

FROM BITTER TO SWEET

1. INTRODUCTION

- a. Not something I enjoy preaching
 - i. I am a pessimist
 - ii. I adore optimists, they probably hate me
- b. Sermon on Israel's experience at Marah Ex 15:22-27
 - i. Then Moses made Israel set out from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur. They went three days in the wilderness and found no water. 23 When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter; therefore it was named Marah.[b] 24 And the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" 25 And he cried to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a log,[c] and he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet. There the Lord[d] made for them a statute and a rule, and there he tested them, 26 saying, "If you will diligently listen to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, your healer." 27 Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they encamped there by the water God Led them there

2. Marah was in God's program

- a. Ex 15:22 Then Moses led the people
 - i. God was leading Moses.
 - 1. Ex 13:22 The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.
 - ii. If my kids were crying for water, this would have been tough to swallow
 - 1. If my glass gets empty at a restaurant, I drink my wife's.

3. Two options: Turn on God, Turn towards God

- a. Neither option is an acceptance of the situation.
 - i. Satan tries to convince us that turning towards God is accepting the situation and then condemns us for doing that.
- b. The people grumbled but Moses prayed.
 - i. Only the prayer got an answer
- c. You will stay in the same situation until you pray about the problem.

4. Realize this is a test

- a. Ex 15:25(b) There the Lord made for them a statute and a rule, and there He tested them,
 - b. It's difficult to realize when you are fighting Satan or when God is testing you.
 - i. Israel was delivered from Egypt. They were tested at Marah
 - 1. Deliverance was all on God. Testing was all on Israel
 - ii. Only 3 days between
5. Result of a passed test
- a. Revelation & Restoration
 - b. Revelation: Ex 15:26 saying, "If you will diligently listen to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, **for I am the Lord, your healer.**"
 - i. They did not know God was their Healer.
 - 1. It had only been 3 days
 - 2. They were learning who God is
 - ii. God gave them a promise
 - 1. "I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians"
 - 2. A promise from God is unique
 - a. Reverently, you have leverage
 - b. You can pray God's promises back to Him.
 - c. Ex 32:11-14 But Moses implored the Lord his God and said, "O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 12 Why should the Egyptians say, 'With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people. 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, **to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them,** 'I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.'" 14 And the Lord relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people.
 - c. Restoration
 - i. They got 12 springs of water AND shade

1. Ex15:27 Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they encamped there by the water.
 - a. God wanted to give them more. The Promise Land
 2. James 1: 2-4 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, **that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.**
 - a. How could you want anything more?
6. The secret to change the bitterness to sweet? The Tree
- a. The tree represents embracing suffering
 - i. Science is catching up
 1. Study of mice running on a wheel, forced vs willingly
 - a. Forced running results
 - i. Anxiety, brain damage, elevated stress hormone, inflammation, no improvement in memory or depression
 - b. Willful results
 - i. No anxiety, no increase in stress hormones
 - ii. What the bible says
 1. 1 Peter 5:10 And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.
 2. Romans 5:3-4 More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope
 3. 2 Tim 3:12 Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,
7. What do we do now?
- a. We must quit withholding God's full character from new Christians like there is a side to Dad we don't want them knowing about just yet.
 - i. From the Red Sea to Marah was 3 days.
 - b. Luke 8:13 And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away.
 - i. This is a new Christian that was not aware a test was coming.
 - c. We must not withhold from a new Christian and doom their salvation

8. Altar call

- a.** Bitter and turned on God. Opportunity to turn towards God
- b.** Embrace the suck
- c.** It's the only remedy to go from Bitter to Sweet