

# Cure for Grumbling: The Tree That Sweetens Bitter Waters

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Preacher: Shawn Woo

[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning, everyone. We are in the book of Exodus, chapter 15, verses 22 to 27 today. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Sean. I'm one of the pastors of Trinity Cambridge Church.

It's my joy and privilege to preach God's Word to you this morning. Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's Word. Heavenly Father, we live in a world that is full of bitterness.

The bitterness of sin, sickness, death. But we pray that this morning you would help us to see and experience the sweetness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We humble ourselves before you, incline our ears and our hearts to you. Speak, O Lord. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Please stand for the reading of God's Word, Exodus 15, verses 22 to 27. Then Moses made Israel set out from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur.

[ 1 : 43 ] They went three days in the wilderness and found no water. When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter.

Therefore, it was named Marah. And the people grumbled against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a log, and he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet.

There the Lord made for them a statute and a rule, and there he tested them, saying, If you will diligently listen to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians.

For I am the Lord, your healer. Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they encamped there by the water.

This is God's holy and authoritative Word. Please be seated. What a sudden change in tune from last week's passage to this week's passage.

[ 3 : 07 ] The triumphant singing of Yahweh's glorious victory at the Red Sea over the Egyptians and Pharaoh, and the jingling of tambourines at the Red Sea have given way now to the sound of grumbling and murmuring among the people of God.

This 180 degrees turn in Israel's disposition occurred in a mere span of three days. But that's how fickle we all are as human beings, isn't it?

We're like the wide-ranging and rapidly changing weather in New England. I don't know if you remember, on the morning of Wednesday, February 16th, 2022, we woke up to a frigid 14 degrees Fahrenheit while below freezing temperature.

But by the afternoon, on the very next day, Thursday, February 17th, we were at 59 degrees Fahrenheit. You guys remember that? It's t-shirt weather for most of us.

Cold on one day, hot on the next day. We can go from fervently blessing God one day to cursing angrily our friends and family members made in the likeness of God the next day.

[ 4 : 15 ] We can go from raising our hands in praise to God to shaking our fists at God in protest. But though Israel's attitude toward God fluctuates with their circumstances, there is one constant that does not change through Israel's journey in the wilderness, and that is the name of the Lord, Yahweh, which contains in it the promise of his faithful presence, provision, and protection.

It means I will be with you. I am who I am. Like the immovable mountains and the earth beneath, the Lord remains unchanged through the seasons, the rain or shine or spring, summer, fall, winter, ups and downs.

And it's for this reason that this passage teaches us this morning, that rather than grumbling against the Lord, we should cry out to him in the bitterness of our souls, for he is our healer. So we're going to talk about the bitter water and the grumbling people and the healing Lord in turn.

It says in verse 22, Then Moses made Israel set out from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur. So this is the only time in the Pentateuch, which is the first five books of the Bible, where the verb set out or lead out occurs in a causative form in Hebrew.

So Moses caused Israel to set out. He made them set out. It's almost as if the Israelites were too enraptured by their triumph at the Red Sea, too high in the moment, that they forgot that they still had the wilderness to cross into the Promised Land.

[ 5 : 49 ] They were not in the Promised Land yet. They still had a long way to go. So Moses has to make them set out. It would not be wrong to describe the crossing of the Red Sea as a kind of a birth of the nation of Israel.

It's a new iteration of the people of God. And 1 Corinthians 10, 1-2 tells us that it was a baptism into Moses. That's when God's people were baptized into Moses. It's a sign of the new birth, a new life for them in that era.

But after crossing the Red Sea on dry ground, after coming out of, if I may use the language, the birth canal of the Red Sea, it's as if the Israelites are unaware that they still have the rest of their lives to live in faith and obedience.

That they haven't reached the Promised Land yet where they will dwell in the gracious presence of God under His rule. Sometimes I think we Christians can be like that, too.

We have repented of our sins. We have been baptized in water. We have believed in Jesus for salvation. We have made public profession of that faith. But then, because we have been forgiven of our sins, we have been washed of our guilt, we celebrate that, and then we turn around and act like we have crossed the finish line already.

