The Smitten Rock

1 Corinthians 10:1-5

- Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye 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;
- And did all eat the same spiritual meat;
- And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.
- But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

Exodus 17:1-6

- And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the Lord, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink.
- Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the Lord?
- And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?
- And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.
- And the Lord said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smitest the river, take in thine hand, and go.
- Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

Provision

Exodus chapters 15, 16 & 17 record the first tentative steps of the great wilderness journey of the Israelites.

- The three chapters are joined together by the conjunction “and.”
  - Each chapter builds upon the former
    - and establishes the foundations of the provision of God for that wilderness journey.

- Exodus 15 details how their first destination in the wilderness was Marah,
  - where the waters were bitter.
    - But God turns those bitter, unhealthy waters sweet
      - and makes a promise to the Israelites
• that He will be their healer throughout the whole of the
Wilderness journey.

• Exodus 16, however, brings the Hebrews to Elim
  o Where there were 12 wells of fresh water,
    ▪ But there was no bread for the people.
  o In that chapter the children of Abraham quickly forget
    ▪ how that God has miraculously delivered them from Egypt
    ▪ and how he has just turned the bitter waters sweet
    ▪ and how he has promised to be their healer.
  o Instead they focus on the absence of bread
    ▪ and begin to murmur and complain
      ▪ that Moses has brought them to the wilderness to die.
  o In the 16th chapter, God responds to their faithless accusations
    ▪ by once again establishing the testimony of his power.
  o In a mighty miracle of creation,
    ▪ He caused bread to rain from heaven
      ▪ and He promised that, by this miraculous manna,
        ▪ he would provide for the hunger of his people
        ▪ throughout all of their years of wandering.

• Finally, Exodus 17 brings us to their next destination, which is Rephidim.
  o In Rephidim there is no water.
    ▪ Once again the Hebrews demonstrate their lack of faith in God
      ▪ as they begin to murmur and complain about the lack of water.

You would think that, eventually, it would dawn on them
• that God is going to take care of them.
  o I mean they just left the bitter springs that God made sweet,
    ▪ they are living off of bread baked in heaven
    ▪ that settles upon the ground like the morning dew
      ▪ and somehow they think that the God
      ▪ who has done all of this
      ▪ cannot provide for them water in a dry place.
  • I mean, how spiritually blind can they be?
    o They followed a pillar of cloud to Rephidim.
      ▪ God brought them here,
        ▪ he has directed their footsteps,
        ▪ they are here by his divine plan.
    o God knew there wasn’t any water in Rephidim.
      ▪ God knew before they got there that there weren’t any springs
        of refreshing.

• What God is doing, in these three chapters, is establishing his credentials.
  o You would think that maybe somewhere along the way
    ▪ the more discerning among them would begin to realize
that this impossible situation has been fabricated by the will of God.
  - He brought me here to show me what he can do!

Let me just say, as a side note,
  - that we would do well to remember in our own lives
    - that when we find ourselves in a dry barren place,
      - we didn't get there by our own hand.
  - God orders our footsteps, he establishes all of our ways.
    - We can blame others,
    - we can blame ourselves,
    - we can blame our circumstances
      - but mark my words,
      - when you find yourself in places that try your faith,
        - God is the one who brought you there!
      - When you find yourself in barren valleys,
        - when you find yourself in dry places,
          - when you find that your faith is tested,
            - you will always find that the hand of providence
            - has brought you to those places
            - so that God can show you who He is
            - and what He can do!
          - Mark it down:
            - If God brought you to it, he will bring you through it!
              - He hasn't forsaken you!
              - He didn’t bring you to the wilderness to abandon you.
              - He hasn’t led you to this valley to hasten your demise.
              - He brought you here to instill confidence in his ability to provide for you.
              - He brought you here to show you what He can do!

