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Exodus / Exodus 13:17–14:31

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### Introduction

- Taking matters into my own hands at the grocery store - it was my only way of escape - I'd still be standing there.
- We like to take matters into our own hands. We like to think we can figure out a way we can get out of any situation.
- But... a situation you can't get yourself out of is slavery to sin. The only way to get out of slavery to sin is through Jesus, our Redeemer.
- [Exodus 13:17-14:31](#) is perhaps the most significant event of the Old Testament - God gloriously delivers hundreds of thousands of people from slavery in a miraculous way. This story is epic, and so significant that the biblical writers keep coming back to this event. The Exodus is referred to at least 25 times in the Old Testament (e.g., [Psalm 78:13](#); [Psalm 106:8-9](#)).
- If you feel trapped in life, this passage is for you. If you feel like you're in a mess that you just can't get out of, this passage is for you.
- This passage is going to challenge us to see God as our great deliverer, and this passage is going to challenge us to move forward in faith.
- You need to move forward in faith. The Christian life is not a life of inactivity as we wait on God to work miraculously. The Christian faith is active - it's moving forward, trusting God for deliverance. Three truths from this passage to help us move forward in faith.

## When God calls you forward it is to a glorious future.

- The final plague took the lives of the firstborn sons of Egypt. Pharaoh finally agrees to let the Hebrews go.
- God Himself leads the people out of Egypt, but not along the shortest route, the land of the Philistines, to protect them from war. He doesn't want His people tempted to go back to Egypt (3:17-18).
- Moses takes the bones of Joseph, fulfilling a promise made to Joseph centuries earlier. Joseph to be buried in the Promised Land (3:19).
- God is with His people (3:20-22) - A pillar of cloud in the day, a pillar of fire at night. He will be with His people.
- God tells Moses exactly what will happen. God will show His glory again with a powerful miracle. God will harden Pharaoh's heart again to display His glory. The Egyptians will pursue Israel (14:1-4).
- vs. 5-9 - Hard-hearted Pharaoh - Can't believe they've let their servants go. Took a hoard of chariots and soldiers to recapture the Hebrews.
- vs. 10-12 - Imagine the shock and fear of the Hebrews. They had seen God work wonders, but what would happen now? On one side, a massive Egyptian army, on the other, a massive sea.
- The Hebrews will complain often, but understandable. It didn't seem like there was a way out. From their perspective, better to be slaves in Egypt - to someday die and be buried there than to die in this pursuit and be buried in the wilderness.
- Moses' response (vs. 13-14) - Stand firm and see the Lord's salvation. Stand firm = be confident. God has already given them victory. He's already brought them out of Egypt, and He's going to continue to give them victory. Be quiet... Or, "Will you just quit complaining and trust in the work of God." (That's a good word for us.)

- Moses gets it, but the people don't get it yet. Moses knows the Lord has been faithful. God has done everything He said He would. Moses also knows where they are going: the Promised Land ([Genesis 15](#)). Moses knows Egypt is a place of slavery and death, but the Promised Land is a glorious future, a place of life. God had not brought the Hebrews into the wilderness to die at the hands of the Egyptians in front of the Red Sea.
- God has a glorious future for us too, but there's a difficulty. We can't see our future. The Bible describes it, but none of us have seen it with our own eyes. The Israelites hadn't seen the Promised Land - all they had seen was Egypt.
- **What you set your eyes on you will follow.** It's easy to get comfortable with and distracted by what you know, even when you know that God has better for you. It's easy for you to set your eyes on the challenges that you think are insurmountable than walking by faith. However, if you fix your eyes on what surrounds you - your challenges, your sinful desires, your idols, those things will capture your heart and get your attention.
- **You will only walk in faith when you keep looking straight ahead.** What are your eyes on right now? The distractions? The challenges? Your desires? If so, you've likely stopped moving forward in your faith. Look at what God has already done for you to help you keep your eyes looking forward.

## **When God calls you forward you can't go backwards.**

- God will deliver, but will the Hebrews believe? Will they walk in faith? Will they return to slavery? To go back was death, to move forward was life.
- vs. 15 - God: "Why are you crying out to me?" Haven't the Hebrews learned anything about the power of God? "Tell the Israelites to break

camp... (vs. 16) Or, “go forward” (ESV). One direction to experience salvation: straight ahead.

