

# Getting Off to a Good Start

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     And last week we began, we read through this chapter through the first 16 verses of Exodus 13 and took a look at the sanctification of the firstborn.
- We saw that this was something that God instituted for the children of Israel as a token to keep in remembrance the night of the Passover, the Exodus from Egypt.
- And we've seen that this has just kind of been building. This was one more piece that God attached to that night and to that memorial along with the Passover meal, along with the unleavened bread days, now the sanctifying of the firstborn.
- And we learned a few things about sanctification and found that, man, this thing is not original with the Apostle Paul at all. This started all the way back here with Moses and with them departing Egypt.
- And we saw that sanctification was a separation from verse 2 and comparing it with verse 12. That's what the word means. And it was being set apart. And we also saw that it followed salvation, meaning they were delivered from Egypt.
- [ 1 : 0 5 ]     And after that salvation from Egypt, then came the sanctification of the firstborn. The point being, you don't ever get them switched around and mixed together. You don't ever put sanctification before salvation.
- You don't clean up your life and make things right with God. Then he'll save you. That's what all religions do is try to get you to do things. And then maybe God will know. You come to Jesus Christ as a sinner.
- God saves your soul. And then comes the sanctifying of the Holy Ghost. And that's a work of God in your life. So it follows salvation. And then the third thing that we looked at was that it was a sign.
- It's called a sign and a memorial and a token and as frontlets between your eyes. It's something that's to be visible outwardly, this sanctified life. This is where a lot of Christians fall short and not living a cleaned up life that tells a story of the deliverance that God wrought when he delivered them from the bondage of their sin and redeemed them by the blood of the lamb.
- And this sanctification of the firstborn is a sign. It's supposed to tell a story. The story was of Egypt. The story in your life is to tell others that you belong to God. That your life now is for him.
- [ 2 : 1 8 ]     You do things differently because you're a child of God. You're going to live a different life. And so today let's finish this chapter. And as we finish the chapter we're going to notice that the children of Israel are on their way now.
- They've left the rule of Pharaoh and they're moving. And if you take a look back at chapter 12 and verse 37. We already read this verse a little while ago. It says that the children of Israel journeyed from Ramesses to Sukkoth about 600,000 on foot.
- So they've already gotten one step out. They've already gotten a little bit away from where they were working and where they were building, where they were living. And they're moved to a town, a region, moving out.

They're not gone. They're not, you know, off and running fully. But they've started to move. They started to go. The journey began. And so you could say they're off and running.

But I doubt they're doing much running with the cattle, with the children, the elderly, all of these possessions that they took with them. It was a lot to do it. Two million strong.

[ 3 : 19 ] You can imagine this was quite an undertaking. So let's begin in verse 17. Exodus chapter 13, verse 17. And read to the end of the chapter. The Bible says, And it came to pass when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near.

For God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt. But God led the people about through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea.

And the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt. And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had straightly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones away hence with you.

And they took their journey from Sukkoth and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light to go by day and night.

He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night from before the people. So let's pray together. Let's seek the Lord here before we do anything else. And God, as we come before you this morning, we're coming before you because we need you.

[ 4 : 31 ] Because this is all vain if you're not involved. If it's just me up here talking about some old story, it doesn't do anything. And God, I mean that. I believe that. You have got to do any work that gets done.

And I want you to do a work. I pray that your people this morning want a work to be done in their lives. And so, Lord, as we open up this Bible and believe it and study it, please use it and minister it into our hearts and open our eyes to its truth and how it applies to this very day that we live in and to our lives and to the decisions we make and the direction that we go.

And may we always follow you. God, help us to follow you. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. So I want to preach a message this morning based off of this situation called getting off to a good start.

Getting off to a good start. This is exactly where we find the children of Israel. They are just getting off. They're just getting out of Egypt. And boy, do they ever want to get off to a good start. There's an excitement amongst them.

I imagine from the youth all the way up to the oldest that there's a stirring in their hearts. There's an adrenaline, a bit of invigoration that just says we are done with Egypt.

[ 5 : 46 ] And there's a new day, a new beginning. And there's a promise of a better tomorrow. That we saw all the destruction that our God did upon Pharaoh and upon his land and his servants. And for the first time in our life, we're outside of Egypt.

