

“Mirage”

Psalms 107:33-38

Good morning...

I would like you to think of yourself in the midst of giant desert this morning... TRY to imagine you are parched & desperate....

Let's pray to begin...

VIDEO: Courtney Love: “Letter to God”

***** Sounds like one crying out from the desert...**

...one in dire need of Living Water...

***** If you can relate... or know someone who can...**

You're in the right place this morning.

Welcome to our 6th week in the series entitled: **“BE-Come-Ing”**

Once again we are focusing our attention on Jesus & His promise
to be LIVING WATER

T/S: Let's look at our primary text for this morning:

Psalm 107:33-38

*He turned rivers into a desert, flowing springs into thirsty ground, **34** and fruitful land into a salt-waste, because of the wickedness of those who lived there.*

35 *He turned the desert into pools of water and the parched ground into flowing springs; **36** there he brought the hungry to live, and they founded a city where they could settle. **37** They sowed fields and planted vineyards that yielded a fruitful harvest; **38** he blessed them, and their numbers greatly increased, and he did not let their herds diminish.*

T/S: Desert Intro...

A few years ago, **the World Press Review** carried a **quotation** from the National Concord of Lagos, **Nigeria**. That paper reported that **twenty-six lakes** have been **found beneath the Sahara desert**. The **American space shuttle "Columbia"** determined by echoes it received that there are **miles and miles of underground rivers beneath that arid land**.

It is sad to think of the people who are starving because those hidden resources have not yet been tapped.

*** That's like starving at a feast...

*** Being imprisoned in a mansion...

*** **Dying at the doorstep of saving grace!**

T/S:

What words come to mind when you think of a desert...

Hot, Dry, Heat, Death... sand, cactus, etc...

How about these words:

Metaphor... God used it to give context to spiritual truths

- God chose to use deserts *metaphorically* to symbolize **stiffening sin and life-less separation from God.**
- Note: He puts life without Him in a desert context for a few reasons
- 1). Commemorate reality of death
- 2). Proves miracles are needed & provided
- 3). Glorifies God by both proving & demonstrating the amazing grace, miraculous mercy, & life-giving love that is the one true GOSPEL

Ministry... God did much ministry in & thru deserts

- Moses at the Red Sea
- Moses with the manna
- Moses & the people wandering 40 years

Mirage...

- What is a mirage? False hope.
- “Sp. - mirage” = **False Gospel**

**The devil’s deserts of death & deception are littered
with lifeless mirages! -JDP**

DESERTS:

Take heed friend,
The Lord does His most grace-defining,
death-defeating, and disciple-developing ministry
in the deserts of life.

Desert of Fear.... Elijah & Elisha... Lord let him see...

Desert of Distraction... Peter walks on water till wave-watching

Desert of the Lion’s Den... Daniel, (3 Boys), etc.

Desert of Despair... (a.k.a. it’s too late...) Thief on the cross

MIRAGES:

Narcissism - (out of which all else flows)

Power King Solomon (Ecclesiastes)

Possessions- King Solomon (Ecclesiastes)

- ***“You have no chips”***

- “All counterfeit ‘plugs’ only serve to widen the hole in our heart that we hopelessly try to fill with the ways of the world.” - JDP

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Achievement | VIDEO: HURT - <i>“Empire of Dirt”</i> |
| Appearance- | (wrinkles & worms...) |
| Relationships | (Paul’s helpers that ran/sold out...) |
| Piety - | Pharisees (Nic @ night & “the cup”) |
| Popularity - | Barabas... crowd favorite vs Christ |
| Control - | (1 catastrophe away from reality...) **** Drinking bleach as water |

M of “a sure thing in this world” = Haman & Mordeci

M of pleasure & prosperity = Solomon & Ecclesiastes

M of religiousity = Nic at night & the Pharisees overall

M of "sincerity" & close enough = Rich young ruler

M of living-it-up... sin-city = Sodom and Gomorrah

M of compromise with corruption = Phineas & Jesus in Temple

M of passivity in name of peace = Stephen, Paul, Jesus...

M of popularity = Barabas

M of “experience”... 9 lepers, early John 9, Damascus road...

M of annihilationism... See Book of Revelation!

Mirage of universalism... John 14:6

M of health... cancer...

M of alcohol & escapism... You wake up with yourself after
sleeping with the devil

M of sinful over-confidence... 1). Goliath vs. David
2). Pharaoh vs. Moses

M of "going back" to "old familiar..." Israelites in desert

Mirage of "disobedient REASONING" "Reason is the Devil's
whore." –

M.Luther

- Josh & Caleb vs 10 spies

M of knowledge/right-ness... 1 Cor. 13 (clanging cymbals/gong)

M of doing vs being church... Acts 5 - Ananias & Sapphira

M of appearing to "get away with it"... the devil, his demons, &
the deceived!

T/S: Confidence in mirages propagates pollutants...

This life is a desert... It is barren, empty, and equivalent to a
funeral home... There's activity and signs of life, but even the
signs of life are, in reality, gathered around "death."

