

Progressing In Promise - Exodus 17:1-7

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Preacher: Pastor Jared Bromka

[0 : 0 0] Good morning, everybody. What a blessing. Welcome to Cover Chapel Charlotte! So it's been a bit since we've been in Exodus! We're back in chapter 17. So if you remember, in chapter 16, Israel has just once again experienced God's miraculous blessing, His provision.

They've come through the Red Sea. They've come down to Mara. The water was bitter. God provides and makes it sweet. After them complaining and grumbling, they have victory. They have God's provision.

Woo-hoo! They go to Elam. And there, Elam, they find God's blessing there. They find fullness there. And then they travel, and now they're in the wilderness of sin.

And here again, they complain because now they don't have food. They're up, they're down.

They're up, they're down. God comes in miraculously and then gives them manna. Amazingly, as we saw that God called Israel near in the midst of their murmuring and their complaints.

He didn't punish them. He didn't lecture them, but He called them near for the purpose of grace.

They had a legitimate need. Was their response to it what it should have been? No, probably not. But it was a legitimate need.

[1 : 0 6] And then once again, here they are. They're traveling as they continue on their journey. We're going to see today the same type of thing. Israel's up. They experience victory. They experience provision. They experience grace.

And they're back down. They're up and they're down. They're up and they're down again and again. And Deuteronomy chapter 8, as Moses at the end of 40 years, we're going to get there eventually. He's going to get to the promised land and the whole thing is going to go south. And he's going to have to wander for 40 years with these people in the wilderness. At the end of that one, the next generation is about to go into the promised land. Moses can't go in.

And we'll find out why as we continue through the book. And he's speaking to them. And he's pretty much Deuteronomy is like his sermon, his parting words. And he says, And you shall remember all the way which the Lord your God led you these 40 years in the wilderness to humble you and to prove you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commands or no.

And so we see in Israel's journey, we see this reflection of our heart's journey with God, of our walk with God. There's a reflection in that as we watch as Israel goes up and down, as they progress in faith and failure, we kind of see a reflection there of our own heart, our own journey with the Lord.

[2 : 1 6] As Moses says, Hey, remember, why did God lead you this way? Why did he lead you these places of need and of want? Well, to test what was in your heart, to see whether you would trust him who was faithful to you.

We saw how with manna, we never need to strive for what God has given. We simply need to reach out and take it. I mean, how hard is it to go outside your tent and to collect the manna? Verse 35 of the end verse of chapter 16, if you're back up in that, in Exodus 16, says, The children of Israel did eat manna 40 years until they came to a land inhabited.

40 years until they come into the Jordan. They did eat manna until they came under the borders of the land of Canaan. Those who follow God's presence can be 100% sure of God's provision. They wandered 40 years in the desert and they never lacked.

Now, if they said, you know what? We're done with this. We're going to go our own way. We're going to find our own path. I don't like wandering in the desert, Lord. I don't like where you're leading me. I want you to lead me somewhere else.

Well, then they're outside of God's presence and outside of his provision. Right? Now, for us, we can never get outside of God's presence once we have his presence because of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

[3 : 26] Look at that a little later. But when we stop following God's direction, the things that God has foreordained before us, before the foundations of the world to walk in those good works, as it says in Ephesians, well, then we don't partake of that.

We're not gathering in the manna. We're not taking part of God's provision. We can find ourselves in a place of discouragement. So Israel received God's provision when they knew what?

Same way we do. We realize there's a need. They received it by participation. They received it by faith. And they had to do it every day and humbly. They had to come and receive God's provision. Now, as we pick up in verse 1 of chapter 17, we've left them a couple weeks at the camp there, I guess, in the wilderness of sin. And all of the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed then from the wilderness of sin after their journeys, according to the commandment of the Lord and pitched in Rephidim.

And there's no water for the people to drink. So if we look on our map here, we can see we've come across the Red Sea from the Noabe beach. As God parts the water, they come to Marah, they come to Elam, they come up through the wilderness.

[4 : 32] And now they're in this camp of Rephidim as God is taking them on this path, eventually, to the Mount of God, to Horeb, to Mount Sinai, as we would call it. And they find themselves now in Rephidim.

Rephidim means resting place. Literally means like a support, like something that something's resting upon. It's supported. It's like this keyboard, supported by the stand. It's a resting place, a place of support as God brings them.

I like the wording here where it says that the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness after their journeys. It's their journey. In a sense, nobody can journey it for them, right?

Your journey is your journey. We're here together, but I can't walk that out for you. I can't move your foot forward and walk the path for you. But they did so how?

According to the commandment of the Lord. God's journey with God's provision will never fail as long as we continue to walk in that path. Now that becomes our journey.

[5 : 30] It becomes ours. We own that. We experience it. We live it. And God's provision and God's leading becomes a journey for us. Something we can look back on and see his faithfulness. If you remember in 1 Kings, when Elijah had gone up on the mount with Mount Carmel, and he has all the 400 prophets of Baal come.

And he says to the people, if the Lord be God, choose him. And if Baal be God, choose him. And unfortunately, it says, and all the people uttered not a word. They're all quiet. And they have the whole thing where the prophets of Baal cut themselves and yell to Baal all afternoon and nothing happens.

And Elijah calls on the Lord. And the Lord sends fire and answers by fire. And then what does he do? He says, gather all of the priests of Baal, the false prophets, and judgment has come upon them.

We're going to take them down to the brook. And we're going to slay them. Well, Jezebel hears this, who's King Ahab's wife. And she's really the power behind the throne. And she's really upset. So she sends him a letter. Sends him a text.

Dear Elijah, you are dead. And he wigs out. He flips out over this. And he runs. And he just runs. And where does he run? Well, he's running to Horeb, to Sinai, to the Mount of God.