- BUT... an obstacle before them - the Red Sea. This WAS the plan of God - Israel in a seemingly possible situation in which they had to trust God for their lives - and a situation for the Egyptians to once again see the awesome power of God (vs. 17).
- Amazing miracle - enemies behind them, water in front of them. Water often represents chaos in the Bible. In some ways, miracle reminder of creation. God speaks, dry land appears from the waters ([Gen. 1:10](#)). Now, as Moses raises his staff at the command of God, dry land appears again.
- People surrounded by the presence of God as the Red Sea parts - angel of God behind them (vs. 19), pillar of cloud in front of them and beside them. Darkness over the land, the cloud lights up the path for the Hebrews.
- A great wind that all night kept the sea parted - waters like a great wall on the right and left.
- God made a way where there seemed to be no way. The Hebrews can't go back to slavery. They must move forward.
- Egyptians pursue, but God will not let them capture the Hebrews. vs. 24-25 - God throws them into confusion. God slows down their chariots. Egypt has had enough - “Let's get away from Israel - the Lord is fighting for them.”
- vs. 26-28 - At the Lord's command and Moses' mediation, the waters close up over the Egyptians. They try to escape, but the Lord threw them into the sea. Not one of them survived (vs. 28). A decisive victory!
- Israelites moved forward. They walked through the sea on dry ground - their eyes on the pillar of cloud before them that led them through the darkness.

- vs. 31 - As a result, the people feared the Lord (not Pharaoh nor Egypt). They believed the Lord and believed that God had raised up Moses to deliver God's people.
- This passage teaching us that you must look forward in faith to your glorious future, and you can't go back.
- **You don't have to live trapped.** If you are a follower of Jesus, you are never trapped. Jesus is always your way of escape. Yet, we feel trapped. We're not saved from a raging sea. We're saved from sin, yet we often return to what we've been saved from and feel trapped by it. "I just can't get past..." "It's too overwhelming..." "I'm not strong enough..." Reality: we want to live trapped because we believe putting sin to death is actually a better way to live.
- Remember - Jesus has paid the penalty for your sin, and as you walk by the Spirit, there is power over sin. You don't have to continually walk in sinful disobedience. There really is freedom. Some day, the presence of sin will be gone, but in the mean time, walk by the Spirit and see how the Spirit leads you to victory over sin. You can't go back! There's no victory going back, just enslavement.
- Problem: you know but you don't know... Intellectually, you know you've been set free from sin. But, you don't know in your practical experience - you often go back to what you have been saved from instead of moving forward in faith (Ill - emancipation proclamation - slaves set free yet many didn't know.)
- **You do have to use every godly resource at your disposal to move forward.** You have God Himself, you have His Spirit within you. You have the conviction of the Spirit, you have the counsel of the Spirit, you have the Word of God. You have prayer. You have a church family rooting you on and ready to go to war with you. Will you take advantage of the resources at your disposal?

- **You need a battle plan to move forward.** Spiritual disciplines, accountability, discipleship group, etc.

## **When God calls you forward you can't hold back.**

- The waters parted - a path to victory. God made a way when there was seemingly no way.
- A decisive moment - Israel couldn't go back and they couldn't hold back. This was not a time for wishy-washy, half-committed faith. It was a moment to fully trust God and walk through a raging sea trusting that God would keep the waters parted, bring them to the other side, and decisively deal with Egypt.
- Imagine walking through the sea. I imagine some walked through with full confidence, hands pumping the air in victory, while others walked through with their hearts pounding and screaming in fear - but all who walked through by faith God brought to the other side. **It wasn't the quality of their faith that mattered as much as the object of their faith.**
- Your salvation isn't determined by the quality of your faith. We're all at different places in the journey. Some of us are more mature or further along than others. Others of us believe, and we've experienced salvation, but we struggle with doubt and questions: "Will God really come through?" But, even in moments of doubt, our eyes are on the object of our faith: Jesus Christ. Even in the struggles, the doubts, the uncertainties, we keep holding on to the cross of Christ and the assurance of the blessed hope.
- We're saved because 2,000 years ago God determined to bring us out of slavery. He chose to redeem us and secure for us a future in His Promised Land - the God-man, Jesus came to rescue us. He healed the sick, cast out demons, and caused a stormy sea to become calm. But, His greatest act of power was going to a cross and bearing the

punishment for your sins, dying in your place as your substitute, so your sins could be forgiven. He rose again proving that He has all power over sin and death. He has set you free! Don't go back! Don't hold back! Move forward in faith.

- **You don't have time to waiver.** The Hebrews didn't. When the sea parted, they had to move. Every second mattered as they were pursued by the Egyptians. Every second matters for you as well. Will you waiver and waste time pursuing sin or will you redeem time by striving for godliness and living on God's mission?
- **You must determine what matters most.** Walking in freedom or walking in slavery? Your desires or God's desires? Your priorities or God's mission?