, please do me the favor, remember this, the Lord led you there, too. He led you to the victory of the Red Sea crossing, the parting of the Red Sea and the destruction of your enemy. He led you to that victory and he gave it to you. But he also led you to the bitter well, to the bitter pools of Marah, those bitter, hard, life experiences where your worship doesn't flow quite so easy, where you feel dry and parched in your spirit, the Lord led you to that place, too. [00:18:33][47.4]

[00:18:36] It only makes sense, doesn't it? [00:18:37][1.2]

[00:18:39] If God doesn't rain on our worship services from time to time, God doesn't rain on our worship, then we're only ever going to be able to worship when the sun is out and it's a balmy 75 degrees or whatever is perfect for you ladies. Maybe 85, Maggie, 85. For me, 70. [00:18:56][17.3]

[00:18:59] If the Lord doesn't rain on our worship parades from time to time, we'll be fair weather worshipers. But the Lord wants us to be able to worship in the rain as well. In the storm is well in that alone I do believe can be the difference between walking and living by sight as opposed to walking and living by faith. And what is it that the Lord wants of us as his people? He wants us to walk by faith. Habakkuk chapter 2, verse 4, Romans chapter 1 verse 17, Galatians Chapter 3, verse 11 and Hebrews Chapter 10 verse 38. [00:19:40][40.3]

[00:19:40] The just shall live by faith so that when you, when you come to the bitter situations, when you come to the tough trials that you can know in your heart and trust the Lord, it's OK. God led me here. I may feel dry and parched. I may feel like everything around me is bitter. [00:20:04][23.6]

[00:20:04] I may feel blasted and bitter myself, but God led me here, so I trust him. I know that everything is going to work out the way that he wants them to for me. He was God in the fruited plains, he'll be God in the dry deserts as well. Of course, the classic example of this would be Job, a reference I've made on numerous occasions here at this fellowship. Job and his wife lost everything or pretty much everything. And what did Job do? He fell down and he worshiped the Lord. Do you believe that word is actually in there? He fell down after losing nearly everything except his wife. And we know why the enemy left his wife for him because he fell down and he worship the Lord, having lost nearly everything. And what was his wife's advice? [00:20:56][51.9]

[00:20:58] You all know this very well. She said, yeah, just curse God and die. Well, thank you, sweetie. [00:21:04][6.8]

[00:21:05] Appreciate the encouragement there, appreciate the counsel. Perturbed that Job had not lost all of his spiritual senses after losing everything, perturbed that Job was still trusting in God, perturbed that Job was still a worshiper of his God, even though Job had suffered so much loss. And do you remember Job's words? [00:21:30][24.9]

[00:21:32] He said to his wife, and this really is the key, this is the key to this type of situation and this kind of thing. This is the key, he said in Job Chapter 2, verse 10, you speak as one of the foolish women speak. That's the key, correcting your wife. No, no, no. That's not the key. It's not the key I was talking about. That's just the start of the verse. That's a key way to end up dead, talking like that to your wife, Job somehow got away with it. But here's the key. He goes on to say, shall we indeed accept good from God and shall we not accept adversity or to make that stronger? The King James version says evil. [00:22:11][38.7]

[00:22:12] Shall we accept good from God and not evil, you see, Job had it right, Job understood, make sure you do too. Verse 25, So he cried out to the Lord, this is Moses praying, this is what made Moses such a great man. You know, they the group would come to him and complain, hey Moses, we need this, Moses we need that, Moses we hate this, and Moses we hate that. Moses would take all of those complaints. He would take all of those needs and he would go before the Lord. He would pray to the Lord and ask for the Lord's Solutions instead of trying to solve things with ministry experience or ministry know how or ministry methods. His method was simple. I need to talk to the Lord. I need to see what the Lord says. So Moses prays and the Lord showed him a tree. [00:23:16][63.7]