[ 7 : 05 ] Like the rest of our life is not there. It's just a victory lap. But no, that's not the case. Baptism is the initiation, not the culmination of the Christian life.

It is the beginning and not the end. We have had several babies born in our church in recent months, which is very happy. And there's more on the way.

And it's right to celebrate the birth of the precious boy or girl made in the image of God. But that birth is only the beginning of the child's life. There's still much growing and learning left for the child to do.

Likewise, when the Lord delivered Israel out of their slavery in Egypt, he didn't stop by saying, let my people go. He said, let my people go that they may serve me. Israel has been freed.

They've been delivered from the pursuing Egyptian army through the Red Sea. But now they must serve the Lord. Now they must obey the Lord. Now they must worship the Lord and journey with him into the promised land while he will rule over them in his gracious way.

[ 8 : 08 ] So let me ask you, my Christian brothers and sisters, are you purposefully journeying toward the promised land or are you wandering aimlessly in the wilderness? Are you obeying the Lord?

Are you serving the Lord with your life? Are you worshiping him? That's why Moses leads Israel out of the Red Sea and from the Red Sea. And of course we know from the rest of the book that it's not ultimately Moses' direction, but it's at the Lord's direction that Israel sets out and goes into the wilderness of Shur.

And it says in verses 22 to 23, they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter.

Therefore it was named Marah. Think about how crucial bringing a bottle of water is even on a half-day hike. But the Israelites have been journeying in the wilderness for three days in a desert climate, under the hot sun, with dry sand beneath their feet.

People estimate that the Israelites have probably traveled about 40 miles or so by this point. And remember, this is not a trek of experienced hikers. This is men and women, their children, and their livestock, and they are carrying their luggage.

[ 9 : 28 ] They get thirsty. They consume a lot of water. I imagine parents have heard a lot of, Mom, Dad, I'm thirsty. Can I have some water, please?

Probably on the first day, they were more generous. Perhaps on the second day, with no water in sight in the wilderness, the heads of households begin rationing out the water more frugally.

Hey, you already had a sip 30 minutes ago. You can't have another sip for another hour and a half. Make sure you take a sip and no more, just enough to wet your parched mouth.

Take care not to spill any of it because we don't have any we could waste. And as the sun sets on another day and it rises, on the next day, they start journeying again, and their anxiety grows with each step when they don't see any water on the horizon.

They don't see signs of any living things. And then all of a sudden, they hear people yelling that, hey, there's water ahead. This word is getting passed down from the front that they have come across a body of water.

[10:34] So people hasten their steps with fresh hope and expectation, and some of them run, and the fastest to reach the water, they all greedily and impatiently lapped the water onto their mouths, and then, yuck, you spit it all out.

It's bitter, brackish water. It's not drinkable. There are lakes in that region called the Bitter Lakes precisely because of the minerals dissolved there, the saline, you know, the levels in the water, it makes it brackish, not drinkable, just like you can't drink ocean water.

And the name of the pool, because of that, is named Marah, which in Hebrew means bitter. It's repeated three times, Marah, Marah, Marah, bitter in verse 23, just to highlight how bitter that experience was for the Israelites.

Just imagine being in their shoes. And the word bitter, of course, recalls Exodus 1, 13 to 14, where it says that the Egyptians ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves and made their lives bitter, with hard service.

And as a perennial reminder of their bitter slavery in Egypt, the Lord commanded them to eat the Passover meal with bitter herbs, in Exodus 12, verse 8. So then Israel's experience at the waters of Marah is a reminder to them of their bitter past.

[12:03] They're reminded of Egypt. And as they continue to face hardship in the wilderness, Israelites will, at some point, boldly say that they wish they had never left Egypt.

They felt like they were better off in Egypt. They're not saying that at this point yet, but they're probably thinking it. There's so much bitterness here, too, outside of Egypt.

At least in Egypt, we knew what to expect. But here, there's so much unknown. We don't know when we will get to water, when we will reach the promised land. Maybe we shouldn't have left Egypt in the first place.

Maybe there are recent converts here, too, young Christians who are feeling the same temptations that Israel felt at Marah. Maybe you're so preoccupied with the bitterness and the bitter circumstances of your own lives that now that your bitterness of past slavery to sin seems like a distant memory.

