

Overview: Israel in the Exodus

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Date: 28 April 2024

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[0 : 0 0] to open up in your Bibles to the book of Exodus, today we begin what I believe will be the longest book that I've preached through at Providence, the book of Exodus. Now I want to start this morning with simply an overview of some of the themes that you'll see throughout this book so that you can be sensitive to what God, I believe, is trying to communicate to us, not only in the details of verse by verse, but more broadly through the story in general.

And I want to start by actually just talking about this title, the title of this book, this word Exodus. Most people don't know that there's an actual Exodus pattern throughout the Bible that happens over and over and over again in the Bible. This isn't the only Exodus in the Bible. Let me define what I mean by Exodus. James B. Jordan, wonderful theologian, if you ever get a chance to listen to his stuff, do so. James B. Jordan says that Exodus is a movement brought by God from an old place to a new place, from a worse place to a better place. That's what an Exodus is.

It's a movement brought by God from an old place to a new place, from a worse place to a better place. Now, in broad strokes, there's three parts of an Exodus. There's the old state, and in the book of Exodus, the old state is Egypt. There's a middle state, and that middle state is the wilderness.

Usually, in all of the Exodus patterns, the middle state is where you wind up having to wait on the Lord, grow in your patience, become qualified in some respects to inherit the promise, and that's the final phase. After you leave the old place, and you're in the middle place, you go to the new place, and the new place is the place where things are resolved, where you're strengthened and confirmed and established. Now, to my way of seeing it, the first Exodus stories appear in the story of Adam.

Let's take, for instance, when he was first created. He's created, but God has a plan to move him where? Into the garden. And what's he do in the meantime? Well, I suppose he waits on the Lord to create the garden. Another really stunning example of an Exodus story related to Adam is that he is, God says, it's not good for you to be in your current state. What is he talking about there? Do you remember?

[2 : 4 1] It's not good for man to be alone. So what does he do? How does he take him out of that place and take him to this new state? He puts him in a deep sleep. That's our middle place. That's the wilderness.

That's the darkness. And then when he awakes from the middle place, he has found himself in a new state. He's now a husband. Good for him. Another good example of an Exodus story is the story of Noah.

Noah moves from an old world to a new world. What's the middle place in that story? The ark and the waters. The middle place is often either waters or wilderness. And from Noah, we could go to Abraham. Leave your father's household and go to the place I will show you.

Leave the old place. Go to a new place. What happens in between? Well, Abraham moves out of the land with a substantial amount of wealth. Remember that. We'll get to that in a minute. And he enters into this in-between state and immediately there's a famine in the land. The wilderness is always the place where you get tested. You think that leaving the old place is good enough. No. You got to go into the middle place and get tested and qualified and so on and so forth. There's almost always something about that middle place that requires trust. And there's usually an opportunity to screw it all up in that middle place. Now, Abraham goes through multiple exoduses. And we begin to see as we study the stories of Abraham, a couple of additional flavors to this theme. The idea of deception and plunder start to emerge in the stories of Abraham. For instance, when Abraham flees the famine and goes into Egypt, the Pharaoh is interested in conscripting, it's a nice way of saying it, Sarah into his harem.

And there's some deception that goes on there. Well, Abraham tells Pharaoh that Sarah is his sister. Pharaoh winds up being cursed. God visits tremendous plagues on Pharaoh. By the way, when we get to when we get to the plagues in Egypt, remember, this is the second time Yahweh has inflicted plagues on Pharaoh's house. Pharaoh finds out that it's because Abraham deceived him.

[5 : 00] And says, get out of here, man. What are you doing to me? And so Abraham leaves and he leaves with plunder. He leaves with great wealth taken from Pharaoh's hand. The same thing happens again in chapter 20. Abraham goes to Abimelech, another king. Same kind of deal. Flees into a place.