[00:23:18] When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. And you're saying what? What is happening here? What kind of tree was this? It took an entire body of water, bitter water. And just by throwing this tree in there, it made everything sweet and OK to drink, refreshing. Well, let me cut to the short on this one, the tree here is symbolic of the cross. It really is. Now, if you've never heard this Old Testament analogy or reference before and connected it to the New Testament, it really is. This tree is a symbol of a representation of the cross as the tree often is in scripture. And then you can read New Testament, second Peter, chapter 2, verse 21, where Peter refers to the tree, the cross, he says he himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree. So this is an Old Testament picture or type of the cross. [00:24:29][71.1]

[00:24:31] And so I see several crucial life lessons here in verses 24 and 25, several crucial life lessons that were learned at Marah. We could summarize it by saying that life is both a mixture of bitterness and sweetness. [00:24:52][21.2]

[00:24:54] Boy that's the truth, isn't it? Life is bitterness and sweetness. There's plenty of sweet stuff. There's a lot of good, a lot of stuff to enjoy, many blessings to count, but life also, no matter who you are, no matter what your lot in life, no matter how much money you make or what you do for a living, for all of us, every one of us, it's true. There are plenty of bitteresses in life, too. So we could summarize it simply and generally by saying that. But the subject matter here in verses 24 and 25 with its full life lessons is far more precise and directional for us. [00:25:41][46.7]

[00:25:42] Lesson one would be this: Things that appeal to our eyes and look sweet to us or refreshing for us often turn out to be bitter. [00:25:57][15.3]

[00:25:59] I don't know if you can relate to this or not, but we see some of those things up ahead. We get our sights fixed on those things. We long for those things. We work toward those things and we finally attain those things. And when we attain those things, we say, Wow. This didn't do for me what I thought it was going to do. And, of course, narrowly directing that into our spiritual walk, there are those things where we set our eyes on and we work to attain and we finally attain them, and once we do, if we're honest with ourselves, we'll say, you know what? This is not being helpful to my walk with the Lord, this is not being helpful to my spiritual state. This is actually being bitter and harmful to me. But lesson number two, lesson number two would be that you can add the cross to any situation, even the bitter ones, and the cross can make them sweet. [00:27:06][66.7]

[00:27:09] I guess this is most commonly experienced by us through collapses in our relationships. You know friends, people that we look up to, people that we trust, people that we respected, people that we depended on. And we have that crash landing with them. Sometimes it's our our heroes in the faith, people that we looked up to, people that we thought highly of, sometimes it's close relationships, people that were doing life with and depending on and trusting when they let us down and when they break our hearts, that situation is immediately bitter. And the enemy wants to take those bitter relationship situations that we run into, and he wants to turn that beginning of bitterness, that event of bitterness into a deep root of bitterness within us. [00:28:08][59.4]

[00:28:09] Hebrews Chapter 12, verse 15, but good news, the cross. The cross, we don't have to get bitter even when our situation is, doesn't mean we have to get bitter, but we can add the cross to that situation and then the Lord can take through that and make something sweet of it. Broken relationships, problems. You can apply this across the board church, add the cross to it and the Lord will provide the sweetness in it. [00:28:43][34.0]

[00:28:45] Just to explain this out, just to give you an example, those people that you need to forgive. Those people that the enemy is trying real hard to get you to hold on to that grudge so that he can keep working that bitterness deeper and deeper and deeper into your heart, here's how you add the cross to that situation, you first stop and reevaluate your own self. And you remember what the Lord forgave you of because of the cross. It was a ton of stuff. [00:29:19][34.0]

[00:29:20] That's right, we all know I'm looking at you. Actually, I wasn't looking at anyone. [00:29:26][6.7]

[00:29:28] God forgave you of a ton of stuff. That's a good place to start remembering what God forgave you. [00:29:34][5.8]

[00:29:36] And then on top of that, the acknowledgment of the promise of his forgiveness to that person that hurt you. [00:29:43][7.0]

[00:29:44] And then last of all, by adding the cross, here is what you're doing. You're saying, God, if you can forgive me through the cross for all of my sins, for all of the times that I've missed the mark and messed it up, if you can forgive me, if you can forgive that bozo that offended me or hurt me or broke my heart, then I can forgive them, too, because of the cross. [00:30:08][24.0]

