**Exodus: Called to Freedom**

***Session 6: Exodus 15:22 – 18:27; Providence and Problems in the Wilderness***

***“As the people grumbled against Moses, saying, ‘What are we to drink?’ he cried out to the LORD, who pointed out to him a piece of wood. When he threw it into the water, the water became fresh.”*** *(Exodus 15:25-25)*

* Initially the water was too bitter to drink. The tree thrown into the water makes the water drinkable.
* The early church fathers saw this an allegory. The tree is thrown into the water making it sweet.
* The bitter water represents the bitterness of this life: suffering and sorrow.
* The tree being thrown into the water making it sweet signifies the Tree of Life which is the cross.
* When God brings the cross, He changes sorrow and bitterness and makes it sweet. He gives it meaning because of the hope of the Resurrection.

***“It was here that God, in making statutes and ordinances for them, put them to the test. He said: If you listen closely to the voice of the LORD, your God, and do what is right in his eyes: if you heed his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will not afflict you with any of the diseases with which I afflicted the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer.”*** *(Exodus 15:25-26)*

* One of the signs that God gave Moses for Pharaoh was to put his hand in his cloak and to take it out with his hand covered in leprosy.
* When he put it back into his clock and pulled it out it was healed. This was a sign that God was not simply going to be a liberator, but he was going to be a healer.

***“Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they camped there near the water.”***

* For the early church fathers, the twelve springs symbolized the twelve apostles.
* The seventy palm trees are a reminder of the seventy descendants of Jacob.
* The apostles would give the Gospels to all the world.
* Seventy goes back to Genesis 10 and is a sign of the seventy nations that come from Noah.
* God is saving Israel for the sake of the nations.

Chapter 16

***“Here in the wilderness the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The Israelites said to them, ‘If only we had died at the LORD’s hand in the land of Egypt, as we sat by our kettles of meat and ate our fill of bread! But you have led us into this wilderness to make this whole assembly die of famine!’”***

*(Exodus 16:2-3)*

* God responds to this ingratitude of the people with mercy and provided the Hebrews with mana.
* God instructed that the people were only to gather a days portion each day.
* God is testing the people to see if they will obey. In the beginning of the Exodus, it was pharaoh and the Egyptians who needed to know Yahweh.
* It is now Israel that is hard hearted and needs to know Yahweh. That they can trust that Yahweh will provide them what they need each day.
* The Israelites were provided mana in the morning and quail in the evening.
* The astonishing thing about the quail is that on a natural level, quail migrater from north Africa to northern Europe every year. They cross over the land of Israel a few weeks after the Passover in mid to late Spring.
* As the quail crosses over the Red Sea, they are exhausted and when they land, they are easy to catch. This is how God has timed things in His providence so that as they cross the Red Sea they quail come down and are easy to catch.
* Israel needs to learn that they can trust in the Lord alone.
* God instructs the people that they are not to gather mana on the sabbath.
* They were able to collect enough food on the sixth day for the sabbath. On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather even though they had enough mana for the sabbath. When they went out the gather mana on the sabbath they found none.
* This was a lack of trust on their part.

Chapter 17

***“From the wilderness of Sin, the whole Israelite community journeyed by stages, as the LORD directed, and encamped at Rephidim. But there was no water for the people to drink, and so they quarreled with Moses and said, ‘Give us water to drink.’ Moses replied to them, ‘Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the LORD to a test?’”*** *(Exodus 17:1-2)*

* By questioning God’s anointed representative, they are questioning God.
* God instructs Moses to strike a rock with his staff and water will flow.
* The Amalekites attacked the rear of Israel. The battle with the Amalekites depends on Moses’ intercession.
* As long as Moses is able to keep his hands raised in prayer the Israelites are successful. When his arms tire and he is not able to hold them up the Israelites begin to lose.
* Aaron and Hur lift Moses’ arms so that he can intercede to God. Israel is triumphant in the battle.
* If God’s people are to be successful it takes intercessory prayer.

Chapter 18

* Jethro was Moses’ father-in-law. He was a high priest of Midian. He comes to Moses to profess his faith in the God of the Hebrews. Jethro the Gentile is now a believer.
* Now God is ready to manifest himself in a more powerful way than the plagues. He is going to reveal Himself and His Torah on Mount Horeb.