Same kind of deal. Sarah must have been one looker. Because this king also wants to conscript her into his harem. God visits this king in a dream and says, let my people go. My people being bound up in the womb of Sarah. The yet infertile womb of Sarah, no less. Abimelech freaks out. He's frightened.

And he gives Abraham a bunch of stuff and says, get out of here. And Abraham leaves again through a process of deception and plunder. He is enriched as a consequence of the Exodus.

Now, by the time we get to the stories in Jacob, the pattern's very well developed. It's almost theme for theme, the exact same pattern we see in the book of Exodus. Jacob goes through multiple exoduses, just like Abraham. And I, yes, I skipped over some people. I skipped over Isaac. And there's some Isaac exoduses and some Rebecca exoduses. Let's just jump ahead to Jacob. Jacob goes through multiple exoduses. The first one is simply a deception to plunder Esau's blessing and inheritance.

He deceives Esau and plunders his inheritance and his blessing. And in doing so, he moves out of a bad place to a good place. He moves from second in line to first in line. He then goes to Laban's household. And on the way to Laban's household, he's in the wilderness again. And he has his first sort of encounter with God. This is the Jacob ladder story. Now, Esau turned out to be a relatively easy mark. It wasn't the brightest tool in the shed. And it turned out relatively easy to handle old Esau. But when he gets to Laban, he encounters someone who almost exactly maps on to the Pharaoh type.

[7 : 03] Laban turns Jacob essentially into a slave. He keeps denying Jacob his freedom and his wages. Laban is dealing treacherously with Jacob turn after turn. And Jacob's dealing treacherously with Laban turn after turn. They're in a real wrestling match at this point. Laban is a worthy opponent to Jacob. Laban keeps rearranging the rules because Jacob keeps winning, which is what we see Pharaoh doing, which is what we'll see Pharaoh doing as it relates to God's blessing of the Jews.

Eventually, this whole thing comes to a head. Jacob flees the house of Laban. Rachel steals the idol, more plundering. Jacob also leaves with a ton of Laban's money. Like Pharaoh pursues the Jews, only Laban hears from God and listens. God speaks to Laban saying, let my people go.

Laban agrees. So that's the Exodus pattern. And that's the pattern you'll see throughout the book of Exodus, but also throughout a great deal of scripture. One of my favorite Exodus story in the New Testament is Saul, who became Paul. He is moved out of a place of condemnation and persecution and into a place of blessing and building up the church. But he takes the plunder from his old education with him and now turns it into worship, turns it into a tool to serve God. That theme of plunder is a really interesting one because a lot of times it ends with something being taken from the old place and brought to the new place and transformed to be an instrument of worship. Adam's plunder was Eve.

Noah took some stuff from the old place, animals. He got to the new place, the new world, and he sacrificed some of those animals unto the Lord. When we get to the place in the Exodus story, when the Jews plunder from the Egyptians, they just tell the Egyptians, hey, we're going away for a while. Can you lend us some of your gold? Deception. What do they do with that gold when they get into the wilderness? Well, eventually, there's a lot of twists and turns in this story, but eventually they turn that gold into the tabernacle. See, there's this interesting piece of the Exodus story that involves sort of leaving the old place, wrestling with God in the wilderness, getting into the new place, but you learn some things along the way. And you learn those things in leaving and in the wilderness, and then when you're in the new place, you use those things you've learned to worship God. Now, I think it's very important for you to understand this pattern because this is at the core of the Christian experience. Any of you who like to stay home and do nothing, I've got bad news for you.

You, as a believer in Jesus, are a sojourner, a stranger in a strange land, a pilgrim. Now, Exodus, of course, is a picture of salvation. That's how the New Testament handles it routinely.

[10:08] And so, in one large sense, the main exodus of your life as a Christian is that you were taken from your slavery to sin, from the domain of darkness, and brought into the kingdom of light. Now, some of you would remember a wilderness experience, and some of you would not. Sometimes the wilderness experience happens after you become a Christian.

