

Exodus 16:1–7

“Tested by Trial and Blessing”

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What do our responses to Providence show about us? Pastor leads his family in today’s “Hopewell @Home” passage. Exodus 16:1–7 prepares us for the evening sermon on the coming Lord’s Day. In these seven verses, the Holy Spirit teaches us that trials can expose whether we have hearts that grumble against God, and the way we respond to His good gifts (especially the Sabbath) will show whether we primarily enjoy the goodness of the gift or the goodness of the Giver.

Friday, March 4, 2022 ▫ Read Exodus 16:1–7

Questions from the Scripture text: From where do they journey in v1? To where do they come? Where is it? When? Now what do the whole congregation do (v2)? What do they say they would have preferred (v3–4)? What would they have wished to have instead of what/Who they have now? How would they have wished to die instead of how else? Who responds to the complaint (v4)? What will He do? Why? What will be different on the sixth day from the first five (v5)? What do Moses and Aaron say Israel will know when in v6? And what will they see when in v7? Against Whom were the complaints of v2 really made?

The “Wilderness of Sin” comes to be ironically named—not that the word has that meaning in Hebrew, but they go from the oasis of paradise (Elim) into the wilderness and immediately plunge into sin.

A complaining spirit is against God. The sin of Israel is to complain “against Moses and Aaron” (v2). But Yahweh hears their complaints as against Himself (v7). “What are we that you complain against us?” they say. What is anyone or anything, that we would indulge a complaining spirit? Even if they do us evil, is not God doing us good? Doesn’t our lot come to us in the providence of Him Who has given Himself for us and to us in Christ? And doesn’t the Potter have the right over us as the clay to do what He will?

Sin is a choice of perishing over paradise. The Lord had given them the choice of Egypt as a glimpse of perishing (15:26) or Elim as a glimpse of Paradise (15:27). It’s only been a month and a half (!!) since they left Egypt, and now they are remembering the hand of Yahweh against Egypt as being not so bad (v3a) and the oppression which had crushed them into crying out (cf. 2:23–24, 3:7) as the good ole days “when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full” (v3).

The forgetfulness is almost unbelievable! But aren’t we guilty of that forgetfulness every time we sin? Every time we choose worldly pleasure over a better pleasure in the Lord that we might have attended upon instead?

Every sin is a choice of “pots of meat and bread” over belonging to the Lord—like Esau’s “root of bitterness” (Heb 12:15) “who for one morsel of food sold his birthright (Heb 12:16). How forgetful and foolish can we be?! We don’t want to know the answer to that question. Instead, we must seek grace from God to worship God with reverence and awe (Heb 12:28), learning to prefer Him over the earthly playthings that our flesh would prefer.

How we respond to God’s good gifts is a test of what we prefer: God or His gifts. The Sabbath was already a test of whether we would learn to delight in a day consecrated to the Creator rather than the created things (cf. Gen 2:2–3, Isa 58:13–14). Now the Lord doubles that effect to “test them, whether they will walk in My law or not” (v4). He will give them manna that lasts just one day, so that they show whether they will trust Him by not keeping any extra. Then, He will give them twice as much to last for two days, so that they will not gather on the Sabbath.

Do we trust His provision, so that we are content with each day’s gifts? And do we especially trust that the Sabbath itself—as consecrated entirely to Him—is better than attempting to gather up for ourselves what is not lawful on that day? Whatever good gifts He gives us, are we determined to prefer Him Himself and His goodness by means of and above the goodness of the gift?

When are you most tempted to indulge a complaining spirit? In what sin do you most often make a choice toward perishing instead of paradise? How can you detect whether you’re enjoying the gift’s goodness or God’s goodness in the gift—how are you doing on this when measured by your attitude toward enjoying the consecratedness of the Lord’s Day?

Sample prayer: Lord, we thank You that You Who have redeemed us are the One Who uses Your providence to bring out of us the current condition of our hearts toward You. Forgive us for how poor that condition yet is, but give us more of that grace by which You have brought us as far as we have thus come! Grant that Your Spirit would persist patiently with us until we have been conformed completely to Christ, in Whose Name we ask it, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP131 “My Heart Is Not Exalted, Lord” or TPH429 “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Exodus. 16 versus 1 through 7. These are God's words and they journeyed from Eileen and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the wilderness of sin, which is between aim and Sinai on the 15th day of the second month after they departed, from the land of Egypt.

Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness and the children of Israel said to them, Oh, that we had died by the hand of Yahweh and the land of Egypt. When we sat by pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full for you have brought us out into the wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

Then you always said to Moses behold, I will reign bread from effing for you and the people. So go out and gather a certain quota every day that I may test them whether they will walk in my law or not, it'll be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in and it should be twice as much as they gather daily.

Then Moses and Aaron said all the children of Israel That evening use shall know that you always has brought you out of the land of Egypt. And in the morning, you shall see the glory of Yahweh for, He hears your complaints against Yahweh, what are we that you complained against us?

