

**Sunday 8/30 Exodus 15:22-27 From Bitter to Sweet**

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. 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?" 25 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."

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

**Several years ago My wife Denise and I were speaking at a Marriage retreat out in AZ.**

**A) There was this one particular woman who was at the retreat**

**B) She was a bit older than us at that time - Mid 60's But there was this Vibrancy about her**

**C) Stood out in the way she Carried herself – way she worshipped –  
1) the way she interacted with her husband/others**

**She just seemed to be so in love with Jesus and so full of life.**

**A) Well during one of the meals we got to sit at a table with her and her husband**

**B) And I asked them a question that I love to ask couples – Tell us your story**

**1) How did you guys meet – How did you come together**

**C)Her response shocked me!**

**D)She said that this was actually her 2nd marriage –**

**Her first husband though he professed to be a Christian – radically abused her physically.**

**A)She told the story of how he broke her arm once – broke a rib -  
Fractured her leg – Crutches**

**B)How she would sometimes show up at church wearing sunglasses to cover up the black eye**

**1)he gave her the night before**

**C)She told us that the Pastor of the church even had the audacity to say the beatings were her fault**

**1)If she learned to submit they wouldn't happen**

**We were horrified and heartbroken, but it got worse.**

**A)After she finally got the courage to leave the guy and that church – filed for divorce. She spiraled**

**C)She took self defense class and Marital Arts –**

**1)She got to the point where she would instigate arguments with men**

**D)In hopes that they would try and strike her or push her**

**1)so she could use her new skills in beating them up – to defend herself**

**E)She lived that way – Broken and Angry for many years**

**Until she became reacquainted with Jesus and discovered who she was in Christ!**

**A)It was when She began to learn about her identity in Jesus,**

**B) she came to realize her past hurt and pain didn't have **to Define her.****

**C)So when we met her she was way on the other side of all of that trauma**

**1)Truly healed and set free**

**Well the Concept we are going to look at today in our Deep Dive - was a Catalyst for her healing**

**A)And her becoming the person Jesus had saved her to be.**

**B)A truth that has liberated many people**

**Here in Exodus 15 we find the Children of Israel on their Journey through the Wilderness**

**A)A year before they get to Kadesh Barnea – 7 stops**

**B)Really 8 because the 8th stop was MT Sinai – 3 months**

**C)The Law/ Instruction for Tabernacle – Priesthood**

**C)Each stop there was a lesson –#1 Succoth – Tent town Pilgrims**

**#2 Etham – God will guide through the desert**

**A)Stop #3 Red Sea – God is the Waymaker – makes a way where there is no way.**

**B)Today Stop #4 The Pools of Marah**

**C)Picture the Scene- Hot in the desert – been on a journey –3 days no water- hot sweaty and thirsty.**

**Up ahead you see what looks like a Desert Oasis –**

**A) Pool of Water – you start running to the water – Bury your face –**

**B)Splash water – the coolness is refreshing – and then you take a drink – spit it out – Gross – Bitter**

**C)Call it Marah – Marah means Bitterness**

**Remember Naomi - Pleasant - Left Bethlehem – Moab –**

**A)In Moab she becomes a Widow – loses her husband and then her two sons**

**B>Returns Home – “Welcome home Naomi!” “Pleasant so good to see you”**

**C)Don’t call me that in more – Nothing Pleasant about my life –**

**1)From now on call me Marah – the Lord has dealt with me bitterly**

**What happens to Israel here at the Waters of Marah A)Is something that most of us have experienced at some point in our lives**

