

SERMON NOTES

SERIES: Exodus: Set Free, Live Free

TITLE: How Life Change Happens

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 16

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We are in a series on the Book of Exodus from the Old Testament. Why study this book? Exodus is the Old Testament story of the salvation of God's people that points forward to the great salvation that comes to us by faith in Jesus. Exodus helps us better understand what it means for God to *set us free* from our broken, messy lives so we can *live free* in loving, personal relationship with God.

Two weeks ago, Matt Densky talked about New Year's Resolutions and how we're not very good at changing ourselves. **Underneath all our resolutions in the admission that there are things in our lives in need of change.** We looked at Luke 19, at Zacchaeus' life-changing encounter with Jesus, and we saw the *transforming grace* of Jesus was the catalyst for change in Zacchaeus' life—not willpower, not religion, not promises to be good, do good or try harder to gain God's favor. The guilt of sin, the penalty of sin, the wrath of God—gone—in an instant. New life, a new identity, eternal life received in an instant. Jesus said it this way, "Salvation had come to his house." This is true for all those who put their faith in Christ to forgive their sin and give them eternal life. And, the grace Zacchaeus received led him to make some radical New Birth Resolutions showing that his heart had truly changed.

However, Christ followers know all too well that even though life-transforming change happens at the moment of salvation, **life-change is a lifelong process.** God intervenes to save us and set us free, but what does that mean practically? How does the salvation we receive when we first believe work its way into our daily lives? **How do we really live free?** And if you want to change, why is change so slow in coming? Exodus 16 (and the commentary on Exodus 16 in Deuteronomy 8) helps us begin to answer these questions.

Passage Summary — Tim Keller puts it this way: "Salvation is how God intervenes in our lives to set us free from the things that enslave us and kill us." Exodus 15, 16, 17—the instances of the children of Israel grumbling about God's lack of provision in the wilderness—help us see how God was purposely putting them into his "wilderness training program" to bring the kind of heart-change that would *cause his people to actually live as his covenant people*. Later, in Deuteronomy 8, Moses tells Israel that God put them into his "wilderness training program" to do two things:

1. to humble them and test them, to show what was really controlling their hearts [v.2];

2. to make them know that real life is not found in the things they need or think they need, but real life consists of resting in and relying on God's Word to sustain them at all times [v.3].

Answer —

1. Life-change is a lifelong process.
2. Life-change is a process that mostly happens in "wilderness" training.
3. Life-change is God's process to humble us and test us to show us what is really controlling our hearts.
4. Life-change is God's process to make us know that real life is found in resting in and relying on his Word.

BIG IDEA — When you find yourself in the wilderness, you have to turn God's Word into daily bread. —EAT THIS BOOK EVERYDAY. Make it personal to your heart in your present circumstances. That's how life-change happens over a lifetime. *And you know why life-change is so hard?* Well, one big reason may be that we're not turning God's word into bread on a daily basis.

Gospel — Exodus 16 points forward to Jesus in three ways:

1. When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, he turned God's Word into his daily bread. He took every thought captive by replacing Satan's lies with the truth of God's Word.
2. He taught us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread."
3. He said in John 6:31-35, "Our fathers ate manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' Jesus then said to them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and give life to the world.' They said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.' Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger and whoever believes in me shall never things.' For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

Action Step — Resolve to turn God's Word into daily bread by using this year's Bible reading plan and discussing what God teaches you with others. (fellowshipgreenville.org/readingplan)

For Discussion —

1. What do you want God to do in your heart in the coming year?
2. In what ways, have you experienced life-change being hard? Talk about areas of your life that you've prayed for God to change, but found that change is slow in coming?
3. *God puts us into his "wilderness training program" in order to humble us and test us.* Talk about the connection between grumbling and humbling.
4. *God puts un into his "wilderness training program" to make us know that real life can only be found by resting in and relying on his Word.* Talk about times when you leaned into God's Word and found "strength in a time of trouble."

5. *Turn God's Word into your daily bread.* Discuss the idea of everyone in the group participating in this year's Bible reading plan, and then setting aside a part of your ongoing meetings for a short discussion about how turning truth into bread helped you during the week.
6. Talk about how Exodus 16 "points forward" to Jesus in the three ways listed.