

# Monday - Week Eleven

## Lesson Thirty: The Deliverance

Read: Exodus 12:29-15:21

**Summary:** For thousands of years the Israelites looked back on this rescue operation as a spectacular example of God's loving protection.

### Background and Comments

- The Egyptians were so shaken up that they pleaded with the Israelites to leave. In fact, when asked they gave the Israelites gold and other valuable possessions. After years of slavery the Israelites left Egypt as conquerors! What a display of God's power!
- Unbelief often results in stupid decisions. The Pharaoh and his officers seem to have forgotten everything God had done to them when they chose to pursue the Israelites.

### Lessons for Today

- God did not lead the Israelites along the most direct route because this would have led them against the powerful Philistine army. God knew that this young and immature nation was not ready for that. Often God steers us away from situations that we cannot handle. Can you think of an example of God making you wait to experience something until you were ready for it?
- Moses and the Israelites took the bones of Joseph along with them as they left Egypt. Joseph's prophetic words (that God would lead the Israelites home) still rung in the Israelites' ears. Are there things that your parents or grandparents did or said that still have spiritual meaning for you?
- For the rest of their history the Israelites looked back on these events as a visible example of God's love. We know that God loves us because the Bible says so - yet it's good for us to point to times when God's love was very visible. What examples would you point to in your life?

**Read:** Psalm 51; Mark 7.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, the Israelites doubted Your power and love right after You led them out of Egypt. Instead of looking at Your promises they looked only at the Egyptians. Always focus our minds on You instead of the difficulties that arise in our life. Thank You for answering this prayer. In Jesus' name I pray; Amen.

## Tuesday - Week Eleven

### Lesson Thirty-One: Israel's Wilderness Wanderings

Read: Exodus 15:22-18:27

**Summary:** This lesson introduces us to a familiar pattern demonstrated by the Israelites: rebellion, rebuke and rescue.

#### Background and Comments

- When the Israelites fled into the wilderness they were not going into a sandy dessert. The wilderness of Shur is not a fertile place but it does have water holes and pockets of dense vegetation.
- The word "manna" means "what is it?" in Hebrew. This manna became the main food source for the Israelites for the next 40 years. Each day God reminded the Israelites in a miraculous way that He loved them.
- The account of Jethro telling Moses to delegate should be read and studied by every church leader (pastors, council members, teachers, etc.). There are two things wrong with trying to do everything yourself: 1) no one else gets a chance to serve and 2) you get worn out.

#### Lessons for Today

- God's grace worked overtime with the Israelites! We can hardly believe how many times the Israelites rebelled against the God who had powerfully rescued them from Egypt. God's patience is astounding!
- Every time we doubt we are being just as foolish as the Israelites. We can't even count the times that God has worked things out for our good. We can hardly remember all the promises God makes to us in the Bible. Yet we fall into doubt. The human heart has a sinful habit of taking our eyes off of God and focusing on ourselves. What are some practical steps that you can take to keep your eyes on Jesus?
- The Amalekites attacked the Israelites who were lagging behind (Deuteronomy 25:17-18); in other words, they attacked the elderly and children. These godless people deserved their defeat.

**Read:** Psalm 52; Mark 8.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, forgive me for rebelling against You even though I know full well that You love me and will never let me down. Thank You for being so gracious to me - again and again You forgive my sins and patiently work with me. Guide me to live for you. Amen.

# Wednesday - Week Eleven

## Catechism Review

### Read Questions 53-62

1. Explain as fully as you can why the Sabbath regulations in the third commandment (as stated in Exodus 20) do not apply to us.

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2. God wants us to be in contact with His Word and sacraments. How would you approach someone who has allowed other things to come in front of coming to church?

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What would you say to someone whose job requires him or her to work most every Sunday morning?

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3. Your commitment to God's Word has become disciplined enough to use this devotion guide on a regular basis. That is excellent! Keep up the good work. How can you encourage others to follow your example? [Note: your encouragement is vital! It's one thing to hear all this from a pastor; it's perhaps more powerful to hear someone else talk about the power of the Word in their lives.]

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**Read:** Psalm 53; Mark 9.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for leading me to study the Word of God on a daily basis. Guide me to keep that commitment to Your Word. Lead many others to that same commitment. In Jesus' name; Amen.

# Thursday - Week Eleven

## Lesson Thirty-two: The Covenant of the Law

Read: Exodus 19:1-24:18

**Summary:** God clearly told the Israelites what He expected of them. God also set up a two-sided agreement with them: if the Israelites obeyed God, He would bless them as a nation.

### Background and Comments

- Exodus 19:4-5 spell out the covenant God was making with the Israelites as a nation. This was to be a two-sided agreement. The Israelites responsibility was to obey God. God's responsibility was to treat the Israelites as His treasured possession. Obviously God kept His part of the bargain but the Israelites failed miserably. The covenant that we rely on for salvation is much different. That covenant is one-sided: God simply promises that our sins are forgiven.
- God's law as we find it in Exodus 20 was specifically tailored to the Israelites. The third commandment (as stated ... no work on Saturday) is not binding on us. When we teach the third commandment we look at what God tells us about studying His Word.

### Lessons for Today

- In Exodus 19 God told the Israelites to stay off Mt. Sinai or they would be killed. God was trying to impress the seriousness of His law. We in 20'th century America have lost that sense of seriousness when it comes to God's law. Instead of humbly respecting what God demands and forbids many people break God's law without thinking twice. How do you see that attitude making inroads into your life?
- God is very serious about authority. Exodus 21:17 commanded that anyone who cursed his or her parents was to be killed! God knew that rebellion against the authorities He had set up (in the home, government and church) would end in chaos. How can you grow in Your respect for the authorities God has place in your life?

**Read:** Psalm 54; Mark 10.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, use Your Gospel to motivate me to keep your law. Show me that it is a joy to live the way that You want me to. I ask this in the name of my Savior; Amen.

# Friday - Week Eleven

## Life Questions

Topic/Question: How can I improve my prayer life?

### Bible References and Considerations

- Prayer is simply talking to God. The most basic answer to the question “How can I improve my prayer life?” is to talk to God more often. That is not a trite answer. We need to understand that prayer is not just something that we do before we go to bed or before we eat. Prayers don’t even have to be “out loud”. God can hear the cries of our heart that we wing toward heaven. We can talk to God any time.
- Prayer is a fruit of our faith (in other words, we pray because our faith in Jesus prompts us to pray). It follows that we will pray more often when our faith grows stronger. How does our faith grow stronger? Our faith grows when we have contact with the Gospel in the Bible and Sacraments.
- Don’t forget to use the Lord’s Prayer as a model for your own prayers.

### Practically Speaking

- Prayer is one part of our conversation with God. The other part is Bible study; when we read the Bible God is talking to us. If you really want to improve your prayer life pray when you read the Bible. Pray that God will lead your thoughts as you study the Bible ... and then pray those thoughts “back to God”. When you find God’s promises in the Bible you can pray with incredible confidence because You know that God will keep His promises.
- Prayer lists can be a benefit to our prayer life. One good prayer list would be your congregation’s latest pictorial directory (although you need to write down the names of those in the congregation who didn’t have their pictures taken). You might also use “topical lists” (Monday’s list might include foreign missions, our Seminary and your pastor; Tuesday’s list might include your unchurched friends, your health and our Synod president; etc, etc.) This sort of list allows your prayers to come from the heart but also gives your prayers some needed structure.

**Read:** Psalm 55; Mark 11.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, bring many people to church this weekend. Especially I pray for those who are starting to stray from Your Kingdom. Bring them back quickly, Lord. In Jesus’ name I pray; Amen.