[6 : 37] He's going to run to the Mount of God. Think Elijah, the mighty man of faith. Look it. He's in fear. He's in doubt. He's running. But yes, but where is he running? He's running to the Lord. He's running to God in fear, in doubt, in overreacting.

And then in 1 Kings chapter 19, he falls asleep. And an angel comes, wakes him up, and says, hey, here's some food for the journey. Elijah says, thank you very much. And goes back to sleep.

And then in verse 7, he wakes him up again. And the angel of the Lord came again the second time and touched him. And said, arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you. You don't have what it takes, Elijah.

You don't have what it takes for this journey. Elijah says, you're telling me. I know. I'm running. God strengthened him in a journey of running, of fear. Yes. Because where was he running? He was running to the Lord, to the Mount of God.

There are many legitimate needs in our lives. God will meet every legitimate need. Sometimes we respond wrongly to those legitimate needs. But it doesn't mean that God won't be faithful.

[7 : 39] 2 Corinthians 5, 7 says what? We walk by faith, not by sight. Right? We know that. We progress forward. Faith is always what? If we walk by faith, it's always doing what? Progressing forward.

It's always moving forward. We progress forward in faith. But to do so means we do what? We leave behind something familiar, something comfortable, some place of provision.

I mean, like, God, why do we have to leave this place? You've given us manna. You've given us everything I need right here. And you took me from a place of provision and journeying according to the command of God.

God led them where? To a place of want. To a place of need. Paul says in Philippians 3, 13, regarding this idea of progressing forward.

He says, He says, Listen, to move forward, I've got to leave something behind.

[8 : 47] What was Paul leaving behind? Well, he was leaving behind persecution. He said, I've got to let that go. I've got to forget about that. Betrayal. Heartache. He was leaving behind his past when he killed Christians.

He was leaving behind a lot of good things that he said, I have to move forward. I'd love to stay here with you, church in Philippi. I'd love to stay here with you, church in Ephesus. But I've got to progress forward. I've got to go forward.

And nobody could walk that for him. For Israel, it meant leaving this place of provision. Leaving the place of manna. So as Israel journeys, we see a reflection of what?

We see a reflection of our journey with God, with our hearts. As we walk in faith, as we walk with the Lord. The Lord's always calling us forwards, but that means a couple things. It means we have to leave something behind that's comfortable, that's familiar, and we have to move forward into something we don't know.

And sometimes, sight can overwhelm faith. We walk by faith, not by sight. But sight's not irrelevant, right? I don't close my eyes and just walk through this world while God's going to lead me by faith.

[9 : 51] I remember the pastor that I had as a kid at the Calvary Chapel I was at up in New York. He was telling me that, well, it was in a message. He was telling us that when he was younger, he was so excited for the Lord, and he thought, you know what, Lord?

You can direct me. He said, I'm driving, so I close my eyes. And the scripture came to mind, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. He goes, I open my eyes. You know, yes, God can direct us, of course.

You can close, Lord, lead me. But that doesn't mean sight's irrelevant. Sight is there. And sometimes it can feel a lot more real than our journey of faith. When God says, hey, leave that behind, that comfortable, familiar, sustaining place, and come to something that you've never seen before.

Walking by faith means we determine if we will walk, while another determines where we will walk. When we walk by faith, our part is, do I determine if I'm going to walk?

But another determines where we will walk. Now, we put our faith in the Lord, right? We ask our children to do the same thing. Come on, just follow me. Where are we going? Don't worry about it, just follow me.

[11 : 00] We're going to go do stuff. Israel's journey of faith, it led them to a place of want. Why? Well, think of every place they've been so that God might satisfy them with himself, right?

Israel's walk is going to continue to be this unstable, up-and-down journey for 40 years. Ours doesn't need to be. We don't need to spend 40 years of up-and-down and instability.

In John 4, 14, Jesus is speaking to the woman at the well. He says, As Israel here is a place like, I don't have anything to drink.

I've got nothing to satisfy. And I've been led to a place of want. Well, just as this woman at the well had a great need and a great want, Jesus said, well, you've been brought here for a purpose. So I can satisfy you with myself.

As Israel continues to journey, God continues to show them self-faithful, and he continues to prove Israel's faithlessness. He's faithful, they're faithless. But for what purpose?

[12 : 13] To punish them? To destroy them? Man, you should have had faith. What's your problem? Come on, how long? You went through the Red Sea. As we read, the waters were a wall. Literally, it says they were congealed. And you walked through there.

Why don't you have faith? No. God brings them to this place of faithlessness again and again and again so that he can build their faith by proving himself gracious and sufficient.

Jesus says in Matthew 12, 20, A bruised reed shall he not break. A smoking flax shall he not quench. Till he send forth judgment unto victory. A bruised reed, you know, a little reed, if it breaks, has no stability left, no structure.

You can't stand that thing straight. It can't stand up. It constantly is falling down. A smoking flax. That'd be essentially something that was used for light. And now it's just, there's no flame. It's just smoking. It's like, it's worthless.

Jesus says, no, no, no. I can coax some flame out of that. I've got a purpose for this. Israel had a legitimate need. And they're right. God had not yet met that need. So we have a need.

[13:16] And God didn't meet this need. What's the operative word? Yet. Didn't meet it yet. God meets the needs of his people, not for the sake of their satisfaction, but for the sake of relationship.

And as he brings them into Rephidim, that relationship leads to rest, right? So the people then realizing this, they're in this place. They see their need. They have no water.

And how do they respond? God, you've been so faithful so many times in the past. I know you're going to be faithful now. They say, Moses, give us water. We may drink. It says they did chide with Moses.