And you're wondering whether or not you made a mistake in deciding to follow Jesus. Perhaps you think your life was more carefree and pleasurable without the discipline of Christian obedience.

Maybe you don't want to carry the cross of Jesus for Christian discipleship.

[13:17] Maybe you miss your friendship with the world, the affirmation and acceptance and approval of this sinful world. But don't let Satan fool you. He is a cruel tyrant while Jesus, our King, is gracious and merciful, gentle and lowly in heart.

In the movie, I guess in the old, really old movie now, in the movie Braveheart, the Scottish are enslaved by the English and William Wallace leads the Scottish to fight for their freedom and in one scene when trying to motivate fearful Scottish soldiers who are just overwhelmed aside of the vastly greater English army, he says this famous line, he says, fight and you may die, run and you'll live.

At least a while. And dying in your beds many years from now, would you be willing to trade all the days from this day to that for one chance, just one chance to come back here and tell our enemies that they may take our lives but they'll never take our freedom.

The day you become a Christian, you become a target of our spiritual enemy, Satan. He will oppose us and he will sorely tempt us because we follow another prince, another king.

But even though there are struggles and sufferings that are peculiar to the Christian, to die free in the Lord's service is infinitely better than to live as slaves to sin and Satan. Psalm 84:10 says, for a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.

[14:56] I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. And there's a reason why the Lord brings Israel to Marah.

Verse 26 tells us that this was the Lord's way of testing Israel. Will they trust God and continue to listen to his voice and do what is right in God's eyes and not what is right in their own eyes? And in the Christian life also testing often follows triumph. The triumph of the Red Sea is followed by the trials of Marah, the test at Marah. Similarly, in Matthew 3, we witness Jesus' triumphant baptism where the Holy Spirit descends upon him in likeness of a dove and then the Father speaks from heaven saying, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

But then, right after that baptism, Jesus immediately says, led into the wilderness by the Spirit. Why? To be tempted by the devil. So, testing follows triumph.

In 1 Corinthians 10, after pointing out that many of the Israelites failed to pass the test of God in the wilderness even after crossing the Red Sea, Paul writes in verses 11 and 13, now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction on whom the end of the ages has come.

[16:16] Therefore, let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide a way of escape that you may be able to endure it.

The Lord himself tempts no one as James 1.13 says clearly, but scripture also often speaks of the testing of our faith that the Lord brings. And that testing of our faith is intended to produce steadfastness.

We are lured into temptation by our own sinful desires and the devil who tempts us, but the Lord does allow trials in our lives in order to test us.

And the difference is this, the devil tempts us to make us fall. He tempts us to see our downfall. The Lord tests us to prove our faith, to build us up, to give us greater assurance.

So 1 Peter 1.67 teaches us that like gold that is tested by fire, various trials in our lives, test the genuineness of our faith. And each time we pass the test from the Lord, we are more assured of the genuineness of our faith and therefore also more assured of the eternal glory that awaits us.

[17:31] And that's why the Lord is testing Israel here, not to make them fall, but to build them up, to prove the genuineness of their faith. And verse 24 tells us how the Israelites fared with the test.

It says, and the people grumbled against Moses saying, what shall we drink? That's a passive-aggressive question. It's plain to everybody there that there's no water to drink.

So why in the world are they asking Moses, what shall we drink? It's not like Moses can gargle some water in his mouth and then spit it out like a bit of filter, right? Why are they questioning Moses?

What they're saying is this, well, Moses, you brought us out here. You must have had some kind of plan, right? I don't know if you realize yet or not, Moses, but we are thirsty and we can't go on for much longer.

What are you going to do about it? But their grumbling is not ultimately against Moses either. It's against the Lord. In the next chapter, we will see the Israelites grumble again against Moses and Aaron and this time about not having enough bread and meat and Moses says to them in verse 8, the Lord has heard your grumbling that you grumble against him.

[18:50] What are we? Your grumbling is not against us but against the Lord. Why does Moses say this? Because even though Moses might be immediately responsible for leading the Israelites out of Egypt and out of the Red Sea and into the wilderness, he's not ultimately responsible because all this is happening under God's sovereign guidance.

