

God Has an Answer

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Date: 29 September 2024

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[0 : 0 0] And if you can rewind in your mind one week, we were in Exodus 16, took a look last week at the manna that God gave to His people that came from heaven to feed His people in the wilderness and sustain them for 40 years as it turned out to be.

And we studied how that manna was a picture of the Word of God, how it came down from heaven and yet it was still relatable to earthly things as the Bible so much is.

And it was sufficient for the young and the old and everybody in between. And that Bible has a daily portion for each person that you ought to be getting. I hope that you got your portion throughout this week and that you've been filled and walking in the Word of God each day.

Now, because I said it was mysterious, then it prompted me to just park on manna for a while. And so on Wednesday night, we just, I don't even know if I could call it a full-on study, but we took a look at the mystery of manna and asked several questions that were never fully satisfied with a clear answer because it really is a mysterious thing, trying to understand what it was.

And when they put that omer of manna in the pot and why they did it. And the other reason was something, something very mysterious.

[1 : 2 7] I don't remember. So, Exodus chapter 17, I want to remind you that when we were in 16, the very first message from chapter 16 was showing how the disgruntled and murmuring nation of Israel was a picture of your flesh.

And I won't go back and rehearse any of that, but as we begin chapter 17, there's another problem. And as you know, when problems arise, guess who pops up?

The flesh. And so the flesh is back. And we're going to see this in the first seven verses this morning. Let's take a read if you're there. Exodus 17, verse 1. And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of sin after their journeys, according to the commandment of the Lord, and pitched in Rephidim.

And there was no water for the people to drink. Wherefore, the people did chide with Moses and said, Give us water that we may drink. Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me?

Wherefore, do ye tempt the Lord? And the people thirsted there for water. The people murmured against Moses and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?

[2 : 4 3] And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, What shall I do unto this people? They be almost ready to stone me. And the Lord said unto Moses, Go on before the people and take with thee of the elders of Israel and thy rod wherewith thou smotest the river.

Take in thine hand and go. And behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock. And there shall come water out of it that the people may drink.

And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah because of the chiding of the children of Israel. And because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us or not?

So the flesh is back. And the flesh is demanding, in verse number 2, Give us water. And the flesh is chiding, in verse 2.

They did chide. And the flesh is tempting God, at the end of verse 2. They're also murmuring, in verse 3. They're also accusing Moses that he's brought them out to kill them.

[3 : 5 6] And then, to make matters worse, in Moses' own words, it seems that this nation of Israel, picture of a flesh, is getting aggressive and threatening. I don't think Moses is just sensationalizing this situation and making it worse than it is.

I don't think he's exaggerating in any way by saying, They'd be almost ready to stone me. I believe that tension is very high. They're fed up.

They've been traveling and traveling. It's not recorded in Exodus here, but if you go to Numbers, toward the end of Numbers, you'll see every stop that they made. There are several places that they've traveled from where the manna fell at the beginning to where they ended up here in verse number 1.

And so on they travel, day after day, and place to place, pitch their tents here, and then pack up and go there. And they're getting tired of not having what they feel they need.

They're getting tired of thirsting. And the Bible says the Lord does this on purpose, that he's testing or tempting the children of Israel. He's proving them to see if they'll trust him or not.

[5 : 04] But nevertheless, Moses is getting stressed out. You can see that in verse number 4, and he's crying to the Lord and says these words in verse 4, What shall I do unto this people?

They'd be almost ready to stone me. What shall I do? It's a good question, because Moses doesn't have an answer for him, does he?

Give us water. How am I supposed to give you water for all of you to drink in your cattle? I can't. I don't have an answer for you.

I don't have a solution for your problem. But the Lord has an answer. The Lord has an answer to Moses' question of what shall I do?

Moses doesn't have an answer for the people, but that doesn't matter. God has an answer for Moses. And I want to look at God's reply to Moses in the next few verses, and take some real thought into the words that God says here, and realize that when we feel like Moses, What shall I do, Lord?

[6 : 14] There's problems I can't fix. There's people against me. I don't have an answer for them. I can't tell them what's right and what you want them to do, or what you want me to do.