We'll see a passage later on where that occurs. But some of you may remember this period of time when you were definitely not okay with being a godless heathen, but you also weren't quite ready to stop being a godless heathen.

And there was this sort of in-between place. They used to call it the struggle. What was it called? The struggle? No, that's communist. Struggle. The struggle bench or something. It was the place where in the Puritan world, those who were in the in-between. By the way, the word liminal, that's what this means.

It means the in-between. Sleep is a liminal state. Anyway, they had this place for people to go that were struggling with God but yet not assured of their salvation.

So that's really your whole life. You're removed out of the slavery of sin. You walk through this life trusting God, waiting on God, wrestling with God, and you enter into the new heavens and the new earth one day where you'll be strengthened, confirmed, and established.

[11:27] So that's kind of like the big exodus that you will go through in your life if the Lord saves you. But you know, there are many, many exoduses in our lives.

I keep wanting to say exodi, which is not a real word. I looked it up, but I like it. You will go through many exodi in your life where God puts his finger on something and says, we're going to move on now. We're going to move on from that now.

We're going to go over here now. And sometimes it is a clear roadmap. There's a bunch of passages in the New Testament that say, put off this and put on that so you kind of know what you're supposed to leave and where you're supposed to go. But sometimes it's not a clear roadmap like it is with Abram. Leave your father's house and go to the place that I will show you.

Now let's suppose that you're reading, you know, you're reading the New Testament and you see a verse that tells you to put off anger and put on joy or something like that. Or put off selfishness and put on selflessness.

Well, you know that you've got to do that because it's the word of God and he's telling you to. But here's the deal. You can leave and say, I repent of being selfish. But the problem is, is you've been selfish for a long time.

[12 : 37] So now you have to go through the period of unlearning selfishness, just like the Jews had to go through the period of unlearning slavery. Sort of learning how to be free.

And that's that middle piece of our Exodus story. Now, the great thing is, is that once you start identifying this, you can always generally locate yourself in one phase.

The other interesting thing that maybe is a little bit more complicated is just that you might be at different exoduses and different parts of your life at different phases. I imagine that some of you here are just coming out of the wilderness.

You've just overcome something. You've just walked through a difficult season. I imagine some of you are in the wilderness. And I imagine some of you are still waiting to start the trip. But this is really what the Christian life is.

All of us experience this over and over and over again. People start off as an angry person or a lustful person or an addicted person or a controlling person or a lonely person. And they'll see this isn't sustainable.

[13 : 41] God will show them this isn't sustainable. You can't go on like this forever. You cry out to the Lord like the Jews cried out to the Lord in Egypt. And in a variety of ways, he releases you from that, but doesn't get you all the way.

He takes you to this in-between place. A place where you learn a new way of thinking. A place where you learn to trust God. This is the hardest spot in many respects.

Eventually, when you've learned what you're supposed to learn in the wilderness, God strengthens, confirms, and establishes you. And now you're in the new place. But you'll probably have some lessons from the old place that you can carry on into the new place as an act of worship.

So that's a little bit about the title of the book. That's what Exodus is. It's a pattern in which God moves you from an old place to a new place, from a worse place to a better place, with some kind of wilderness in between.

Now let's go on into verse 1 of Exodus. We've covered the title. We're just working down the page. So we've got the title figured out. Now let's move on to verse 1 of Exodus. Exodus chapter 1, verse 1.

[14 : 49] We'll see it say, There are the household. Now, we're going to spend the rest of our time focusing on this phrase, Sons of Israel. It's used 169 times in the book of Exodus.

169 times in the book of Exodus. Sons of Israel is the preferred nomenclature for the people of God in most of the Old Testament. And it carries over to us who are in Christ in the New Testament.

You know, one of the best things I'd ever read, and I know one person who disagrees with this, but one of the best things I'd ever read was the first couple lines in John Calvin's Institutes. He says this, Nearly all wisdom we possess, that is to say true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts, the knowledge of God and of ourselves.