And we're going somewhere. And our God is guiding us. And you've got to imagine this is an exciting time for them. There's hope. There's relief. There's joy.

And they're getting off to a good start. And I want to relate this to our lives today because life is, it's not just when you are birthed into this world. But there's beginnings, new beginnings through all, we call it like a new chapter of life.

That happens all the time. Whether you're a young person just going to school for the first time or whether you're going off to school, leaving the house to college, or maybe you're getting married and it's a new chapter, a new beginning.

Bringing a child into the family. That's a new beginning for you. Things are changing. Sometimes someone's departing from you. Sometimes you're widowed or a widower. And that's a change in your life.

[ 6 : 54 ] And it's now a new beginning. And you face this all through life. It could be a new job. You could be moving from one location to another. There's all kinds of times in life when you get off to a start.

And God help us to get off to a good start. And I don't just mean that you land on your feet and things go well for you. We're talking about your spiritual life here.

That's what this is about this morning. Your walk with Jesus Christ. I want you to hit the ground running or land on your feet walking with Jesus Christ. That's what we're aiming for this morning when I talk about getting off to a good start.

And so I want to pull three things out of this passage that we just read. And the first one comes from verses 17 and 18. The first way to get off to a good start is to allow God to choose the way.

Allow God to choose the way. In verse 17 we read that there was the way of the land of the Philistines that was near. That would have made a whole lot of sense to take that way.

[ 7 : 59 ] But God, no. God said let's not go that way. Verse 18. God led them about. What does that mean? About. It means opposite. About. You heard the phrase in the military maybe about face.

That means 180 degrees. And so there was a direction that was near. But God said well if they go that way they're going to face war with the Philistines.

And that's not going to end well. They're not ready for that. They're not prepared for war. So instead I'm going to take them about. I'm going to take them a completely different direction through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea.

And this is God's decision. Allow God to choose the way. You want to get off to a good start. You better allow God to choose the way that you go. There are going to be ways that seem good.

There's going to be ways in life and decisions that might seem prosperous. Might even seem financially responsible. But you better be careful. If God's not in that way. You don't want to go that way.

[ 9 : 02 ] That way is not going to work out the way you expect it to. It's going to be a mistake to go that route. I'd like to take you to keep your place. But we've got to go to the Proverbs. Find the book of Proverbs.

Right after the book of Psalms. Kind of dead center of your Bible. And find Proverbs chapter 14. Allow God to choose the way that you go.

Proverbs 14. And just want to read one verse here. That's verse number 12. The Bible says, There is a way which seemeth right unto a man.

But the end thereof are the ways of death. So that tells me that the way that seems right may not be right. That tells me though it seems right.

There's obviously some things about that way that you're not fully seeing. Or understanding. But somebody does understand. And somebody does know what happens if you go that way.

[ 10 : 10 ] And so learn how to allow God to choose the way. Not the way that seems right. For Israel it seemed right to take the shortest way. I mean look at how many people we're taking.

Why on earth would we go a long way when we can go a short way? I mean this is not rocket science. This is a no brainer. If you're leaving Egypt. You will take the shortest path to Canaan.

It would be going kind of like right up along the Mediterranean Sea. It would lead you right into the land. There's no question. That is the way. The most direct way. That's the way to go. But God said no.

There's something about that way that you're not aware of. And it's not going to be good. As a matter of fact. It's going to be so bad if you go that way. You're going to face war. You're going to be defeated.

You're going to be scared. And you're going to turn around and go back to Egypt. And that is not what I want. So God says I'm going to lead you a different way. And the other way.

[ 11 : 10 ] The long way. The way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. That the Lord decided to lead them on. That doesn't seem right unto a man. But that seemed right unto the Lord.

That seemed to a man. That seems like that's the wrong way. Like here's an intersection. We go that way. The sign says Canaan that way. The other sign says Red Sea that way. Why would we go to the Red Sea?

That's not only the wrong way. That's a dead end. That's leading us to the Red Sea. What are we going to do when we get there? God says don't worry about that.

I've got that all figured out. I'm actually. I want you to go that way. I've got something I want to perform on Pharaoh that way. But man would say no.

