

Exodus 16

STATION #1 – A WILDERNESS JOURNEY

“Rabbit Proof Fence” movie loop, projector, screen, speakers, video camera, DV tape, stones, plastic, sand, music from “Paris, Texas” by Ry Cooder.

The whole congregation of the Israelites set out from Elim; and Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt.

Exodus 16:1

This is a journey
born of restlessness
daily pacing the same cage
back and forth
a venture birthed
of hope for a better life

a passage of liberation
a covenant promise
a long walk to freedom

a way back home
and yet, a leap
beyond the familiar
to a new destination
somehow more complete
and more surprising

a place overflowing with promise
flooded with grace
a place of belonging
- of close embrace
a place of mending
- of healing all hurts
a place of knowing
- of truth beyond wisdom

and yet, no simple plan
or easy ride
instead, a distant horizon
a rocky road
a long, dark night
of the soul

*What are you journeying towards?
What are you journeying from?
In your soul?
In your ministry?
In your vision for a changed world?
What deep hunger rumbles within you?*

In such a desert,
we hunger for a easier way,
a shorter path.
In such a desert,
we might turn stones into bread
if we could.

*Take a stone.
Hold it and reflect on your inner hunger*
- for your own wholeness
- for a faithful church
- for a world of peace and justice

*Let the stone represent this hunger.
Spend a moment with God reflecting on this hunger.
Know that only God can fulfil this longing..
Give the stone a name that expresses this hunger.*

The desert is a place in-between
the was and the not-yet
a place of emptiness and nowhere
a place where we cannot help but be changed,
by moving ahead or turning back
a place where we may have little left
but to trust and follow.

*Take this stone with you on the journey as a reminder that your hunger has yet to be
nourished.*

STATION #2 – A DISTURBING INJUSTICE

Black cloth, black plastic, , newspapers (tumbleweeds), felt pens, candles

The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Exodus 16:2-3.

In this wilderness,
nothing makes sense
as it once did
we are strangers in a strange land
surrounded by
deprivation and disease
injustice and insecurity
desolation and death
so much easier to turn back

In this wilderness,
we wonder
if God is punishing us
refusing to rescue us
planning to destroy us

In this wilderness,
we feel powerless
to make a change
to improve the situation
there are no quick solutions
no easy answers

In this wilderness,
tempers flare
voices rise
emotions boil

why me? why us? why them?
why here? why now?

Make your complaint to God
- about the state of your soul
- about the state of the church
- about the state of the world

Take a felt pen and write your complaint to God on the black cloth.

there are no quick or easy answers
hold the hunger of your soul
hold the struggle of longing
hold the hope that a change might come

Light a candle.

*Spend a moment offering a prayer to God for the people and situations
that are a burden to you at this time.*

STATION #3 – A UNNECESSARY EXCESS

card table, purple cloth, 4 goblets, 4 plates, cutlery, hammer, red wine, mouldy bread, bowl, grapes

Then the LORD said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days."

Exodus 16:4-5

Just enough for today
only what is needed

and yet we want more

a extra helping
more than enough
the icing on the cake

at first it seems fine
but then turns sour
inedible, undrinkable

the main course is served
but it doesn't satisfy
a bitter cup
a broken communion

*In what ways do you seek for more than is needed?
In what area does your desire lean toward excess?*

Offer your silent confession.

*Eat a grape.
Just one.
Know that God
mends the broken.
Know that God
will provide enough
for the journey.
Just enough.*

STATION #4 – A DEEP KNOWING

plastic, sand, plants, tea candles, glass bowls, water
computer & projector?

Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, 'Draw near to the LORD, for he has heard your complaining.'" And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. The LORD spoke to Moses and said, "I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'" "

Exodus 16

You shall know

You shall know
and be known

Not only at the wellspring,
but in the thirsting
God may be truly known

Not only in the fullness,
but in the hunger
God may be truly known

Not only in the comfort,
but in the complaining,
God may be truly known

Not only in the healing,
but in the hurting
God may be truly known

Not only in the destination,
but in the journey
God may be truly known

This deep knowing calls your name
deep knowing hears your grieving
deep knowing cradles your tears
deep knowing binds your wounds
deep knowing marks your journey

*Write your name in the sand.
Know that you are known.
Dip your finger in the water.*

*Make the sign of the cross
on your forehead.
Remember who you are.*

the way welcomes the wayfarer
know that you are truly known
and deeply loved
in this wilderness wandering
and that every step
brings you closer to home
in the company of the one
who is our beginning and our ending.

STATION #5 – A SWEET PROMISE

platter, frypan, quail, limes, mead, glasses, fruit (?), coriander seeds, bowl, baklava (or crackers & honey & knives)

In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground.

The house of Israel called it manna; it was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. Moses said, "This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Let an omer of it be kept throughout your generations, in order that they may see the food with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.' " And Moses said to Aaron, "Take a jar, and put an omer of manna in it, and place it before the LORD, to be kept throughout your generations." As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron placed it before the covenant, for safekeeping. The Israelites ate manna forty years, until they came to a habitable land; they ate manna, until they came to the border of the land of Canaan.
Exodus 16:13-14, 31-35

This wilderness meal is a foretaste
of a land flowing with milk and honey.
God's presence and God's promise sustain us
even in this desolate place

Improbable surprises of grace,
rash acts of compassion,
unpredictable words of mercy
- all a foretaste of shalom,
a renewed world
a covenant fulfilled
peace and justice for all
"You will be done on earth as in heaven"

*Eat and drink as
a small celebration
that God leads people
from slavery to freedom
always and ever*

*Talk with someone at the table about a glimpse of the coming reign of God
that you have 'tasted' recently*

*Take a coriander seed
- a small, improbable sign of hope that
God sustains us on the journey
despite all evidence to the contrary*

STATION #6 – A FAMILIAR LONGING

Bible, Coke can, UIW, Basis of Union, 12 Keys/Bandy, offering bowl, 40 days of purpose, Hillsong, credit card, Planetshakers, computer?, Masters Degree, ???

The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."
Exodus 16:2-3.

In the desert
our greatest desire
is not to move forward,
but to return to the familiar
to turn back time

In the desert,
old idols are resurrected
quick solutions are offered
to little avail.

In the desert,
we can choose
to be uncomfortable
with what we thought we knew
to let go of old answers
we can choose
to relinquish control
to ask new questions
to sift the mystery of meaning

*What part of the past do you cling to?
What are you tempted to idolise in God's stead?
What might be rejected? revived? renewed?
What is your lifeline in the desert?*

*Sit with this regret, this longing
Sit with this hunger for the old
Sit with the impossible horizon of the new*

Offer your confession to God.