



SESSION 2

OUR HEALER

The Point

God is the only one who can restore us and make us whole.

The Passage

Exodus 14:29-31; 15:22-27

The Bible Meets Life

We are broken people. We may be broken by our circumstances or surroundings, or we may be broken by our sin and failures. Regardless of our best efforts, we remain broken people. But God steps in. He heals our brokenness and restores us when we trust in Him. The Israelites were continually called to trust and obey God. In so doing, they would experience His healing and wholeness.

The Setting

The Israelites had known nothing but slavery for centuries. But that changed when *Yahweh*, the one true God, sent His spokesman Moses to the Egyptian Pharaoh demanding that the Israelites be released from their captivity. As God displayed His might and mercy both in the Israelites' exodus from Egypt and their time of wandering in the wilderness, He called the Israelites into covenant relationship with Himself. This relationship demanded both trust in and obedience to *Yahweh*.

What does the Bible say?

Feared (14:31)—The Hebrew term translated “feared” has a range of meaning from frightened and terrified to a sense of awe and reverence.

Wilderness of Shur (15:22)—This refers to a rocky and barren region in what today is the northeastern part of Egypt in the Sinai Peninsula stretching to the east as far as the Negev in Israel.

The LORD who heals (15:26)—The Hebrew term, *Yahweh-Rophe*, refers to God’s merciful intervention and includes the meanings of healing, forgiveness, and restoration.

Exodus 14:29-31; 15:22-27 (CSB)

14:29 But the Israelites had walked through the sea on dry ground, with the waters like a wall to them on their right and their left.

30 That day the LORD saved Israel from the power of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.

31 When Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD and believed in him and in his servant Moses.

15:22 Then Moses led Israel on from the Red Sea, and they went out to the Wilderness of Shur. They journeyed for three days in the wilderness without finding water.

23 They came to Marah, but they could not drink the water at Marah because it was bitter—that is why it was named Marah.

24 The people grumbled to Moses, “What are we going to drink?”

25 So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he threw it into the water, the water became drinkable.

The LORD made a statute and ordinance for them at Marah, and he tested them there.

26 He said, “If you will carefully obey the LORD your God, do what is right in his sight, pay attention to his commands, and keep all his statutes, I will not inflict any illnesses on you that I inflicted on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you.”

27 Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy date palms, and they camped there by the water.

GET INTO THE STUDY



10 minutes

Notes



DISCUSS: Invite your group members to discuss **Question #1** on page 21 of the PSG (Personal Study Guide): **“When have you admired a restoration project?”** Allow time for each person to respond.

SUMMARIZE THE PSG (PAGE 22):

Works of art such as Leonardo da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa* and *The Last Supper* are universally recognized as great masterpieces, but most people don’t realize the images we admire are quite different from what

Da Vinci first painted. The *Mona Lisa* has darkened over time because of the varnishes used on it. Original fine details are now obscured. *The Last Supper* has deteriorated due to mildew. Early on, well-meaning painters attempted to clean it and repaint sections. In the process, they covered up Da Vinci’s actual work.

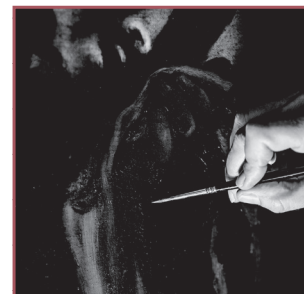
Restoration is needed when we want to return to the artist’s original design. When “left to themselves,” art, houses, and old cars lose their luster and even fall apart. And so do we. When left to ourselves, we drift from God’s original plan and design for us. We take our eyes off of Him. We often complain about Him while forgetting all He has done for us. We need restoration and healing.

SAY: “In the Book of Exodus, the Israelites lost their focus, yet God showed Himself to be the God who restores. He is the Lord our Healer.”

LEADER PACK: Divide your group into subgroups of three to four people each. Display **Pack Item #2**, “Restoration” poster, and bring your group’s attention to **The Point** on page 22 of the PSG: **“God is the only one who can restore us and make us whole.”** Ask: “What gives you assurance that God can bring healing and restoration?” Allow time to discuss and invite volunteers to share their responses.

PRAY: Transition into the discussion with prayer.

TIP: Let your tone and attitude create an environment where everyone feels free to add to the discussion. Make it your goal to encourage each group member to participate in discussion.



God is the only one who can restore us and make us whole.

PACK ITEM:
Pack Item #2
“Restoration” poster

PLAYLIST PICK:
“Come As You Are”
By Crowder



STUDY THE BIBLE

Notes

Dotted lines for taking notes.