No we'll go this way. Look while you're in Proverbs. Look at chapter 3. Proverbs chapter 3. Maybe two of the most popular verses of the Proverbs. And somewhat of the Bible itself.

[ 12 : 07 ] If these verses don't mean something to you already. I promise you at some point in life. You're going to need them. And they're going to speak to you. And so it would be a good idea to memorize.

Proverbs 3 verses 5 and 6. The Bible says trust in the Lord with all thine heart. And lean not unto thine own understanding.

In all thy ways acknowledge him. And he shall direct thy paths. There's a couple things I want to extract from these two verses.

In light of allowing God to choose the way. Number one it says trust in the Lord with all thine heart. To allow God to choose the way is going to require an open heart.

An open heart to the Lord. One thing you're going to struggle with in life is making decisions. Big decisions. Small. Sometimes weighty decisions.

[ 13 : 06 ] And you're not going to know what to do. I'm going to advise you to open your heart to the Lord. And trust in the Lord with all your heart. Open your heart by faith and say, God, I'm just going to tell you how I do it.

Regularly. Lord, I don't know what to do. But you're God. And you're my God. And I trust you.

And I believe that you know what's best for me. I don't know what's best for me. Here's what I think. X, Y, Z. But I don't know if that's right.

So Lord, would you please direct my path. That's opening your heart. In faith. Believing that God knows the right way. That God can direct you the right way.

And that actually, He will direct you the right way. I don't tell God I need an answer by 2 p.m. I just say, you're God. I'll wait on you.

[ 14 : 09 ] Learn how to open your heart to God in faith. Faith is the portal. It opens a portal between you and God. Without faith, you're not getting anything.

God's not telling you anything. If you don't approach Him by faith, you're not getting through. He won't respond where there's no faith. Then in verse number 5, He said, Lean not unto thine own understanding.

Boy, you can relate to this right here. We say this all the time when we're trying to make a decision. I'm kind of on the fence. But I'm leaning this way. Because, here's why.

It makes sense financially. Or because this is opportunity that I've never, I've always wanted to do. There could be different reasons why you would lean one way or another. But make sure that you're not leaning on your own understanding.

What makes sense to you, it may be wrong. What made sense to Israel was, Go the easy way. Go the short way. It's not going to be full of mountains. It's not going to be full of dry, barren desert and wilderness.

[ 15 : 15 ] Go that way. Lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways, acknowledge Him. And He shall direct thy path.

If you'll acknowledge, search and seek God's will and open your heart of faith to Him, There's a promise that you can count on. And that promise is, He shall direct thy paths.

I'm trying to teach you to allow God to choose the way that you go. If you want to get off to a good start. If you want to end up with your face in the sand and beat up and heading back to Egypt, Then lean on your own understanding.

And then you'll cry out to God when the affliction of Egypt gets worse And the oppression is back in your life. And then you're going to say, Oh God, get me out of here. Learn to let God choose the way.

He knows some things that you don't. We read that in verse 17. In the middle of verse 17 in Exodus 13, That God led them a certain way because God said something.

[ 16 : 19 ] He said, Let's peradventure the people repent when they see war, And they return to Egypt. So God knows some things about each way that you don't know. He knows what's ahead and He knows there's a battle ahead That you're not prepared for.

So if you want to get off to a good start, Then allow God to choose the way. Open your heart of faith to Him And let Him be your God. That's what God does.

He guides His children. He's like a shepherd. He leads His sheep. He leads them beside the still waters. When things are rough, it's okay.

Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. He'll lead through the valley of the shadow of darkness. It doesn't matter because thou art near me. The Lord's always going to be there. Let Him choose the way.

Don't go the way that you want to go. I'm trying to give you this by illustration of my own life. And I don't want this to go too long. But it's kind of a long story.

[ 17 : 23 ] I'm trying to just give you a snapshot of it. I feel like I may have told some of this before. But there was a time where I was just coming out of the world and lived several years of my life in some stupid sin.

And about five years, I want to say, I wasted of just running from God and chasing wickedness. And the Lord, by His grace, got me out.

Like, got a hold of my heart. And so there I am. I'm back in church. And it was in the middle of the summer, very close to this time of year. And I had known all of my life that God had called me to preach and called me to serve Him.

