

Week 7: Trust in the LORD

Exodus 15:22-18:27

Aim: To see the way the LORD shapes and grows his saved children into the image of His Son. To see testing, or training, grows those whom the LORD has saved in maturity, even though the circumstances, timing, and experience may be unwelcome at the time. Nonetheless, as he knows and grants our greatest need - for salvation - so too he meets our need to grow up in the salvation we have received.

Getting Started:

Share an example of when training made you better at something

Pray for understanding as we read God's word.

What is God saying?

Read Exodus 16:1-35

What challenge do the Israelites face, and what is their response (vv1-3)?

*They were now in the desert wilderness and hungry without food.
They grumbled against Moses and Aaron. They wished they were enjoying 'the good old days' back in Egypt – forgetting the slavery and oppression that made them call out to God from there!
(BTW Desert of Sin is not related to 'sin', it's simply a name from Hebrew where the letters are sounded out!)*

What does the LORD promise, and what does he say he is doing (vv4-5)?

*Rain down bread from heaven, the people can collect it each day.
He will test them. What that looks like is shown in what follows – to see whether they will follow his instructions. I think test isn't just a matter of pass and fail here, though that is present, but includes 'training' in how to respond to the LORD.*

V5 gives the specifics of preparing the 7th day's on the 6th day, after collecting twice as much, unlike other days. It probably captures the other details as well (not keeping overnight the other days)

What insights into what is going on do Moses and Aaron's words bring (vv6-8)?

By the LORD's actions his people 'will know' the LORD – who brought them out of Egypt – the same LORD who provides them food at this time. As he miraculously feeds them they will see his glory given he heard them and provided their need.

The Israelites aren't grumbling against their leaders – but their LORD

How does the Lord meet Israel's need?

He provides the meat and bread. Not just once either but for their entire time wandering in the wilderness v35

How does Israel fair through the test?

Not so great – while many follow the LORD's instructions some keep the manna overnight when they shouldn't v20, and others went out to gather on the seventh day v27, and the LORD calls them out v28-29 (the you is plural and refers to all Israel, communally)

Read Luke 4:1-13

How does Jesus' experience in the wilderness compare with Israel's?

His tempting/testing is a parallel to them, but where they failed to follow the LORD's instructions in their fullness, he does. You could notice too that where the devil says things from God's word that in themselves appear true, he's twisting the word of God to deny the truth about God and deceive. But Jesus responds in a way that honours the word of God, and reality, and reflects the proper response to God

Notice too it begins with hunger in the wilderness, and Jesus responds with the lesson the LORD taught Israel – they do not live by bread alone (see Deut 8:3)

Read Hebrews 12:7 & 11

And our experience of hardship or suffering compare?

There isn't time together in group but encourage people to read vv1-12 when apart.

The discipline we experience is formational, at the hand of a loving father, and produces mature disciples of Jesus and children of God

Why is God saying this?

What have you learnt or been reminded of regarding the LORD – who he is and how he acts?

This question is being addressed throughout Exodus.

We see his glory, we know him by his acts of salvation through judgement, extraordinary provision, mercy and forgiveness even in the face of our failures

How have you been challenged by what he is doing now, with us, as his children?

This is an opportunity to reflect, and for people to consider how the LORD is training/shaping/growing them – through specific circumstances, responsibilities, and in the battle against temptation and sin.

What confidence may we have in the midst of it?

We're not growing in salvation – but it is already ours – and the same mercy that brought it will sustain and grow us into maturity in Christ

Prayer Starters

- Thank God for his dependability in all things
- Pray that by his Spirit we may understand the times, and what he has revealed he is doing, and live in step with it
- Pray our Father in heaven would lead us as children to maturity in our dependance upon him

Growing Growth Group Suggestion

Consider an end of term meal or prayer focus or other activity together as a group (mix and match)

Are there any people I should follow up this week?