I have no power in this situation. It's just a problem. And on top of that, there's pressure to do something. Do something. Do something.

And so God gives a very precise answer that I believe every one of us needs to hear. And this answer I'm going to show you is in four parts. And so let's look at all four parts.

It's very simple, and it's going to be quick, I believe, this morning. So let's look at Exodus 17 again and come back to verse number 5, first part of God's answer to Moses. And the Lord said unto Moses, next two words, they're really tiny, Go on.

Look at the last word of verse 5. Go. The first word the Lord spoke in verse 5 to Moses, the last word of the same verse, Go on.

[7 : 16] Go. You get the idea? The first part of God's answer to Moses, when he doesn't know what to do, what shall I do? Keep going, Moses. Keep going.

Nobody's going to stone you. You're not finished here. I'm not done with you. It sounds bad. It feels bad. The pressure's, they're murmuring and chiding. I get it. But keep going.

You're not going to get stoned, and it's not going to be over. This is not the end. I want you, Moses, to go on. Moses, your orders haven't changed. Just because they're not happy, and just because there's a problem in front of you, doesn't mean nothing, that anything has changed from what I've called you to do.

You don't quit because the way gets tough. And you don't quit because people aren't with you, or they're complaining against you. You don't quit, Moses. Jesus, keep going.

Do you know when things get rough in your life and in heart, and even when people get against you in certain ways, I think that probably the greatest temptation, the easy way out is just, okay, I'm done.

[8 : 25] I'll just walk away. I don't need this. Why would I keep trying and working and doing, but all I'm getting is just slapped around and people against me? Why would I keep going for God when all it does is lead me into hard spots and places that I can't help, I can't fix?

The greatest, quickest temptation is just give up. It's already hard enough walking through this wilderness with these people, and now all of this on top of it, there's no water, they're thirsty, they're complaining, they're crying, they're threatening me.

You know that the past speaks for itself. Many a preacher has walked away from a ministry when things have gotten tough. Many a husband has walked away from a relationship and from a home when things got tough, and many a wife has walked away from a relationship and a home because things got tough.

But God's answer is keep going. Don't quit. The Lord Jesus Christ came to this earth, and before He started His public ministry, He was led out of the Spirit into the wilderness, into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil, and He fasted for 40 days.

He was hungry. And the devil came up to Him and said, Don't hunger anymore. Get you some bread. If you're the Son of God, turn the stones into bread.

[9 : 53] Stop this fasting. Just quit. And you can have it right now and satisfy your hunger. He tempted Him to quit fasting. He tempted Him to quit waiting for the glory of God to come on Him and the kingdoms of this world to be His, like it says they will be in Revelation, and for His name to be highly exalted.

He said, If you bow and worship me, I'll give you all of it right now. And He was tempting Him to quit waiting and trusting God. I think of David, the people's debate of stoning him, and he encouraged himself in the Lord.

He had to get away with God and get an answer from God to keep going when the people were against Him, threatening to pick up stones and stone Him. But he wasn't going to quit. He kept going.

And church and believer, if you're not at the finish line that God has set for you in your Christian life and in your race, then your race is not complete. It is not run. Keep going.

And let me say this. It will be worth it if you keep going. If you quit, you're going to be so regretful and hate yourself, and you're going to just whine and cry the rest of your life that I wish I would have, wish I would have.

[11 : 08] If you would stick it out and trust God just a little bit longer, I don't know what this week will bring for you. I don't know what this year will bring for you. I won't make any promises to you, but I'll give you the same answer that God gave to His servant.

Keep going. Maybe that's all you need to hear this morning. Maybe somebody here, it's all you need to hear is just, okay, God, thank you. I'm just going to keep going. I'm not going to quit. I'm not going to give up. I don't care if they're against me. I don't care if things aren't working out. I don't care if I've got problems. Keep going. Keep going.

The Lord pities them that fear Him, and the Lord offers them grace, and He offers them mercy, and He'll give them help. He'll strengthen them.

He'll give comfort when comfort's needed. The Lord sees your sacrifice. He knows the feelings of our infirmities. He understands where you're at.

