

Exodus 15:22-27 “Jehovah Rapha – The Lord is our Healer”

Read Exodus 15:22-27 and Deuteronomy 8:2

1. The Lord had rescued the nation of Israel from Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Salvation however had only just begun. The people were out of Egypt, but Egypt was not out of the people. What sort of work would God need to do in order to shape them as a new people?

They have learned to trust in the bounty and fertility of the Nile for their provision. They worship the gods of the Egyptians adopting their customs and their practices of worship. They have been formed for generations as slaves and must learn what it is to be free, healed from the trauma they have suffered. They must learn what it is to be a nation of justice and equality, mirroring the goodness, love and justice of their God.

2. If we were to relate this work to ourselves, what kind of work must God do in us?

We have been rescued by the death and resurrection of Jesus, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. We have been rescued from the powers of sin death and hell. We must learn what it is to live free of sin and death. We must turn away from the idols of our world, money, success, beauty, comfort, to trust in him alone. We must be healed from the trauma our broken world has thrown at us that we would be formed as a people of his kingdom, reflecting his goodness, justice, and love.

3. Deuteronomy speaks of God’s work in them during their time in the desert. A work of humbling, a work of testing, revealing what is in their hearts. At Marah what is revealed in their hearts?

Marah, bitterness, at its root deliberate defiant disobedience. This is not bitter complaint to God, it is bitter complaint about God. Rebellious muttering, under the breath plotting to return to Egypt.

4. Have you ever experienced this work of God? What did it look like? What were its results?

Most of this testing / refining work happens in the context of everyday experiences. Relational matters, financial matters, decisions, news we hear. They are any situations where THE question is laid before us – will we trust God’s wisdom our ours? Will we rely upon our work or His work? Will we work toward our best or his best? Will we lay down our lives upon the alter of the idols of work, money, status, beauty, comfort or lay down our lives for the one who has laid his life down for us?

It is these situations that reveal what is truly in our hearts, what we truly trust in.

As a leader having a story ready to go will really help others to think of their own...

5. God responds to them with grace, with provision, with the revelation of a new name. How does such grace shape us to be able to see what is in our hearts and learn to trust in God?

Such grace gives us the environment where we can acknowledge who we are before a holy God and can learn that God indeed CAN be trusted.

6. (26) How does Moses invite us to a new relationship with God? What does this look like for us?

If we listen to the commands of God, live in step with them there will be healing and wholeness. Obedience and healing, wholeness and faithfulness to God's word are intricately interwoven. It reveals to us that God's commands are perfectly suited for who we are created to be, they are intended to undergird our flourishing as individuals, in relationships, in community.

7. The people are led from there to Elim. How is this story both a reversal of the story of the garden of Eden and a foreshadowing of what God has done for us in Jesus?

The story of scripture opens in paradise and the people are given a command – obey me about the tree. There is Marah – deliberate defiant disobedience – and Adam and Eve are cast into the desert. Now here in the desert there is once more Marah – but in response there is grace – there is the provision of a tree – and the people are saved and brought to paradise.

Jesus meets our Marah with grace, love and forgiveness, and provides us a tree, a cross where he deals with everything that undercuts our flourishing opening up a new future by his resurrection. A future where heaven and earth will meet, a new creation, where our world will pulsate with the goodness, love, and justice of the living God.