So far the reading of God's inspired and hurt.

The wilderness of sin comes to be for us somewhat. Ironically named or maybe appropriately named obviously, it doesn't mean, you know, sin does not mean sin in Hebrew. It's the wilderness that surrounds the mountain Sinai and the name sign for, maybe we should say it that way and you can read it.

Like it's trigonometry is related to derived from the same route. It is the root from which we get the name of the mountain, but we see the greatness of their sin in the wilderness of sin. The Lord had told them. If you diligently heed the voice of Yahwe your God and do what is right in his sight.

Give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes. I will put none of the diseases. I either plagues on you which I have brought on the Egyptians for I am Yahweh. Who heals you? And they get hungry and it doesn't even say that they're hungry in verse 2.

It just says they get there and they start complaining and they say that they're complaining against Moses and Aaron. But in verse 7, Moses and Aaron say, what? We have been observing in the in the text. You always hear is your complaints against Yahweh? What are we that you complain against us?

You know, we are the ones he put in front of you. We are the ones he has appointed to the office of leading you, but what you're complaining against is Providence and it's not our providence, it's as providence. All of our complaining spiritedness is against the Lord Himself. One of the lies deceits that we tell ourselves is that it is against the particular agent under the Lord by by whom a difficult, providence comes.

And it's complicated by the fact that there are evil people who do evil things. And yet God is good and doing good, even through the evil things that evil people do. Remember what Jesus said to his brothers, You intended it for evil, but God intended it for good. But remember, at the same time what we heard in Psalm 41, that God is not giving His people up to the will of the wicked even when the wicked are carrying out their designs, God isn't giving His people up to the wicked will of the wicked.

God is accomplishing his goodwill for his people in the midst of it. But God had given them the option between Egypt and Eileen, Elim, of course, which looked like Eden, he'd given them the option between perishing and paradise and they actually say we choose perishing. Oh, that we had died by the hand of Yahweh and the land of Egypt, as a weird conversation that people sometimes have or maybe it's not weird.

It's good for us to think about dying because it's the one thing that's short to come to us and we want to do it in the right way with the right hope and so forth. But when you say all that would be a good way to die. You think of, well, the believer thinks of ways in which he will be able to remember and rest upon the goodness of the board.

And/or be ushered immediately into God's presence without even knowing that he was about to die. Those sound about the best. The most horrible possible way to die. Is to die. Under. What is obviously the hand of Yahweh's curse and vengeance. Oh, what terror? There is in death to know that it is coming upon you as someone who has not been atoned for who is in rebellion against God, who is being executed as God's enemy and therefore who shall receive from the presence of the Lord.

And from his glory, destruction forever as he says in second Thessalonians chapter 1,

It is the most horrible of all times, but God presented them with the option between Paradise and perishing and they have chosen perishing. In fact, they refer to Egypt as paradise, oh that we had died by the hand of Yahweh in the land of Egypt. When we sat by pots of meat and ate bread to the full, oh my children.

Be careful of the view of life that says pleasure is found primarily in the good gifts that God gives us and the fun that you have or the food that you eat the entertainment that you may have the admiration of others living out of love for earthly. Pleasure is something that infects the mind with a disease that makes you see all of reality incorrectly was back in Egypt.

Those good old days when they sat by the pots of meat and ate bread to the full. Have we not heard throughout Exodus and chapter 2 verses 23 and 24 in chapter 3 in verse 7 and other places that they were crying out from how much the oppression was crushing them.

But that's how they came to think of it. And remember it they're like Esau who is willing to sell his birthright for a part of that red stuff and therefore the root of bitterness sprang up in his heart and Hebrews 12 uses Esau as an example and says If you are not willing to go through pain in order to get holiness so that you may see the Lord so that he may be your pleasure and be your joy.

You are a short-sighted and foolish and wicked as Esau and you will come into destruction and where Hebrews 12 uses. Esau, it could well have used Israel and Exodus. 16. Now whenever we sin we're choosing perishing over paradox. Sin is always a choice of self-pleasure self-obedience self-dependence over pleasure in God obeying God.

Dependence upon God and he himself is the joy is the pleasure of paradise. The pleasantness of paradise. So, don't tell yourself lies when you have a choice to do right or wrong, it's a choice between perishing and paradise. It's choice between God and whatever else comes with him, which, you know, ends up perfectly good forever and ever.

And even now is full of all kinds of gentle good that he, that he often gives to wise and obedient living that every sin is a choice between him, which is paradise and not him and against him which is perishing. And it will never be the enjoyable thing that you thought it was.

Whatever momentary pleasure, you could even have in it will itself be poisoned by the misery of being against God, and then any pleasantness in it itself will be torn from you. And you'll have only the fury of God forever. All sin is a choice to perish over paradise. The last place.