[12 : 09] So take comfort in that, and keep going. You can go to God, and encourage yourself to the Lord like David did, and get to your Bible, and get to Isaiah 40, and read that the Lord will help you to mount up with wings as eagles, so that you can run and not be weary, so that you can walk today, and not faint.

Because He'll give power to the faint. He'll give strength to you. The Lord is not slack concerning His promises. The Bible says that God is faithful, who also will do it.

So turn your eyes to Him. What shall I do? Keep going. That's what you should do. That's exactly what you should do. And maybe that's all you needed this morning.

You can get up and leave, and just take it. But there's another part to this answer. In verse number 5, the Lord said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel.

Go on before the people, out in front of the people, and take those elders, their leaders, their men of renown, and highly respected, among this large nation of people.

[13 : 25] And Moses, you take them. Why? Because you're the leader here. So you go on before the people, and you take the most important people of the elders of Israel, but you tell them, Hey, fellas, come with me.

What is that? That's, Moses, keep leading. This is what I called you to be. Do you remember studying this in detail earlier in this book, the making of a man? How God took him through those years at Egypt, and had all of this input into him, and then took him out into the wilderness, and had 40 more years of input, and very specific things, that God instilled in this man, in preparation to do what?

To lead this people in this very place, in the wilderness, and to lead them, to be the leader. And so God says, Moses, keep going.

And he says, Moses, keep leading. Keep leading. I called you to be a leader, so it's time for you to lead. I never promised that it was going to be easy.

Why, it's easy to lead when everybody's happy, and on the same page. That's so easy to do. It requires virtually nothing of you. But when the going gets tough, and when they're against you, that's when it shows up, if you're a leader or not.

[14 : 45] If you can stand up, and do what's right, when they're mouthing off to you, when they're complaining and rebellion. What do you do when they fight against you, and chide against you, Moses?

You keep leading. That's what you do. What do I do, Lord? Keep leading. You've been called to this. I built you for this. Now, leaders don't always look like Moses.

They don't always look like a man, that's been trained in all of the wisdom of Egypt, and mighty in word and deed, and spent all this experience, and knows things like that.

They don't always look like that. They don't always look like somebody who can govern a state, or a nation, or the person that signs the paychecks, or the pastor of a church, or that kind of leadership that's out in front of everybody, and you see it.

Leaders don't always look that way. The Bible says, the husband is the head of the wife. That's leadership. That's exactly what that is.

[15 : 53] And every husband has been given the role and the commission by God to be leaders in their homes. So that's not out in front of everybody, but it is in the home.

The man is supposed to be out in front in the home leading. Mothers have a responsibility to lead their children, and to train them in the home. And I'd say as long as you're alive, if you're a mother, you have a responsibility, maybe not to boss them around when they're 45 and 50 years old, but to still lead them, and still train them, and teach them the ways of God.

What's right? You realize in this Bible, it's the aged men, and the aged women that were responsible for teaching the younger, and training the younger. That's leadership. That's leadership all the way.

Till you're in the grave, you're leading somebody. It may not be the governor of California, but you're leading somebody if you have people under you in any way. But when the wife starts to chide against the husband, and she starts to complain and argue with him, what's the man supposed to do?

What shall I do, Lord? Keep leading. That's what you should do. You keep doing what God told you to do. When the children start rebelling against mom's authority, and they get a little older, they get a little mouthier, and they start complaining and murmuring against mom, what do you do, mom?

[17 : 19] You keep leading. You don't ever give in. That's for sure. No matter if they're two years old or they're 20 years old, you don't give in to their complaining and to their rebellion, because that sin inside of their heart, it needs to be chastened and removed.

Keep leading because God is still God and you are still His child and His servant. And so you don't quit, man, when your wife chides against your leadership. And you don't quit, moms, when your children rebel against your leadership.

You stay in your role. You leave them according to the holy words of God as He commanded you to do. What do I do, Lord? They're murmuring against me and I don't know what to do. Keep leading. Keep doing what God has told you to do already. The worst thing that Moses could have done in this case was sought to please these complaining, rebellious people.