[00:30:12] The cross makes all the difference. I love that message. Here's the real question, why does the Lord lead us to bitter wells in the first place? Why does the Lord lead us into difficult trials and situations of this sort in the first place? Doesn't sound like that's really what we signed up for, is it? I didn't make that announcement in my statement of faith. It was much simpler than that. I expected good times. I expected beachfront property spiritually. Why does the Lord lead us into bitter situations, bitter wells like this? Because it is the only way to show us what is really in us. It's the only way to really know what's in your heart. I've shared that little saying with you before, Christians are like tea bags, you never really know what the flavor is until you dip them in hot water. See, that's when the flavor comes out. And it's true with Christians. [00:31:18][66.4]

[00:31:20] We don't really know what's in our heart, learn that lesson from this group, would you? Read verses 1 through 21 again, see what they thought was in their hearts. Remember, they were ready to take on the Philistines and the Canaanites. They were ready to conquer the world. That's what they thought was in their hearts, but that's not always in their hearts, that was only fresh in their mind. That's what was on the tip of their mind because it was the most recent thing that happened. [00:31:49][29.2]

*[00:31:50]* God just did an undeniable miracle. So it was fresh in the mind, but it wasn't in the heart. They thought it was, but the wells here at Marah are revealing that's not really what was in their hearts. So these bitter times that we go through, the challenges that we face, they're tests. They're like MRI's to show us our hearts, to show us what's really in there, not what we think is in there when we're worshiping with the church group or when we're studying at home peacefully and the kids are asleep or whatever. But what's truly in there, those tests, those trials bring those things out and they show them to us. It was so easy for the Hebrews, so easy to sing about being ready for the Philistines when they were on the beach celebrating God's victory. But it wasn't what was in their heart. If you think here, it kind of works like this, if you think you're ready to take on the Canaanites and what the Lord is probably going to do, if you're sure that's what's in your heart, if you're sure you're ready for spiritual battle and spiritual victory, then the Lord is going to drop you off on the doorstep of Canaan and see how you fare. *[00:33:17][87.5]*

*[00:33:18]* That's your test. If you're just sure that you're ready to take on the Philistines and the Lord knows that your bark is worse than your bite, what the Lord's going to do is he's going to bring a Goliath down into your valley and then see how tough you are at that point. So that's how the Lord tests us. And it's so crucial because it reveals to us where we are with the Lord like no other time. I can truly relate to this on just so many levels. *[00:33:52][34.0]*

*[00:33:54]* You know, you should see my spiritual condition when I am on the beach in Ocean City, Ocean City, Maryland. Oh, man. I am just spiritually on the top. I am on fire. Two years ago, I believe it was, we took a vacation there. Oh, it was so easy to just have the worship and the praise of God on my heart all day long. Me and Maggie woke up every morning before the sun and we went out there onto the beach. We had to drive a half hour to the beach because we were staying in Salisbury. *[00:34:26][32.5]*

*[00:34:27]* We drove out there a half hour drive every morning just to see the sun come up over the ocean. Have you ever watched that? The sunrise over the ocean. *[00:34:36][8.6]*

*[00:34:38]* It's amazing. It's way different than watching the sun come up over the summit. Way different. It's powerful. It's amazing. And so for days on end, spiritual life was real simple, real easy. And I just couldn't help but at almost all moments of the day to just say thank you, Lord, Lord, bless your name for what you've done. *[00:35:04][26.7]*

*[00:35:05]* Lord, I can just sit here on the beach with my toes in the sand and think about all the things you've done and just rejoice in how easy things are right here. *[00:35:16][10.2]*

*[00:35:18]* But then came the trip home. *[00:35:23][4.3]*

*[00:35:25]* And getting thrown back to the fire and the Wednesday deadline and the Sunday deadline and the questions and the issues and the decisions that had to be made, then came the tests and the trials. *[00:35:37][12.8]*

*[00:35:38]* And that gave me a much better idea of where I was spiritually than the beach did. Now, I won't tell you how I did. I want you to assume the best. But it really does that. *[00:35:51][12.8]*