Sadly... even reality can't guarantee a remedy
for the trappings & mishaps of a mirage (because
some people reject reality...) but still... the reality of
Living Water IS the ONLY hope the deceived & dying
really have...

So... ***"let not your hearts be troubled."*** Jesus said:
"Believe in God, believe also in Me." Those life-giving words of divine power & hope speak to the fact that Jesus offers the miracle of eternal life to those dying here in the desert... who are willing to trade in their mirages for a Messiah!

If that's you...

"LOOK UP!!!"

"So long as you keep your focus on the horizontal, all you will ever find are the empty, meaningless mirages that promise life... but only serve to trick-the-heads and harden-the-hearts of those "happy" with the hallucinogenic, satisfactions of sin. - JDP

T/S: This is WHERE, WHEN, & WHY
the Christian Church shares Communion!

For those who have been rescued out of the desert of this life... We are to be eternally & infectiously grateful for the Gift & Grace of God...

Hear the opening words of the 107th Psalm...

107:1 *Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!*

T/S: Pass out the elements...
(read all of Psalm 107 during distribution)

2 *Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble*

3 *and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.*

4 ***Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to a city to dwell in;***

5 ***hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them.***

6 *Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.*

7 *He led them by a straight way till they reached a city to dwell in.*

8 *Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man!*

9 *For he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things.*

10 *Some sat in darkness and in the shadow of death prisoners in affliction and in irons,*

11 *for they had rebelled against the words of God, and spurned the counsel of the Most High.*

12 *So he bowed their hearts down with hard labor; they fell down, with none to help.*

13 *Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.*

14 *He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and burst their bonds apart.*

15 *Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man!*

16 For he shatters the doors of bronze and cuts in two the bars of iron.

17 Some were fools through their sinful ways, and because of their iniquities suffered affliction;

18 they loathed any kind of food, and they drew near to the gates of death.

19 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.

20 He sent out his word and healed them & delivered them from their destruction.

21 Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man!

22 And let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, and tell of his deeds in songs of joy!

23 Some went down to the sea in ships, doing business on the great waters;

24 they saw the deeds of the Lord, his wondrous works in the deep.

25 For he commanded and raised the stormy wind which lifted up the waves of the sea.

26 They mounted up to heaven; they went down to the depths; their courage melted away in their evil plight;

27 they reeled and staggered like drunken men and were at their wits' end.

28 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.

29 *He made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed.*

30 *Then they were glad that the waters were quiet, and he brought them to their desired haven.*

31 *Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man!*

32 *Let them extol him in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.*

33 *He turns rivers into a desert, springs of water into thirsty ground,*

34 *a fruitful land into a salty waste, because of the evil of its inhabitants.*

35 *He turns a desert into pools of water, a parched land into springs of water.*

36 *And there he lets the hungry dwell, and they establish a city to live in;*

37 *they sow fields and plant vineyards and get a fruitful yield.*

38 *By his blessing they multiply greatly, and he does not let their livestock diminish.*

39 *When they are diminished and brought low through oppression, evil, and sorrow,*

40 *he pours contempt on princes and makes them wander in trackless wastes;*

41 *but he raises up the needy out of affliction and makes their families like flocks.*

42 *The upright see it and are glad, and all wickedness*

shuts its mouth.

43 *Whoever is wise, let him attend to these things; let them consider the steadfast love of the Lord.*

BEFORE WE TAKE ELEMENTS

T/S: Solution to the desert...

There was a man who got lost in the desert. After wandering around for a long time his throat became very dry, about that time he saw a little shack in the distance. He made his way over to the shack and found a water pump with a small jug of water and a note. The note read: "pour all the water into the top of the pump to prime it, if you do this you will get all the water you need". Now the man had a choice to make, if he trusted the note and poured the water in and it worked he would have all the water he needed. If it didn't work he would still be thirsty and he might die. Or he could choose to drink the water in the jug and get immediate satisfaction, but it might not be enough and he still might die. After thinking about it the man decided to risk it. He poured the entire jug into the pump and began to work the handle, at first nothing happened and he got a little scared but he kept going and water started coming out. So much water came out he drank all he wanted, took a shower, and filled all the containers he could find. Because he was willing to give up momentary satisfaction, he got all the water he needed. Now the note also said: after you have finished, please refill the jug for the next traveller." The man refilled the jug and added to the note: " Please prime the pump, believe me it works"!

We have the same choice to make...

QUESTION: Will you pour out what little you have... to bring glory to God?

Will you pour yourself out in faithful obedience to Christ?

T/S: Before you answer... 2 closing thoughts:

1. The only thing that can kill a desert is life. - JDP
2. "Do this in remembrance of Me..."
 - a. Bread... "My broken body..."
 - b. Juice... "MY Poured out blood"

CLOSE:

Isaiah 43:18-19

"Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old.

19 *Behold, I am doing a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and
rivers in the desert.*

Amen!!!

Romans 8:38-39

*For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, **39** nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Let's Pray!

1. "One Thing"
2. "White Flag"
3. "Two Wings"