It was the Lord who appointed Moses to lead Israel. It was the Lord who sent Moses into Egypt. It was the Lord who used Moses to bring Israel out into the wilderness of Shur.

So even though the Israelites don't dare openly to grumble against God, that is in reality what they are doing. And that's what we often do also.

we grumble against our president because of inflation. We grumble against our boss at work for the long hard hours.

We grumble against our parents or against our spouses at home. But underneath it all we are grumbling against the Lord because he is ultimately in charge.

[20:00] if you knew how to rule the universe better, if you knew what I really needed God, these things wouldn't be happening to me. This is why the Bible considers grumbling to be such a grave sin.

In Jude 15 to 16 it speaks of the day when the Lord will return to execute judgment. It says, on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against them.

That's a lot of ungodliness. And what do they have in mind? What is this great ungodliness that God's going to judge? It says, these are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires. They are loud mouth boasters showing favoritism to gain advantage. Grumblers and malcontents had this list of ungodly sinners in Jude who warrant the judgment of God.

This is probably surprising for many of us because we don't tend to think of grumbling as a serious sin. In fact, in our society grumbling is increasingly seen in a positive light.

[ 21 : 10 ] In a 2015 article in the New Yorker the editor Josh Rothman makes some astute observations about grumbling that's even more relevant in 2022 quote, it's no surprise that grumbling has become a central aspect of online life.

If HTML had a tag how much of Facebook, Twitter, and especially Yelp would be surrounded by grumbling? Tumblr too might be renamed grumbler. Grumbling being simultaneously entertaining, elevating, competitive, and social is a natural fit for the web and the web in turn has enabled grumbling.

In recent years the web's culture of mass grumbling has produced a new kind of distributed social critique. This has lent to grumbling an aura of dignity, even virtue.

Grumbling is, after all, a form of resistance and there are few things contemporary culture values more than the act of resisting. To grumble is to elevate ourselves at the expense of others that we grumble against.

At its heart, grumbling is rebellious and seditious. When people murmur and grumble, it creates an atmosphere of resistance and a quarrel is not far from breaking out.

[ 22 : 35 ] This is not to say that we never can lament or pour out our complaints to God. For example, throughout the book of Psalms, the psalmist often pours out his complaint and moans before God.

And similarly, Job cries out to God in Job 10, verse 1, I will give free utterance to my complaint. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.

Like the Israelites who have come to the bitter waters of Marah, Job experienced much bitterness in his life due to the trials that the Lord allowed in his life. And Job did not hold back.

He voiced his complaints and he cried out to God in the bitterness of his soul. But the Hebrew word that is translated here as complain is not the same word that's translated as grumble in our passage.

Apart from one instance in Joshua 9, 18, the Hebrew word for grumble occurs exclusively in the accounts of Israel's journey in the wilderness in the book of Exodus, in the book of Numbers.

[ 23 : 39 ] The two words grumble and complain or grumble and moan do not mean the same thing. Crying out to God with your complaints is not the same thing as grumbling against God.

Moaning in your grief and pain is not the same thing as murmuring in prideful resistance and rebellion. Do you see the difference? The New Testament also maintains the same distinction. Philippians 2, 14 to 15 says, do all things without grumbling or disputing that you may be blameless and innocent. 1 Peter 4, 9 says, show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

The Pharisees, scribes, and the Jews who oppose Jesus grumble against him throughout the Gospels. And on one occasion, Jesus' disciples also grumble against him after a teaching that is hard to accept.

This is the grumbling that we should not be doing. But there is another Greek word that is usually translated as a sigh or a groan, which is okay for us as Christians to do.

[ 24 : 47 ] Even Jesus sighs in Mark 7, 34. The Holy Spirit, he says in Romans 8, 26, intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

It's as if the Spirit empathizes with us, feels our pain, and he groans for us in interceding for us. Acts 7, 34 refers to Israel crying out to God in their slavery in Egypt as groaning.

And Romans 8 tells us that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth under the weight of and the consequences of sin. And so we also, he says, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

While we are still on this earth with our fallen bodies, we groan, it says in 2 Corinthians 5, we groan longing to put on our heavenly dwelling.