That means they strove. They wrestled. They pulled. They were tearing this man apart, right? They were looking to Moses for a source he didn't have. And they were going to rip him apart, trying to get satisfaction from this man.

He says, I don't got it. I don't have enough. What if Moses had a little canteen? Why? Maybe one person. What if he had a truckload of water? It's still not enough, is it?

[14:15] They're looking to the wrong source. Moses said to them, Israel allowed their currently unmet need to cause them to view their journey as one of failure instead of faith.

Their currently unmet need, they said, well, there's a problem here. There's a failure. Moses, why have you done this? Instead of seeing it as an opportunity for grace, an opportunity of faith.

We must not judge our journey by its present progress or by its present problems. How do we judge our journey? We judge it by a person and a promise. I judge my journey because of the person that I'm following, because of Jesus and the promise he's given me.

I will supply all your needs, he says, according to, that God will supply all of our needs according to his riches in Christ Jesus. All of our needs, all of our unmet needs will be supplied. But I judge my journey by progress and problems.

I'm not progressing, Lord. I see some problems. What's going on? Paul tells us in Romans 8, this is something we should kind of not be too surprised about when we run into these sufferings and these problems on our present journey.

[15:37] He says, I reckon that the sufferings, to reckon means to count it so, I count this so, I establish this in my life as a truth, that the sufferings of this present time, my present progress and problems are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Yet. The glory which shall be revealed in us. Yet. To come. So why would God lead his people into a place of need? Why does he do this?

Because there's a lesson we have to learn as we experience his grace. We have to learn that part of the journey of faith is learning to trust God for everything when it feels like he's led us into nothing.

Right? Why does God do that? Because he wants us to experience his grace. It's the only one he's led me to the point of want, of need, and of nothingness that I realize he's everything. Man, if I'm full, if I've defeated Egypt on my own and I've pedaled the boat across the Red Sea and I've dug for wells in the desert, I'm good.

I don't need the Lord. I'm good. But as we follow him, his presence and his people and his leading and his deliverance and his faithfulness is all at work here and he has led them to a place of want, of emptiness, and of need.

[16:56] Why? As Luke 12, 32, Jesus says, fear not, little flock. It's your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid when I've led you to what appears to be a place of nothingness and of emptiness.

It's still your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. You see, when we fail to understand God's grace, we sin against God and against his people because we look outside of the Lord for

fulfillment.

I begin to look somewhere else because I think God has led me to emptiness and to want. I'm going to have to find this somewhere else. And Moses says to the people, why do you tempt or try or test the Lord?

Why are you testing him? Does that mean we can't ask God questions? Lord, why did you lead us to this place of emptiness? No, not at all. But what they were saying is, will God be faithful?

Well, I know God has been faithful. I know God is faithful, but is he gonna be faithful? Well, God's word has already been proven true. It does not need to be tried any longer.

[18:01] It needs to be lived. As David writes in Psalm 18, verse 30, as for God, his way is perfect. The word of the Lord is tried. He is a buckler, a shield, a defense to those that trust in him.

It's already set. It's already settled. God's word has been proven. I don't need to test it and I don't need to prove it. I need to live it. I need to choose whether I'm going to do that and put my trust in him. There are many valid questions for God.

Many valid questions for God. When God leads us into a place of suffering or want, there are valid questions to ask there. Elijah, when he was running from Jezebel, when he was running to the Mount of God, he had valid questions that he needed to ask God.

And he got there and he asked him, he said, Lord, why have you done this? You've left me alone. I've got nobody. I'm full of emptiness and want. And the Lord says, Elijah, I've got 7,000 that have not bent the knee to Baal.

Well, I've never met him. It doesn't matter. They're still there. He has all the resources. But there's never, ever a valid reason to doubt God. There are many valid reasons and many valid questions we have for God.

[19:10] But there's never a valid reason to doubt God, to tempt him, to test him, and say, God, I don't think you're faithful. Remember when Jesus appeared to the 12, well, actually, it would have been 11 because Judas was, you know, what happened to him.

So it would have been the 11 after the resurrection. But it was only 10 because Thomas isn't there. And then Thomas comes back, Thomas, we saw the Lord. He appeared to us and to Peter and to the women.

And Thomas said, oh, I don't believe it. And we rag on poor Thomas, a doubting Thomas. Well, remember before Jesus was crucified, he said, be careful. There will be those that will come in my name saying I am Christ.

Do not believe them. So Thomas is like, now Thomas was also the one who, when he was going to go up to Jerusalem, or no, when he was going to go back to Lazarus, to raise Lazarus, he goes, come on, let's go with him and die also.

So let's not put Thomas down too much. So he's like, no, I'm not going to believe. And Jesus appears. And then he says to him in John 20, 27, he says, behold my hands and reach hither your hand.

[20:11] Put it in my side. Be not faithless, but believing. Thomas, you don't need to doubt. You don't need to see it to believe it. Because I've already told you because God's word is tried.

And the people thirsted there for water. By the way, we're only getting through seven verses if you saw in your outline. So don't, like man, this is going to take a while. It's just too much. I mean, we have two amazing events in this chapter in the life of Israel.

The water from the rock and then when Amalek comes and fights them and Moses is on the mount with his hands in the air. There's just so much. And as we go through this, it's not just to process the history.

Not just to understand about Israel. We want to understand that. But we also want to understand, as Paul says, that these things were written for our learning, for our edification. That the things we see in the Old Testament as we see people's heart toward God, his response to them, then we can see our own heart reflected in that.

And then we can believe and understand how God will respond to us. And the people thirsted there for water in verse three and they murmured against Moses. And they said, wherefore is this that you have brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children?