**B)They come to these waters thinking they are going to bring the Refreshment they are looking for –**

**C)Instead Bitterness - We have all experienced that at some point in our lives – THIS WEEK?**

**D)We entered into something that we thought was going to bring Joy and Refreshment to our lives**

**1)Ended up bringing Bitterness**

**E)Maybe it was Job – THE JOB – DREAM JOB – Bitter – Relationship – Praying for Excited – Bitter**

**1)Marriage – Sweet at first – Bitter**

**So here is the question: When that sort of thing happens how do we KEEP from STAYING bitter.**

**A)How do we keep the hurt and bitterness from defining us ?**

**B)Maybe you have been hurt and you think – I have a right to be mad – I have a right to be bitter –**

**1)I am never going to TRUST \_\_\_\_\_ AGAIN!**

**C)The Lord Warns us in his Word “To Beware of roots of bitterness whereby many become defiled” Hebrews 12:15**

**D)Principle is this Bitterness and resentment doesn’t just affect you it affects those around you too.**

**When my wife and I moved into the house we live in right now 29 years ago.**

**A)There were these trees in the backyard that had been planted right next to the concrete patio**

**B)For some reason the roots didn’t grow deep they grew out – completely ruined the concrete patio**

**C)The concrete patio looked like a MT range – all messed up**

**D)You could say the roots of those trees – completely defiled the patio**

**1)First thing we were going to need to fix**

**We had to break up the whole patio and tear it out!**

A)And then we had to dig out all of those roots – some this big around and the stretched – 20-25 feet

B)That is the damage a root of bitterness does –

C)It Doesn't just defile the person who is bitter – defiles others around them

D)So the Lord – says Beware of roots of Bitterness –

**So how do we avoid falling into that trap – Consumed defined and controlled by bitterness?**

A)Two steps **#1 Learn a lesson here from what the Lord says to Moses.**

25 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.

B)The picture is a Beautiful one – because by every Pool of Marah we face in our lives there is a tree –

C)When that tree is cast into **those Bitter waters it turns the Bitterness** into sweetness.

1)What is this tree a picture of ? **Scholars -The Cross**

D)When we have been hurt we need too learn to throw in the tree – apply the Cross to that situation

**E)Easier said than done/**

**When we have been hurt by people we want revenge right - Hurt back**

A)Hurt people Hurt people – **Fallen Human Nature**

**B)Story about a Wife who's husband died –**

1))Funeral buried – cemetery – nice tombstone that read – **Rest in peace**

–

**C)But then she found out he left her out of the Will**

1)She changed the tomb to read – Rest in peace until I come for you!

**D)Out for revenge and that is our Human nature: Right?**

**When we have been hurt or wronged – we can say: Lord I want justice to be served –**

**A)And Jesus whispers in our ear/ he speaks to our Hearts –**

**B)Justice was served 2,000 yrs ago – My death – on the Cross**

**C)When I died on the Cross I paid the price for that very sin that was done against you**

**D)So throw in the towel – Throw in the Cross – 1)Realize Price was Paid / Justice was served .**

**So First step in our healing is to apply the cross**

**A)Which means you realize that Jesus paid the price for your sins**

**B)And the sins that others have done against you**

**C)Listen some of you are not going to like this:**

**1)But the scriptures make it very clear that in every situation we are called to Forgive.**

**32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. Ephesians 4:32**

**A) We are to forgive others – because we have been forgiven of so much**

**B) But here is what we need to understand – The Call to Forgiveness is really about your heart –**

**C) The Lord says I love you and I don't want bitterness and unforgiveness to ruin you**

**1) or Define you**

**D) You need to learn to walk in Forgiveness**

**Recall - Peter asked How many times forgive – 7 times? That seems like a lot to me!**

**A) 70 times 7 – 490 times – Who is going to Count ?**

**B) PT You are always to Forgive –**

**C) The first step in learning to walk in forgiveness is to APPLY THE CROSS**

**D) Embrace the truth – Jesus did was Enough**

**Also Learning this truth: Forgiveness is not a feeling or an emotion it is an a Repeated Action:**

**“To forgive is to decide not to hold something against another, regardless of what he or she has done to you. It is effectively an act of dying to self.” Renee Zou GC**

### **Forgiveness is A Repeated action –**

A) See I can forgive one day – and wake up the next day – mad all over again -

B) Throw in the tree again– Apply the Cross -AGAIN

### **Important truth about Forgiveness: Forgiveness takes one –**

A) It is about You and your heart. It really has nothing to do with what the other person does.

B) It is deciding in my heart was what Jesus did on the Cross – enough to cover that sin.

