

God's everlasting love (Jer. 31)

Part 1

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[00:00:00] I'd like to remind you of our first attack. It's not a major one with me, but I'd like to bring it to you this afternoon.

The Old Testament to Jeremiah 31 and verse 2.

Thus saith the Lord, the people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness, even Israel, and I went to call him to rest.

In the next verse we often repeat it. The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love. Therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee. But perhaps we don't pay quite the same attention to the previous verse. [00:01:06] But I think it's very precious.

These people who were left of the sword, what did they find?

They found grace in the wilderness. Did they deserve it? Part one. But they found it because the Lord provided it for them.

We've been reminded of the wonderful grace of God, the God of all grace, that has manifested himself to us. For this was the same God who manifested himself to his people. They were left of the sword.

They had come from Egypt, hadn't they? They'd been there as slaves, bond slaves, held fast in the tyranny of Pharaoh. God had brought them through the Red Sea. [00:02:04] In his wonderful way, God had delivered them. He had redeemed them. But they escaped the sword, didn't they? We turn back to Exodus.

We have it there very clearly. They sang the song of deliverance on the banks of the Red Sea. And they could say that God had triumphed gloriously.

And they had the benefit of that triumph. But what are they saying, verse 9?

The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide this world. My lust shall be satisfied upon them. I will draw my sword.

My hand shall destroy them. [00:03:01] That's what the enemy sought to do. He was trying to vent his spite and enmity upon God's people.

God said, they are my people.

I will deliver them. Pharaoh escaped the sword.

We might go back earlier in the history. And we could say they escaped the sword that the angel had when he went through the lands. Do you remember the story where they were placed under the shelter of the slain man? God sent his angel with a sword to destroy the firstborn.

And God's people were sheltered.

They escaped the sword. They were people left of the sword. [00:04:02] Both after God's judgment and after the power of the enemy in the 15th of Exodus. So they were a people left of the sword.

Not because of anything in themselves, but simply because God's love was settled upon them. God had taken them up. They were his people. And God was pleased to display his grace to these failing people. They found grace in the wilderness.

What would they have done to nature? They were a poor, weak company, were they not?

But God provided for them.

And when they were faced with the rigors of the wilderness journey, what did God provide for them?

[00:05:02] He ministered his grace to them, didn't he, in sending them the manna. That was God's provision, was it not? God's grace to them, the manna.

Does it speak to your heart that God has provided grace for us in the wilderness? Are we not a wilderness people? Are we not treading a pathway through the desert land? Are we not redeemed by the precious blood of Christ? And have we not escaped the sword of his judgment that is going on? And like the children of Israel, you know, we can look across the wilderness and we can see the glory of God shining before us. But meanwhile, there's grace in the wilderness for us.

Don't just get too downhearted, too discouraged. [00:06:02] Let us see and make use of all the provisions that God has made. God has provided food for us. The children of Israel were hungry people. They needed to be fed.

They had no resources in themselves. But they had everything in the eternal God to whom they belonged and who was interested in them and who himself was leading them on to heaven's fair land.

Well, the Lord Jesus said, I am the bread of God which came down from heaven.

And the manna caught speechless of the Lord Jesus in his lowly pathway here as a man. And these children of Israel, they fed on that wilderness, that wilderness food. [00:07:02] They fed upon the manna for the 40 years. It never failed them. And God's food for our souls will never fail us

throughout the wilderness journey. But do we go out like the children of Israel and gather our portion day by day?

He satisfied the longing soul. He never disappoints those who would take up and use that which he has provided. What a wonderful thing it is that we can feed upon one who came down with wondrous grace to meet our deep need.

We're dependent upon physical food, aren't we? We've enjoyed it surely here today. And we've been refreshed and strengthened as we have taken of the good things our friends have provided for us. [00:08:03] We go on our way with strength renewed. Well, it's so spiritually, isn't it?

We need to feed upon Christ the spiritual food that can sustain us and provide us with the energy and the vigor that we need along the path. The children of Israel, they found God's grace. And when there was no water for them in their thirst, they murmured as they were ever prone to do. God brought streams of refreshment out of the rock for them.

And is Israel's God still the same?

Our God surely is ready to meet us today in the power of His Holy Spirit. God's blessing will come down to us if we are ready to obey ourselves of all that is laid up for us. [00:09:06] Well, what a provision! Christ, the humble one here, wore His meekness to feed upon us, our souls to feed upon, and the Holy Spirit with water out of the rock to quench our thirst, to refresh us and to strengthen us, and to provide the power that we need. Our Lord Jesus said, did he not, in the 7th chapter of John, said that if any man thirsts, he can come unto me. Beloved friends, are we thirsting after that living water? We can only find it in the person of Christ. You may turn to the pleasures of this world, but surely we have to own them. But Christ can satisfy.

And what a provision we have in Him.

[00:10:02] He says, if any man thirsts, he can come unto me and drink, and out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. If we are really in contact with Christ and we draw from Him, there will be the outflow in blessing to others. There will be the rivers of water flowing out. You may say, well, how difficult the answer to it is. I have to admit how true that is.

But you see, if we are to give out, we have to drink. And we can only do it as we are in communion with our blessed Lord and Savior. Well, we might go on.

But these people, they found grace.

They found all their needs met.

They found the God of all grace was ready to supply their land.

[00:11:07] And it has often been said that the wilderness is a place of human destitution, but of heavenly supply.

Nothing from man, nothing from this earth can meet our needs.

But our supply is from the Lord himself.

It is a place of heavenly supply. Well, they found grace in the wilderness. And my brother read us a verse in Peter.

But he didn't finish the verse. He probably would have had me just to complete the verse. The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory. [00:12:01] The King of Israel were called, but they were called to earthly blessings. You and I, with our friends, were called unto God's eternal glory. What a prospect.

But it's true, isn't it? But meanwhile, there is the wilderness journey. After that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you. Well, he'll do that.

But let us not lose sight of the fact that it's God's grace that is sufficient for us. As our brother has emphasized, and I emphasize it again. We are dependent not upon our own efforts and our own powers.

But all our supplies come from him alone.

God of all grace, who has called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus. [00:13:01] After that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion forever and ever.