

In the Desert

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God is in control.

Journey is more important than destination in spiritual formation.

When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, "If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt." ¹⁸ So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea. The Israelites went up out of Egypt ready for battle. Exodus 13:17-18

God doesn't give the Israelites a map and control. God gives them His presence as a guide.

By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. ²² Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people. Exodus 13:21-22

Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions..." ¹⁵ When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat." Ex. 16:4,15

Three invitations from God to us in the desert...

- To camp around God's presence and trust Him to guide us
- To live gratefully one day at a time
- To let God form us into people who are ready for whatever's next

I can't. You can. He can through me.

I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³ I can do all this through him who gives me strength. Philippians 4:12-13

Let's Connect

If you were in control of this crisis, what one thing you would do?

Let's Talk About It

This season *in the desert* is an opportunity for God to form us into the people He wants us to be. Our need for control is often one of the big areas that hinders us from becoming people of faith, hope and love. When we attempt to control the things we can't control, contentment goes away, anxiety goes up, peace goes down and you're tempted to go in a direction you'll regret. Ultimately, our trust is in God and He is in control. Remember: I can't...God can...He can through me.

Exodus 13:17-22; Exodus 16:1-4, 9-15; John 15:1-5; Philippians 4:10-12

- Which part of the message made an impact, caught your attention or challenged you?
- Read Exodus 13:17-22 & 16:1-4, 9-15. What are you trying to control? How can you surrender this area to God and trust Him? What would this look like?
- Discuss the three invitations God gives to us in the desert. Why are these invitations incompatible with control? Which of them do you desire to grow in? What would that look like for you?
- Read Philippians 4:10-13. Does the kind of contentment the apostle Paul describes seem achievable in your own life? Why or why not? What would you need to change or adjust to take steps in that direction?
- What is your primary source of discontentment right now? What is one thing you can do to live with less control and more contentment knowing that you *can't...He can...He can through you?*

Take a Step

- Give God your primary area of discontentment. Trust that while *I can't, He can and He can through me.*
- SOAP reading for this week: **Day 1:** Psalm 16, Romans 1; **Day 2:** Psalm 30, Romans 2; **Day 3:** Psalm 63; Romans 3; **Day 4:** Psalm 77, Romans 4; **Day 5:** Psalm 111, Romans 5; **Day 6:** Psalm 133, Romans 6; **Day 7:** Psalm 142, Rom. 7.

Here's My Prayer

- Lord, You alone are in control. I surrender to You and ask You to fill me with your peace and presence. Empower me today, to live fully and freely for You. I can't, but You can. And You can *through me.* Work through my life for Your glory. In Jesus' powerful name, amen.