C) It is deciding in your heart – that person is not really your problem – they are God's problem

D) It is deciding in I am not going to allow what they did to me to wreck me and define me –

1) Or mark me forever as a Victim

### **So Forgiveness takes one –**

A) **Reconciliation takes Two** – based on repentance –

B) Those who sinned have to own it – repent – not going to treat you that way anymore –

C) That has to happen before there can be Reconciliation

D) Or else you are just sweeping it under the rug and pretending that it never happened

**E)And that is never healthy – never last**

1)The Relationship never really moves past it – Pretend world

**So Forgiveness takes one –**

**A)Reconciliation takes Two – based on repentance –**

**B)Trust takes time-** trust is earned over time and comes through consistent behavior and actions

**C)Listen: If you Wronged someone – Spouse?**

1) You say: **I feel like they haven't forgiven me even though they say they have**

**No chances are they have forgiven you – you are back together –**

**A)But what you are experiencing is still don't trust**

**B)You do something – say something – respond in a way – reminds them of that Hurt –**

1)setting them back again –

**C)Trust takes time to build back – consistency**

**So how do we not allow a wound or hurt to become bitterness that defines us and defiles us and others? A)We throw in the towel – we apply the Cross**

**B)We grab on to the truth that what Jesus did was enough - **Justice was served at Calvary.****

1)Their sin is mostly between them and God

**C)That is the first step – throw in the tree – Release in my heart – bitterness not control me – FREE**

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

**A)What we have here is an actual OASIS in desert**

**B)All the water they could drink !!!! All the Shade – this was a Place of great refreshment**

**C)Follows the time of Bitterness – tree –**

**1)Same thing is true w/ us – Cross leads to freedom**

**Same is true for us – when we learn the secret and the truth of throwing in the tree – cross**

**A)To those bitter situations – it makes them sweet again**

**B)And as we learn to live in that truth there is a freedom and refreshment that marks our hearts**

**C)Our lives become an Oasis for others to experience the Love and joy of Jesus**

**D)So first step – Throw in the Tree – apply the cross**

**The 2nd Step or action that we learn to do is –**

**A)We follow the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 5:44 “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”**

**B)Jesus modeled this from the Cross – Prayed “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.”**

**1)They didn’t know they were crucifying the Messiah**

**You might say the people who hurt me or wronged me knew exactly what they were doing –**

**A)Ok – doesn't matter – Pray for them anyway.**

**B)Now at first your prayers might resemble Davids- Lord Kill them – knock their teeth out Lord**

**C)That is ok – because over time those prayers will change**

**1)Prayer changes things—1st thing it changes ..You!**

**Now what I am sharing with you today – Is not just pie in the sky Bible theology –**

**A)Seen this worked out in my own life**

**B)Listen I been here a long time –30 yrs – Pastor here / Church is a family – families have problems**

**1)Families are messy –**

**C)JF Dysfunctional family ....best around**

**D)Had many people get mad at me because they didn't like the counsel they got from me**

**1)Or someone else here**

**Had one guy who was stalking me – went on for so long we had to take out a restraining order**

**A)Show up at our house unannounced – walk into our back yard**

**B)Actually came into my house one day -I was there alone**

**C)Leave mean messages on our VM machine**

**D)Last resort – Restraining order**

**Had a lady who would call our house and leave crazy messages – animal noises – Bizzaar**

**A)Kids younger then - light blinking race – Dad it is the crazy lady again**

**B)Had people malign me – slander me –You can creat a pretty good list in 30 years**

**C)Most would never talk to me personally – but  
They would talk about me – or send an email**

**D)Comes with the territory- Being a Pastor  
Bigger the church – bigger the target**

**Well I have learned personally the power of  
applying this principle I am sharing with you today**

**A)To daily and regularly apply the Cross – until my heart is in the right place**

**B)So the First step in forgiveness to learn to daily apply the Cross –**

**1)Whenever those feelings of bitterness and Anger arise – apply the cross**

**C)The Cross can make turn the bitterness and Anger in your heart to Sweetness**

**1)Say Lord – they are not my problem –your problem –**

**So this 2nd step is just as important- Pray for them!**

A)I will be honest – at first my prayers were more like David's Lord get them wreck them -