This kind of groaning is the appropriate response of the Christian who lives in a broken and sinful world. When you are living in constant pain due to arthritis, when your body is wasting away due to cancer, you can groan and pour out your complaint to God.

[ 26 : 06 ] When you lose a loved one to death, just as Jesus wept in front of Lazarus' tomb, you can grieve and you can groan that death is still ravaging our loved ones.

When you face rejection, isolation, and loneliness due to a sinful people, you can groan. When you are saddened by your own besetting sins, you can sigh and you can groan.

But we must never grumble. We can groan before God and to God, but we must not grumble about God or against God.

We can groan in submission to God, but we must not grumble in rebellion against God. We can walk by faith and still groan, but if we grumble, then we are walking by sight.

A groan says, God, this is really hard, but I trust you. A grumble says, God, you are a hard man, and I don't trust you.

[ 27 : 17 ] To groan is to implore God to plead with him. To grumble is to try to impeach him.

The Israelites grumbled, but Moses, we see in verse 25, he groans. He says, Moses cried to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a log, and he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet. Moses cried to the Lord instead of grumbling against him, and this one man's cry accomplishes more, far more than all Israel's grumbling, because he directed his prayer to the Lord, and the Lord answers Moses' prayer by showing him a log, or as the footnote on ESV says, a tree, that he can then throw into the bitter waters to make it sweet.

Verses 25 to 26 continue there, the Lord made for them a statute and a rule, and there he tested them, saying, if you will diligently listen to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, your healer.

It's a wonderful promise. This is a covenant promise given specifically to the people of God. The Lord repeats it again to Israel in Exodus 23, verse 15, where he promises that if they serve the Lord, he will take sicknesses away from among them, and this covenant blessing is repeated in Deuteronomy 7, 12 to 16.

[ 28 : 57 ] Again, if you listen to these rules and do them, the Lord your God will keep with you the covenant and the steadfast love he swore to your fathers, and the Lord will take away from you all sickness, and none of the evil diseases of Egypt which you knew will he inflict on you, but he will lay them on all who hate you.

But there's also an accompanying curse, covenant curse, in Deuteronomy 20, 15 to 23. If they break the covenant, if they are not faithful to the Lord, they disobey his voice, then all these diseases will come upon them.

This is not because the Lord is vindictive, or harsh. It's because the Lord loves his people and is teaching them and disciplining them. Job 36, 15 says that the Lord delivers the afflicted by their affliction and opens their ear by adversity.

God sometimes delivers us by afflicting us to wean us off from some pride and sinful pleasure. God opens our ears by adversity.

That's how he gets us to pay attention to his voice. That's why C.S. Lewis is not wrong when he writes in his book *The Problem of Pain*. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains.

[ 30 : 17 ] It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world. Generally speaking, sickness is a symptom of a sinful fallen world.

That's why in John 5 when Jesus heals an invalid, he tells him, sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you. But this shouldn't make us go around judging everyone who is sick.

Oh, he just coughed. What sin did you do the other day? Why? Why can't we do that? Because in John 9 when Jesus and his disciples come across a man blind from birth, the disciples make that assumption and they ask Jesus, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?

But Jesus answered, it was not that this man sinned or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. Sometimes people have a disease or a disability for no particular sin, but simply to serve God's greater purposes and display his glory.

But we must not miss the general force of the Lord's assurance to his people here. Because our Lord redeems us from our slavery to sin, he also brings healing from our sicknesses.

[ 31 : 31 ] If the Israelites obey the Lord, things will go well for them. And if they disobey the Lord, things will not go so well for them. That's the case for everyone in the world.

Just as any product that you buy works better if you use it according to the manual, just as every citizen in this country, fares better if they live according to the laws of the land.

If you follow the ruler of the universe and you live according to his will, things go better for you. It does. The healing of the water of Marah is a dramatic illustration of this truth.

God says specifically in verse 26, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, your healer. Remember the first plague that the Lord brought upon the Egyptians. In Exodus 7, the Lord commanded Moses to strike the water with what?

With his staff, wooden staff. And what happens to it? The water turns into blood. People can no longer drink from the water, the sweet waters of the Nile.