The people chided Moses and they tempted God.
  - They demonstrated that, in spite of the miraculous provision of God which they had already seen,
    - they weren’t willing to trust God.
  - There’s something in our flesh that simply doesn’t trust God.
    - There’s a part of our humanity that is always looking for an excuse to doubt God.
      - That’s exactly what the Hebrews did.
  - Even as they ate the manna that fell from heaven
    - and drunk the last of the sweet water that they had carried on their journey,
      - they doubted the provision of God!
  - How incredible!
    - God was already sustaining them,
yet still they doubted him.

The Rock
So Moses cried out to God, what shall I do?

• The answer came in Exodus 17:6:
  o Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.
  o This is different.
    ▪ This isn’t like the other two miracles.
      ▪ The miracle of healing that was set in motion in Exodus 15 would encompass the next 40 years.
      ▪ The miracle of manna that was set in motion in Exodus 16 would never run out for the next 40 years.
    ▪ And, here, God is getting ready to make the same kind of continual miraculous provision
      ▪ but this time he’s going to actively involve himself in the miracle.
        ▪ He didn’t just say, Moses go tell the people
          ▪ that I will make it rain water every morning
          ▪ after it rains manna.
        ▪ He could have.
          ▪ That would have been sufficient.
          ▪ But that wasn’t his answer.
  o This time the miracle involved a rock.
    ▪ What sets this miracle apart is the fact
      ▪ that the rock had to be smitten
      ▪ before the miraculous provision could flow.
  o Watch this:
    ▪ God said, I will stand before thee, there upon the rock and thou shalt smite the rock.
      ▪ God stood on the rock.
      ▪ The glory cloud that symbolized the presence of God moved over the rock.
      ▪ and God overshadowed that rock with his glory.
    ▪ When Moses swung his rod to strike that rock,
      ▪ the rod had to pass through the cloud to hit the rock.
      ▪ He, in effect, smote God, when he smote the rock!
        ▪ And it was the smiting of the rock
          ▪ that caused the water to flow.

In 1 Corinthians 10:4, Paul writing under divine inspiration, gives us the spiritual insight into what happened that day.

• Paul said:
  o And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.
• To get the full impact of this you have to step back and see the bigger picture.
  o The children of Abraham were unfaithful.
    ▪ They tempted God and chided Moses.
      • They had the audacity to partake of the provision of God
        o but still murmur against God.
      • They were so stirred up that the scripture tells us
        o that they were ready to stone Moses.
          ▪ They were in the wrong.
          ▪ They violated the very character of God,
            ▪ questioned his motives
            ▪ and his ability to provide.
  • But here’s the real crux of the story:
    o When they should have been smitten,
    o when they should have been struck down,
    o when judgment should have been turned loose against them,
      ▪ instead God stood in their place!
  • God overshadowed the rock.
    o God said, take the rod and smite the rock!
      ▪ When water flowed from the rock that day
        • it was an act of the marvelous mercy of God.
    o When he should have shown them his wrath,
      ▪ God instead showed them his mercy.
    o When he should have loosed his judgment,
      ▪ he instead loosed his grace!

The Rock Was Christ
Paul said that the Rock was Christ!
• When God overshadowed that rock
  o It was typical of Jesus Christ.
    ▪ You see God alone knew that his perfect plan
      • required that one day he would overshadow the virgin
        Mary
      • and conceive within her womb a child
        o and his name would be called Emanuel
        o meaning God is with us!
          ▪ He is our Rock!
          ▪ He is our Savior!
          ▪ He is our Strong tower!
  • This is why Paul said, in 2 Corinthians 5:19
    o “To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not
      imputing their trespasses unto them…”
      ▪ Just like God overshadowed the Rock,
        ▪ God was in Christ Jesus
• not counting our sins against us
  o but standing in our stead!

The prophet Isaiah, looking through the ages, saw that wonderful savior and said of him:

**Isaiah 53:4-5**

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But 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.

• He bore our griefs.
• He carried our sorrows.
• And we did esteem him stricken SMITTEN of God and afflicted!
  o He was smitten for our transgressions!
  o He was smitten for our iniquities.
  o He was smitten for our peace.
  o He was smitten for our healings!

The rock was struck by the command of God.

