

Coming to Marah. (Quality: good, but incomplete)

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- [0 : 00] In the name of God, trusting that we may receive the heavenly anointing of the Spirit, let us read our text this evening in the book of Exodus, chapter the 15th and verse the 23rd.
- Chapter 15 in the book of Exodus, we read the verse the 23rd and have reference also to verse the 25th.
- And when they came to Nara, they could not drink of the waters of Nara, for they were bitter.
- Therefore, the name of it was called Nara. Our beloved friends, spiritually exercised and taught, will immediately perceive the connection between our lesson and the text.
- It is quite obvious that from these divine records that the Lord's dear people in all ages know what it is sometimes to come to this place that is specifically named Nara.
- [1 : 59] Nara. And we have seen, as we have followed attentively, that beautiful chapter in the book of Ruth, Nara.
- Nara. And we have seen, as we have seen, how that that beloved Jewish matron, Naomi, whose name means pleasant, came to this very place, this experience.
- And returning, rather a sweet hymn you have been singing, returning to Bethlehem.
- And it is an amazing mercy to refer to and observe and know what influenced her.
- And she heard in that land of Moab that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread.
- [3 : 22] And she was off home. Well, as you remember, coming to Bethlehem, the city was moved.
- And they must have been quite amazed at her appearance.
- Those who knew her and loved her, they must have recognized a tremendous change in her appearance and her spirit.
- For they said, in absolute astonishment, is this Naomi? Quite obviously, the ten years and the huge sorrows that she had experienced had left a very profound mark upon her.
- And she acknowledged that the hand of her, she acknowledged that the hand of the Lord had gone out against her, that the Almighty had dealt bitterly with her.
- [4 : 49] So she made a request. Call me not Naomi. Call me Mara.
- Call me Mara, she said, as you well know. And she gives the meaning of it. For the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.
- The name Mara means bitterness. Now, I want to make an observation on that.
- do not conclude that because she said call me Mara and the Almighty had dealt bitterly with her do not for one moment conclude that she was in the bitterness of rebellion very far from that she was completely submissive to the chastening hand of God that had stripped her she recognised undoubtedly how displeasing to God this step was to leave Bethlehem and go to an idolatrous country

Moab that the very curse of God rested upon and how the Lord does mark his dear people if they grieve the spirit if they sin against him I have said and I feel that I must be perfectly fair here that undoubtedly as it was in those days the wife called her husband Lord God and she was really completely under his control I think really that she had no alternative she had to obey him but it was a wrong step although the Lord brought God out of evil by gathering from that land that idolatrous country one of his dear elect one of the sweetest characters in the Bible that dear Gentile damsel

[7 : 48] Ruth and so inseparably united them together that it was her joy to accompany Naomi to Bethlehem and as we have said she walked and you want to look at this she journeyed and walked out of bondage into sweet liberty Bethlehem was liberty Moab bondage well you have therefore the abundant meaning of this term Nara poor dear Naomi Nara bitter not bitter in rebellion that the meaning is that her cup was bitter very bitter first stripped of her husband there were three successive steps in this experience of being stripped first her husband's death then the two sons left her and married the women of

Moab Ruth and Orpah so she was left alone and then the third step the death of Mardon and Kylian so you can really say that that poor dear soul that very gracious godly matron she was absolutely stripped of everything here below but how wonderful is this return now if I may just make this observation I have no intimate knowledge obviously of staple her standard of this little flock but you may have noticed as we joined together in our prayer to the Lord that my spirit was rather specially led in this channel concerning any in this area who were brought up here in the days of their youth and who may have long since departed from this house of

God my prayer I hope ascended through the mediation of their great high priest to the father's throne that there might be a return now what a wonderful day that would be for you if you saw some return who have departed this is the Lord's work it is quite clear to my mind and knowing something of the dreadful depravity of human nature and the lack of anything that is attractive to the flesh in our divine services that without grace young people especially when they come into their adolescence and their teenagers they often say to themselves now as soon as possible

I shall take my journey into a far country I do not intend to have any more to do with this religion or this form of religion and how often this has been the case this was not of course the case with Naomi but the word return has brought this to my spirit and understanding many have felt like that they have thought well these divine services and the method of them is now archaic and out molded there's nothing to attract us and so on and we're off and in many cases this takes place but my friends there is a divine power there is one who is almighty

Satan is mighty God is almighty now I am in the experience even just now of witnessing souls and in their hearts the Lord has made a tremendous change instead of departing instead of antagonism and enmity there is just the opposite because the Lord as I believe has removed the heart of stone and given them the heart of flesh I cannot tell you how great the joy of a pastor is to see young people returning and to see them under the sound of the ministry listening attentively and to know that the word of the

[14 : 17] Lord is entering their hearts with divine energy and unction and power well that perhaps is an aside observation but in any case it fits in the pattern of the subject for this reason that if any of you who are parents or even grandparents or friends if you have any that you love in the family or maybe the children of your friends and you have seen them depart this is bitter those waters are very bitter in fact nothing can be much more bitter than that than for those who have prayed and sought the Lord and endeavored to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the

