

# Sermon Discussion Guide- Week of Oct 20, 2019

## I've Got Questions: Is the Lord Among Us or Not?

Pastor Hall (8, 10:30 Selah), Pastor Temple (9:15, 10:30 Traditional)

### Getting Started- Life Updates, Prayer Requests & Opening Question (15 min)

- Anything to share about personal events since you last met or about applying last week's message on I've Got Questions (and So Does God): Is Anything Too Difficult for the Lord?
- Are there any joys or concerns that you would like to share with the group for the closing prayer time or for group members to hold in prayer during the week? (please note them below for later)

Opener Question: Do you consider complaining a real sin or just an annoyance? In your experience, what have been negative results of too much complaining?

### Review the Sermon (15 min)

Please read aloud the sermon scripture, Exodus 17:1-7. Know that it is ok to skip some questions below in order to manage the time for discussions in each section.

**The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. <sup>2</sup> So they quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the LORD to the test?" <sup>3</sup> But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?" <sup>4</sup> Then Moses cried out to the LORD,**

**"What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me." <sup>5</sup> The LORD answered Moses, "Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. <sup>6</sup> I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. <sup>7</sup> And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the LORD saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"**

- If you had to give a one-minute summary of the sermon message this week, what would you say?
- In today's passage, God already had, 6 weeks earlier, delivered His people out of slavery in Egypt through His servant Moses, the ten plagues and the parting of the Red Sea and provided manna in the desert for food (Exodus 3-16). Just judging from verse 1, how would you rate the faithfulness of the Israelites on a scale from 1-10?
- How about from verse 2?
- Where do you think the people wanted Moses to get water from?
- Why did Moses consider it to be putting the Lord to the test?

- How do things take a turn for the worse in verses 3-4?
- In verses 5-6, the Lord provides the people with water through His servant Moses. Do you think this was in response to the people's complaining or was this the Lord's plan all along?
- Why do you think Moses chose to give the place a negative name (Massah-testing, and Meribah-quarreling) rather than a positive one since the people received the water?
- Pastor Temple mentioned that the original Hebrew of the passages hinted that there was actually some water present, but that the people did not think it was enough. How is this a significant insight in interpreting the lesson of the waters of Massah or Meribah?
- What lesson do you believe the Lord intended for His people in the apparent lack of water at Massah?

### **Other Related Readings (10 min)**

- Deuteronomy 6:16 says "Do not put the LORD your God to the test as you did at Massah." Would a volunteer please read the gospel account of Jesus being tempted in the desert in which He references this passage and the Exodus passage- Matthew 4:1-11.
- How does God's activity in this story of Jesus begin in a similar way to the Israelites story (verse 1)?
- How did Jesus approach the lack of resources in the desert differently than the Israelites did?
- The devil tempted Jesus in the desert (1) to misuse his power to make food, (2) to throw himself from the tallest point of the temple to show God's saving power and (3) to worship the devil to gain more power. Jesus overcame each temptation and referenced scriptures in doing so. How are Christians today tempted to
  1. Not depend on God for physical needs?
  2. Try to manipulate the Lord into displays of power?
  3. Complain and rebel against the Lord's will and chosen leaders?
- Jesus referenced Massah and not putting the Lord to the test in temptation #2 (in the gospel of Matthew). Afterwards in verse 11, it says "the devil left him, and angels came and attended him." Since Jesus and the Israelites both had their needs provided for by God, why was Israel's experience judged a failure that future generations were meant to learn from?
- How did Jesus succeed where they had failed?
- What is the difference between grumbling or complaining and prayer?

### **Personalizing and Applying The Message (10 min)**

- As you reflect upon the sermon and the additional readings above, what are points of encouragement or challenge for you personally?
- If you lived at that time among the Israelites, do you think you would have responded to the circumstances and spoken to Moses differently than they did? How so?
- When have you acted in the flesh out of fear of scarcity only to discover that, just out of your view, God was already at work providing for you? How is this a faith stretching experience??
- What fears or disappointments can we give up and trust with God to take care of this week?
- While we might avoid the discomfort of the desert, how might being in one not necessarily be a bad thing in spiritual terms?

### **Witness & Closing Prayer (5-10 min)**

- How is our witness with non-Christians strengthened when we are seen waiting on the Lord with quiet trusting faith in circumstances of uncertainty or scarcity?
- If you are in a desert this week, how can the group best support you and pray for you?
- The group leader or another volunteer who took notes on the prayer requests shared earlier in the meeting, may now lead the group in closing prayer