**BCM Bible Study: October 21/22, 2020**

**Exodus 15-17: Testing in the Desert**

Bitter Water: **Read Exodus 15:22-27**

* What issue does Israel face in the desert and how does God resolve the problem?
* Right after God provides for them, they reach Elim and experience relief. Why is it important that they reach this relief *after* God performs the miracle?
* Look again at 25b-26. The word “test” at the end of v.25 is important and will appear in each of the stories we read tonight. What does the word test typically mean to you? What is the purpose of tests?
  + How does the quote impact the way you understand what is happening in this story?
* What is God trying to instill in the Israelites through this lesson with the bitter water?
  + **Read Hebrews 12:7-12**. How has hardship brought forth a “harvest of righteousness and peace” for you?
  + How has hardship taught you to trust the Lord to give you all that you need?

Manna: **Read Exodus 16:1-21**

* How does God test the Israelites? What is the intended outcome of this testing?

*Trust* - **Read Deuteronomy 8:1-5.** How did God teach Israel to trust him?

* In what parts of your life is it difficult for you to trust God?

*Obedience* **– Read Deuteronomy 8:6-10.**

* What was the basis of Israel’s obedience? (He gives them all they need.)
* In what ways do you struggle with obedience? Why do you think this is the case?
* **Read John 6:30-35.** What does it mean that Jesus is the bread of life? What does it mean to “eat” this bread?
* **Read Deuteronomy 4:5-8.** What effect can the church’s obedience to God have on others?

*Contentment* **–** Where do you see discontentment in the Exodus story?

* **Read Philippians 3:17-19, 4:10-13**. Are you characterized more by contentment or discontentment?
* In what parts of your life do you feel discontent? How do you find that this impacts your relationship with God?
* Just as dangerous as discontentment is false contentment. **Read Deuteronomy 8:11-20.**
  + What is the warning in this passage? Have you seen this warning played out in society?
  + When are you tempted to say something like v.17?

**Read Exodus 16:22-36**

* What is the foundation of the Sabbath
* What would the Israelites learn from practicing the Sabbath?
  + **Read Mark 2:23-28**. Here Jesus suggests that the Sabbath is *for* us. Do you think of the Sabbath more as something for you or something that is a burden? Why?
* What makes it difficult for you to practice the Sabbath?
  + We often fear that practicing the Sabbath means we won’t get everything done. Is this true for you? What does this thought reveal about your heart and your trust in God?
  + Notice that the Israelites had to *prepare* for the Sabbath. Extra work needed to be done on the sixth day to rest on the seventh. What could this look like for you?

Water from the Rock: **Read Exodus 17:1-7**

* How is the role of testing reversed in this passage? (Israel now tests God)
  + What do you think it looks like to test God?
* What needs (emotional, physical, spiritual, etc.) do you want Jesus to meet right now? Let this be a part of prayer requests for the night.

Challenge: It is critical that we learn to trust God’s provision. One way we can do this is to deprive ourselves of something to lessen our attachment to it and increase our attachment to God. Consider these three options:

1. Fast. See [this site](https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/fasting/personal-guide-to-fasting.html) and the related resources.
2. Give something away. (money, possession, time)
3. Practice the Sabbath. Pick a day (Saturday or Sunday) to do no work.