• And when that rock was struck, water flowed from it.
  o The smitten Rock produced rivers of water.
    ▪ But the water couldn’t flow until the rock was smitten!
• In the seventh chapter of John, Jesus stood up in the middle of a great feast and cried, saying:
  o *If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.*
• John writing under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost includes a footnote in the 39th verse:
  o **John 7:39** *(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)*
• The water that flows from the rock is typical of the Holy Ghost.
  o It couldn’t flow until the rock was smitten.
    ▪ It wasn’t yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.
• **That’s what the Prophet Isaiah was telling us.**
  o The healing water of the Holy Ghost only flows from a smitten rock!
    ▪ He had to be stricken, smitten and afflicted
      • because that’s where our souls healing flows from,
        o that’s where our soul’s refreshing flows from,
          ▪ that’s where the springs of everlasting water come from –
            • they come from a smitten rock!

Abundance
When Moses struck that rock, a tremendous thing happened.

- Water flowed from the rock.
  - Not just a trickle, not just a small spring.
  - The Psalmist said in **Psalm 105:41**
    - *He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river.*

- There was nothing lacking in the provision of God.
  - There was an abundance.
  - It was more than enough.
  - King David would later say it this way: The cup was running over!

- But Paul details the far-reaching effects of that miracle.
  - God didn't just make provision for a day.
    - Just like he did with the Manna, God loosed a flow of provision that lasted for 40 years!
  - Paul said “that spiritual Rock followed them.”
    - It was there for them everywhere they went.
      - In every trial, there were waters of refreshing.
      - In every valley they found sweet springs of lively water.
      - In every hardship their provider was there.
        - Just as surely as manna falls from heaven,
          - God provides for their thirst.

- Jesus Christ was the Rock that followed them through the wilderness, every step of the way!
  - As often as was necessary, the rock was there.
    - Whenever they needed it, the Rock was there.
      - Paul said, they drank of that spiritual Rock.
        - The verb form, in the Greek, is continuous.
        - They were continually drinking from the Rock.
        - They continually drank from the rivers of God’s grace
          - that flowed from the deep recesses of a smitten rock!

It doesn’t have to be the same physical rock every time.

- It doesn’t have to be that the stone itself followed them.
  - **Their rock followed them!**
    - The Rock was Christ.
    - He was their constant provider.

- It wasn’t just by chance that they camped by springs of water in a barren wilderness.
  - Christ was their Rock.

- It wasn’t just by chance that they found still waters and green pastures in the midst of a forsaken desert.
  - Christ was their Rock.
• It wasn’t an accident that they found refreshing cool water each day of their journey through some of the harshest environments known to man.
  o Christ was their Rock!
    ▪ He was the Rock that followed them!
    ▪ He was their provision.
    ▪ He was their way maker.
    ▪ He was the source of life giving living water that carried them through their journey.
      • He was their Rock!

Application
Let me bring it home tonight.
• You have a Rock that follows you!
  o You have a provider that watches over you.
    ▪ Don’t despair.
      • He hasn’t abandoned you!
    ▪ Don’t lose faith.
      • He hasn’t forsaken you.
  o He is your rock!
    ▪ He brought you to this trial,
      • he will bring you through it!
    ▪ He brought you to this valley,
      • he will provide for you while you walk that lonely trail.
  o He orders your footsteps,
    ▪ his divine will has brought you to your current situation
      • and He is more than able to provide for you in the midst of your storm.
      • He is your Rock!

Isaiah 41:17-18
17 When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.
18 I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

• He is the Rock that follows you.
  o In good times and bad, he is there.
    ▪ No matter what you face, he is there.
    ▪ No matter where life takes you, he is constantly there.
      • He follows you!
  • When you run from him, he follows you.
    o When you stray from the path, he follows you.
      ▪ When you are less than faithful, he follows you.
        • He is the Rock that follows you!
Conclusion
Now, let's put it all in context. Paul started chapter 10 by saying,

1 Corinthians 10:1-5 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink...

But then he begins verse five this way:
5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

• They All were partakers of the goodness of God.
  o They all drank from the waters.
    ▪ They all ate of the manna.
    ▪ They all saw the mighty miracles of God.
    ▪ They all received the multiplied blessings of God.
      • BUT...
      • With many of them, God was not well pleased!
• Even though they saw blessing after blessing,
  o God was never pleased with them.
• Even though they experienced mercy upon mercy,
  o God was never pleased with them.
• Even though they could tell, first hand, of the miraculous preservation of God...
  o They still managed to lose out with God.
    ▪ God scattered their graves all over the wilderness
      • as a testimony to the fact
      • that they were not pleasing to Him!

