

The Song of Victory and the Bitter Waters

Exodus 15:1-27

We serve a God who is not only powerful enough to deliver us but is also worthy of our highest praise. As we read Exodus chapter 15, we find the children of Israel standing on the shores of victory. They have just watched the Lord wipe out the Egyptian army in the Red Sea. And what is the natural response when God works a miracle? Worship!

The Song of Deliverance

Moses breaks out into song, and I love the imagery here in Exodus 15:1-8. He describes the Lord as a "man of war." He talks about the "blast of Your nostrils" piling up the waters. Now, that is picturesque! When the wind blows hard, you can just imagine God breathing out His power to make a way for His people.

The enemy was arrogant. In Exodus 15:9, they said, *"I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil."* But God simply blew with His wind, and they sank like lead.

There is nobody like our God. He is glorious in holiness and fearful in praises. This victory wasn't just for that moment; it was a preparation. You see, the report of what God did at the Red Sea was going to melt the hearts of the inhabitants of Canaan. God was already working ahead of them.

It's the same for us. As it says in Ephesians 2:10, *"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."* God has a plan for your life, and the victories He gives you today are equipping you for the territory He wants you to take tomorrow.

Emotion vs. Emotionalism

Now, Miriam—the sister of Moses—grabs a timbrel, and the women start dancing and singing. The Jewish people are so full of life and exuberance! You know, some people get nervous when they see someone getting excited in church. They say, "Oh, they're being a fanatic."

But isn't it funny? You go to a stadium on Monday night and see a grown man with his face painted, screaming at the top of his lungs because a guy caught a leather ball, and everyone says, "What a great fan!" But if we smile or shout "Hallelujah" because the Creator of the universe saved our souls, people think we've lost our minds.

There is a big difference between emotion and emotionalism. Emotionalism is worked up; it's emotion for the sake of a show. But true emotion is a response to reality! If your team scores in the final seconds, you jump and cheer. That's a response to a victory. How much more should we rejoice when we consider the victory God has wrought in our lives? It's okay to enjoy His presence!

From the Mountain to the Marah

But notice how quickly things change. They travel three days into the wilderness and find no water. When they finally find some at a place called Marah, it's bitter. They can't drink it.

Isn't that just like us? One minute we are on the mountain singing, and the next minute we are in the valley murmuring. They forgot the Red Sea in just three days! They started grumbling against Moses.

But look at what God does in Exodus 15:25. He shows Moses a tree. When Moses casts that tree into the bitter water, the water becomes sweet.

This is such a beautiful picture of the Christian life. We all face "bitter" experiences—disappointments, pain, loss. But when you cast the "tree"—the Cross of Jesus Christ—into those bitter circumstances, God transforms them. He takes the bitterness of our past and makes it sweet by His grace.

The Lord Who Heals

Then the Lord gives them a promise. He says in Exodus 15:26, *"I am the Lord who heals you"*—Jehovah-Rapha.

He tells them that if they walk in His statutes, He will keep them from the diseases of Egypt. God cares about your whole being. He wants you to be healthy and whole. Often, His healing comes through His "preventative medicine"—living life according to His Word, which is a perfect manual for how we were designed to function.

Finally, He brings them to Elim. Twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees. After the test at Marah, God brought them to a place of total refreshment. He knows exactly what you need, and He knows how to lead you to the quiet waters.

Practical Application

- **Keep a "Victory Journal":** When God does something great, write it down. When you hit your own "Marah" next week, go back and read about the "Red Sea" moments so you don't start murmuring.
- **Apply the Cross:** If you are dealing with a bitter situation right now, bring it to the foot of the Cross. Ask the Lord to transform your perspective through what Jesus did for you.

A Challenge for Believers

Are you living in the exuberance of your salvation, or have you become "pious and somber"? I challenge you this week to let your heart rejoice. Don't be afraid to show some emotion for the One who purchased you with His own blood. Let the world see that serving Jesus is a joy, not a burden.

An Invitation to the Unbeliever

Perhaps today your life feels like the waters of Marah—just bitter and empty. You've tried to find satisfaction, but everything you drink leaves you thirsty.

Jesus Christ went to a cross for you. He shed His precious blood to pay for every sin you've ever committed. He died, but He didn't stay dead. He rose again, proving that He is indeed God, Savior, and Lord. He wants to take the bitterness of your sin and replace it with the sweetness of His forgiveness.

You know, the Bible tells us that we've all fallen short. We've all tried to drink from those bitter wells of the world, and we've all found them wanting. But Jesus Christ—the One who stretched out His arms on that tree at Calvary—did it because He loves you. He shed His blood to wash away every bit of that bitterness, every sin, and every regret. And when He rose from that grave three days later, He proved once and for all that He has the power to give you a brand-new life.

It's not about being religious or following a bunch of rules; it's about a relationship with the Living God. If you're ready to step out of the "Egypt" of your past and into the freedom of His grace, you can talk to Him right now.

There's no "magic" in the words themselves—it's about the sincerity of your heart—but you can pray something like this:

"Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner and I've been wandering in the wilderness. I believe that You died on the Cross for me and that You shed Your blood to pay for my sins. I believe You rose again and that You are Lord of all. Today, I turn from my way and I turn to You. I ask You to come into my life, forgive me, and lead me from this day forward. Thank You for saving me. In Jesus' name, Amen."

What's Next?

If you prayed that and meant it, the Bible says you are a new creation! The old things have passed away, and all things have become new. You've just crossed your Red Sea, and the Lord is going to lead you to those "Elim" places of refreshment.