[21:19] If that wasn't enough, you want to take the pets as well and our cattle with thirst. You want to kill the animals too, Moses. Cruel, cruel man. You remember in Exodus chapter 16 in verse three, we saw the same thing.

They said about not having food. The children of Israel said unto Moses and Aaron, would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in Egypt when we sat by the flesh pots, when we did eat bread to the full.

For you have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger. Remember Moses and Aaron? We had it so good in Egypt. Don't you remember the restaurants? Don't you remember how much fun we had there? It was God's will for us to be there and now you've brought us out here to kill us.

Israel had a genuine need. They did. It's interesting, despite their response to Moses and to God, God's response to them is to meet their need.

God sees and responds to legitimate need. God sees, acknowledges, and meets every need of his people, but he also gets to determine how and when that need will be met.

[22 : 21] He gets to determine. As we follow the Lord, he determines when we enter into seasons of fullness and seasons of want, and he also determines how and when that need will be met. In John chapter seven, Jesus is at the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem.

The Feast of Tabernacles was to celebrate and remember this time. Well, not yet, but when they're 40 years in the wilderness wandering and God provided for them. All of Israel would go camping. They'd leave their homes and they'd make these little booths, sometimes right next to their home or on top of their home, and they'd all live in them.

Kids must have loved it. Parents must have been like, can we bring our mattress? They'd all camp for seven days, this feast. And every day, they would bring water up from the pool of Shalom. Shalom, Shalom, Shalom. Yeah, Shalom means peace. Shalom, Shalom. They'd bring it up and they would dump it at the altar, representing how God provided for them in the wilderness. And then verse 37 of chapter seven, it says, in that last day, the great day of the feast, that would be the eighth day.

Technically, the feast is over, but on this day, they would go down to the pool, they would come up, but they would not fill the pot, and they would dump it out and it would be empty. And at that moment, on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried and said, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

[23 : 39] God will provide. He acknowledges our genuine need and he meets it. But we don't get to determine how and when. Israel said, that's not how we want our need met. We don't want a savior.

We want a soldier. We want him to take over Rome. As Jesus stands, I just, I would love to have been there. Could you imagine? Dead quiet as the priest is emptying the picture and there's nothing coming out of it and Israel standing there and then this one guy stands up and just says, I'm it.

Do you want fullness? Does any man thirst? Let him come unto me and drink. Genuine need has the potential, unfortunately, in our lives to cause us to view life from the perspective of want.

When we have a genuine need, we see that as a want and we then begin to view life as I need, I want, I have to have, whereas faith views need as potential for fulfillment. This, the Lord, you know, when you're studying his word, he always brings you through these things and, you know, an expense came up this week that I wasn't anticipating.

I'm like, oh, praise God, potential for grace, for fulfillment. But it does when you begin to look at it that way, you realize, well, God's going to supply all my needs.

[24 : 53] So if I have want, praise God. He's going to provide manna. He's going to provide what I need. So as we end this section and then we're going to do the next three verses when Moses responds, how do we respond in faith to genuine need?

How is it we process that? Well, I think we can see here first, we need to recognize that that purpose is for grace. That when we have genuine need in our lives, it's not because we've done something wrong.

It's not because we're in rebellion. It's not because we've lost faith. I mean, here we have Elijah who's run. Here we have the people being led by God into deliverance and into, eventually, into Canaan.

And God isn't like, I'm done with you. He says, the purpose is for grace. We respond in faith to genuine need by acknowledging acknowledging the need and our lack. I have to just, I can't make this up.

I can't do this. Someone else is going to have to do this for me. Be honest with the Lord. Be okay with asking him those questions. God, I just, I'm struggling. I don't know why there's this need in my life.

[25 : 59] I want to have faith. I want to pretend everything's fine, but it's not. I mean, if Elijah can run, I can too. And then await God's fulfillment and direction. That's the hard part.

I turn over the Lord. I acknowledge it. I pray and say, God, I'm honest that I need you to meet this need and I can't. Now let's see how I can make it happen. I've prayed. Now I'm going to work for this. No, never seek to meet the need in your own effort or on God's behalf.

Right? Well, God, I know you said you'd do this, but you didn't. So I'm going to figure out a way to do it. And there's a lot of, so there's a part of the church out there that has relied upon their effort, their programs, their policies, and the collective effect of a lot of people to meet a lot of needs. Nothing wrong with meeting needs. Jesus says, the poor you will have with you always. But when we have a need and a place that God's brought us to in our journey, it's not to first look to one another or even to ourselves.

It's to look to the Lord and then await his fulfillment and direction. Does he use the body? Many times. I mean, this is his body here in a sense incarnate on earth until Jesus returns.

[27 : 09] So yeah, many times he uses the body. Right? Is that a way to need? We had a time we needed a car. We needed a vehicle. We were praying about it. I'm like, Lord, you know we need another one. We had this guy at church say, hey, got this really old Toyota.

Do you want it? And I just broke down. It was like, wow! Because I waited, I got to see God fulfill that. You know, I could have started talking around. Like, hey, I need, anybody got a car?

Hey, I need this. Hey, I need that. I need this. Doesn't mean we're not faithful. You know, well, I don't need to go to work. God's going to meet my needs. Sweet. I'm not supposed to do it on my own.

Well, no. God may meet that need through work. He may say, hey, I'll meet that need. Go work.

Well, I don't want to work there. That's not what I wanted to do. Well, that's how God's meeting the need.

Remember, faith isn't determining where we walk, just if we walk. And Moses then, now, Moses responds. Moses gets a turn. Like, all right, you people, be quiet. You've talked enough.

