**“Are we there yet?!”**

**Intro:** Here we find ourselves at the end of another year. For all but the very youngest of us, we’ve made a similar journey before, but in truth – every year is different. The new year acts like a threshold separating old from new. Old pain, old failures, old flaws and mistakes… it’s a great time to think of all the new opportunities that wait on the other side of that calendar.

This journey of life can feel so long at times that we forget we have a destination. We haven’t arrived yet.

The truth behind what we’re doing is that we’ve never been closer to heaven than we are today. Does that excite us? Does it shape our priorities?

“Are we there yet!?”

**Main Passage**: Exodus 13:17-14:20

**Outline**:

1. The Excitement – A promised future! (13:17-14:4)
2. The Fear – An inability to escape the past (14:9-14)

**Match the paraphrase with the reference**

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| “Fellas! Fellas! We know God’s going to work this out for our good!” | Proverbs 10:29 |
| “If God be for us, who can be against us!” | Romans 8:28 |
| “God is our strength!” | Romans 8:31 |
| “We are more than conquerors!” | Romans 8:37 |
| “Greater is He that is with us than with them!” | Philippians 1:6 |
| “If He begun it, He’ll do it!” | 1 John 4:4 |

1. The Certainty – “No parking allowed!” (Staying still is not an option) (14:15-25, 29-15:1)

**Application**: Israel’s progress was a sure sign of their relationship with God. Those who were with God advanced. We see this same outcome in one of Jesus parables – the parable of the sower.

(Matthew 13:3-8)

1. Hard Soil – **PRO**: no effort in sowing, convenient; **CON**: Wear patters, lots of traffic, worn down, high pressure; **NEED**: break it up!
2. Stony Soil – **PRO**: Broken soil receives seed, warms quickly; **CON**: no depth, lack of stability/durability, more work to reach; **NEED**: remove rocks
3. Weedy Soil – **PRO**: depth available, things grow easily; **CON**: distraction, more work to reach than stony; **NEED**: remove weeds
4. Good Soil – **PRO**: depth available, focused/prepped for a purpose; **CON**: It doesn’t naturally stay that way; **NEED**: tending

**3 of these require work to become usable, 1 of these requires work to stay usable**

To change the **hard** soil, you have to work and break it up. If you do nothing, it stays hard.

To change the **stony** soil, you have to pull out the rocks. If you do nothing, it stays rocky.

To change the **weedy** soil, you have to pull out the weeds. If you do nothing, it stays weedy.

To change the **good** soil, you do nothing. To KEEP it, you have to continually work it. Breaking it up, pulling weeds, applying fertilizer, planting seeds… all of these contribute to good soil remaining good.

**Closing:** Eccl 7:8 “Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof; and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.”

END > BEGINNING

Imagine the scenario: we die and on approach to God’s throne we loudly exclaim, “I’m SOOO glad that’s OVER!!!” God did not redeem us for us to remain hardened, resistant or distracted. That means there’s work. It’s hard. It’s constant. But if we do it His way… if we FOLLOW Him, it’s also the only way for us to bear lasting fruit.

Gen 18:14 “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” (Num 11:23, Jer 32:17, Zech 8:6, Matt 3:9, 19:26, Luke 1:37, Rom 4:21)

As we enter this new year together it may feel for some of us that God has to do something monumental like He did dividing those waters. For each of us he has a path to follow. He’s at the end of that path. We’re closer to God than we were at the beginning of the year. Does that excite you? Life’s a journey.

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