*[00:35:52]* And here's an added blessing, an added bonus that comes from the bitter stuff that we experience in life. Not only do those bitter situations serve as good tests for us and MRI's to show us what's really in us. *[00:36:08][16.0]*

[00:36:09] But more importantly, they also produce something in us. They produce a longing for our true home, heaven. Can you imagine if life was just sweetness? [00:36:22][13.2]

[00:36:25] It would be so hard to do what the New Testament tells us to do. Set your mind on things above, not on things of the earth. Man, if everything was sweetness down here, we would have no longing for heaven. We would struggle with not wanting to leave earth, we'd just want to stay right here. [00:36:47][21.8]

[00:36:48] But those bitternesses in life, they push us like nothing else to begin to long for the sweetness of heaven. We need that. It makes heaven all the sweeter to us. It gives us that heavenly perspective. Reading on in verse 25, there he made a statute, not a statue. You know those things you tear down when you're mad at your history. Not a statue. A statute. He made a statute which is a decree and an ordinance which is a law. A rule. [00:37:25][36.5]

[00:37:27] And there he tested them. Verse 26, and said if you, now listen, this is for you computer programmers again it's an if then statement. So it's an if there's an if clause and if you do then there's going to be a positive result. And if you don't, then there's going to be no result. But the Lord says 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 or literally Yahweh Rapha, one of the descriptive names of God, Yahweh, Rapha, the God who heals. And this is a famous passage to quote, for the health, wealth and prosperity proponents. And unfortunately, it is a misuse and abuse of the text because there is a context here. We have to keep this in its context if we want to understand this correctly, and not foolishly make it say something it doesn't and end up hoping and trusting in something that is not a biblical principle. [00:38:52][84.3]

[00:38:53] We know that this does not mean that believers will never get sick, will never get covid, will never get cancer, will never fall down and break a leg or a hip. [00:39:07][14.2]

[00:39:08] We know that is not what this verse is teaching us. And those health, wealth and prosperity preachers are using this wrong because we understand that true believers are not impervious to the problems that are inherent with living on this fallen, cursed planet. We understand that, right? [00:39:30][22.2]

[00:39:32] I didn't say we like it, I said we understand it, it's the truth. [00:39:36][3.5]

[00:39:36] So this is first and foremost from God to this specific group of Hebrews. That's where we start with this, when we're looking for the meaning and it means this, this is the Lord speaking, as it were, it means this, I know what you have just been through. I know that you have experienced the collateral damage that came with my heavy hand toward the heathen. You've experienced the fallout from my judgment on the ungodly there in Egypt. But this is the Lord's way of saying that those sicknesses, those plagues, they have come and gone, they have passed, and that there would be no lingering effects from those plagues upon this Hebrew nation moving forward. Do you see that in the text? [00:40:31][54.2]

[00:40:33] So this is the Lord saying there will be no second wave of the ten plagues, this is the Lord saying that curve has flattened. I mean, I'm just explaining the text. Might sound like something else. We're just talking about the text here. [00:40:52][19.4]

[00:40:55] So if you want to make a personal application of this, you have to keep those two things conjoined with it. Number one, the judgment of God. That's what those ten plagues were about. And number two, the manageable collateral damage that God allows to be inflicted upon believers during those times when he is



pouring out judgment on others near you. So you keep those connected, you'll come to the right conclusion. [00:41:24][29.5]

[00:41:26] Now, let's take a look at this new law in verses 25 and 26. What exactly was God instituting here in verses 25 and 26? They were to be listening to the Lord and they were to be doing the right thing, and if they did that, then the Lord would be their healer, the Lord would take care of them. [00:41:57][30.5]

[00:41:58] That was the deal. This was a covenant. God was making an official law. I love this. He was making an official law requiring them to hear and obey. Which probably means what? They weren't doing a good job of it without the law, so the Lord makes it a law, he makes it an ordinance. Here's the new rule, the Lord says you make sure you're listening to me. Make sure you're tuning in to what I'm saying. Make sure you're hearing what I'm saying. Make sure you listen and make sure you obey. Which, by the way, those are all the same Hebrew word. It's all one word. It's the Hebrew word shamar. It means to hear, to listen and obey. We have two different words, probably because in English we Americans are more likely to hear, but not obey. It's all one thing to the Hebrews hear, listen, obey. So you hear the direction that I give you the Lord is saying, and you do what you're supposed to do, you do the right thing. And if you do that, the Lord says, I'll provide, I'll take care of you, I'll heal you, I'll protect you from sickness. It's that guarantee. [00:43:17][79.2]