[28 : 10] And Moses cried unto the Lord and said, Lord, get me out of here. Deal with these people. Now, Moses has such a meek heart. What shall I do unto this people, Lord? They'd be almost ready to stone me.

You know what he's saying there? God, help. I don't know how to satisfy the needs of these people. I don't have enough, and they're going to kill me. I can't do it. Moses took his genuine need and his genuine concern to God.

Psalm 120, verses one and two. In my distress, I called unto the Lord, and he heard me. Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips and from a deceitful tongue. He took his need to the Lord.

He didn't try and defend himself. He didn't try and say, hey guys, listen, I've led you through the, out of Egypt. Pharaoh's army was destroyed. Through the red sea, can we take a minute and just think of all that I've done for you?

I've actually written a list. Here, let's pass it out, right? No, you went right to the Lord. So Lord, you deliver me. You take care of this. Psalm 34, verses four and five. I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and he delivered me from all my fears.

[29 : 15] They looked unto him and were lightened. Their faces were not ashamed. How wonderful to go to the Lord and know like, I have no shame before him. It doesn't matter what these people say.

I know. My face is lightened. He's lift the burden. And verse five, and the Lord said unto Moses, go, go on before the people and take with you the elders of Israel and your rod, wherewith you smote the river, take it in your hand and go.

It's essentially what he said to Elijah. When Elijah runs to that cave and he says, there's a whirlwind and God wasn't in the whirlwind. There's a fire. He wasn't in the fire. There was an earthquake and he wasn't in the earthquake. And then it said, there came a still small voice.

And when Elijah heard that, he wrapped himself in his mantle, went, stood in the entrance of the cave and there the Lord spoke to him. Go, Elijah, go back. Go back.

I'm not done with you. I know you think because you've reached this place of emptiness, because you've not been in a place of fullness and victory. I know you think that you're done, but you're not. Go. Go back.

[30 : 16] Anoint Elisha to be in your place. Go back and anoint this guy to be king. Go. The Lord's solution to need, to my need, to my want, to my lack is to progress forward in faith based upon God's word that he's spoken.

That is the solution. We continue forward in faith. We don't just stop and wait, well, God, until you supply a need. When God called us down here from New York to North Carolina, he very specifically said, hey, I want you to go.

And we're like, okay. But then I got wigged out because I'm like, I don't see the need being met. I don't have a job. How can we get ready to go? How can we do all this? How are you going to do that, Lord? He literally gave us a scripture in Ezekiel where he says, prepare you stuff for removing, O son of man, and prepare you stuff for removing by day in their sight that they may see or whatever.

It's like, okay, we need to get ready. Well, we spent a whole year worrying and wondering, came back and visited and went back home and on the way back, I'm like, I think the Lord wants to put us, our house, for us to put our house in the market.

And Sue's like, I think so too. We got home. We weren't even unpacked from the car and she was packing up the kitchen. We realized we had not done what? What did he ask us to do? Just step in faith in what he said. Prepare your stuff.

[31 : 27] And then God just did everything else. The house was sold before I had a job. And literally, God just dropped it in my lap and he just took care of it all. You know, now it was so supernaturally natural just doing what he said and he brought all the rest of the pieces.

The Lord's solution to our need is to progress forward in faith based upon his word. And if we look at this scripture in verse 5, we can specifically see some things. God met need with what?

His word. What does he do? And the Lord said to Moses, Moses, here's how I'm going to meet your need. With direction, go. Go before the people. With fellowship, take with you the elders of Israel.

He didn't go alone. He equipped him. He said, Moses, take your rod. Moses is like, yeah, I like that rod. And with remembrance, remember Moses, you smoked the river with that rod.

Yes, Lord, we did, didn't we? Yes. If I can turn a river to blood, wait till you see what I can do. And with his power, take it in your hand and go.

[32 : 35] Took it in his hand, the power of God, what he smoked the river with, what the sea was parted with. That's how God meets need. Moses had placed his need in God's hands and then what did God do?

Well, God placed in Moses' hands everything he needed to walk forward in faith and provision. As God turns his need over to Moses, I mean, God didn't turn his need over to Moses.

As Moses turns his need over to God, God then gives Moses everything he needs. He puts in his hands everything that he needs. And he tells Moses what's about to come.

He says, Behold Moses, I'm going to stand before you there upon the rock in Horeb. And you shall smite the rock and there shall come out of it water that the people may drink.

Remember Moses, you smote the river and it turned to blood. I can't get blood out of a rock? Well, no, God can get water out of a rock. And Moses did so on the side of the elders of Israel. Horeb means dry, a desert, a place where there's no water.

[33 : 37] Remember when Elijah was on the mountain? What did he do? He dumped water after water, after bucket load, bucket load, on the altar, on the sacrifice and upon the altar so that there was no chance there was going to be a spontaneous combustion there.

Nobody was going to like, when no one's looking, whoops, throw a match or whatever and poof, oh hey, God answered. It was impossible. God sent fire from heaven. When in this situation there is no water, there is nothing.

It is a dry and desert place. But where is provision to be found? As Moses goes forward in faith, what does he approach? He approaches God's presence first.

God's provision is found in a place of God's presence. As Moses approaches this place, this rock, who's there? It's God's presence. When Jesus, remember, had gone to Bethany to meet Mary and Martha because their brother, Lazarus, was dead, when Thomas said, come on, we'll go with him and die because the Jews will kill him, well he says to Martha, he says, Martha, I am the resurrection and the life.

He that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this, Martha? Do you believe that life is found in my presence,

Martha? Do you believe that?

[34 : 48] Do you think there's something else that's needed? Can you believe, even though your brother is still dead, that in my presence he's actually alive? As Moses approaches the rock, he approaches God's presence.

