

Small Group Guide: The Smitten Rock

Based on Exodus 17:1-7

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when you felt spiritually "thirsty" or in a wilderness season. What did that look like for you?

Key Scripture Passages

- **Primary Text:** Exodus 17:1-7
- **Supporting Texts:**
 - Isaiah 53:4
 - 1 Corinthians 10:4
 - John 4:14; 7:37-38
 - Luke 9:62
 - Matthew 6:25-34

Sermon Summary (5 minutes)

Have someone briefly summarize the main points:

1. God deliberately leads us to places of need to reveal what's in our hearts
2. God Himself stood on the rock to be smitten—Christ took the judgment we deserved
3. From the smitten rock flows eternal satisfaction through the Holy Spirit

Discussion Questions (30-40 minutes)

Section 1: The Journey by Stages

1. The pastor mentioned that the Israelites traveled "by stages" — day by day, step by step. How does this relate to Jesus' teaching about "daily bread" and not worrying about tomorrow?
 - Follow-up: What does a "day-by-day" faith look like practically in your life right now?
2. Read Matthew 6:25-34. The Israelites kept looking back to Egypt despite God's daily provision. What are the "Egypt" in your life — the comfortable places or old patterns you're tempted to return to when things get hard?
3. The sermon stated: "God leads us to our storms not to destroy us, but to reveal Himself and strengthen our faith." Do you agree with this? Why or why not? Share an example from your life.

Section 2: Rephidim — The Place of Rest Without Water

4. Rephidim means "resting place," yet there was no water there. Have you ever experienced a "divine appointment" that looked like a dead end? How did you respond — with faith or with complaining?
5. The Israelites asked Moses, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" (v. 2). When facing difficulties, do you tend to blame circumstances, other people, or bring your complaints directly to God? What's the difference?
6. The pastor said: "Have you ever looked at your trouble, your Rephidim, as a divine appointment? Instead of saying 'why,' say 'what' — God, what are you trying to show me?" How might this shift in perspective change how you approach current challenges?

Section 3: The Rock Was Christ

7. Read 1 Corinthians 10:4. The pastor emphasized that God said, "I will stand before you there on the rock" (Exodus 17:6), and Paul tells us "the rock was Christ." What does this reveal about God's character and His willingness to take judgment for us?
8. Moses was told to take the rod of judgment — the same staff that brought plagues on Egypt — and strike the rock. How is this a picture of the gospel? What does it mean that Christ was "struck" for us?
9. The sermon mentioned that Moses was only supposed to strike the rock once (representing Christ's once-for-all sacrifice), but

later he struck it twice in anger. Why is it significant that Christ only needed to die once? How does this give you assurance?

Section 4: Living Water Flows

10. Read John 7:37-38. Jesus said, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink... out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." The Israelites' water flowed out to others, even the grumblers. How should the "living water" of the Holy Spirit flow from your life to others around you?
11. The pastor noted that grace came before the law—they received water at Mount Horeb before receiving the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. What does this teach us about God's approach to His people?

Section 5: Picking Up Your Cross

12. Read Luke 9:62. Jesus said no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is "fit" (equipped) for the kingdom. The pastor clarified this doesn't mean "worthless" but "not equipped yet." What does it mean to pick up your cross daily rather than looking back?
13. The closing quote said: "The key is where we flee when we fear." When you face fear, difficulty, or failure, where do you typically flee? To God, to distractions, to comfort, to other people? How can you train yourself to flee to God first?

Key Takeaways (5 minutes)

Have group members share which point resonated most:

- **Takeaway 1:** God deliberately leads us to waterless places to test and reveal what's in our hearts, teaching us to depend on Him daily
- **Takeaway 2:** Christ is the Rock who was struck with the rod of judgment so that living water could flow to undeserving sinners
- **Takeaway 3:** The Holy Spirit is our continual source of living water that satisfies eternally and flows through us to others
- **Takeaway 4:** Grace always precedes law—God provides what we need before He calls us to obedience

Practical Application (10-15 minutes)

Personal Reflection:

1. **Identify your "Rephidim":** What is one area of your life right now where you feel spiritually dry or in need? Write it down.
2. **Change your question:** Instead of asking "Why is this happening?" commit to asking "What are you teaching me, God?" this week when difficulties arise.
3. **Remember the Rock:** When you take communion next, specifically remember that Christ was struck in judgment so you could receive living water. Let that reality sink deep.

Group Challenge:

Choose one of these to commit to as a group this week:

- **Daily Dependence:** Set a daily reminder on your phone to pause and acknowledge your need for God's "daily bread" — whether that's wisdom, strength, patience, or provision
- **Stop Grumbling:** Identify one area where you've been complaining, and instead practice thanksgiving. Share with an accountability partner
- **Flee to God:** When fear, anxiety, or difficulty hits this week, commit to praying *first* before turning to any other source of comfort
- **Let Water Flow:** Identify one person who is "thirsty" (struggling, lost, hurting) and intentionally share the living water of Christ with them through encouragement, testimony, or practical help

Closing Reflection & Prayer (10 minutes)

Reflection Question: "God does not withdraw His love when we falter or fail." How does this truth change how you view your relationship with God?

Prayer Focus:

- Confess areas where you've been grumbling or looking back to "Egypt"
- Thank God for being the Rock who was struck for you
- Ask for the Holy Spirit to be living water flowing through you
- Pray for specific needs in the group—remember, God is FOR you

For Further Study

- Read the full account of Israel's wilderness journey in Exodus 15-17
- Study other "rock" references in Scripture: Deuteronomy 32:4, 31; Psalm 18:2; Matthew 16:18
- Trace the theme of "living water" through John's Gospel
- Read about God's daily provision of manna in Exodus 16 and Jesus' teaching on daily bread in Matthew 6

Leader Notes

- **Be sensitive** to group members who may be in genuine wilderness seasons—create space for honest sharing
- **Emphasize grace:** Some may feel condemned about their grumbling; point them to the truth that God gave water to undeserving complainers
- **Connect to communion:** If your group shares communion together, this sermon provides rich material for reflection
- **Encourage honesty:** The Israelites' story shows that even God's chosen people struggled with faith—we're not alone in our doubts and fears