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Sermon Notes

Term – Spring 2020

Series – Exodus

Gathering & Date – Livestream, 29 March

Title – An Unexpected Journey

Preacher – Paul Langham

As we share this unexpected journey, we're going to consider lessons from the most significant desert journey in scripture. You can read the story in Exodus 12 – 40. **Our reading is Exodus 16:1-5**

Reading – *The whole Israelite community set out from Elim and came to the Desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had come out of Egypt. ² In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. ³ The Israelites said to them, 'If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat round pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.' ⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, 'I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. ⁵ On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days.'*

For thought

The world is in mourning – we're mourning the death of the illusion that we were somehow in control (Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol)

Up until now, people thought they could plan for everything, but we've finally realised that we live with uncertainty all the time, and it's confronted us head-on (Baroness Finlay, professor of palliative medicine at Cardiff University)

Questions

What are you most missing of life before Coronavirus, before we were all propelled on this unexpected journey?

What are you not missing?

Many of the unexpected journeys in the Bible share 2 characteristics

- They are involuntary (i.e. not chosen by the people concerned)
- They lead into the desert

How does it feel to be on a journey you've not chosen? Name your fears and expectations of this journey.

For the Israelites, Egypt represented a place of oppression and slavery (Exodus 1). In what sense, if any, did the life of a few weeks ago represent oppression or slavery? Remember, things we enjoy can oppress and comfort can enslave.

The Israelites still looked back with longing to the place of oppression and slavery. How can we ensure that we are looking forward, expecting to encounter the living God in the desert? What lessons do you sense he wants us – as individuals and as a church – to learn?

Our recent preaching has spoken a great deal about responsibility and dependence. Now is a time for that teaching to bear fruit. By all means tune in to good teaching, both from Christ Church and elsewhere – but please ensure that you pursue the presence of God, the voice of Jesus and the promptings of the Holy Spirit above any human voice.

Ask the Lord to reveal what you instinctively depend upon – and whether that needs to change.

A final question: what is the Lord saying to you on this Unexpected Journey? If the answer feels like 'Nothing!' please don't worry and please don't give up. Give him the time and he will speak to you.