Before that rock ever spews out water. Do we believe that? Do we believe that Jesus has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God.

As Moses is going to strike that rock, who gets hit first? The presence of God is standing there. He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed.

Do we believe that? Do I believe that Jesus took the hit for me? When Jesus hung on the cross, that that was sufficient, that that is God's provision, that as I approach God's presence, that it was God's presence where I found my life.

God's provision cost God essentially everything so that he might then freely give to us. In all of this journey with Israel, what have they had to do?

[35 : 55] What did they have to pay into this? They just had to continue to progress forward in faith and follow. God took care of all the need. God took the hit for the sake of his people's provision as Moses strikes that rock.

And Moses also had to accept his part in that truth. Moses had smitten God. God, can you just stand out of the way? God, I can't do, I can't, I'm going to strike you. Peter on the day of Pentecost preaching to the Jews who are saying, what must we do to repent?

And he says, be it known unto you that God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you slew and hanged on a tree. Do you accept your part in that? Well, I didn't slay him. Yes, you did.

It was my sin that put him there. It was my hand that struck the nails into his. It was my hands that pressed the crown of thorns upon his. It was my sin. Can I accept my part in that?

Because before I can approach the life-giving water, I have to accept the smitten presence of God before I can partake. Paul tells us something very interesting in 1 Corinthians 10 regarding this section of scripture.

[37 : 06] He says, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud and all passed through the sea and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. What's he saying? He's saying, hey, look, they all went through this experience but not all entered in because they lacked faith.

They didn't trust God. They experienced but didn't walk. And they did all eat the same spiritual meat and did all drink the same spiritual drink. For they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them.

That rock was Christ. Moses is going to smite this rock and water's going to come out of it. Does that mean they wandered 40 years in the wilderness? You know, there's rocks rolling after them like a sprinkler just squirting out water?

No, it's spiritual. The spiritual rock. They all had the same opportunity. That the source, the source that they needed for life journeyed with them. The presence of God.

Jesus was that rock in representation. But only a smitten rock could become a source of life for God's people. Luke 9.22, Jesus says, the son of man must suffer many things and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be slain.

[38 : 13] See, only a smitten rock could then rise again to become the source of life for God's people. Before you and I can partake of fullness, we must first partake of faith.

Before we can drink of the life-giving water, we must first, by faith, partake in the smitten life of God. But what do we know? And we know God's heart, God's will, and even his wounding is for what purpose?

It has the provision of his people. Always for the provision of his people. Jesus, in Matthew 26, it says he went and he prayed and he fell on his face and he said, what? Father, if there be any other way, take this cup from me.

Is there any other way we can do this? But not my will, but your will be done. Why? So that we could enter into that provision. So, it sounds very poetic and very nice, but what was this rock?

I mean, there's a lot of rocks in Israel, a lot of rocks in Sinai. There's a lot of rocks over there. Well, if you look on a map of Rephidim, this is Rephidim, see that little red dot in the middle?

[39 : 20] See that shadow? The red thing's not creating the shadow, it's not really there, that's a graphic. There's a rock there. And if we look on our Google imagery here, we zoom out, we can see

there's our beach, still there today.

They crossed across, they come down through these wadis, up, and I can kind of picture them coming up through here, coming over into here, and being like, we have nothing.

It's just desert. And then you zoom in, and you see that shadow? And if you zoom out, there's not really any other shadows quite like that, because there sits this rock, split.

as Moses struck the rock, and out of that rock came forth water. So what's the scale of that thing?

Well, this isn't the best picture right here, but you can see some people, a guy that looks like his wife and kids down there, you can see how big that thing is, as Moses split that rock.

And here's some other people in front of it, there today. And if you notice something very interesting, I'm going to put it back to this picture, look in the far corners, the type of rocks, and the structure, the rock structure.

[40 : 37] They're very jagged, very angular. And look at the ones around the base of that rock.

What do they look like? Look like they've had a lot of erosion from water. A lot of water has flown over that area.

You see, our faith is miraculous, it's marvelous, and it is ridiculously practical and real and tangible. Right? As Moses struck that rock, and it literally split, and water came out and flowed, and it is still there today.

And all the rocks around it are remarkably look like rocks you would find like in glacier deposits where the water has eroded them.

Well, that's a bunch of coincidence. No, it's not. It's a bunch of truth. God himself stood in the gap for his people. Literally, in the gap as the water came out.

So that there is now nothing that stands between us and that fullness of life. Nothing that stands between us and that life-giving water. Colossians 2, verse 9 says, For in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and you are complete in him.

[41 : 48] There's nothing that prevents us now. God's work through God's wounding, as Moses strikes that rock, it was witnessed by all. It was public. It was undeniable.

As Jesus hung on that tree, it was undeniable. It's a historical fact. It was recordable. And it was for the purpose of life. As we're told in John chapter 10, Jesus says, I am come that they might have life, but they might have it more abundantly.

Well, who's they? Well, he came for the purpose of life. Well, who's they? I don't know if you've read this scripture before. John 3, 16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

God's work through God's wounding was for the purpose of life for all. And as each person stood there and witnessed this, would have loved to see that.

The thing just split and water just began to gush out of it and flow down and the people rejoicing.

You know, people running forward into the water, the children playing in the water.

[42 : 54] All of that emptiness forgotten and God didn't go, now wait a minute, say you're sorry. Now God's grace says let's just move forward. Move forward into fullness.

But they had to partake one at a time. I could have stood off and been like, well, that's interesting. I'm here with God's people in God's presence following God's leading in the midst of God's provision but I'm not partaking.

And he called the name of the place Massa. Massa means temptation and Meribah in verse 7 meaning strife. Because of the chiding of the children of Israel and because they tempted the Lord or tested him saying, is the Lord among us or not?