Well, what do you want me to do, guys? How can I please you? Wrong. Do you realize if he would have turned it to them and said, okay, you make the decisions.

[18 : 28] God gave me this role of leader. God gives me directions and I'm supposed to follow His word. But I'll let you make the choice. Do you know what's in the hearts of these people?

It shows up just in a few chapters when he's gone for a little while up in the mount. As for this Moses, we wish not what has become of him. You know what?

Aaron, make us gods and lead us back into Egypt. That's what's in their hearts is to go right back to the hell hole God got them out of. If Moses would have gave in to them, it's the worst thing that could have happened not just for his sake but for their sakes as well because they would have turned themselves into a complete mess of destruction because it's in them to rebel all the way to their own destruction.

They need a leader that'll stand up and say, no, this is what's right, this is what we're doing. So Moses, keep leading and man or woman or whoever you are, you keep leading in whatever capacity God has placed leadership upon your shoulders.

You step up and as he said, go on before the people. You stand up in front of them and lead. They need a leader. They don't need a friend that is going to give them what they want.

[19 : 50] They need a leader so you obey God and keep leading. There's a third thing. In verse number 5, the Lord said unto Moses, go on before the people and take with thee of the elders of Israel and notice the last part of the verse.

He says, and thy rod wherewith thou smotest the river take in thine hand and go. Behold, I stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb and thou shalt smite the rock and there shall come water out of it that the people may drink.

And here's another otherwise absurd command from God to Moses.

They're in a dry, dusty, dead wilderness. And Moses has to take these elders, these frustrated elders on the brink of furious elders representing the people and take them up this dusty trail in the dry heat of the day and there this rock of Horeb.

Horeb's a mountain. And so on the side, maybe it's a cliff, maybe they went to, I don't know how this was, if they went up part of it and it was something he was to smite, be kind of a waterfall thing.

[21 : 11] I don't know how this looked but it had to be some massive rock that was very visible.

And he takes these men, they're fed up with Moses and I can hear him saying, where is he taking us?

What in the world, what are we doing? We need water, Moses, not a rock, not a hike up a hill right now. We're already dying of thirst much less doing this, exerting all this energy.

We should be conserving it. And Moses, if this is a joke, you're a dead man. And I don't think for a minute it was anything less than that in their hearts.

If this is a joke, Moses, if you're playing games with us, you're done. We're done with you. And with that pressure on his heart, what did Moses do?

He believed God. He believed what God told him to do. When he said, hey, go take your rod and go smite that rock, water's going to come out of the rock in the middle of this place.

[22 : 19] Just go hit the thing. Am I going to split? I can't even, I don't have a sledgehammer. I don't have a, what do you call those, big hammer drills with the pneumatic things, 50 pound thing.

I don't have that. But he says, take the rod. Verse 5, take thy rod wherewith thou, notice this in verse 5, wherewith thou smotest the river.

Not the Red Sea. This is rewinding all the way back into Egypt. Plague 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, before any plagues. Take thy rod.

Just like from the very beginning, Moses. If you remember, the people were pretty mad at you back then too. Because you went into Pharaoh and said, let my people go.

And he said, what are you talking about? It's because you're idle. Therefore, we're going to put more work. And they started beating the people worse. And the elders met with Moses and said, what's going on?

[23 : 16] Ever since you showed up, everything's getting worse and worse and worse. And it's after that, it's in that very day when God says, all right, get that rod, take Aaron, you boys go out to the river.

It was when the folks were already ticked off at Moses. They've had enough of his games that God says, take the rod. You remember that rod, Moses? Remember that day? Remember how they were mad at you back then?

Well, let's go up to this rock in Horeb. And so the Lord tells Moses, just believe me. Keep believing. Keep believing.

I'm the same God that you took that rod back then, and I want you to go smite a rock. That's crazy, Lord, smite a rock and water's going to, I know. But keep believing. Keep believing what I tell you. People are against you. Keep believing. And so Moses says, hey, elders, follow me. What's that? That's Moses believing God.

[24 : 22] When they're against him, and what God's telling them to do, I've never seen this before. It doesn't make sense. I don't see how it's possible. But God has an answer. He has an answer to the pressures that come with this wilderness journey.