B)But it is really hard **to stay mad at someone** that you are constantly praying for –

1)It doesn't something to your heart

C)As you pray for them the Lord starts to change your perspective – see them the way God does

**So when I started praying for someone who hurt me or my wife or my family**

A)I have gone from being mad – to literally feeling sorry for the person who hurt me –

B)I realize They did that because they are messed up – they need help

C)How their behavior is really related to their own hurt – or their own sin

**Lord can you Heal them – Fix them!**

A)Or realizing their behavior is really connected to a lack of surrender in their lives to the Lord in an area.

B)Still clinging to control – not giving that over to the Lord – affects them

C)**Pray for them – Learn to surrender –**

**D)My point is the more I prayed for them – the more my heart changed toward them. -**

**I think that is really part of the point why Jesus said to pray for your enemies**

**A) You pray for them – and those prayers might not affect them at all –**

**B) Like Pharaoh – still resisting – still hardened –**

**C) But as you pray it is going to radically affect you! – Change you and free you and heal you.**

**Now Listen in some of those relationships –**

**A) There has Never been reconciliation – those people still don't like me**

**B) But my heart is free - I am walking in Forgiveness – continue to pray**

**But In other of those relationships – there has been reconciliation- there is a relationship –**

**A) But trust still hasn't been earned – still in process or it is still growing**

**B) Still do things and say things and react in ways – that makes me think –**

**1) I can't fully trust them yet – MORE TIME - OK**

**C) At least there is a relationship again**

**D) But my heart is free – what they did or said – is not defining me or defiling me –**

**1) there is a relationship again**

**Close with this: Anytime you have been wounded by someone – the wound is eventually going to Heal.**

**A) All wounds eventually heal – but wounds leave scars – the bigger the wound the bigger the Scar**

**B) Any of you have literal scars on your body? –**

**C) Two hip surgeries – Shoulder surgery, knee surgery – Scars**

**Here is what is interesting about Scars –**

**A) You really don't think about them on a daily basis - unless you notice them in the mirror**

**B) You don't think about them**

**C) Until maybe someone else sees them – They notice it and they ask – How did you get that ?–**

**1) what happened ?– A Story behind it**

**D) The same thing is true of our emotional wounds.**

**They leave an emotional scar that tells a story. It becomes a symbol**

**A) The story is going to go one of two ways:**

**B) It is going to be the symbol of the thing that ruined your life, marriage, friendship**

**C) It will be the story and the symbol of why you are bitter or why you are jaded. –**

**Why you are the victim I am this way because.....**

**A) Why you don't trust anyone –**

**BYou say: “I don’t trust those people or that person – or leaders or**

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**C)Ultimately what we are saying if we are honest – Is God I really don’t trust you.**

**So the Scar is going to tell a story – it is going to be a symbol – of what defines you as the Victim.**

**A)Or it can become an amazing beautiful symbol of and story of the Grace of God –**

**B)Where you say: My story – this should have ruined me**

**C)This could have and maybe should have destroyed my marriage**

**1)That “church hurt” could have made me – hate church – never want to be a part of a church again.**

**D)But God in his grace – as I learned to throw in the towel – apply the cross**

**1)Pray for those who hurt me**

**Jesus has healed my heart –**

**A)Now I am defined by Joy and Victory and Grace because who I am in Jesus – not MY PAST**

**B)That my Friends is incredibly attractive and noticeable - CONTRAGIOUS**

**C)Like that woman we met at that retreat in Az – VIBRANCY marks your life**

**Friends listen our world is filled with broken hurt people**

**A)who are in need of healing – need of being set free.**

**B)As we learn to walk in freedom – The answer they are looking for**

**Maybe You here today – Not Saved!**

**A)You are broken by sin by hurt – In bondage to hurts – bondage to pain –**

**B)That has led to bondage to addictions – further brokenness**

**C)Our World discards broken things – Jesus loves to take broken people – make them NEW**

**1st Step in your healing – Apply the Cross – Jesus died for you -Loves you**