And even I knew exactly where I was supposed to go to Bible school. And I had fought that and ran from that for years, for all my teenage years. And then when I got out of the house for a couple years like that, I did not want to do it.

Finally, I got out of the world and said, Enough of that. Enough. I want to serve you, God. I want to follow you and obey you. And at that moment, I had one month until school started, the semester, first semester of Bible school.

[ 18 : 32 ] It was no question to me. I got a month. I can be there. And so right away, I canceled my cable television service and I canceled my home phone in my apartment, which we had back then.

And I just started kind of making plans and figuring out like, Okay, I need to do this and just get ready because I only have a month and I can do it. And I, at the time, was dating a girl named Carla.

And it looked like I'm leaving. And you're not. And it looked like that was going to have to end. And I didn't know how to handle that. And I told her, I've got to do what God's called me to do.

And I need to go. I can't waste another year. I've wasted five already. Where should I be? And I'm not. So I have to go. I had this conviction.

I've got to go. And so I was sad by that, but I felt like I had to do it. And I went to church on a Wednesday night and I finally, I told a man, in talking to an older man, you brought something up and I said, Well, I'm going to go.

[ 19 : 37 ] I'm going to go to Bible school. He said, What? Really? I said, Yeah, I've got to go. I've wasted too many years and I've got to go. And he just said, Hmm. He didn't see it. Because I had, I mean, literally just got back to church.

And so I, long story short here, there was a moment after discussing this with some people and telling them, I know it's the will of God for me to go to that school.

God called me to preach. All of this was true. I knew this. And after this kind of dust settled of me stating my convictions and standing on, I'm following God, the Lord in my own private moment, their quiet time, said to me this.

It was not audible, but it impressed upon me as clear as day. I can take you to the place in this world where I was sitting, where the Lord said, You haven't prayed about this. And I thought, Why would I?

I already know what God has told me in the past and told me to do. And he said, You haven't even asked me if that's what I want you to do right now. And in that moment, it's like pouring something into me that I'm not getting weird on you.

[ 20 : 43 ] I'm just saying, I could feel this in my being. God was speaking and giving me instruction and giving me light saying, I don't want you to run away to Bible school.

You've got one foot out of Egypt. If you go running away to Bible school, you're not going to last. The pressure that's going to come down there, and I didn't understand it at the time, I would have crumpled.

There was no way. I was way too carnal. But the Lord showed me and just gave me insight and a direction. I want you to go that way. But Lord, that's a long way.

I want you to stay here for another year. But Lord, I should be there in a month. It's going to start. I want you to stay. And I thought on it, and all of a sudden, things just started falling in line where the Lord was showing me.

I want you to go back to work and to work with those people that you had that mouth with and you participated in these things with and went these places with. I want you to go back and show them somebody that lives for Jesus Christ.

[ 21 : 49 ] I want you to go tell them about the Lord Jesus Christ and witness to them. I want you to stand on your own two feet. I want you to read the Bible. I want you to get involved in church.

And looking back on it now, by the grace of God, I can see the two choices. The one that made sense to me in the moment and the one that God led when I allowed Him to lead me.

When I took the long way, which seemed like the wrong way at the time to me, the Lord allowed me to read through that Bible for the first time in my life before I ever got to Bible school.

I just finished it right before we started. That was huge. I mean, it's not a, it may not sound like much to you, but boy, in that moment, in that day, that was such an accomplishment, something I had never done in my life.

And now I'm going to study this thing, but I finally read it through on my own. Not at Sunday school, not at church, not with my parents. Me seeking the Lord in His Word.

[ 22 : 48 ] That was a big deal. Beyond that, I got an opportunity to serve in the church and to work with the teens and just be a faithful young man and leader to them who had been in the world for years, but now, by the grace of God, I'm going to, I'm sick of that.

And I was able to kick those worldly edges off of those teenagers as much as I could and say, don't do it! That's garbage! That's no good! And they didn't know they wanted it.

They were, you know, stuck in church. They wanted the world. And I tried to kick it out of them and preach to them and be a witness to them and a testimony to them. Along the way, I got to go and stay with my girlfriend.