They were so fixated on the provisions that they forgot about the provider.
• They became so accustomed to the miraculous
  o that they were able to drink from streams that were provided by God
    ▪ and to eat of manna that fell from heaven
      • and still doubt God!
• They became so apathetic about spiritual things
  o that, even though the spiritual Rock followed them,
    ▪ they quit following Him!
    ▪ And they lost out with God because of it.
• They became so fixated on the troubles and trials
  o that they allowed their hearts to doubt
    ▪ the very Rock that constantly followed them.
• Understand what I’m telling you:
  o He never abandoned them
    ▪ but they abandoned him!
He never turned his back on them,
- he was always there,
- he always provided,
  - but they turned their back on him,
  - even while he was providing for them!

Let me tell you what this life is about.
- It’s not about the valleys.
  - It’s not about the storms.
  - It’s not about the trials.
  - It’s not about the wilderness journeys.
  - It’s not about the miracles.
    - It’s not even about the provision or lack thereof.
- It is all about your soul!
  - It is all about you being right with God.
- This is the truth that an entire generation of Hebrews failed to see.
  - It isn’t about the hunger,
    - the thirst,
    - or the disease.
  - It is all about the condition of your soul.
- The Hebrews learned to see God as their provider.
  - They learned to see God as their way maker.
  - They learned to see him as the source of Bread.
    - It became an institution of their religion.
      - But they never learned to see Him as the savior of their soul.
- You can go to heaven hungry.
  - You can go to heaven thirsty.
  - You can go to heaven with sickness in your body.
    - But you can’t get to heaven without a savior.
- It was never about the physical bread and physical water.
  - It was always about spiritual bread and spiritual water.
    - They never got that and they lost out with God because of it.

Listen to Pastor tonight:
- When your trials cause you to murmur against God,
  - it’s a good sign that you’ve got the emphasis in the wrong place.
- When your trouble causes you to lose faith in your God,
  - it’s a good sign that you are focused on the wrong thing.
- When the storm clouds of your life cause you to doubt the very hand of God in your life,
  - your soul hangs in the balance.
- You need to make up your mind, like Job did,
  - though he slay me, yet will I trust him!
- If your trust in God is conditional,
that is evidence of a much deeper spiritual problem.

- Don’t make the mistake of assuming
  - that the provision of God is a sign of the approval of God.
- They were ALL recipients of the blessing
  - but most of them died in their unbelief!

CLOSE

I come to this pulpit tonight in a two-fold purpose.

- I wanted to remind you that you have a rock that follows you!
  - I wanted to remind you that your Rock is always with you.
  - I wanted to remind you that,
    - because his body was broken,
    - there are springs of living water bubbling forth in this place tonight
    - and you can drink of the refreshing of His presence no matter where you are in your life.

- But, as I studied the text and the context within which it was written I recognized the warning of Paul in this text.
  - It hearths back to the last verse of the last chapter

1 Corinthians 9:27

27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

- I feel compelled to warn you, lest you become a castaway.
  - Don’t make the mistake of handling the things of God lightly.
  - Don’t make the mistake of taking forgranted the provision of God.
  - Don’t make the mistake of growing comfortable and complacent in the blessings that God has provided for you.
    - If it was possible for Paul, after having preached to so many others
      - To become a castaway.
    - How much more should you and I guard ourselves against such a reality?

- I’m calling you to a place of consecration.
  - I’m calling you to a place of rededication.
    - Search your heart and your life.
    - Are you doing everything that you can to live for him
    - Are you walking in the way that he has prescribed for your life?