Lord to see the day come when they manifest hatred and enmity to the truth of God that's very bitter but what a wonderful mercy when the Lord makes those bitter waters sweet so as I have said that is perhaps an aside observation but it is my prayer being within the experience of it personally that the Lord will accomplish the same for you here at Stapleshurst for I rather feel convinced in my mind that there must have been many families here in the days of Frederick Kirby and possibly son are still living in this town or in the rural area the Lord knows whether he has set his mark upon them if so it will be a wonderful day to see them return very well we have then this case demonstrated in the experience of

Naomi and I shall now endeavour to open this word that I have read before you it is very instructive and singular to see how the experiences of the Lord's people alternate on their journey to the land of promise Thor as you know very well in the subject matter of this chapter all the first part is taken up with Moses song and why song because of the deliverance the Lord so wonderfully accomplished for the

Israelites in the passage of the Red Sea and the destruction of their enemies and undoubtedly in that deliverance not only did Moses see the deliverance of the Lord's ancient people and a way made through the mighty waters but he also saw the glorious spiritual interpretation of that experience namely that because all the waves and the billows of God's wrath passed over our surety and substitute the dear Lord Jesus himself there is a way for his ransomed people to pass over into glory that is how

I view that amazing narrative concerning the Red Sea certainly there are three things in it one is the Lord making known to his people that the things which are impossible with men are possible with God they could see no way and I do not know whether any of you are in that place tonight I certainly have some of my flock in that place where the Lord has brought them even in providence and it is a heavy weight on my heart he has brought them to a place where they can see no way none at all and they do need the dear

[19 : 52] Lord to appear for them when thou canst no deliverance see but what a wonderful strength of faith this is when the Lord brings the whole of this narrative before the eye of faith in the covenant of grace for the people of God so that they see and experience the blessedness of that word that Moses spake by divine command to them fear ye not stand still and see the salvation of the Lord which he will show to you today and he made a passage through those mighty waters so that we have these three things in that we have the wonderful deliverance wrought for Israel in their extremity we have also the pattern and the example of how the Lord appears for his dear people in all ages when they come into these extreme situations it is a very sweet hymn with that refrain this truth to rejoice in the

Lord will appear and he does why because he loves you with an everlasting love because Christ is risen because his very name and honour is at stake what would the Lord do with his great name if he let his dear people sink to rise no more in their troubles so this is a demonstration and the pattern of how in all ages down to the end of this dispensation the Lord will always appear for his dear people even when they can see no way at all I might just remind you of one thing and that is when you can see no way there was no way back and in any case they didn't want to go back did they to Egypt surely the people of God would never wish to go back although in a state of rebellion they did speak about that

Egypt but I'm sure the people of God amongst them didn't feel like that but there were those that did say that you would never want to go back would you into the world or into Egyptian bondage there was no way back and there was no way to turn either on the right hand or the left hand they couldn't see any way before them because of the sea I mean after all if you go down to Folkestone or East Thorn or any watering place and go down close to the sea even with the English Channel look out you just contemplate it standing before the sea who would ever contemplate that all this great host of the

Lord's chosen nation would walk through the sea on dry land but what I wanted just to remind you of was this when you can see no way and the preacher knows what this is very well sometimes we may be in it personally sometimes with our dear children that's a very bitter thing you may be in it with your dear children and you can see no way at all and however much you try every door seems to be closed there's no way well what I wanted to say sweetly to the dear friends was this when there's no way on the earth no way that you can see at all there's always one way open and that is up look up there's always that way you can't go back you don't wish to go back you can't see any way before you you can't turn to the right hand or the left see so you may say there's no way there is up

Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven there is always this way up the throne of grace the door of mercy it stands open all day to the poor and the needy who knock by the way now if you find yourself in an impasse in an extremity in a very difficult situation the Lord bring that before you if there seems to be no way whatever there's always this sweet way to look up and the Lord will appear so that is number two and the third is what I have already referred to the spiritual content of this providential and physical experience this miracle of the passage through the sea setting forth the atonement of Christ the agony of Christ our

[26 : 45] Savior for through his agony his passion his smart his expiatory sacrificial vicarious death there is a way for the ransom to pass over now that's very sweet so you can understand and I wonder if I can find any of you here you can well understand that after this great deliverance we have this song of Moses then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord saying I will sing unto the Lord for he hath triumphed gloriously the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea now there are times when you will sing

I know and I wish to make reference to that that it is right for us to always join by the help of God in singing the praises of God in the sanctuary it is something that really quite distresses my mind and my spirit if I see people always with their lips pursed and never attempt to sing a note of praise to the Lord you may feel far from a song like the song of Moses but it is incumbent upon us always to seek to join in singing the praises of God for he justly claims a song from me his loving kindness oh how free one of our old friends who is in heaven singing now and it is something that is always with me when I mention this she walked in this bitterness

Nara the waters were bitter and she stopped singing when she went to the house of God she didn't open her mouth she ceased singing and she said to herself I can't sing I can't join in singing and she was tempted that she would never sing again because of this Nara these bitter waters now that was sinful and it was a snare and the Lord broke it and he broke it by the couplet that I have named in the hymnal he brought that into her soul he justly claims a song from me his loving kindness oh how free and she commenced to sing again she never stopped singing after that she could see how absolutely grieving to the spirit it was the one that had been redeemed by precious blood to stop singing the praises of

