

Bitter Waters Made Sweet

Exodus 15:22-27; Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 291-294

The Jones family was on a hike in unknown woods. They walked for a long time. Soon they knew that they were lost. Their water bottles were empty, and they were very hot and thirsty. "Let's stop here," said Mother, "and ask God to help us."

After praying together, they began walking again. Before long they found the right trail. And soon they were back at their campsite.

At their campfire that night they worshiped God with joyful praise. Then Mother told the story about a time when the Israelites had water problems too.

The joyful celebration on the banks of the Red Sea was over. The pillar of cloud began to move again. The Israelites knew it was time to move on. So they followed the cloud into the desert. For three days they traveled without finding water. The water they had brought with them was gone. They had to find more if they were to stay alive.

The cloud led them toward Marah, where they expected to find a spring. Moses had herded sheep in the wilderness for 40 years. He knew the place well. He knew the water at Marah was bitter and not fit to drink. But God

had led them to this place.

Just as Moses expected, at the first sight of water the joyful cry went up. "Water! Water!" Men, women, and children rushed to the spring. But as soon as the first of them tasted it, their joy turned to disappointment.

It had been just three days since the Lord had worked the miracle at the Red Sea. Just three days since



The Message

We worship God
with joyful praise.

Memory Verse

“I will praise you,
O Lord, with all
my heart”

(Psalm 138:1, NIV).

He had destroyed the entire Egyptian army. It had been only a few days since they had left Egypt and their lives of slavery. God Himself, in the pillar of cloud, had led them to Marah. But they forgot all that. “What are we going to drink?” they grumbled to Moses.

Moses did what the Israelites did not do. He turned to the Lord for help. The Lord showed Moses a piece of wood and told him to throw it into the water.

Moses did, and the water became sweet. And then, imagine how the people rushed forward to the water. They had gone from joy at finding water to disappointment after tasting it. Now they were back to joy after God worked the miracle. They were no longer in danger of dying of thirst. They had been saved!

And then God gave them a promise through Moses. “Listen carefully to the voice of the Lord and do what is right in His eyes. If you do what He asks you to do, He will keep you from the diseases of the Egyptians.” God would keep them from much of what troubled Egypt. Would they worship God with their lives? Would they honor Him with their obedience? If they did, God would give them happy lives.



God gives you the joy of salvation. Just as the Israelites were saved by the sweet water at Marah, you are saved by the grace of Jesus Christ. That is a reason for joy.

“With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation” (Isaiah 12:3, NIV). That promise is as true for us today as it was for the Israelites. Praise God with joyful praise!



S A B B A T H

DO With your family, take a long nature walk. When you stop for rest and water, read the lesson story together. Take a big drink of water and thank God that He provides all your needs. Find and read Psalm 138:1 together. How many ways can you praise Him?

M O N D A Y

READ For family worship, read Exodus 15:22-27. How many days did the Israelites survive without water? (Exodus 15:22).

DO Look in books for information about deserts. Draw a picture based on what you learn.

DO Sing or say your memory verse.

S U N D A Y

SING During family worship play "Sing a Scripture." Give each family member a Bible verse to "sing." Each person (or two) makes up their own tune and practices it. Some suggested verses are: Psalm 59:16 or 17; Psalm 66:1, 2; Psalm 66:5; Psalm 67:1; Psalm 121:7, 8; Psalm 138:1 (your memory verse). Use the whole Bible verse, or just part of it and repeat it several times.

READ Read Proverbs 15:13, first part. Practice smiling in front of the mirror. Does it make you happier?

T U E S D A Y

DO With your family, make some popcorn (or enjoy another salty treat). How did it smell? How did it look? How did it taste? Did it make you thirsty? How would you have felt if you had been at Marah when God made the water sweet? Thank God for good water.

READ Read Exodus 15:25 and Isaiah 12:3.

DO Say the memory verse several times, each time a little louder.

W E D N E S D A Y

SHARE In worship today, read Exodus 15:24 together.

DO Draw what you think a grumbler looks like. Pray with your family that you will praise God instead of grumbling about life. Should you praise God when bad things happen to you? Talk about it with your family. Then sing a "happy" song together.

DO Find out where your water comes from. Thank God for it.

T H U R S D A Y

DO During family worship, read Psalm 77:14 together. Think of something amazing that God has done for your family. Then make plans to tell it to someone not in your family. Read Exodus 15:26 together.

DO Sing a song of praise to God for taking such good care of you. (For example, "God Is So Good" [Sing for Joy, No 13].) Then say your memory verse together.



F R I D A Y

- DO** Repeat your memory verse while you help your family prepare for Sabbath.
- DO** During family worship tell the Bible lesson story in your own words. Ask your family members to help you act it out.
- SING** Praise God with a "singing relay." One person sings the first line of a familiar praise song, then points to somebody else. That person must sing the second line and then point to another singer, and so on.
- PRAY** Thank God for His loving care this week.

PUZZLE

Directions: Use the code to fill in the blanks.

A D E F H I J L M N O R S T U V W Y

Donkeys can go four days without water, but cattle need it much more often. They were near death when God made the bitter water sweet.

