

God Delivers



DailyLife
Five Oaks Church

Week 3: January 14–20, 2017

Day 1

January 16



Pray | Ask your heavenly Father to help you put his grace to work.

THE WILDERNESS

After their rescue from Egypt, Israel was led into the wilderness, a place where provision was not obvious. It was sort of the opposite of Eden—no low-hanging fruit to satisfy your every need. Furthermore, even the provisions they had had in Egypt were unavailable! However, over and over again, it was demonstrated that the Provider, with a capital P, went with them every step of the way.

As Christians, we all go through wilderness experiences. Charles Spurgeon, an influential pastor in late nineteenth-century England, called these wilderness experiences, the Oxford and Cambridge of God’s students.” Without God’s grace, we would all flunk out of this university. Let’s see to it that none of us fail with his grace!



Read | Exodus 17:1–7; 1 Corinthians 10:1–6



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

Consider Exodus 17:1. It is the Lord who led them in and through the wilderness. It appears to have been his idea! Who do you think is leading in your life's journey?

God is a good God! Why do you think he would put his people into situations where they don't, right away, have everything they want—even necessary things?

Even before God delivered Israel from Egypt, he had promised to bring them into a land flowing with milk and honey. The wilderness, which Israel didn't see coming, was to be temporary. Likewise, our wilderness experiences are temporary. Are you willing to depend on God while you're in your wilderness?

Day 2

January 17



Pray / Ask your heavenly Father to give you living water.

THIRSTY?

God brings Israel into what seems like an impossible situation. Deserts aren't known for having an abundance of water, and he leads them to camp at Rephidim, where there apparently is none. However, it is clear that God is leading, as the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night demonstrate his presence. In hindsight, though, God had to lead the people into impossible situations in order to show that he could do the impossible! There is one impossible predicament that we are all in. It is our deepest need, our inescapable evil nature—it's who we are, outside of Christ. Like the rock in the wilderness, Christ, the Rock who was struck for us, provides the answer: living water, a new nature, which springs up to eternal life. He shows us once again that he can do the impossible!



Read / Exodus 17:6; 1 Corinthians 10:4



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

The Israelites' impossible situation was the lack of vital water in the midst of the desert. Let's take a closer look at our impossible situation. If you tried with all your might to live without doing, saying, or thinking something ungodly, always doing good with the right intent, could you do it for a year? A week? A day? An hour? A minute, maybe? Do you see any hope for entirely resolving this problem without a miracle?

The Israelites thirsted in the wilderness. Jesus said that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be satisfied. As you see the impossible predicament you are in with regard to righteousness, will you thirst and come to the Rock for living water?

Day 3

January 18



Pray / Begin by thanking your heavenly Father for something.

GRUMBLERS

The apostle Paul makes it clear that the Old Testament writings related to the wilderness were written for us. He warns against many of the errors the Israelites made, all of which had severe consequences. One of the behaviors he mentions is grumbling. When the people didn't get what they felt they deserved (water), they grumbled against their leaders, even though God was right there with them. Grumbling is not like stating your case passionately before God as the psalmists did, ending in praise. Grumbling comes from an unbelieving heart. For example, there were two thieves on crosses next to Jesus. One humbled himself, and the other grumbled with a sense of entitlement. For many of us, grumbling has become such a way of life that we don't even know we are doing it!



Read / 1 Corinthians 10:6–11; Exodus 17:2–3



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

What kind of situations get to you so much that you can't resist grumbling?

Philippians 2:14–15 says, “Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked generation and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.” Because, like Israel, you have God's presence, what is a good alternative to grumbling?

According to the Scripture quoted above, you are to shine as a light to the world. How might an attitude of thanksgiving, rather than grumbling, make you shine brightly?

Day 4
January 19



Pray / Ask that you might grasp how great God is.

TESTING GOD

“Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” one of the criminals crucified with Christ yelled. “Give us water to drink,” the Israelites demanded in the wilderness. Moses said to them, “Why do you test the LORD?” When Jesus was led into the wilderness after fasting forty days and forty nights, He was tempted by the Devil. When Satan tempted him to use God’s promises foolishly for self-aggrandizement, Jesus said, “It is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ”

In today’s reading we will see that it is an evil, unbelieving heart that puts God to the test.



Read / Hebrews 3:7–19



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

God's goodness and His precious promises are not meant to be flung back at him like a spear or treated flippantly or carelessly. We are all tempted to question his goodness in troubling times. When these times come, what sort of response do you think pleases him?

Faith in Christ proves itself true, if we hold on to it long enough! The Bible urges us to "exhort [encourage] one another every day" (Hebrews 3:13). How might this help fend off a hardened, unbelieving heart?

From today's reading, what do you think is the key to entering and remaining in God's rest?

Day 5

January 20



Pray / Pray that you would pass your wilderness tests.

IT IS FINISHED!

During Jesus' wilderness experience, He passed all the tests. He continued to do so all the way through the Cross as he took on our sins and the Father forsook him. Throughout his life he was tempted just like we are, yet he never sinned.

Proverbs 17:15 says, "He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the LORD." However, this is just what our heavenly Father did . . . for us. He condemned his righteous son, and he justified us, the wicked, through our faith in Christ. God's love for us was so great that he did the very thing he hated so that we might be saved.

Are you a grumbler, an idolater, an immoral person? Have you put God to the test? Jesus was condemned in your place so that you can be justified when you stand before God.



Read / Matthew 4:1-11



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

In today's reading, notice how important knowing and rightly applying Scripture was in resisting temptation. Hebrews 4:12 also says, "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Will you open yourself up to a deeper working of God's Spirit by committing to learn the Scriptures better?

Consider the Cross and the Resurrection. Will you put your faith in Jesus and his work as your only means of being righteous in God's sight?

Everything changes when we put our faith in Christ. We become new creations—old things have passed away, and all things have become new! Such is the power of God. He who began a good work in you will see it to completion! Meditate on these things. What attitude do these truths form in your heart?

Portions of this study were adapted from Ed Stetzer and Trevin Wax, eds., The Gospel Project Chronological: God Delivers, Vol. 2, Adult Personal Study Guide ESV (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Christian Resources, 2015). Used by permission.

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