The knowledge of God and of ourselves. Nearly all the wisdom, Calvin says, we could possess consists in two parts, the knowledge of God and of ourselves. Now, I've already given you some knowledge about God and some knowledge about yourself in talking about the Exodus pattern.

You know what God does. You know how God works. And now let's talk a little bit more about you. It says, you're like, I love talking about me. That's great. What does Israel mean when it says, these are the sons of Israel, this preferred nomenclature for the people of God?

[16:07] What does the word Israel mean? Well, it means wrestling with God. It means those who wrestle with God.

This comes from a particular story on the back end of the Laban Exodus in Genesis 32. Laban has, Israel, Jacob has fled Laban and now he's got to go home.

And guess who's still at home? The not so sharp tool, Esau is home. And he's always wanted to kill Jacob as revenge for tricking him.

And so now, Jacob finds himself in another in-between place. He's left the slavery of Laban, in which he prospered, by the way, and he's headed back to face his brother.

And so in Genesis chapter 32, Jacob is all alone. He's isolated himself from his family. He's split all of his possessions into two so that if Esau takes one, he can't take the other.

[17:10] He's done everything he can humanly do to prepare for this meeting with Esau. He's bought off Esau with a series of elaborate gifts. He's done everything he could possibly do, but he's still not okay.

He's still quite nervous. And so he goes off by himself and he prays to the Lord, Lord, deliver me. Lord, deliver me from the hand of Esau. And what is, how does God answer this prayer?

Lord, deliver me from the hand of Esau. Well, he wrestles with him. Jacob prayed for peace and he got a wrestling match.

The text says in Genesis 32, 24, that Jacob was left alone and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him.

Then he said, let me go for the day has been, the day has broken. But Jacob said, I will not let you go unless you bless me. And he said, what is your name? And he said, Jacob.

[18:14] And then he said, your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed. So the name Israel means wrestles with God.

The Isra in the Hebrew is just the word for contend or strive or wrestle. And El is the name for, is a name for God. Now, this is what you need to know about yourself.

If you are in Christ, you are in Israel. You are one who contends with God. This is a part of his plan.

In his glorious transcendence, he should not necessarily want to have anything to do with you, but he condescends, he draws near, and he walks with you. Not only does he walk with you, he contends with you.

Now, what I'm talking about here when I talk about the wrestling with God is really talking about the wilderness. It's really talking about that middle phase between leaving and arriving.

[19:18] Think of the Joseph story. Jacob's son, his favorite son. Well, Joseph starts off with a promise. A promise that comes to him from God from the form of two dreams, and the two dreams are basically the same thing.

Joseph will be the head of the household. That's what this promise says. Joseph will be the head of the household. Everybody in the household, all of his brothers, even his father, will eventually serve and obey Joseph.

Now, the bulk of the story appears to have absolutely nothing to do with those two promises. The bulk of the story, the bulk of Joseph's story, is in the wilderness, where he's bouncing around from one form of captivity, one form of, not captivity, but one form of, of uncertainty to another.

He's bouncing around from one thing to another, from being sold as a slave, and then in Potiphar's house, and then dealing with Potiphar's wife, and then coming to the prison, and so on and so forth.

The bulk of Joseph's story is him in the wilderness, him in this middle state. And what he's doing there, is he's wrestling with God. He's figuring things out.

[20 : 29] So, friends, I think that this is something that I just don't hear enough people say. Let me just tell you, maybe we'll get into this in the future. One of the things you would be shocked to learn, or one of the things I would hope you keep in mind anyway, is the supreme value God places on toughness.

He wants you to be tough. That's a big deal to him. It's a very big deal to God that you have grit, that you endure, that you know how to wait on him, that you know how to trust him.

So, this middle state is where Joseph learns to trust God. This is where you're going to learn to trust God, and that's the wrestling time. That's the time where you begin to doubt the whole plan.

