

SERMON NOTES

SERIES: Exodus: Set Free, Live Free

TITLE: God on Trial

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 17:1-7

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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.

If you've walked with Jesus for any length of time, you've no doubt found yourself wandering in a wilderness of disappointment and trouble at some point—maybe even now. The "wilderness" is a place where your comforts dry up, your security evaporates, things seem hopeless, and you feel helpless. God is nowhere to be found. The things that sustained you have failed you—health, family, friends, success at school or work, and peace of mind. It's hard to get our minds around the fact that God sometimes puts us in these places to humble us and to teach us to rest in and completely rely on him and his Word. God's "wilderness training program" is designed to work life-change in the hearts of his people. As we saw last week, life-change is a lifelong process that mostly happens in the wilderness times of our lives.

Main Point – How well you do in the wilderness depends on how well you see God in the wilderness.

Passage Summary – As in Exodus 15 and 16, we see in Exodus 17:1-7 that God tests his people again. The test question is simple—***Will you trust the God of your salvation to save in the midst of the disappointments and troubles of your daily life?*** For a third time, the children of Israel are being tested, but in this story, they actually put God to the test. They put God on trial, and in so doing, this story teaches us two important lessons about the character of God and the nature of our salvation.

Key Question – What does this story teach us about God that can help carry us through the wilderness times in our lives?

Answer –This story teaches us about the patience of God and the justice of God.

1. The patience of God (17:1-4)
 - Even though we have been saved, set free, and spiritually changed at the core of our being, there's something wrong with our spiritual memories that works against trusting God in our daily lives.

- When we are in a wilderness of disappointment and trouble, whatever God is not doing for us now, causes the good memories of what God has done for us in the past to evaporate.
 - To the degree that I rest in God's patience with me, to that degree, I will experience peace and confidence in the wilderness times of my life.
2. The justice of God (17:5-7)
- This part of the story is absolutely mind blowing when you understand what's really going on.
 - The details of this story paint a picture of a courtroom scene. Basically, God tells Moses to go before the people with the elders and his rod of judgment to convene a public trial. The question is—Who will be put on trial?
 - The shocking truth here is that the people are guilty, but Yahweh stands in their place to be judged! He takes the blow that they rightfully deserved.
 - The salvation we see in this story points forward to the great salvation that has come to us by faith in Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 1:1-4; John 7:38)
 - To the degree that I rest in God's justice satisfied for me in Christ, to that degree, I will experience peace and confidence in the wilderness times of my life.

BIG IDEA –How well you do in the wilderness depends on how well you see God in your wilderness. Do you see the patience of God as he teaches you, tests you, and trains you for you what he knows is your highest good? Do you see the justice of God, satisfied for you in the Cross of Christ, as God's pledge to be with you and for you no matter what happens to you?

The Cross forever stands as God's monument that He is always with us and for us in the wilderness times of our lives.

For Discussion:

1. How does God's patience with you in the past wilderness times of your life encourage you to trust him to carry you through now?
2. Talk about how Exodus 17 points forward to the great salvation that has come to us through faith in Christ.