

August 2nd, 2020
Grumbling and Grace
Exodus 15:22 – 17:7

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

July 26 Eccles. 9-12	July 30 Isaiah 9-12
July 27 Song of Sol. 1-8	July 31 Isaiah. 13-17
July 28 Isaiah 1-4	August 1 Isaiah. 18-22
July 29 Isaiah 5-8	August 2 Isaiah. 23-27

Lesson Introduction: Last week we saw how the LORD delivered the Israelites out of the hand of the Egyptians, parting the Red Sea, and then closing it back on Pharaoh and his armies. That section ended with God's people rejoicing in the LORD, giving Him glory for all that He had done on their behalf.

Our passage this week tells a vastly different story, as God's people quickly become frustrated, and begin to grumble against Moses and Aaron, and ultimately, against the LORD Himself. As we study this week, we will examine the sin of grumbling, and will consider how we often grumble against the LORD in our own lives. Finally, we will see how God pours out His kindness and grace on His people by delivering us despite our sinfulness.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS:

- **When we grumble we sin against God (16:7-8)**
- **The LORD is gracious and patient, though we are sinful and ungrateful (15:25, 16:4-12, 17:4-7)**
- **God calls us to obedience upon giving us salvation (15:25-27, 16:4-5; 22-26)**

Read Exodus 15:22 – 17:7

Discussion Section 1: The Forgetfulness of God's People (15:24, 16:2-3, 17:2-3)

-What makes the grumbling of the Israelites particularly astounding?

-Who does God say Israel is grumbling against? (16:7-8)

-In what ways might you find yourself grumbling against God?

Excerpt from *Exalting Jesus in Exodus* by Tony Merida, pg. 152-153:

"The Israelites responded to their need and fear by grumbling against Moses (v. 24). "What are we going to drink?" they asked. Complaining and grumbling are signs of ungratefulness, self-centeredness, immaturity, and insecurity. It is what children do in minivans and in response to homework assignments..."

Over and over we read about Israel's "grumbling" (v. 2,7,8,11). Complaining is a serious sin, more serious than you might think. (See 1 Cor 10:1-12. Notice the sins mentioned there.) Paul told the church in Philippi, "Do everything without grumbling and arguing" (Phil 2:14).

What did the children of Israel complain about? They grumbled under Pharaoh (Exod 2:23). They grumbled at the Red Sea (14:11-12). They grumbled at Marah (15:23-24). They grumbled about their leaders (16:2-3; 17:3-4; also Num 11). God just did a miracle turning bitter water into sweet water; He showed Israel that He would care for them; yet they still complained. What would you have done if you had brought out the people from Egypt and they began to murmur, "[in Egypt] we sat by pots of meat"? I would have been angry... In contrast, God reacted with mercy here to the Israelites. He still provided for them in spite of their ingratitude."

Discussion Section 2: God's Enduring Patience (15:25, 16:4-12, 17:4-7)

-What does God's response to all the murmuring and grumbling of His people in these three chapters teach us about His character?

-How do we see God's power and might displayed in these three chapters?

-How might the patience and grace of God on display in these chapters impact the way you treat others?

Excerpt from *Exalting Jesus in Exodus* by Tony Merida, pg. 152, 158:

By now you would think the Israelites would have learned to cry out to God in prayer rather than complain. Instead, they show their immaturity. However, Moses does cry out to God, and the Lord answers Moses (v. 25a). Is your first reaction to trouble faith-filled prayer or grumbling and anxiety?

Moses brought his trouble to the Lord. In response, the Lord told him what to do. Obediently, Moses threw a log into the water and the water became sweet. Some have tried to find a scientific explanation for this. The best way to understand it is to believe it as a miracle. What is amazing here is not just that God can do a miracle, making the water sweet, but that He is willing to do it for these complainers! This is grace. God's grace is sweet...

(The giving of the mana) **was sanctifying (Deut 8:3). In Deuteronomy, Moses reflected on the manna, and he said that the miracle bread was not intended to just sustain them physically. It was also intended to teach them a deeply spiritual lesson:**

'Remember that the Lord your God led you on the entire journey these 40 years in the wilderness, so that He might humble you and test you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep His commands. He humbled you by letting you go hungry; then He gave you manna to eat, which you and your fathers had not known, so that you might learn that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.' (Deut 8:2-3)

God was not just filling their bellies, He was trying to shepherd their hearts. He said that this experience was intended to humble them and teach them to depend on God's word. God was disciplining them, shaping them. We need God's word every day just as the Israelites needed manna every day. The God who was worthy to be trusted for bread is the God who "is worth listening to everyday. He sanctifies us through His word (John 17:17)."

Discussion Section 3: Called to Obedience (15:25-27, 16:4-5; 22-26)

-What does God's call to Israel to listen to Him and do what He says tell us about the nature of the Christian walk? (15:25-26)

-Why was such an emphasis made on the Sabbath when it came to gathering instructions for the mana? (16:4-5; 22-26)

-What is the point of walking in obedience to the LORD? (Matthew 5:16, Deuteronomy 10:12-13)

Excerpt from *Exalting Jesus in Exodus* by Tony Merida, pg. 153:

"As we continue, we see that God tested His people (vv. 25b-26). He made a small covenant with them, providing the terms of their relationship. If they kept His word, He would bless them. Heeding His voice and doing what is right included Passover, the Festival of Unleavened Bread, and the consecration of the firstborn. Later, God would reveal more through Moses. However, if they did not follow God's ways, He said that they would experience "diseases" that fell on the Egyptians...

We can apply the pattern of instruction to our lives today. Israel was first rescued and then they began to learn about obedience and following God's word. These requirements were not the basis of their salvation. They were conveyed after they were saved, in order to teach them how to now live for God's glory. This is the same pattern for the Ten Commandments, which we will examine later. God brought them out of Egypt, and then He instructed them on how to live."

As we close out this lesson, may we consider the call the Lord has placed on our lives. He has saved us by His grace alone, and in doing so has made us into new creations (2 Cor. 5:17). As new creations we are called to walk in obedience to His Lordship each day, laying aside our old, sinful ways, and pressing on toward Him. He has created us in Christ Jesus to do the works that He has prepared for us beforehand (Eph. 2:10), and it is the call of our lives to let our lights shine before everyone, so that they might glorify God as they see us living for Him (Matthew 5:16). This call to obedience is not simply a call to rule following, but a call to abundant life (John 10:10)! The Lord's commandments are not meant to be burdensome to us but are meant for our good (Deuteronomy 10:12-13, 1 John 5:3). What a privilege it is to not only be saved by God, but then get to live out the rest of our days living for His glory doing the things He has called us to do! May we be a people who serve Him with gladness and gratitude!