That's the time where you begin to be tempted to accuse God of doing evil to you. That's the time you begin to wonder if the old place wasn't so bad after all.

You know, most of the Exodus story takes place in the wilderness. By the end of chapter 12, they're out of Egypt, and for the remaining 28 chapters, they're in the wilderness wrestling with God just like their father, Jacob, did with one exception, one crucial exception, one fearful exception.

[21 : 54] They kept wanting to give up. Unlike Jacob, who endured the struggle, the people kept wanting to quit.

Let's just walk through a few of these instances. I think it'll serve us down the road when we start talking directly about Christ. Let's just walk through some of the instances where the people of Jacob wanted to stop.

The story of Jacob is, of course, this incredible endurance. He wrestles all through the night, and then even after his hip is dislocated, he will not quit. That's the people that God wants to make us into.

But the people that have fled Egypt, that have been delivered from the Lord, seem to lack that character. For instance, in chapter 14, they had just been mightily delivered from the great hand of the Lord through the Passover and through the killing of the firstborn of the Egyptians.

And in chapter 14, just like we saw with Laban, Pharaoh pursues after the people. And he pursues them all the way up to where their backs are against the Red Sea. And in that very moment, when their backs are against the Red Sea and they appear stuck, they say, leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians.

[23 : 08] For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness. Then in chapter 15, by the way, God takes care of them. Then in chapter 15, they arrive at a place with bitter, undrinkable water.

And they say, the people grumbled against Moses, saying, what shall we drink? In chapter 16, they have no food. And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

And the people of Israel said to them, would that he had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt. When we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full. For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill the whole assembly with hunger.

In chapter 17, they have no water. Therefore, the people quarreled with Moses and said, give us water to drink. And Moses said to them, why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord? But the people thirsted there for water and the people grumbled against Moses and said, why did you bring us out of Egypt to kill us and our children?

And our livestock with thirst. You see, each and every time they were faced with a substantial struggle, they basically gave up. Meanwhile, Jacob says, what?

[24 : 25] I will not let go until you bless me. See, this is the basic challenge of the Christian life. It's a sorting out between the true sons of Israel and the false sons of Israel.

The true sons of Israel hold on to God until he blesses them, until he delivers them out of the wilderness and into the land that he promised.

The false sons of Israel, the fake wrestlers with God, quit. Here's the writer of Hebrews. Turn in your Bibles to the book of Hebrews, chapter 10, verse 32.

Let's take a look at this passage. It has so much to do with this idea. Here's the writer of Hebrews trying to keep the new Christians on track. He wants them to keep hold of God and not let go and not shrink back to their former state.

So in verse 32, he writes, but recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, so they're leaving the old place, this is their, this is their salvation, or so it appears.

[25 : 32] Behold, the former days when you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated.

They were saved to go where? Well, they weren't saved to go to the wilderness, but they were saved to go through the wilderness. And the writer of Hebrews is saying, okay, you did okay.

You held on to God. He says, for you had compassion on those in prison and joyfully accepted the plundering of your property since you knew that yourselves had, that you yourselves had a better possession and abiding one.

But you know, the writer of Hebrews is concerned for these people because he loves them and we would all be concerned for one another in this regard. that with great testing comes a great temptation to let go of God.

And so the writer of Hebrews doubles down and he says this, therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward, for you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what is promised.

[26 : 50] For yet a little while and the coming one will come and will not delay. But my righteous one shall live by faith and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.

But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, those are the false sons of Israel, but of those who have faith and persevere, faith and preserve their souls.

So this distinction between true sons and false sons, the false sons immediately encounter difficulties. And what appeared to be a real seed, just like in Jesus' parable, the sowers, quickly loses its life.

It's built on rocky, it's grown on rocky soil, it's grown in thorny soil, the cares of this world choke it out. But the true sons of Israel, they all do the same thing when put into the wilderness to wrestle with God.

they all say, I will not let you go until you bless me. I'm going to hold on to you, Lord. It's taking all of my strength, it's taking more than the strength that I have myself.

