Discovering Exodus: Finding prayer points, testimonies, reflection and journaling questions that will engage your heart with the Father.

Chapter 38: We Become What We Behold

**□ The Invitation**: Invite the Holy Spirit to show you something new as you read through the chapter. The Father desires to meet with you and share something with you today. You may find it in the reading or you may hear His Voice speaking to Your Spirit in the quiet of this moment.

**□ The Reading:** Read Exodus Chapter 38. Record any thoughts from the chapter, questions you have or verses that the Holy Spirit highlighted to you while reading.

**□ The Focus**: Today’s focus is a refection. Write your thoughts as you meet with the Father.

Standing between the bronze altar and the Holy Place (the inner court structure) was the only other piece of furniture in the outer court, the bronze basin. All other vessels in the tabernacle were used in reference to God, but the bronze basin was used specifically for the consecration and purification of the priests. It was here that the priests washed their hands and feet in preparation for service before the Lord. No ministry happened until the priest had washed himself in the basin. This was a daily practice.

A priest would enter the outer court through the East gate entrance, sacrifice a burnt offering unto the Lord at the Bronze Altar to atone for his sins, then make his way to the Bronze Basin, where he would wash his right hand, then his right foot, then his left hand and left foot. The hands speak to the service of the priest and the feet speak to the walk of the priest. The priests lived a life dedicated to the service of God. All defilement had to be washed from his body--the dust from the courtyard and the blood from the sacrifice. He had to be holy before he could move into his position of service before the Lord on behalf of the community.

The priests were commanded to wash their hands and feet whenever they presented a sacrifice on behalf of an individual or the community at the bronze altar or whenever they entered the inner court structure (the Holy Place). They also washed after the sacrifice or after coming out of the Holy Place.

This vessel is made of bronze, which symbolizes judgment. Both vessels in the outer court were constructed of bronze. Judgment of sin is seen in the outer court. The bronze altar was the judgment for sin (our sin nature). The sin nature or the flesh is what we are born into. We are controlled by the sin nature until we are born again of the Spirit. Galations 6: 17 says this, “*For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit…*” and Romans 8:8 “*Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.”* When we are born again, we have been set free from the power of the sinful nature to control our lives. Romans 8:9 is such great assurance, “*You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you.”*

The bronze basin is a judgment of our sins. The sins that are cleansed at the basin are the thoughts, attitudes, motives and behaviors that need to be put off. This is what is in the mind or heart that needs to be transformed. When a person meets Jesus at the cross, he is given a new nature, “*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”* (2 Corinthians 5:17). After that time, the transformation comes! There are new habits, new attitudes, new behaviors, new motives of the heart that will come. The old needs to be washed away, so the new can be formed in us.

Cleansing, refreshment, purification-- these are all words that have to do with the water of the basin. I am a runner and especially love running outside in the hot sun on a summer day. After finishing a long run, with the hot sun beating down on me, I have two thoughts on my mind: 1) a shower to cleanse the dirt & sweat off my body and 2) a large glass of water. Water. Cool water. Take a minute to think about water.

What are the thoughts that immediately come to your mind?

* Rushing water
* power of water
* water baptism
* water is the life sustainer
* Jesus is the living water
* the ocean
* the refreshing taste of water on a hot summer day
* the joy of cleansing after working out or being in the garden for an afternoon
* the beauty of a pool that seems to beckon one from the chores of the day
* the sound of waves upon a beach

There are many images and memories that water brings to the mind. Water=Life. Without water, life cannot survive. In Exodus 7 the first plague sent upon the land of the Egyptians was the plague of blood, where the water from the Nile and all water everywhere in Egypt turned to blood. God went right to the source of life, water. And we see the first miracle that Jesus performs has to do with water. While at a wedding, Jesus has the servants take jars (that were used for ceremonial washing) and fill them with water and when the father of the bride went to taste it, the water had turned to wine (see John 2). In John 4, Jesus has a conversation with the woman at the well. The well was a popular place for women to gather. It was like their “Starbucks”. Jesus speaks to her of living water that he has to offer. Jesus offers living water to all who come thirsty, to drink deep of the water that refreshes and purifies. ”*The water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”*  Water, pure and fresh is a desperate source for life. Water is the sustainer of life.

There are two aspects of water that we see in the bronze basin. 1) Cleansing that the water provides, and 2) refreshment and sustenance that it provides. The priests of the Old Covenant took the time of cleansing in the Bronze Basin seriously. Let us, the priests of the New Covenant, take the cleansing in the basin seriously.

We are the priests of the Living God, all who have committed our lives to Jesus. Cleansing for us came in His blood, because we have been washed in His blood, once and for all sins I have ever committed, am committing now or ever will commit. And the daily cleansing comes from the water of His Word. God’s Word is our basin. It is a reflective cleansing. As we spend time in His Word studying, meditating, we are washed in the water of the Word and as we are cleansed, our thoughts, attitudes, motives and behaviors are transformed. Ephesians 5:26-27 speaks of the washing that the Word of God brings, “*…to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the Word, and to present her to himself (Jesus) as a radiant church without stain, or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.”* It is an inside-out transformation.

There is some interesting information given that we read about the bronze basin in Exodus 38:8. *“They made a bronze basin and its bronze stand from the mirrors of the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.”* Mirrors that were used in the construction of the bronze basin were made from polished bronze (or brass). Where did the Israelites get the mirrors? From the Egyptians--remember when they left Egypt, the Egyptians willingly gave them gold, silver, bronze, jewelry, linens, yarn, and all the other materials that would be used in the construction of the Tabernacle.

The basin was constructed with the mirrors of polished bronze. For the priests, they would have used this reflective bronze to make sure that all dust and blood was removed from hands and feet. The mirror reflected back the cleansed image of the priest. The priest spent time at the basin washing until the reflection showed him that he was clean and ready to minister before the Lord. This was not to be a burden for the priests, but a time of reflection (physically and spiritually) to get ready for service. This cleansing was a time to be consecrated unto the Lord, not to be rushed, but to be savored.

James 1:22-25 says, “*Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the Word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it~ he will be blessed in what he does.”* The Greek word for “looks” in this passage means “to peer within; stay near”. So, what does that look like? We need to stay near the Word and do what it says. That is how we are changed and cleansed and transformed. As we behold God’s glory by spending time in His Word , we will be transformed more and more into His likeness. 2 Corinthians 3:18 says, “*And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”*

We become what we behold. Proverbs 27:19 tells us, “*As water reflects a face, so a man’s heart reflects the man.”* What does your heart say of you? What are you beholding? I am not the same person I was 10 years ago. I am not the same person I was 5 years ago. I am not the same person I was 1 year ago, or 6 months ago, or 4 weeks ago. God’s Word cleanses me and changes me. What about you? The Old Covenant priests needed to be cleansed from the defilement of the world, in a physical sense, we who are the New Covenant priests need to be cleansed from the defilement of the world, in a spiritual sense.

The Bible does not give any dimensions for the Bronze Basin. We don’t know what size Moses made the basin. I think it is very interesting that dimensions weren’t recorded, because for us, the New Covenant priests the basin is God’s Word. And His Word is dimensionless! There are no parameters that you can put around the Word of God. He is limitless and His power to change our lives is limitless!

On the diagram draw the placement of the Bronze Basin. Use a circle to show its placement in the outer court between the bronze altar and the inner court structure.

Reflection: Draw what the Bronze Basin looks like in your life today. Use your imagination and be creative.