[00:43:22] Verse 27, then they came to Elim stop number five, Elim. They came to Elim where there were 12 wells of water and 70 palm trees so they camp there by the water. My favorite stop of all, stop number five Elim, which means mighty ones. [00:43:44][21.8]

[00:43:46] And this location is an oasis in the desert. This is like, this is Palm Springs to a T.. Palm Springs is that lush California city out there in the Sonoran Desert. [00:44:00][14.5]

[00:44:01] Is that the right? I think I got the right one. [00:44:02][1.6]

[00:44:04] It's an oasis in the desert out there in California. That's what Elim is. It's an oasis in the middle of this desert. You've got wells of water and you've got fruit. At least that's my assumption, because you had palm trees. And palm trees, we don't know exactly what fruit they had, the palm trees produce depending on the tree, coconuts, bananas, dates, and berries even. So, a lot of different fruit that you can get from palm trees, also there are some palm trees that grow no fruit whatsoever. But I'm pretty positive that's not the kind of trees we're dealing with here, because, hello, what is the Lord trying to do here? [00:44:53][48.7]

[00:44:53] He's trying to bring them out of that last season of testing there at Marah, that dryness en route, that bitterness there on location. And he's trying to bring them now into a place of spiritual, refreshing, physical refreshing. So I'm pretty sure there's fruit coming from those palm trees. [00:45:16][22.5]

[00:45:19] Aren't you glad that the Lord doesn't leave us in the dry times? Aren't you glad those are temporary spots? Aren't you glad that the Lord doesn't leave us in the bitter situations either at the bitter wells? Aren't you glad that the Lord brings us back once again to times of spiritual refreshing and he knows right when we need it, doesn't he? I don't know how many times I've got so close to my breaking point. Got so close to just the end. Not being able to hold on any longer, and it's almost always in that moment right there, when you've reached the max, when you've reached the end of yourself, that the Lord diverts you into another place and into another season, a time of spiritual blessing where he can renew you, strengthen you, and then give you the time to sit back and consider what you learned through the difficult times. [00:46:21][62.1]

[00:46:23] So these are temporary stops in the Christian life. They're necessary. [00:46:27][4.0]

[00:46:27] It's necessary for every one of us to go through desert's in life. Wilderness experiences. I've had them, probably you have had them. If not, God bless your heart. We're going to be praying for you because you're probably pretty near one. [00:46:45][18.0]

[00:46:48] It's necessary for us to go through the desert. It's necessary for us to go through these difficult times of trial and testing. It is necessary for us to face bitter circumstances, but God only intends for those to be temporary. [00:47:06][17.7]

[00:47:08] He doesn't intend for you to live in those places. Ethom and Marah, yes, thank the Lord, Ethom and Marah are not permanent residents spots, they're camping locations, they're meant to move through. [00:47:22][13.8]

[00:47:24] God brings you to that tough time. And you you understand what the Lord is doing. You be sensitive to him. You hear, you listen. You don't lose your cool and panic. You trust, you obey, and the Lord moves you out of that test and into a time of refreshing. [00:47:43][19.7]

[00:47:46] If you're stuck in one of those spots, if you're stuck between Pi Hahiroth, Migdal and Marah in a dry and parched season of your spiritual life, or if you're stuck in a time of bitterness, man something went wrong, you missed your exit or something. You overstayed God's intention for you in that spot. God didn't mean for that to be permanent. He meant for you to learn the lesson, trust him, pass the test and move on to the next thing that the Lord wants to show you and grow you in. Are you with me, church? [00:48:25][39.7]