- [28 : 02] It's taking a level of faith that isn't even real within me. It's taking a level of faith that is a gift from you. But Lord, in the middle of this wilderness, I will not quit.
- I will hold on to you and I will hold on to you until you bless me. So what's going on in your life? Any exodus patterns currently happening for you?
- Any addictions or old attitudes? Childish ways? Youthful passions? Old ways in the flesh?
- What are you called to leave these days? What are you headed to? Are you trying to marry or build a family? Are you struggling with your health?
- Are you working hard and still struggling financially? Are you raising a child with special needs? You could give up. You could grumble.
- [29 : 07] But I would encourage you to just grab hold of God and say, I won't let go until you bless me.
- You have need of endurance. I have need of endurance. This is a major part of God's sanctifying plan for us to make us tough, to make us hold on, to teach us to hold on for dear life.
- Now, I have some hope for you. Moses was a good mediator, but we have a better one. Here's the deal.
- In the Exodus story, the people of God would have never gotten anywhere without Moses serving as their mediator and their intercessor. Basically, the only reason they got anywhere at all was because Moses pleaded with the Lord on their behalf.
- He fought against Pharaoh to secure their freedom. He interceded for them when they sinned. In many ways, Moses was the only thing keeping that mighty nation of Jews alive.
- [30 : 19] Let me give you a good story from Exodus. It'll be a while until we get to it, so you'll forget about it by then. And I'll just preach the same thing again and you won't even remember. Wonderful. Exodus 17 has this beautiful passage that tells us some of the details of what mediation is and intercession is.
- This is after they've already gone through the struggle with the water and the struggle with the Red Sea, the struggle with the bread and so on and so forth. Just when things couldn't get any worse, they come into a king named Amalek and he came and fought with Israel at Repidim.
- So Moses said to Joshua, Choose for us men and go out and fight Amalek. Tomorrow, I will stand on top of the hill on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.
- So Joshua did as Moses told him and fought with Amalek while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed.
- But whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. You get the picture? He's up on a mountain. He sees a kind of Lord of the Rings scene beneath him.
- [31 : 30] Masses of people, his side and their side, fighting. And as long as Moses has his hands raised before the Lord, the victory is theirs.
- But his hands get tired. And so, you know, at some point right around here, Israelites start getting killed, you know.
- And so the only solution, the way they get through this crisis is that, you know, the other guys that are with him hold up his arms for him. And they keep him steady until the going down of the sun.
- And then the text says Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword. So Moses is really the key to Israel's survival. Christ is a better mediator and intercessor and key to your survival.

And the good news is that he doesn't get tired. He neither slumbers nor sleeps. Hebrews 7.25, consequently, he, Jesus, is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him since he always lives to make intercession for them.

[32 : 44] And, you know, Moses was a good mediator, but maybe even worse than his, you know, weak arms. He's going to be not happy to hear that.

But maybe worse than his weak arms was the fact that he couldn't get those, he couldn't get his hands on the people's hearts. You know, all he could deal with was the external.

All he could deal with was who they were at the time. He had no transformative power. The law doesn't have transformative power. He couldn't deliver them from their spiritual amnesia.

And by the way, if you're a quitter, if you keep quitting on God, it's because of spiritual amnesia. You're just forgetting the last time he did it for you.

And Moses couldn't do anything for them about those things. They just kept forgetting time after time. Time after time they would grumble. Time after time God would provide and then they would just go back to doubting and wanting to quit again.

[33 : 43] Basically, the main thing is that Moses couldn't give them faith. Now, you and I are in so much better position with Christ as our mediator because he has complete and total access to our hearts.

And he can give us what we lack. He can supply the faith that we lack. He can supply the peace that we lack. He can fill in for all of our weakness with his own strength.