And then she became my fiancée. And then she became my wife. And along the way, I was on one side of a street knocking on doors with tracts and a Bible.

And with a brother and across the street, there was that girl that I was going to leave. She was with a teenager of the church knocking on doors, handing out tracts, witnessing for Christ. And the Lord did something in our lives together, brought us closer together, closer to Him, prepared us for what would be the next step.

[ 23 : 59 ] Allow God to choose the way because, boy, does He ever know what He's doing. It didn't make sense to me in that moment. Boy, it was hard. I had to swallow it. I had to go back and say, well, I'm not going.

I just told everybody I'm going. No, I'm not going. I need to stay. God's telling me to stay. I just sounded like a total fool. And on top of that, my dad, a very godly man, spiritual man, was telling me, Tobe, I think you ought to go.

I think you ought to go. I don't think you should stay. Your track record of being around there is just, it is not good. You should go. Get around those good people. Get around the Bible preaching and the teaching.

It'll change you. Little did he know, God was telling me something else. And by the grace of God, I allowed God, I can look back now and see it and boy, is it ever a difference.

So allow the Lord to choose the way. Let's get back into Exodus 13. I want to say something else about how you can get off to a good start. In verse number 18, But God led the people about through the way of the wilderness.

[ 25 : 03 ] I want you to notice that God led the people. In verse number 21, it says, And the Lord went before them by day in the pillar of a cloud to lead them the way.

At the end of verse 21, it says, Nor the pillar of fire by night from before the people. The pillar of a cloud of day and the pillar of fire by night was before the people.

It was out in front because God was leading them from the front. And so the second thing I want you to consider in getting off to a good start is not just allow God to choose which way you go, but then follow the leading of the Lord along that way.

The Lord's out in front. And that's exactly where He should be. In front. Where your eyes are on Him. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

When Christ came by some men, He came by and He said, Follow Me. And I'll make you fishers of men. He came by a tax collector and He said, Hey, follow Me.

[ 26 : 13 ] Later on at the end of John's Gospel, He said to Peter, Follow Me. And Peter said, Well, what about... And He said, What is that to thee? Follow thou Me. And He went.

He left. It's always follow. Follow Me. He tells the disciples, He tells any of them that are going to be His disciples to take up your cross and follow.

And so follow the leading of the Lord. You are never to be out in front of God's leading. You're in the wrong place.

If you can't see Jesus Christ, you're in the wrong place. He doesn't call you to figure it out for yourself. He calls for your eyes to be completely on the Lord following.

I said it earlier that God likens Himself to a shepherd. And He likens us to sheep that He will protect and provide and lead. But you know what the Bible says about us as sheep?

[ 27 : 10 ] It says, All we, like sheep, have gone astray. Actually, this way, in my illustration. We have turned everyone to His own way.

That's what we do. You want to get off to a good start? Then you better learn to follow the leading of the Lord. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left.

So when God moves, you move. When God stops, when the pillar of the cloud stops, you stop. And you know what you do then? You wait.

And you wait. You don't get up and say, I gotta go. I gotta do something. I gotta do something for Christ. Or I gotta make a decision. No, you wait. You learn to wait until that Lord starts moving again.

You sit and wait. That's a hard thing for people. That's a mistake Christians make. But if the Lord's not in front of you, something's wrong. That means you've gone ahead of Him. Or that means you've turned aside.

[ 28 : 19 ] And how do you get that fixed? Well, get on your face and determine, where did I leave Him? When did I leave Him and help Him get you back till you're under that cloud?

There's a couple things about following the Lord. You can follow Him because He's equipped you for the way. In verse 18, at the end of that verse, it said, I don't know if you noticed that when we read through, the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt.

It's an odd statement to us. Went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt. It's such an odd statement that so many of the new versions change it. And they make comments about it's a bad translation.

And I just say, well, I think you're just bad commentators. That's all that is. Let God be true and every man a liar. Study the Bible and let it speak for itself. And what I see here is that God sent them equipped.

Look back at chapter 12. And verse 35. The Bible says, The children of Israel did according to the word of Moses and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver and jewels of gold and raiment.

[ 29 : 26 ] The Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians so they lent to them such things they required. They spoiled the Egyptians. His people were loaded down with goods and treasures and things of high value that they spoiled from the Egyptians.