[ 32 : 40 ] He turns the sweet waters of Nile bitter so people cannot drink it. And the miracle in Marah is nearly the exact opposite of this. They come across bitter, undrinkable water, and the bitter water becomes potable, sweet water when it is struck with a tree, a log, a staff.

By this, the Lord demonstrates another one of his titles, the Lord, your healer. And the healing hand of our king is most perfectly demonstrated by the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. When Jesus cast out evil spirits and healed all who were sick in Matthew 8, Matthew notes that this was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah. He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.

This is a citation of Isaiah 53, 5, which is about Jesus, the messianic king who was to come. He says there that he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities.

Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds, we are healed. We saw earlier from Romans 8 that all creation is still groaning, and we are still groaning in our decaying bodies.

[ 33 : 54 ] As Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4, our outer self is wasting away. We have in this life momentary light affliction, but that's preparing us for eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.

In this life, we still sin. We still get sick. We still die. But the glorious redemption of God has already begun in Christ.

Humanity's sin and their consequent alienation from God is the root of all diseases and death in this world. But Jesus came to die for our sins, to atone for our sins, and to reconcile us again to the Lord, our healer.

And as we are reconciled to the giver of life, we have eternal life. As we are reconciled to God, our healer, we are healed of our diseases. This is why sometimes we experience miraculous healings. They are a sign of the in-breaking kingdom of God. The kingdom of God that has already begun, that's been inaugurated, and that will soon be consummated.

[ 35 : 01 ] It is the cross of Jesus Christ, like the tree of Mara, that sweetens the bitter waters of our own lives. Do the circumstances of life taste bitter to you?

Are you sick and depressed? Are you hurt and lonely? Are you weary from the fight, worn out from your battles with the world and the flesh and the devil?

Throw the cross of Christ into your bitter waters. Let it have its sweetening effect. Behold the Savior who died that you might live. Behold the King who was wounded that you might be healed and it will sweeten the bitterness of your life.

Elim, in verse 27, was a foretaste of the promised land, Canaan, for the Israelites. It says in verse 27, then, they came to Elim where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees and they encamped there by the water.

It's a wonderful picture. The numbers twelve and seventy have symbolic significance throughout the scriptures. There is, of course, the twelve tribes of Israel, but also when Jacob's family, Israel's family, first moved into Egypt, he said in Genesis 46, 27, that their number was seventy.

[ 36 : 21 ] Later in Exodus 24, we see that there are seventy elders of Israel. So then, twelve springs of water for Israel to drink from and seventy palm trees for them to take shade in under the beating sun.

They represent God's perfect provision. And I believe this points beyond God's provision for Israel toward God's provision for all of God's people and all nations.

Why? Because there are twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. And according to Genesis 10, there are seventy nations or people groups descended from Noah scattered throughout the world.

So then, this promise is also for all nations, for all of God's people, including Gentiles. And Revelation 21, 14 tells us that in the new city of God, new Jerusalem, and in the new heavens and the new earth, quote, the wall of the city had twelve foundations and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

And when Christ returns, it says in Revelation 21, verse four, he will wipe away every tear from our eyes and death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

[ 37 : 35 ] If only Israel had persevered in faith a little longer, they would have come to Elam and they would have had no cause to grumble. The same is true for us, brothers and sisters.

We are journeying still in the wilderness. In the world, we will have tribulation, but take heart, Jesus has overcome the world. Because of Jesus, there are twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees ahead of us.

Because of Jesus, there are, there's a promised land flowing with milk and honey ahead of us.

There is the new Jerusalem with the throne of God and of the Lamb in the midst of the city, with the rivers of the water of life, bright as crystal flowing from it.

And on either side of the river, there will be the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit. And its leaves, it says, are for the healing of the nations.

The Lord, our healer. So let us not grumble against the Lord. But let's behold the Lord Jesus, our healer, by whose wounds we are healed.

[ 38 : 50 ] Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. God, we thank you for sending Jesus our Savior.

God, we thank you that though in our sin you should be our destroyer, in your grace and mercy you are our healer.

We thank you for the cross of Jesus. Jesus smite all grumbling from our hearts, Lord. Let us instead groan in faith and praise you in gratefulness.

I pray for dear members of our church, people here who are experiencing significant bitterness in their own lives right now. Lord, sweeten those waters.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.