God so you never want to stop those of you who fear God never stop singing his praises you may feel far removed from that that you have much to praise him for that you are not in the bottomless pit and that you have a living hope so never cease to sing and then think of the language of good bunyan when he came to the door of mercy and knocked and he said will he within open to sorry me though an undeserving rebel I have been then I'll not fail to sing his lasting praise on high very sweet isn't it to have that hope not fail to sing his lasting praise on high so here is the song of

Moses you know what it is to sing for your heart to be full of praise to the glorious trinity God in three persons blessed trinity you know what it is to feel the truth of this in the hymn to make his signs his glory view and sing their cares away the Lord will make his goodness cast before us in the why oh this singing this praise well they engaged in this sweet melody of praise but I said how this demonstrates the alternation in the path of a child of

[33 : 10] God now you may have a day or a little season and you feel so happy you feel happy all day you go to bed in this happiness there's such peace and joy in your spirit and perhaps tomorrow you're in distress the devil doesn't like this when we praise the Lord the adversary oh how he seeks to distress the Lord's people and what he endeavors to do is to rob you of your joy if you've got a little enjoyment whether it is personal or in your family or in the church of

God the devil tries to take that away to rob you he can never rob you of the reality that he may succeed in robbing you of the enjoyment and he shows his ugly face and he puts something in and it seems to take away all the enjoyment see how things alternate and it was so here there they were singing surely you few dear people of God here know what this is don't you don't you know what it is to sing in the night you not feel this in your soul sometimes oh what shall I do my saviour to praise you'll say the

Lord has blessed me he has blessed me on this Lord's day he has blessed me in reading his precious word he has blessed me with a token for God and you praise him you're happy but how soon you experience this alternation and if you're wise and if you're discerning you will well know that if you do have enjoyment and blessing that it's not very long before there's some trial on it and if you get some special favour it's not long before you have perhaps a taste of devilish opposition or something that is bitter Nara the bitter waters and so here they were singing and then the next thing you read is that they they came to

Nara and they could not drink of the waters of Nara for they were bitter therefore the name of it was called Nara if you take a map as you will sometimes and work out an itinerary you want to go from A to B now you think of the children of God they have been brought out of Egypt the Lord has quickened them into life and they are on their journey to heaven now there's a route and it was for the children of Israel a route it was not their choice it was God's forty years in the wilderness he led them and the Lord will lead you and as you look on the map in the scriptures and also compare your own experience with that you'll find that you come to this place called

Marah and it's on route to heaven this is the very route the journey to heaven and you'll put your finger on it and you'll say I'm there there it is in the scripture Marah that's where I am so this is in the journey do you see the exposition of this just as traveling now from south to north or to the midlands or wherever you pass through the various towns or villages en route you say well now here we are you'll have this spiritually too you'll say no we've come to Marah so let me give you a concise word on it this place name in scripture stands for the trials and afflictions of the

[38 : 48] Lord's people of his own choosing and in the very way of God's own leading that is very important these trials and afflictions are in the way of God's own leading it was God's own leading that brought them to the Red Sea it was God's own leading that brought them to Marah and here are the trials and afflictions of the Lord's people you'll come to it you may be here tonight I don't know you may be you may say that's where I am Marah I'm not rebelling against the Lord thanks be to God but the waters are bitter and if you come into the various trials and the afflictions a an immense variety of afflictions afflictions of body afflictions of soul afflictions of mind afflictions in your family it may be church afflictions and into trials heavy trials trials are usually within two categories they're either like passing through the fire or through the water and they both have a characteristic if you're in the fire or passing through the fire it seems as though everything will be consumed if you're passing through the water it seems as though you'll be overwhelmed you'll sink in these waters and also denied and it was very bitter to her and look at dear old

Israel with all that he went through when he saw the coat of his dear son Joseph stained with blood and concluded that he was dead look at all the trials and afflictions of Job now these are bitter it's one thing to read it as a narrative it is quite different to come into the experience of it it's bitter very bitter but blessed be God the Lord does something for his dear people they have a secret and it's a secret that only the people of God know I mean after all your neighbors the inhabitants of

Staplehurst or wherever you live you'll hear of some very sad cases very sad and your heart will go out in sympathy you'll say what a tragic thing this is but you see only the Lord's people know the secret that is in this chapter and that is the bitter waters made sweet it's a wonderful thing this is so they cried to the Lord it may be that you passed through this or some of you may be in it now something is bitter and they cried and you will cry and Satan may say it is useless it is futile you'll die in it you'll never be brought out of it but the

Lord showed him a tree very significant the symbolism of scripture is majestic a tree he showed him a tree that it had to be cast into the waters and then they were made sweet there's only one tree that faith looks to and that is the rugged wood of Calvary's cross where our Savior voluntarily gave his life the just for the unjust to bring us to guard as a tree that symbol there sets forth has ever to who are in the thing until everything