He says the same thing in the Psalms recounting this that he led them out with silver and with gold. The thought I have is that God used the Egyptians to supply the needs of his people because there's certain times along the journey where they encountered other nations and in some cases they offered to pay money for anything they used, anything, any water, any food, anything and some nations wouldn't have it.

They fought with them. But beyond that the entire journey is marked back in Numbers chapter 33 of each location they went from this place to this place to this place and what I want you to see is it's not just wandering through some desert.



There's named locations that they're moving from and to, from and to, from and to and the manna doesn't start for quite a while.

So before that there's locations and localities that they're coming by and God has allowed his people to go on this journey strapped, fully prepared for what they're going to need.

[ 30 : 49 ] He's equipped them. They went up harnessed. They were prepared and equipped for a long journey even in their haste of getting things together and getting out the door God saw to it that they were prepared.

I specifically want you to realize then that where God guides God provides. That you have no excuse to fear the Lord's leading in your life or to argue that you can't get away from Egypt because you just don't have it in you to live that life.

No actually you do have it in you if you have Jesus Christ in you. In the Lord Jesus Christ you have everything you need to survive in this world and to get out and to serve Jesus Christ and to walk with God to allow Him to lead the way.

He's equipped you. He's given you the power of His Holy Spirit the presence of His Son. He's given you contact and communication with the Father.

He'll never leave nor forsake. He'll like a shepherd lead you. He's equipped you. If you go to work and you say I can't live for Christ here no Christ is in you. You're equipped to live for Jesus Christ at work.

[ 32 : 01 ] You end up in the hospital and say I just can't deal with this. I don't know what to do. You have Jesus Christ and the comfort of the Holy Spirit with you. You can deal with it. You're equipped for the whole journey if you're saved.

So He equips you for this way and you can also follow Him because He provides light for this way. That's down in verse 21 where He led them by night in a pillar of fire to give them light.

I want you to remember this that the Christian life is not likened to treading unfamiliar and dangerous territory in the dark.

The Bible says the path of the wicked is as darkness. They know not at what they stumble. But thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

If you want to get off to a good start then learn to follow the leading of the Lord. He'll provide light on this way. There's one more thing I want us to see back in Exodus 13 and it's in verse 21 where the Bible says that the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud to lead them the way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light.

[ 33 : 19 ] Notice the last six words of this verse. To go by day and night. To go by day and night.

If you want to get off to a good start third thing and final thing I want to say is keep moving forward. You've just got one foot out of Egypt that is not a time to rest.

That's not a time to sit down and act like oh that's good I'm good. If you've got one foot out of Egypt it's not time to rest. There'll be time for that. The cloud will stop when it's time to stop.

The fire will stop when it's time to stop. But for now God has that cloud moving and he has that fire continually moving to get them as far away from Egypt as possible.

You want to get off to a good start? Get as much distance between you and Egypt as you possibly can. Don't stop. Keep moving forward.

[ 34 : 19 ] God knows how important this is. And so he gave them what they needed to go by day and by night. There's something supernatural about this. You can understand by reading later on where they look back over the years and their clothes didn't, their raiment didn't wither and their shoes didn't deteriorate.

They were fine. God took care of them. He fed them with manna and the water from the rock. I mean God's hands all over this and his hand is on this very thing here to get them not just one foot out but to get them moving and on their way off to a good start.

Keep moving forward. The more ground you cover the more removed you are from that horrible place. The more distant Egypt is the better.

But the more that the world is constantly in front of your view the more it's at your fingertips the far more likely you are to go back. The far more likely you are to return.

Keep moving forward. If you stay put picture in this very thing if you decide I'm taking a break guys I'll catch up. If you stay put and take a rest and back off on the journey and stop moving forward you're going to miss out on what God has for you on where God is leading you and it's going to get real dark at night and it's going to get real cold at night and it's going to get real hot during the day and it's going to be real dry without that cloud to cover you and shelter you.

[ 36 : 02 ] And this life Christian if you think you can live it not following Christ taking a break for a little while it's going to be to your own demise. You're going to find that this is hard this isn't comfortable I'm all on my own out here and you'll find yourself company with some other quitters I guarantee it.