An answer to the chiding and the rebellion of the carnal and weak people that Moses is surrounded by. And he tells them, Moses, keep believing.

And God has the same answer for you this morning. If you're surrounded by folks that don't believe in the word of God, they don't believe Jesus Christ is real, they don't believe what you tell them is

true, you keep believing.

They tell you, oh, you're pathetic. You don't have any money. You're not doing any good. You don't have anything. I've got all the riches. I've got all the toys. I've got everything. Why would I ever want what your God has?

You keep believing. You don't listen to the chiding. Don't listen to the rebellion that's in the hearts of the people around you. Because God has given you faith to believe his word and to believe in him as a person that is your father and knows your needs.

[25 : 28] And even when it seems absurd or when others are against you and they're not in agreement with you, God's word is still good to you. If he gave it to you and spoke it to you, then it's still good to you.

You keep believing. It is a huge thing to God when you believe him. Against your own understanding and against human reasoning and against all the critics around you and against what's even looks in front of, you know, walking by sight and saying, this is dry out here.

It's very dry out here. Where's the water going to come from anyway? When you exercise faith, without faith it's impossible to please him. There's something about a man or a woman that just believes God apart from anything they can see or understand.

And just, God said it. It's right. It's truth. I can't prove it. I can't argue it and debate it. But I believe it. And I'm going to live accordingly. And when you show faith and display it and exercise it in your life with your walk, when you walk by faith, oh, that's something good to God. Man, that's something good to God.

[26 : 43] It's a huge thing to him. And so, Christian, keep believing. When things get tough, when you say, God, what should I do? Keep believing.

Don't ever, ever, ever, ever, ever let go of faith. It's a gift that he's given you. And there's some substance to it. And there's evidence in it.

And there's understanding that comes with it. And there's pleasure to God in it as well. Don't ever give up faith. Don't allow the eyes of your flesh to overcome the eyes of your faith, where you see God and you see his word as true.

Don't allow feeling to force out faith. Fight it. Fight it with the word of God. And you need to get back in the book, then get back in the book until you get some help.

Until you get your faith back. But never stop believing God. Keep believing. And then one more thing for Moses in this answer to Moses is verse number six.

[27 : 49] He says, The people will drink. And the last part of verse six says this, And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

What's that, Moses? Just keep obeying. And Moses did so. The elders didn't. They weren't part of this.

God was telling Moses to do it. So Moses did it. When everything in you and everything around you says stop, says give up, says you're done, Moses did so.

He obeyed. Look to God. And keep obeying. When the people go against you, the people are ready to remove you, the people want to leave, or they want to go another direction, what do you do?

You keep obeying what God told you to do. You keep obeying. Because, listen to this, you will answer to God for your obedience to God.

[28 : 53] Moses, But Lord, what should I do? They're going to stone me. Moses, I gave you a job to do. You obey me. I can take care of them. What do you do?

When the people speak of stoning you, when the people are against you, when you're on your own, or the problem, you don't have an answer, what you do is you keep obeying what God has told you to do. Because you will give an answer.

I can't do this anymore. God, I quit. You'll give an answer for that. You were wrong. You can keep going in the strength that he'll provide if you'll trust him. So keep obeying.

That's the answer. Keep obeying. You will answer for your obedience to God. You will not answer for their disobedience. You will not answer for their rebellion and chiding and murmuring.

You're going to answer for how you respond to what God has told you to do. But I just want them to be happy. I just want them to do right. Yeah, I know you do.

[29 : 49] God does it. We all want everybody to be happy. We want this to be a wonderful thing.

But it just doesn't happen that way. So what do you do? You do right. You don't ask for their favor or their help.

You do what you know is right. Amen. You do what is right. You don't... Adding to this. You do what... You do what... You keep obeying. But you don't go... You don't help others at the expense of... That is... I don't know how I'm trying to even say this. At the expense of what God told you to do. You want them to be happy. You don't want them to mess up their life. You don't want them to destroy or to be against you. But you've got to stay in your lane where God has put you. And if they go off, you can't go running after them. Sometimes you just have to let them go that way and let God meet them down there somewhere.