Now you see what their doubt was. He said, is the Lord among us or not? Deuteronomy 6 verse 16 at the end of this 40 years wandering Moses will say, you shall not tempt the Lord your God as you tempted him at this time in Massa.

You shall not say is the Lord God among us or not because you know he is. How often do I tempt the Lord, test the Lord by asking questions that take a shot at his faithfulness?

[44 : 06] How often do I do that and say, well God, I know you did but how often am I taking a shot at God's faithfulness? Psalm 81 verse 7 says, you called in trouble and I delivered you.

I answered you in the secret place of thunder. I proved you at the waters of Meribah, this place. God answered. God proved what was in their heart. You know, why didn't they name it like life-giving gushing forth water?

Why didn't they name it God's miraculous provision? Why did they name it in remembrance of temptation and strife? Why that? The same reason we look back at the cross. We look back at a place of our sin, of the death of God because it reminds us of what?

It reminds us of his provision and his grace, of my great need that was met by his great provision. God has been faithful and is being faithful then why do I question if he will be faithful?

As we ask the question, is the Lord among us? The answer is a resounding yes. Yes, he is. Yes, he is. And like Israel, we find ourselves sometimes up and down.

[45 : 17] I don't know what your walk's been like and I don't know what it is like, but I know what mine has been like at times. It's up, it's down. I'm in God's provision. Yes! And then the next want, the next need, the next thing he's led me into.

God, I followed you faithfully and now you've led me into nothingness. What are you doing here? And what do I do? Do I say, God, do a mighty work of faith?

No, I say, is the Lord in this place or not? And I question. We don't have to walk like Israel. We're going to travel, I mean, it's going to be a while.

Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteron, before we get to Joshua. Okay, when we get to Joshua, then we'll see how to walk in stability. No, no, no. Israel, we're going to journey with them and we're going to see this for a long time.

They're going to be up and down, that instability, but God wants a stability in our lives and he's given us that. He's given us a way to do that because we ask the question, is the Lord among us? The answer is, yes, he is.

[46 : 10] As Jesus says to his disciples in John 14, he says, I'm going to go but I'm going to pray the Father and he will give you another comforter. Another comforter that he may abide with you forever. Well, Jesus has been their comforter.

Jesus has been abiding with them. They had the physical presence of Jesus with them. He was leading them. He was talking to them. He was providing for them. Peter says, hey Lord, this one dude's asking if we pay taxes. He's like, of course we pay taxes.

Go fishing and open the mouth and take out a coin. Okay. Praise God. Right? He says, I'm going to send you another comforter and the difference is he won't be localized.

He won't be individual to each. They won't be like, well, we have to be where Jesus is physically to have his presence. He will abide with you forever. Even the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it sees him not, neither knows him, but you know him for he dwells with you and shall be in you.

So we are promised that we will have the presence of God. Is the Lord among us? Yes, because he sent his spirit. Jesus tells us in John 16, he says, listen, I have to leave.

[47 : 15] I know you don't want me to, but there's a very specific reason I'm ascending back to the father. If I don't go, the Holy Spirit can't come. But if I depart, I'll send him unto you.

The presence that we experience of God daily and continually is because of the work Jesus did on the cross, his resurrection, and his ascension that allows us then to approach through the smitten presence of God into the fullness of life that comes through his eternal presence as he sends the Holy Spirit.

God is among us and his desire is that we live lives of fullness and provision in the spirit. 2 Peter 1.3 says, His divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of him that has called us to glory and virtue.

All things have been given. God has provided the answer to our instability. We don't have to live an experience like Israel. We don't have to be up in God's amazing, miraculous moments and then down the next time we enter into want.

We don't have to question his God among us. You know, Paul had this instability in his life. In Romans chapter 7, he tells us in verse 14, he says, well, we know the law is spiritual.

[48 : 25] We know God's word and God's commands and God's ordinances and God's orders. Those are spiritual, but the problem is I'm not. I'm carnal. I'm sold under sin. I'm a fallen man. And the things that I want to do, man, I don't do.

But what I hate, I end up doing. I just can't get off this roller coaster of instability. I know the truth, but I'm continually up and down in this.

We know Paul will tell us in Galatians 5, 16, he says, walk in the spirit and you shall not fulfill the desire of the flesh. How do you do that? It's a wonderful thing to say. How do I walk in the spirit?

How do I progress forward in faith in a way that's stable and where my needs are coming from a source outside of myself? Well, Jesus, if you remember, in the first part of Acts as he's about to ascend, he says he takes them out from Jerusalem and he begins to speak unto them, to his disciples.

And he says this to them. He says, being assembled together with them, the disciples, he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which he said, you have heard of me.

[49 : 35] For John truly baptized with water, but usually baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence. Okay? Who are these guys he's talking to? These are the apostles. They spent the last three years in intensive training with Jesus.

They've had his words. They've experienced his power. They've had his commission. What more do they need? Let's go. And he says what? Wait. Wait, because you need a source.

You need a source. John truly baptized with water, but usually baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence. I don't know what part of the church you've grown up in and you might hear that and go, oh, baptism of the Holy Spirit.

I heard that's kooky or that's bad or irrelevant or whatever. I'm just reading my Bible and teaching it as it comes. It says, John's baptism still exists today.

Yes, we have baptized according to John in water. If we had a baptism, let's say we had all of us outside and three of us were walking around wet, what would you conclude by those who were wet? They've been baptized.

[50 : 34] You can tell. Something's happened. They're covered. Right? He says, you must be what? Baptized, poured out upon by the Holy Spirit. These are the men that Jesus had breathed on and said, receive you the Holy Spirit.