[00:48:31] Now, we have some peculiar specifics here, and I wish I had a little bit more time to develop this, so let me make this concise, if I can, and do my best with it. But we are told here in verse 27, the exact number of wells and the exact number of palm trees. One of them Hebrews was so excited to see this oasis, they went out there and counted the trees, even. 70 trees, tree number one, tree number two. These numbers are repeated later on in the scriptures. We're given particulars here, we're given specifics, we're given numbers. So any time I see something like that, especially on something unusual like this, I mean, I can understand why you might count the wells might be easier. [00:49:26][54.3]

[00:49:27] It's easier to look around and say, there's probably like 12 of them here, huh? That's a different thing to go around counting 70 trees. [00:49:35][7.8]

[00:49:36] So when I see unique and odd, almost unnecessary numbers and specifics like this given in the scriptures, I, of course, want to know what is the significance of that? And I think that in this case, there is significance to these numbers. [00:49:52][15.6]

[00:49:54] Usually when the Bible gives you a number, usually not always, but in almost every occasion, there's something for you to learn there in that number. [00:50:06][11.9]

[00:50:07] And it is usually consistently tied to biblical numerology. That is, when there is a number in the Bible, it always means something in that situation. And I think that's the case here. So what's with the numbers and what is the mighty ones? That's what Elim means, the mighty ones. What does that have to do with anything? [00:50:30][22.8]

[00:50:31] Well, here's the Cliff Notes version. The number 12 in the scripture always means perfect government, you know, perfect set up authority, perfect government. [00:50:46][15.5]

[00:50:47] And the number 70 in the scripture always means perfect spiritual order. Or you could say restoration. And you can track that number down 70, track that down, you'll always see it comes in moments where there is a signification of a transition into perfect spiritual order or restoration. [00:51:14][26.6]

[00:51:15] For example, the nation of Israel, after 70 years returning to the land, returning to Jerusalem. So you can track those down and see that perfect government, perfect spiritual order, restoration. What does that have to do with the mighty ones? Let me do it like this since we're out of time. [00:51:40][25.1]

[00:51:41] How about these numbers for you, how about these groups of names for mighty ones? There were 12 tribes of Israel. And then in just a little bit here in the flow of Old Testament text, there will be 70 men appointed to rule under Moses to help him with the work load of pastoring a congregation of three million people. 70 people that the scripture says that they would end up being filled with the same spirit that was in Moses. [00:52:15][34.0]

[00:52:16] Let me decode that for you. That's being filled with the Holy Spirit. How about these for numbers and how about these names for mighty ones? There were 12 apostles and there were 70 sent out as ambassadors, mini apostles, in the gospels for the purpose of evangelism and ministry. [00:52:43][26.9]

[00:52:44] So there has to be a connect there. And I am very confident about this New Testament application that what's really being signified here is this perfect spiritual order. At least that's the symbol, the symbolism of it, perfect government, perfect spiritual order. That the place where the nation would find its ultimate total and final spiritual refreshment is when they are being led by mighty ones, if you will, or were actively involved and being mighty ones themselves. [00:53:24][39.3]

[00:53:25] What do I mean by that? [00:53:26][0.7]

[00:53:29] I mean that you'll find refreshment as congregants when God has set up God ordained ministry and it's functioning the way that it's supposed to. Does that make sense? You're going to be blessed as a church of congregants when God has selected that church's leaders and those leaders are doing what God has called them to do, according to his will and for his glory. If you get leaders that shouldn't be leaders in your fellowship, you might have some things out of whack, but you'll find that fulfillment, that ultimate refreshment and blessing when things are ordered in that church or in this case, within the nation as God chooses. Or secondly, and better yet, you'll find ultimate fulfillment, refreshment and relaxation when you yourself hear the call and obey the voice and get involved in the work yourself. [00:54:34][65.6]

[00:54:35] There is nothing more fulfilling and rewarding than ministry. Nothing that I can think of. [00:54:42][6.8]