[30 : 52] Because you don't get off your lane at the expense of what they have chosen to do. It's never right for you to chase somebody else's well-being at the expense of what God has put in your life.

A command of God. Here's an example. Luke chapter 15. There's a man that has two sons. The elder, the younger. The younger decided, I'm out of here, Dad. I want to go live my life. I want to live it up. Give me the inheritance that I have coming to me. My portion. And I'm gone. And he did. The father, he was of age. He gave him his inheritance, this portion that he owed him. And let him go live his life in riotous living. And just squander the whole thing. Find himself way down at the bottom. What the father did not do was say, Son, I love you so much. Okay, I get it. You're a grown man. You can make your own decisions. But just let me, you know, tell me where you're going to be. I'll meet you there. I want to, you know, I don't think you're going to make good decisions.

[31 : 53] I want to help you, guide you on your way. He stayed, the father stayed home with his wife, with his servants, with his eldest son, with his business, with all of the things that he was given of God to be maintaining and leading.

And when that man, young man, that son of his in his heart, he loved him, but he made a choice. I'm going to the far country. The dad didn't go to the far country with him to try to protect him or to try to counsel him. He let him go and he left him up to God's hand. He didn't go chasing him. And sometimes you have to let him go in order for them to learn a lesson so that they could come back to God in the right spirit and humble themselves before God. So what do you do? I don't know what to do, God. Will you keep obeying? That's what you do. Individually before God, you keep obeying his word regardless of decisions that others make. It could be that you're the husband of a home. You keep obeying. If people are against you, you keep doing what the word of God says. If you're a wife and your husband's doing wrong, you obey the word of God.

[33 : 05] If the children are out and rebelling, you husband and wife, parents, you stay with God. You stay in church. You don't go chasing them. You stay faithful. They need to see that rock and that stability and that faithfulness of your heart and your determination that God is the priority.

His will is first in my heart and life. If you're going to go down that road, I can't leave the Lord to come with you. Christian parents and ministers and all of them flounder all over the place because they try to please the people.

But God had a word for Moses and Moses obeyed. So keep obeying. So God's answer to Moses in four parts this morning is, Moses, you keep going.

Moses, you keep leading. The people need a leader. They need to see somebody that stands up and leads. Moses, you keep believing. I won't fail you. So believe me.

Moses, you keep obeying. It's in the Lord's hand to work all things together for good according to His perfect will and according to the foreknowledge He has of all situations.

[34 : 16] It's our duty to obey Him, to believe Him, and to keep doing what He has told us to do. So you're going to have times where you stand before God and cry out and say, what shall I do?

Because I don't have an answer and this problem is getting worse and worse and worse. But God has an answer for you. Keep going.

Keep leading. Keep believing. Keep obeying. Let's bow our heads and we'll go to the Lord in prayer here. Father, I thank You for this answer You've given to Your servant.

I need this as an answer in my own heart and life. I trust Your people, all of us, need to hear an answer from You at times.

And whether we get one that's loud and clear and very precise or whether we just get some principle that says You just do right, Lord, help us to take this.

[35 : 26] I pray Your Spirit could apply this into the individual situations in this room, into the husbands and the wives, into the children, into the homes, into the jobs, into the relationships.

O God, drive this in us. May we receive it with meekness. May we be obedient.

Thank You for giving answers, God. Thank You for answers. I pray You'll help each person this morning. Give us faith when our eyes are telling us different stories and our ears are hearing different things.

Fill us with Your Word, with Your promises, and Your presence that we might rest in You and hold firmly to our anchor, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lord, may Your presence be very evident and clear in each situation, in each family. Help us to do right. Help us to desire Your will and give us victory.

[37 : 02] This morning, if you need to pray, I invite you to come up here and pray. There's nothing wrong with coming up front here and praying. It's a good place to talk to the Lord. I do it. You should too.

Don't ever be ashamed to just talk things over to God in front of this church. Nobody's looking at you. Nobody's judging you. But if God's nudging you or God's speaking your heart about a situation or your response or an answer you need, then talk it over with Him.

It's a great time to do it. Respond.