They did. They had faith in him. They believed. There'll be a revival soon in Samaria and they will send the apostles up, Philip's up there and there's a revival. Why? They will send Peter and John up to pray for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit because he had not yet fallen on any of them.

Paul and his ministry will end up in Ephesus. He'll meet 12 disciples, brethren, and he'll know something's a little off. They're not all wet. He can tell. Something's a little different from them. He's like, hey, have you guys received the Holy Spirit? They said, we didn't ever hear there was such a thing. What is that? He explained it more fully and he prayed for them that the Holy Spirit might come upon them.

Someone who's been baptized is most definitely wet. Nobody's going to be baptized without knowing it. Have you been baptized? I don't know. They dunked me under the water. I got wet, but I don't remember anything. You're going to know.

[51 : 40] You know, if you say, have you been born again? You say, well, yeah, I think so. Do you have an exact moment? Well, we don't always. Sometimes we kind of progress into that. You're like, but I believe. Okay, but there's evidence of that working in your life.

Jesus, if you remember, we read in John 7 already. In that last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood crying and saying, if any man thirst, let him come into me and drink. And then he says this, he that believes on me, as the scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow forth rivers of living water.

As the rock is struck and what comes out, rivers of living water. Torrents, different from Mara. Mara, where the water sits there. And what water is there is there. This is different. It's gushing forth. It's coming out. It's flowing out. As Paul said, that represented Jesus, the spiritual rock, whose presence abides with us always. And he says, but this, John then gives us this in parentheses, well, Jesus spake this about the Holy Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive for the Holy Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified.

This is a separate experience, a separate receiving of the Spirit other than salvation. Because he says right here, they which believe on him should receive for he was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified.

[52 : 52] As we read, Jesus must go to the Father to send the Holy Spirit. But he'd already said to the disciples, receive the Holy Spirit by breathing on them. They've already believed and have the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

But he's saying, hey, there's an equipping that you need. There's a fullness that you need so that you're not up and down. They're not traveling from one place of fullness through the desert to another place.

If we continue reading in Acts, jump back to Acts chapter 1, picking up verse 6. It says, These are to his apostles.

He said, you're not fully equipped until you have a source, a continual source. It's not about knowing all that God is doing. As the apostle said, are you going to now do? It's not about knowing all that God's doing.

I don't know all that he's doing. I don't know why he leads me in the places he does, but it's about being equipped for what he's doing. And it's not something, whoa! According to Jesus, what he said in John, it's an indwelling, overflowing experience of just his life.

[54 : 10] If I have a glass, it's empty, right? And if I stick it under the faucet and I leave it there, it gets full. I pull it away. I have a full glass and I'm filled. Well, and then, someone kind of jars me.

Some spills out. I don't have as much in there. Or someone, I drink from it. Or someone else does. They have a need. And before I know it, I'm empty. And I go back and I get filled and I go away and I'm empty again.

Or maybe as I go through life, I put something in that glass. I fill it up. With rocks. Or before you know it, there's only this much space left for water.

And it empties so quick and I go back and I gotta fill it and it's just, or maybe it gets contaminated. And it's like, I don't, I don't really want anybody drinking from this now. It's kind of been contaminated.

Like this, this is exhausting. What I want to do, I don't do. And what I don't want to do, I do. And the Bible says, love not the world nor the things of the world.

[55 : 09] And I got a glass full of worldly things. If I take that glass, empty glass, I say, Lord, empty me. I empty all that stuff out and if I put it beneath that faucet and I turn it on and I leave it there, what happens?

It fills. It fills and it gets full and I leave it there, what happens? It overflows. Where's that source coming from? Well, if you just looked at the glass, you'd be like, it's coming out of the glass, but it's not, is it?

It's an external source coming into the glass and overflowing it. That glass is essentially being baptized as that water overflows it. Man, and if, if I have a source, as Paul tells us about Jesus, that he is that source, that rock that followed them, continual source, essentially overflowing my glass, I don't need to then come back again and again and again.

That source goes with me and then I'm overflowing. And then someone bumps against me and they're like, man, I'm all wet. You're, you're all wet. You're overflowing. You know, if someone says, I'm thirsty, I'm saying, here, drink.

And I'm not gonna run out because it's not my source. It's a continual flowing source from within. And today, I don't know where you're at.

[56 : 24] I know where I'm at. I think. The Lord's so faithful in this journey to lead us to places where he reveals what? I have a need.

I have a lack. He wants us to be equipped. It's not about knowing what he's doing, but it's being equipped for what he's doing. And we're not gonna do that by any source that we can come up with. Jesus has given us a source. It's the Holy Spirit that abides with us forever. Jesus tells us that if we've been, then being evil, know how to give good gifts to our children.

In other words, that innately, we have a broken nature, a sin nature. But we know how to give good gifts to our children. We look forward to doing that. He says, well, how much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask?

Why do I need to ask for the Holy Spirit if when I'm born again it's just given to me? Because just like we read, God wants to equip us with the Holy Spirit. Israel was in God's presence, in God's provision, in God's leading, with God's people, and yet they needed a source of provision, a continual source.

[57 : 31] Father, thank you so much, Lord. Lord, we love your presence, Lord. Truly, we love your presence, Lord. Lord, better is one day in your courts than thousands elsewhere.

Thank you for this morning in your presence, Lord, with your people. Lord, I pray, Lord, that you would pour out abundantly, Lord, in our lives, the work of the Holy Spirit. Lord, that we wouldn't be

afraid of you, Lord, we would just follow you.

And that you would work as you please to glorify your name, to bless your people, and to save a lost world. The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you. The Lord be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you and give you peace.

God bless you. Have an equipped week.