You take a break from following Christ you'll find the company that you're all there's a few other people that took a break and before long you're so miserable because you don't have any protection because you don't have any direction and warmth and light and the presence of God that somebody's going to say let's go back to Egypt let's go get some food I'm hungry there's fish and melons and cucumbers and leeks and onions and garlic let's come on what are we doing out here in this dry hot cold and freezing at night and you'll say yeah that sounds like a good idea to be too so you want to get off to a good start keep moving forward reading your Bible every day praying communicating opening your heart and faith to God and talking with Him reading your Bible praying being spiritually minded attending faithfully a local church that God has put in your life these things are not a checklist of the Christian life what they are is staying under the cloud what they are is moving forward every day in the word of God moving forward taking another step if God gives you an opportunity to do something you take a step you stay under that pillar of cloud it's not a checklist of do's and don'ts that's not God's

Christian life and it never has been He's leading and you're just moving forward that's all it is you're following Him you're enjoying the light that that fire gives you in this barren world you're enjoying the comfort that that cloud affords you when it's hot and dry and you just wither up and die without it so keep moving forward you can get off to a good start if you keep moving forward so not only is this a help to you to get off to a good start but when I look back at it all it's really it's a sure way to live the Christian life these very things never get ahead of God don't move unless He moves unless He's leading and when He does lead go pack up and go immediately and keep your eyes on the Lord the three points this morning allow God to choose the way follow His leading and keep moving forward I can look back over my life and I can tell you from experience this stuff works it's not just good advice it's truth it's truth that you can take and apply you can swallow it whole it'll help you it'll work for you it's wisdom from the Word of God so I ask you in closing what will you do with this truth will you receive it will you follow it when the choice comes will you well preacher

I know what you said but and lean on your own understanding and give excuses that somebody out there in the world told you is the right thing to do they're wrong if it goes against the Word of God allow God to choose the way you go allow God to lead you and keep moving forward I hope and pray today that you'll receive it that you'll follow it that you'll learn to put into practice these truths and that then you too can gain some ground in your Christian life let's bow our heads together we'll be dismissed in a few minutes but before we are dismissed you find yourself having to make a decision or with a choice on your hands you find yourself to where you don't know what to do did you just throw up a little flare prayer to God God help me or are you opening your heart in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ do you know how to do that do you know how to humble yourself and open up your heart and say

God I trust you I'm gonna walk with you I'm gonna follow your leading in my heart you say I don't know how to follow his leading I don't know how he's gonna speak to me I don't know how he's gonna talk does he talk out loud you get on your face you spend time in prayer you'll find out what it is for the Lord to lead you for the Lord to move on you to give you direction you'll find it'll be that still small voice that comes from inside and it speaks and you hear it and it's comforting and it's peaceful and you know it's him and he's giving you an answer he's giving you direction you find yourself getting ahead of the Lord in life ask him for patience he'll give it to you but Christian whatever you do keep moving forward stay in the book every day keep a line of communication open every day it's not gonna make you better than other people it's just gonna help you to walk with God and that's what we wanna do you're gonna slip and fall you get back up and follow that cloud and stay with God father father I pray that you'll use these words and use this old story to help us today in the lives that we live to learn to trust you to learn to follow you and to not make excuses of why we can't or what we're afraid of give us faith that can overcome each fear

[ 42 : 42 ] Lord may the strongest in here be stronger may the weakest in here grow stronger in Christ may we learn to lean on you thank you for Moses and for his leading in this passage but ultimately it was you that led it was you that moved in them and guided them by day and night so God please guide us by day and night guide us in our families guide us in our decisions in our relationships guide us in our relationship with you give us wisdom where we can speak to others help us not to get ahead of you Lord I want to thank you for this today it's been good it's been real in my life I want to thank you for keeping me from my own wisdom and folly and giving me the instruction to follow you and thank you for how that life has turned out so far it's not all been easy but I wouldn't change it

I wouldn't ask for anything else what you chose for me is right and I love you and I trust you oh God may we each say that and feel that and know that feeling to know what it's like to lean on you and follow you please make yourself real and available to each one that calls on you and help us to be humble and obey and follow we pray in Jesus name amen