

Thirsty for Faith

Zach Carter

Exodus: Redeemer and Redeemed / Ex 17:1–7

Sermon Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on a time when you felt a deep spiritual or emotional thirst. What were you longing for, and how did you try to satisfy that thirst?
 2. The Israelites grumbled against Moses and God when they were thirsty. How do you typically respond when you face difficult or dry seasons in your life? How can you shift your perspective to trust in God's provision instead of complaining?
 3. What are disciplines which have helped you find satisfaction in God rather than temporary or harmful sources?
 4. Commit to one specific action this week that demonstrates your trust in God's provision.
 5. The sermon highlights how the Israelites' actions revealed their idolatry. What are some potential idols in your life that you rely on more than God? How can you actively work to remove these idols and place God at the center of your heart?
 6. How can you deepen your relationship with Christ to ensure your spiritual thirst is quenched by Him? What practical steps can you take to drink deeply from the "living water" that Jesus offers?
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Thirst doesn't kill you. Ignoring your thirst will kill you. Thirst is a response to the sense that something critical is lacking and the simultaneously irrepressible instinct to fill what is lacking.

German psychologists something akin to “soul-thirst” *Sehnsucht*—its the word that translates roughly to “longing” but its more about knowing the gap between how life is supposed to be and how it really is.

Anyone ever felt that type of thirst before?

- In Exodus 17:1-7, we see God's faithfulness to give water to his people even though they test God and miss the whole point of their thirst.

- God tells us that anyone who trusts will have their thirst satisfied.
- Where do you look for a drink when you're thirsty for relief?

Exodus 17:1–3 ESV

¹ All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ² Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?" ³ But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"

1. You need to anticipate thirst amid life's dry seasons.

Rephidim is the last stop before the people make it to Mt. Sinai. This whole season has been one of purification. **Remember, God took them out of Egypt but they still need the Egypt taken out of them.**

Yet, the people have not fundamentally changed since they grumbled against Moses about their hunger for bread. Here they are, in the wilderness demanding water and even testing the Lord.

And let's take careful note of how their **dissatisfaction and grumbling has grown like a disease** in the congregation. We've seen the escalation from a select party within the group frustrated with their circumstances in 15:24 to the entire congregation of Israel in 16:2. They have moved from grumbling about circumstances to quarrelling, *ya'reb*—attacking, Moses now about the fact that there is no water.

- › Now, pause. Think about your workplace or house. How do you and I usually respond when people complain to us? If they are our peers, do we join in? If we lead them, how do we respond?

Let's see how Moses responds. Because he is deeply rooted in Christ, he immediately recognizes that even though they are attacking him, they are "testing" the Lord. He's not offended, although in his sidebar with the Lord he does seem a bit irritated by them.

Remember what wilderness means? Wilderness is an opportunity, neither good nor bad. And God has them here, testing them to see what is truly within them. He has them in a circumstance which will squeeze their hearts, and like a sponge squeezed will yield what it held, so too will the heart.

Moses can lead in the midst of their complaints without joining in as a peer or taking their complaint personally because he has already seen God deliver and visit him in the wilderness even before he left Egypt with the people.

So, he recognized that they're not complaining about him but God's providence in their lives. They have put God on trial and sit as witness, jury, and judge in their "test." Moses will have nothing to do with it.

Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary (Commentary)

Testing God is demanding that he jump through our hoops and make himself answerable and accountable to us. Sovereignty passes to us. (263).

- › Now, how would it change your leadership at work if didn't join in complaints with peers or take personal complaints of subordinates because you could see that you've already been where they're walking for the first time.....etc.
- › And how much more would it change your leadership if you realized that complaining reveals an ungodly heart.

Paul carries this forward in [Phil 2:14-16](#)

Philippians 2:14-16 ESV

¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

Just as then and now, complaining stems from a failure to hold fast to the word of life. So, the people are to blame here. They have already seen God provide for them miraculously in big dramatic moments in Egypt, one singular moment at the sea, and a miraculous provision of food. He has promised

- Moments when we face scarcity, challenges, and doubts.
- Emphasize the human tendency to doubt God's provision in tough times.

If you don't anticipate thirst, you won't prepare ahead of time and you'll grab whatever relief around you can find. They looked for complaints. I'm pleading with you to remind yourselves of the promises of God.

Because as we saw two weeks ago, we have to examine what we're looking at to satisfy our hearts longings.

Exodus 17:4-7 ESV

⁴ So Moses cried to the LORD, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." ⁵ And the LORD said to Moses, "Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶ Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink." And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the LORD by saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

2. You need to examine where you are looking for satisfaction.

Here's a simple diagnostic question. If I had _____, I would not be so impatient with my family. If I had _____, I would have a better time at home.

Whatever you fill the blank in there, that's what your heart truly trusts as its savior. For me, too often its circumstances: cool breeze, full belly, no sleep debt? I can ride any storm, right?

But life isn't like that, and God is not content to keep his children satisfied with things that will ultimately lead them to die of malnourishment: 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'

So he leads the Israelites into the desert to expose the folly of Egyptian dependency and help them long for God, but ultimately, as we see, they do not learn.

Moses is clearly frustrated. The tone of his question reminds me of how my teachers in middle school used to talk about me: "What are we going to do about this kid?!"

God is kind and tells them exactly what to do, in spite of their rebellion—because its not about their faith but about His faithfulness. Again, our God is not a God who saves people halfway.

You will have a lot of wells from which you can drink, but only one satisfies.

And I know in a room this big there are people drinking from wells that are making them sick.

Normally we cover this up by leaning more and more and more into whatever it is that we think will make our hearts happy, but it will potentially make us sicker and sicker.

Here, in verse 6, God makes the most incredible statement. He'll be faithful to you and I in spite of our faithlessness.

Exodus 17:6 ESV

⁶ Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink." And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel.

One commentator noted that:

Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary (Commentary)

It is common for a mortal to stand before God in worship (Jer. 7:10), in entering his presence (Deut. 19:17; 29:14–15), in service (KJV: 1 Kings 17:1; 18:15; 2 Kings 3:14; 5:16), in intercessory prayer (Jer. 15:1, 19 NRSV).

But it is almost unheard of for the Lord to stand before anybody. In fact, some scholars believe that Gen. 18:22b ("but Abraham remained standing before the LORD") originally read, "but the LORD remained standing before Abraham"...

If the Lord is standing on the rock, and Moses is to bang the rock with his rod, what are the chances that his rod might hit or come down on the Lord? Talk about the hammer missing the nail!

And might we see any connection between this incident in which the Almighty puts himself in a situation of great jeopardy for the purposes of providing water—and the incident in the passion narrative in which “one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and *water*” (John 19:34)? (263).

When you find Christ, you need to drink deeply.

Ignoring your thirst is deadly, and so is ignoring those nagging feelings of frustration in a relationship, etc.

1 Corinthians 10:4 ESV

⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.

You see idolatry is what is at the heart of passage in Exodus. They are putting God to the text because they think they could run things better than He is. Ever been there?

What is idolatry? Its taking God off of his throne and putting whatever quenches your thirst on the throne. Again, we’ll know our God by what we long for.

Ignoring your thirst is deadly, and so is ignoring those nagging feelings of frustration in a relationship, etc.

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