Exodus 14:29-31 (CSB)

29 But the Israelites had walked through the sea on dry ground, with the waters like a wall to them on their right and their left. 30 That day the LORD saved Israel from the power of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. 31 When Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD and believed in him and in his servant Moses.

READ: Ask a group member to read aloud Exodus 14:29-31.

SUMMARIZE THE PSG (PAGE 23): The Israelites had lived in Egypt for 430 years (Exodus 12:40), and for much of that time, they were slaves. But God never forgot His people, and He intervened, sending ten plagues that ultimately decimated the Egyptians. After the tenth plague, Pharaoh finally allowed the Israelites to leave (12:30-31). Once the people had left, however, he changed his mind and pursued the fleeing Israelites (14:5-8).

- » The Red Sea lay before the Israelites, and the onrushing Egyptian army was behind them. But God instructed Moses to stretch out his staff over the Red Sea, and immediately the waters stood up on both sides. Ultimately, all of the Israelites walked “through the sea on dry ground, with the waters like a wall to them on their right and their left” (v. 22).
- » Then God directed Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea once again, and the water came back over the Egyptians, their chariots, and their horsemen. So Moses did as God instructed, and not a single one of the Egyptians survived (vv. 26-28). The mighty Egyptian army, now lay “dead on the seashore” (v. 30).

ALTERNATE QUESTION:
When have you seen God fight on your behalf?

DISCUSS: Question #2 on page 23 of the PSG: **“What have you learned about God from firsthand experience?”**

SAY: “The miracle of the parting of the Red Sea holds a prime position as a symbol of God’s salvation in the Old Testament. God had exhibited His ability to lead the nation from captivity into freedom.”

TRANSITION: The Israelites had just experienced a miracle. Unfortunately, their focus would soon shift from God’s power to their immediate problems.

Exodus 14:29-31 Commentary

Verse 29: God worked powerfully on behalf of the Israelites in delivering them from slavery in Egypt. After He freed the Israelites, God “led the people around toward the Red Sea along the road of the wilderness” (Exodus 13:18). But Pharaoh soon changed his mind about allowing the Israelites to go free, and set out in pursuit of the Israelites with his army (14:5-9).

When the Israelites saw that the Egyptian army was overtaking them on the shore of the Red Sea, they panicked. “The Israelites were terrified and cried out to the LORD for help” (v. 10). Rather than remembering and taking confidence in the fact that God, who had won their freedom through inflicting the ten plagues upon the Egyptians, was with them, the Israelites saw only the large, well-armed force of Egyptians in chariots closing in on them. Although they cried out to the Lord, they quickly turned on the Lord’s chosen representative Moses (vv. 11-12).

Moses responded by telling the Israelites, “Don’t be afraid. Stand firm and see the LORD’s salvation that he will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians you see today, you will never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you must be quiet” (vv. 13-14). God told Moses to stretch the staff in his hand over the sea. When Moses obeyed, the waters parted and all the Israelites “walked through the sea on dry ground” between the two walls of water to the other side of the sea (vv. 21-22). When the Egyptians came after them, God told Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea again. After Moses obeyed, the waters came back together and the entire Egyptian army drowned (vv. 26-28).

Verse 30: Moses had encouraged the Israelites to trust in the Lord for their salvation from the Egyptians and God had delivered them: “That day the LORD saved Israel from the power of the Egyptians.” At daybreak, as the Israelites looked back toward the sea, they saw that the waters had returned to the seabed and that the Egyptians were “dead on the seashore.”

Verse 31: Whereas the Lord had brought ruin and death upon Pharaoh’s army, God had brought deliverance to the Israelites. Having seen the demonstration of the great power of the Lord in delivering them from the Egyptians, the Israelites feared the Lord. The Hebrew term for “feared” (*yare*) is the same word used to describe the terror the Israelites had felt at the approach of the Egyptian army (v. 10). Depending on the context, the term can be used to express fear and terror or it can be used to express respect and awe. Not only did the Israelites now fear the Lord; God’s act in saving the Israelites caused them to believe in the Lord as well. Fear of the Lord was accompanied by faith in the Lord. The Israelites “believed in” God and in his servant Moses.