So we are in a much better position to be true sons of Israel, to endure all the way to the end because of Jesus. You know, Jesus really underwent the ultimate exodus.

The cross is kind of the ultimate middle place. It's the ultimate liminal space suspended between earth and heaven. It's the in-between of all in-betweens.

And there, Jesus didn't quit. Not really anyone else that had ever been on a cross had the option to quit. They were just pinned there and they had nothing they could do.

[34 : 54] Jesus literally could have quit. He could have literally called angels down, listened to the scoffers, listened to his own screaming nerve endings, and just ended it right then and there. But Jesus held on to God.

He did not let go of God until he blessed him. Jesus endured the cross, forsaking its shame for the joy set before him. And in this moment, in this liminal state where he's wrestling and fighting, he is plundering the strong man and stealing the treasure of his house and you are that treasure.

He rescued you from the kingdom of darkness and brought you into his kingdom of light. You are his plunder. He endured the exodus to lead you out into freedom.

And it's through Christ that we enter the promised land. So I just want you to understand that whatever you're going through now or will go through in the future, you have a need of endurance way more than you've got.

So just hang on to Christ and he'll get you through. Don't succumb to the temptation of grumbling. Don't succumb to the temptation of going back, of doubting whether this is even worth it, of wondering if maybe God doesn't want me to get over this thing.

[36 : 23] Maybe God doesn't want me to stop. Just hold on to Jesus and he will get you through. Just hold on to Jesus and he will get you through.

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial. For when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. James 1.12.

To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality, he will give eternal life. Romans 2.7. I am coming soon.

Hold fast what you have so that no one may seize your crown. Revelation 3.11. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

Hebrews 12.1. Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. Galatians 6.9.

[37 : 29] And finally, from Peter, humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

Be sober-minded, be watchful, your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. Resist him. Firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of sufferings are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world, and after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

Don't grumble. Don't give up. Grab hold of God. And after a little while of suffering, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

would you bow your heads with me? I want to pray for you. Some of you I know are in the wilderness right now, and some of you I probably don't know are in the wilderness right now.

I want to pray for you. Dear gracious God, I lift up these friends of mine who are in this middle place, and Lord, I pray that you would just give them the faith to hold on to Christ and to follow his lead out of the wilderness.

[39 : 17] We know that the story of Exodus doesn't exactly end happily for this first generation who all proved for the most part to be false sons of the one who wrestles with God.

But Lord, as Hebrews says, chapter 10, we have much greater confidence in these. God, I'm praying for, I don't think they're the kind who shrink back and are destroyed.

I think they're the kind who believe and are saved. And so, Lord, I just want to, as a friend and a pastor, I want to lift them up to you and pray, God, that you would bless them and care for them help them to know that the only real enemy, the only real way to lose is to quit.

God, fill them with a satisfaction in you, not a satisfaction in this in-between, this isn't, wilderness is no place to live forever, but a satisfaction in you that when you have deemed it time, you will do the work you've promised to do.

God, please fill these folks with faith, help them to know that you are worth it, that you can be trusted, help them to remember all the other times that you've come through for them.

[40 : 39] God, please bless these folks. In Jesus' name we pray, amen. Well, we come to the table as an opportunity to taste and see that the Lord is good.

The Lord Jesus has paid the ultimate price so that he could never leave you or abandon you or forsake you. this is the table we go to where we taste and see that the author and perfecter of our faith is the start and the finish, the alpha and the omega, and that he who began a good work in you is faithful to carry it on to the day of completion.

Of course, the cup represents the blood shed, Christ shed blood, the bread represents his body given up, and the basic logic of all of the table is simply this.

he gave you everything you need for life and godliness. So if you're a follower of Jesus Christ today, whether you're a member of Providence or just visiting, if you're a follower of Jesus Christ, would you come and just taste and see that the Lord is good and observe this table with gladness and gratefulness to the God who will see you through.

Come.