

Exodus
The Cure for Stanky Living- Week #11
Small Group Notes
October 15 and 18

Main Point: When God draws us out to draw us in, we learn how to remember God's goodness and slow to forget His faithfulness.

Introduction:

In the sermon introduction, Pastor Nick references Romans 12:1-2 with this statement: To remember well is to worship well.

How does remembrance and worship go together?

What typical things do you reflect and remember when you worship?

(I encourage you to bring some dark chocolate to your group and pass around.) Ask: How would you describe this chocolate? How does it have the qualities of being bitter-sweet? What are examples of a situation that you have called "bittersweet"?

Today, we are going to see episodes in the lives of the children of Israel that we would call bittersweet. They had to go through a bitter experience in order to trust in the amazing grace of God that has proved itself over and over.

Discuss:

1. Read Exodus 15:22-27

- Let us be quick to remember and slow to forget.
- The Israelites show us that our biggest problem is within us not outside us.

Explain: They traveled for three days without finding water. The lack of water put an enormous stress on everyone, especially the children, elderly, and animals traveling in the large caravan. When they finally got to Marah,

there was water, but it was too bitter to drink, which must've been a huge disappointment. The people complained to Moses and he cried out to God. God directed Moses to a piece of wood and Moses cast it in the water, making it sweet enough to drink.

Extra Note: Just how amazing is the miracle of God's provision for the children of Israel: Moses led the people of Israel into the desert....Now what was he going to do with them? They had to be fed, and feeding 3–1/2 million people required a lot of food. According to the U. S. Army's Quartermaster General, Moses needed 1500 tons of food a day, filling two freight trains, each a mile long. Besides, you must remember, they were cooking the food (not to mention for keeping warm, and if anyone tells you it doesn't get cold in the desert don't believe them!). Just for cooking this took 4000 tons of firewood and a few more freight trains, each a mile long and this is only for one day!!! They were for forty YEARS in transit!!! Let's not forget about water, shall we? If they only had enough to drink and wash a few dishes (no bathing?!), it took 11,000,000 gallons EACH DAY—enough to fill a train of tanker cars 1800 miles long.

Ask: It's notable that immediately following the victory at the Red Sea, the Israelites faced a major trial. Why should we expect trials and not be surprised when they come?

God performed another miracle on the people's behalf by making the water turn from bitter to sweet. Do you think this impacted the Israelites' faith or were they quick to forget? How prone are we to forget the ways God has worked on our behalf? How do you see a glimpse of the cross in this story?

Why is complaining and grumbling always the wrong way to respond to any circumstance? How do you think God feels about complaining?

2. Read Exodus 16:1-12

- Remember to pray and not to complain. Read Philippians 2:14-16.

Explain: The Israelites weren't wrong in the fact that they were calling attention to their lack of food and water. Obviously, we all have needs that must be met. But they sinned by complaining to one another rather than

asking God to meet their needs. Complaining creates a toxic environment that demonstrates a lack of gratitude and a lack of faith. God's people are to take their needs to the Lord in prayer rather than complain to other people, who have no power to change the circumstances.

Ask:

How have you behaved in the same way as the Israelites?

Is your first reaction to trouble, faith-filled prayer or grumbling and anxiety?

What is the difference between complaining to other people and presenting our needs before the Lord? Why is there a vast difference in these two behaviors?

3. Read Exodus 16:19-30, 33-35.

- Forgetfulness leads to stanky living.
- Remembrance leads to an aromatic life reflective of the King. Read 2 Corinthians 2:14-15
- Remember God is enough and we can rest in Him. Read John 6:32-36.

Explain: At first, the Israelites obeyed and gathered the prescribed amount of manna. Moses reminded them not to keep it until morning but consume the day's amount on the same day it was gathered. The only exception was the day before the Sabbath, when they were allowed to gather enough for two days. On all other occasions, God would provide on a daily basis and there was no need to hoard for the next day.

It's easy to diagnose the Israelites' lack of faith in these verses, but in what ways might modern-day believers demonstrate a similar degree of unbelief?

What are things you rely on God for on a daily basis? How might our "lack" actually be a gift that keeps us close to God?

How can you as a group support each other to not become forgetful of the provision of God?