

JULY 15th
GRUMBLING 3.0

“But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” So Moses cried to the LORD, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.” **EXODUS 17:3-4**

Ever had déjà vu? The word is French and means “already seen.” It refers to a person encountering a new situation but believing that they’ve experienced it before. Déjà vu usually only lasts for a few minutes and evidently happens mostly with young adults. As we read Exodus 17, you might feel like you’re experiencing déjà vu. We only just finished reading in the last chapter about no water, then bitter water that the Israelites can’t drink. Now we are encountering again another time of...no water. What does God teach them and teach us at the same time?

We discover the seriousness of the situation. In Exodus 16, the people go without water for 3 days, a physical problem. Here in Exodus 17 of course the physical problem still exists, but the emotional problem is also explained. Did you catch Moses’ words here? “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.” That’s quite a reaction. Moses is allowing us to walk in his sandals at this point and know exactly what he is thinking and feeling. Millions of people are ready to revolt against their leader. It’s not just the danger of replacing Moses, he’s concerned that he might die right there in the wilderness!

Is Moses panicking here? We don’t really know for sure. But what we do know is that God answers His cries with His perfect presence and power. God has shown His power and given His peace, and now He will again show His providence for His people...the people that are testing God’s care for them. What does God say here? “Take the rod that you’ve used to produce my miracles and hit the rock. Once you hit the rock, water will flow out to the people.” Have you ever imagined the amount of water that came from the rock? Remember, we are talking about over a million people, with all their flocks and herds that also need the water. This isn’t a Tall Timbers small trickle that comes out. What do they learn here? God always gives exactly what is needed in His timing. Of course, we’re not sure what they are really learning here, because it seems to us that the Israelites don’t remember what they learn for the “test” of faith, but only “cram” for the exam as it happens. This is now the third time that they’ve doubted that God will care for them, within the span of a few months!

God shows us the unbelieving hearts of the Hebrews here. What does verse 7 say? “And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the LORD by saying, ‘Is the LORD among us or not?’” Wow, what a challenge to God’s love and care for them! Is the Lord here with us...because it certainly doesn’t feel like it! Their faith is struggling...and that’s quite an understatement! But we aren’t much different, are we? We can struggle with the same questions because we can become disappointed with God. We are guilty of asking, “Is God here or not?” Have you ever asked God for a sign so that you can trust Him in that situation? If you have, join the club! Most of us have some time or another tested God in this way. The Hebrews just saw God’s miracles, and they still don’t trust Him. A sign doesn’t help us trust God more. It only makes us a god over the God who created the world. It puts us in the driver’s seat instead of God. It would be foolish to place a toddler into the driver’s seat and expect them to drive the car, so why would we replace God with our childish way of distrust? Men, God is always here; He never left. The question for us is, will we trust God’s way or trust in our own way?

Spend some time thinking about times when you’ve tested God’s ways of providing or protecting you. Ask Him to help you trust Him when times are difficult.

For Further Reading: Psalm 95