God's good gifts, give us the opportunity to demonstrate whether we are enjoying the gift or him. Who gives it? This is something. He said the Lord said about when he was giving them the manna, a note, he said, I will reign bread from heaven. For you. Is that a good gift?

It is a good gift. It's a good gift. When you wake up in the morning and there's manna which is like cakes with honey every every day they would wake up. And instead of frost on the ground, there would be cakes with honey. All over the ground that you'd go and collect it.

Isn't that a wonderful idea? All that was reality for them but the question was whether you would prefer the goodness of the gift, over the giver from whom the goodness came and it says and the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day that I may test them whether they will walk in my law or not.

And so, every day how much you gathered was a test, whether you would obey God, and you would obey, God if you trusted God, There were those. We're gonna read later who gathered too much and tried to keep it for the next day. Why would they do that? It wasn't God gonna just, you know, make the honey cakes show up in the ground.

The next morning. Oh, but they didn't trust that. He would or they were greedy for for more than they needed. And so God was testing them for that. But then there would come a day in which He caused them to be able to gather twice as much and it would keep.

Why is that? Because it was the day before the Sabbath and they wouldn't want to gather on the Sabbath because on the Sabbath, you don't wake up and you find honey cakes on the ground, you wake up and find out that God has set apart this whole day. So that you would enjoy the Creator, more directly even than the created thing.

And would you count that day? Even better than Honey Cake Gathering because you gather moments, holy moments of dedicated consecrated time unto him and within is he going to be more pleasure to you? It's not that you're not going to have Honey. There's gonna be honey cake from yesterday.

I don't know if it was as good leftover or what I suspect it was that would be consistent with the Providence of God but it would also be consistent with the Providence of God in testing them. If it was better to

have him, Then the freshmana on the set because the point of the manner was not merely to feed his people.

You're gonna had a, you know, and he could have fed them in any way whatsoever but he fed them in a particular way that would come with particular commands that would bring out of their hearts and lives. Whether they enjoyed him and his goodness and every one of the good gifts or whether they clung to the gift instead of the giver and every good thing he does for us, although, it doesn't come with the same kind of specific command structure.

That the mana did, Every good thing he gives us comes with the same challenge, this house that he's given us. That you know is not the best house we've ever lived in. But it is so well suited for our family and you know, living on the five acres in the middle of nowhere.

Is there's a tremendous blessing, But will our hearts, enjoy Him. So that we want to make the best use of it unto his glory, and enjoy His goodness in it and employ it for his service. The food that we enjoy this family. Oh, my dear children. You have a small concept of the pleasantness that you have and one another's company.

It's one of the reasons why even when you're harming yourselves a little bit, talking land at night and don't you dare do it to your sister when she wants to fall. Asleep was one of the reasons why I don't like, police the bedrooms and make everyone stop chatting. These days are time, limited and the fellowship that you are building.

Now, in the Lord with one, another is something that I pray that when this short season is over, will extend across households, We have such a great blessing. But are you enjoying the goodness of your God in it? Are you seeing your siblings as gifts from him? That's gonna help you and the the good gift is irritating.

You and you want to start bickering and fighting with one another. You remember that? It's the goodness of God that you're enjoying in one another and the congregation that we have and the still to a great extent liberty that we have even under the current administration. It's not looking good for the future of the country.

But still at present you are some of the freest Christians in the history of the church in the last 2,000 years. All of these good gifts come with the challenge. Are we enjoying more the goodness of the gift or the goodness of the giver? Is the goodness of the gift?

A means by which we enjoy his goodness. So that I've been God's wise providence and he's wiser than we are. The gift itself has taken away. You still have him. Who was your pleasure and you're still able to walk and obedience to him? Because having his words to obey is a pleasure and being able to enjoy doing it under his glory, as a pleasure.

So you see how the mana was? Not just good nutrition but an opportunity to test whether they counted God himself more important even than the manner. God's goodness to be the meal as it were, as they put the good tasting and good nourishing honey, cakes into their mouths. So be careful of a complaining spirit against God.

Remember that, when you sin, you're choosing perishing over paradise. And remember that, when how you respond to God's good gifts is a test of which you are ultimately enjoying the good gift or God himself. And his goodness, let's spray Father. We thank you for such Scripture and that you bring to us as a family at beginning of this day with the very ideas and concepts in it that will help us to live well throughout the day.

Help us to enjoy you and to love you and to serve you to live vigorously and we pray that we might even be used by you to do good to others that the glory of your goodness would be seen both and how we are satisfied with you and how we imitate you.

We pray. Lord for there's rumors of the congregation who have particular challenges today that you would carry them through it by your piece, and bring them out of it with joy. We pray for your gentleness and the providence that the outcome would be as helped and that you would keep us from what we fear and yet.

Oh Lord, If in your wisdom. What we fear comes to pass. Keep us from the fear of it, because we walk through it with you granted. All we ask in Christ's name. Amen.