

## TAKING THE BITTER WITH THE SWEET

Exodus 15:22-27

March 15, 2009 Sunday pm

### INTRODUCTION

- A. Have you ever been to Platt National Park near Sulphur, OK?
  1. That's what it was called when Congress recognized it in 1904. In 1976 it was renamed the Arbuckle Recreation Area.
  2. In an early 1900's brochure it was advertised for its 30 healing sulphur springs and other springs containing bromides and several other mineral salts. Thousands visited yearly to drink these waters and camp near the Indian Reservation bordering the city of Sulphur Oklahoma.
  3. At one time there was a pavilion there where brave people could sample its awful tasting waters, or at least it tasted awful to me.
- B. In Exodus, the Israelites came upon some bitter tasting waters themselves. We read about the experience in Exodus 15:22-27 (READ).
  1. Sometimes we drink from bitter waters ourselves in the form of a failing economy, failing health, or damaged relationship.
  2. Let's see what lessons the Israelites learned from these bitter waters.

### I. FIRST, THEY LEARNED SOME LESSONS ABOUT LIFE.

- A. First, they learned that life is a mixture of good and bad.
  1. Just three days before the bitter water experience God had delivered Israel from the Egyptian army—v.22.
  2. Now, however, they encountered the bitter water—v.23.
  3. Solomon warns us that life is a mixture of the good and the bad or in other words, "Bad things happen to good people".

**Ecclesiastes 3:1-8** <sup>1</sup> There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: <sup>2</sup> a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, <sup>3</sup> a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, <sup>4</sup> a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, <sup>5</sup> a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain, <sup>6</sup> a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, <sup>7</sup> a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, <sup>8</sup> a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.
- B. Second, they learned that God is Lord of both the good and the bad things.
  1. God made the bitter waters sweet for Israel—v.25a.
  2. God is still Lord of both the good and the bad.

**Romans 8:28** And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

### II. SECOND, THEY LEARNED SOME LESSONS ABOUT THEMSELVES.

- A. First, they should have learned they were living only for themselves.
  1. They complained when the water wasn't to their liking—v.24.
  2. God wants us to put what he wants first.

**Matthew 6:33** But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.
- B. Second, they should have learned they were living by sight.
  1. The world says, "Seeing is Believing".
  2. God says, "Believing is Seeing".

**Romans 1:17** .... "The righteous will live by faith."
- C. Third, they should have learned they were never satisfied.
  1. God delivered them from Egypt but they still demanded more proof of His love.

2. God wants us to learn to be content with what He gives us.

**Philippians 4:11-13** <sup>11</sup> ..... I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. <sup>12</sup> I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. <sup>13</sup> I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

### **III. THIRD, THEY LEARNED SOME THINGS ABOUT GOD.**

A. First, they learned that God knows our needs.

**Matthew 6:31-32** <sup>31</sup> So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' <sup>32</sup> For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

B. Second, they learned that God can meet our needs.

**Philippians 4:19** And ..... God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

### **CONCLUSION**

A. We will always be faced with some bitter waters in life.

B. God, however, can be trusted to meet our needs.