[00:54:43] You remember what Jesus said multiple times in my meat, my food, my nourishment is to do the will of him that sent me and we read of Jesus on occasion where he's exhausted in. The disciples are exhausted from ministry and he needs a rest. He needs a break, but the crowds throng him. So what does he do? He doesn't shut them out, he continues engagement in the ministry, he ministers more and more, and he ends up blessed and filled and satiated and energized because his nourishment was to do the will of the father. The disciples there in John Chapter 4, they went off into Sychar there in Samaria to get Jesus and the group some food. So they went through the drive through there and got some Sychar burgers and Sychar fries and whatever they had there in the town. And while they were making that trip to the drive through there in Sychar, of course, they didn't really have drive throughs, but Jesus was ministering to the woman at the well. He was revealing to her that he was the long awaited messiah. [00:55:59][76.4]

[00:56:00] He was the messiah that she was desiring, and that woman ended up believing in Jesus as the messiah. She ended up saved. She went back into the city and she told everyone she knew, hey, come meet a man that told me everything I ever did. [00:56:16][15.8]

[00:56:17] Now, that's a little bit of embellishment, but that's the way it felt. This guy knows everything about me. Come meet the Messiah. And when the disciples finally get back with the burgers or whatever, they finally get back with the food. Jesus didn't want the food. You know, the story. And the disciples begin to question among themselves, what did he eat? [00:56:41][23.8]

[00:56:42] Why isn't he hungry? Who gave him something to eat? Did someone sneak him a meal? How is he not hungry? And Jesus said, my food, my nourishment is to do the will of him that sent me. [00:56:55][13.2]

[00:56:55] So there's no better place to find refreshment than in a church that is ordered by God, set up by God, put in place by God's, structured by God, functioning according to the leading of God's spirit. Or you yourself getting involved in the ministry and finding the joy that comes from service. [00:57:15][19.9]

[00:57:17] It's that flow. It's a flow, you know. And when the Lord pours into you, and it stops there with you, it's different. It's not active, it's not constant, but when you're working, when you're ministering, when you're giving out to others, there's that constant flow of God's spirit in you and through you. [00:57:46][29.3]

[00:57:46] And it's a constant movement. It's a constant refreshing. It's one of the most incredible things that I have ever experienced in my life. I would love to see you experience that, too. [00:57:57][10.6]

[00:57:59] Plus, we need a bunch of workers. We need people to pick up the slack around here. [00:58:04][4.6]

[00:58:06] So either the Lord is going to call you to work or I'm going to eventually beat him to it. But those are two wonderful places to find our ultimate fulfillment and reflect refreshment. Would you stand with me tonight? We'll take Chapter 16 next week, a great chapter. I look forward to sharing this one with you. I wanted so badly to do these last handful of verses in Chapter 15 tonight and then get all of Chapter 16 done, but I think we'd have been looking at about 9:30. So let's just all thank the Lord for that one in our closing prayer. Lord, thank you for some wisdom from time to time. Let's pray, Lord, thank you for this group. Thank you for every one of them. [00:58:50][43.4]

[00:58:51] Ask your blessing over them. Lord, I know that this is very relatable stuff that we are reading about, even though this has happened thousands of years ago, millennia ago. Yet the human condition really hasn't changed. The human experience really hasn't changed. And certainly the way that you have structured spiritual life hasn't changed. These principles still apply. So, Father, help us tonight to learn these things, help us not to miss the lessons and fail the tests, help us to really, truly grasp these things, pass those tests and bless your heart, with our faith, with our obedience. So would you work that in us tonight, Lord? Like never before. [00:59:48][57.2]

[00:59:50] Like never before. [00:59:50][0.6]

[00:59:51] Lord, pray that you would meet the needs of the group here. You hear every prayer, you know, every need. We ask you, Lord, to be merciful. We ask you to act powerfully on behalf of the group meeting those needs, healing sick bodies, answering those prayers, speaking into our hearts, direction for life and Lord, just further finely tuning our ability to take these spiritual truths, these spiritual lessons that we're learning. [01:00:30][38.7]

*[01:00:34]* And Lord, to be able to just insert them right where we are in the necessary situations of life.

*[01:00:40][6.7]*

*[01:00:43]* Thank you, Father. Thank you, Lord. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen. God bless you.

*[01:00:43][0.0]*

[3477.8]