Exodus 15:22-24 Commentary

Verses 22-23: Although the Israelites had believed in God after He delivered them from the Egyptians at the Red Sea, it did not take long for them to lose their focus on God and fall back into complaining about the difficulties they were facing. After Moses and his sister Miriam led the people in songs of praise to God for the deliverance He had provided from the Egyptian army (Exodus 15:1-21), Moses led the people toward the east into the Wilderness of Shur. The Wilderness of Shur is a desert region located in what is today the northeastern part of Egypt in the Sinai Peninsula and stretches to the east as far as the Negev in Israel. The typical terrain is rocky and barren though enough springs and oases exist for travelers and nomads. The Israelites were probably headed south along a caravan route toward Mount Sinai.

The Israelites had traveled for three days in the wilderness without finding any sources of water. Finding water to supply such a large group would have been problematic to begin with, but to make matters worse, they had not found any water at all. They finally came upon an oasis, but when they tasted the water, they found that it was too bitter to drink. The oasis itself was named Marah, which means “bitter.”

Verse 24: The people began to complain to their leader Moses. Remember that this is the same group of people who had witnessed firsthand God’s judgment on the Egyptians through the ten plagues and then were given their freedom by Pharaoh after the tenth plague. These are the same people who only days before had trusted God enough to walk through the Red Sea between two huge walls of water and then seen the dead bodies of their enemies on the shore after the opening in the sea had closed. If any group ever had reason to trust beyond question the providential care of the one true God they knew as *Yahweh*, it was the Israelites. But when they grew desperate for water, how did they respond? They grumbled, asking Moses, “What are we going to drink?” Instead of remembering the powerful ways God had provided for them, they thought only about their immediate need for water. Instead of relying on the constant presence of their faithful, awesome God, they complained to the one who had led them to freedom. Though their complaint was directed at Moses, in reality they were also complaining to the One who had called Moses as leader: they were grumbling against God. Sadly, this pattern continued throughout Israel’s journey through the wilderness (see Exodus 16:1-2; 17:1-2; Numbers 14:1-4; 16:41; and Joshua 9:16-18).

While the need for water was a legitimate concern, the real issue for the Israelites wasn’t a lack of water but lack of trust. They had enough knowledge. They weren’t relying on stories handed down from past generations. They had been there and experienced God’s deliverance and mercy for themselves. Despite what they knew firsthand, despite all the logical reasons they had to keep trusting, they refused.

Exodus 15:25-27 Commentary

Verses 25-26: Faced with this crisis, Moses cried out to the Lord. He laid out their need before God. Despite the people's grumbling, God responded to Moses' call for help. God immediately answered with a strange command: He showed Moses a nearby tree and told him to throw it into the water. Moses didn't complain or question but simply obeyed. Moses acted in faith without knowing the how or why behind God's command. Instantly, the water was no longer bitter and became fit for drinking. God had tested the Israelites at Marah. Sadly, they had failed this test when they stopped trusting and started complaining. But because of His faithful love, God had answered Moses' plea by providing the needed water.

After God satisfied the people's need for water, He made a statute and ordinance for the Israelites. The use of the two terms does not point to two separate commands, but rather is a Hebrew literary device whereby repetition is used to emphasize a single concept. The overall framework for this one command was God's requirement that the Israelites were to carefully obey Him. Specifically, they were to do what He said was "right in his sight," to "pay attention to his commands," and to "keep all his statutes."

At this point in Israel's history, God had not yet made a formal covenant with the Israelites. That would happen later at Mount Sinai, where God would give the Israelites the Ten Commandments and the other laws. What God did at this time was to establish the general basis for maintaining the relationship He had established with the Israelites. God required their complete loyalty and obedience. If they would trust and obey Him and follow Moses' direction, then God would not punish them by afflicting them with the kinds of illnesses which He had sent on the Egyptians. When God gave the Israelites the entire Law at Sinai, He spelled out the many ways He would bless them for their trust and faithful obedience (Deuteronomy 28:1-14). However, He also identified a long list of judgments that He would send upon them if they were unfaithful and disobedient (vv. 15-68).

God then concluded His instruction with another revelation about His divine nature. He is "the LORD who heals" (*Yahweh-Rophe*). The Hebrew word for "heals" is found over fifty times in the Old Testament. Often it refers to physical healing (Genesis 20:17; Leviticus 13:18); but, it is also used in the sense of to forgive (2 Chronicles 30:20), to restore (7:14), or to repair (1 Kings 18:30).

Verse 27: The Lord demonstrated that He is indeed "the LORD who heals" as He brought the people to Elim. While the exact location of Elim is not known, Elim was known to have had seventy date palm trees as well as twelve springs of water. Whereas at Marah they had initially lacked even the essentials (drinkable water), at Elim the Lord provided for the Israelites an abundance!

