

Exodus 14:1-31

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[0 : 00] Then the Lord said to Moses, Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdal and the sea, in front of Baal-zaphon. You shall encamp facing it by the sea.

For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, They are wandering in the land. The wilderness has shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them. And I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host.

And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord. And they did so. When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people.

And they said, What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us? So he made ready his chariot, and took his army with him, and took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the other chariots of Egypt, with officers over all of them.

And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and he pursued the people of Israel, while the people of Israel were going out defiantly. The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots, and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea by Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zaphon.

[1 : 15] When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord.

They said to Moses, Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we said to you in Egypt?

Leave us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness. And Moses said to the people, Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today.

For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent. The Lord said to Moses, Why do you cry to me?

Tell the people of Israel to go forward, lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground.

[2 : 20] And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his hosts, his chariots, and his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.

Then the angel of God, who was going before the host of Israel, moved, and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel.

And there was the cloud and the darkness, and it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night. Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

And in the morning watch, the Lord, in a pillar of fire and of cloud, looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily.

[3 : 40] And the Egyptians said, Let us flee from before Israel, for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians. Then the Lord said to Moses, Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.

So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the Lord threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea.

The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea. And the sea, not one of them remained. But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians. And Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians.

So the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in his servant, Moses. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Good morning.

[4 : 59] Welcome to Holy Trinity. My name is Oscar Leyva. I'm a pastor at Holy Trinity Church. I've been here for about eight years, and it's good to be back in Hyde Park. My wife and I actually have been members of Holy Trinity for the past 15 years, and it's just so glad to be here.

I'm the pastor that's leading up the work in Pilsen, and we're about to begin a congregation in Pilsen. Our first service, Lord willing, will be September 13th. So it's great to worship here with you.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we are thankful for your word this morning. We're thankful, Lord, for these incredible narratives, these stories that remind us of your power.

We're thankful, Lord, for that wonderful meta-narrative of your redemption, the way you redeemed your people, and the way that you call us to trust in you.

Lord, this morning, as a congregation, we trust in you. We believe in you. We place our complete commitment of all that we are to all that you are, that the glory of God might be revealed in and through us and in through your people today.

[6 : 20] We ask, oh God, even now, Lord, that you would allow your spirit to minister to us as we seek for understanding as we look at this text.

Come, minister, instruct, challenge us. Lead some from complacency into greater faith. Lead those with faith into greater trust.

Lead us ultimately to the person and work of Jesus. And it is in his name that we pray. Amen. Amen. Well, in combat, in the midst of battle, it is said that generals are pressed to make decisive, deliberate, and effective measures in order to conquer the enemy, in order for them to make steps forward in this war or in battle.

And of course, for those of us who are Americans, we've had our share of wars. Each battle results in drastic and even collateral damage. War is not a benign event.

The victor must come out. The victor will stand in the end, standing strong, standing firm from the debris and chaos, the carnage.

- [7 : 45] Our passage has a lot of carnage at the seashore. It is the 16th century military theorist, Carl von Clausewitz, the one who wrote on war.
- He defines victory as one that leads directly to peace. The victor is one who leads to peace. And he's right, isn't he?
- And so it is in our story. God gives his people peace. God liberates his people and ultimately gives them rest and peace.
- He leads them and he delivers them from slavery. He gives them salvation, that greatest, from this great military power of their time, the Egyptians.
- And he gives them ultimately the very thing that they were in greatest need of, namely peace. You've been going through the book of Exodus this past summer.
- [8 : 48] The story of Exodus isn't merely about some tactical, geopolitical maneuvering that procures Israeli power. This passage is about a God who shows his saving power over Israel's enemy.
- and thus secures Israel's trust in him alone and no one else. God's glory, God's fame is resting upon God's people that they alone would trust in him as the ultimate source of peace and confidence.
- This passage, Exodus 14, is about God procuring their trust in him. And his victory over their enemies becomes then a paradigmatic kind of model for us in that Christ's victory is proved over our enemies.
- And therefore, the aim of our passage is that we, in gratitude to God's saving power over our enemy, should ultimately lead us into trust.
- In other words, the aim of this passage is to see this incredible story and for us who are in Jesus to enter into that story, that metanarrative, and to say that redemption and deliverance is only given to those who are in Christ so that we might, in gratitude, trust in his name alone and in nothing else.
- [10 : 34] Now, the Bible doesn't just tell us this story of God's work of salvation just so that we can just see his power, but actually, it's all about revealing God's character.
- You see, Jesus, or God himself, is the hero from the beginning to the end. And sometimes, we too miss that point, don't we? You see, we quickly read a passage like this and we try to ask this question and answer it, well, what is it saying to me?
- It's a, it's not the right place to begin. Rather, we should, as we read the Bible, we should be asking the question, what does it really mean concerning God's character and quality?
- what is God trying to prove within this text for us today? Or, what is it that he proved for them there that gives implications for us today?
- If we're going to read the Bible correctly, we must look at it in that light. What is it proving about God's character and quality so that we could trust in him in that way?
- [11 : 47] Well, this passage seeks to answer three questions and this is really the outline of the text here. What does it mean to trust God?
- Why do we need to trust God? And then thirdly, how do we get it? Children, if you're taking notes, it's simple. What does it mean to trust God? Why do we need to trust God?
- And how do we get it? And really, the answer to these questions is that salvation is one through his work alone. Not through the Israelites' work, not through their trust, but through God's work.
- What does it mean to trust God? It means to trust in his work alone. Why do we need to trust God? Because we, as they, have a tendency to believe and to trust in our own work, to believe and trust in our own pedigree, in our own beliefs and understandings in order to procure his, a right standing in his name.

And then lastly, we'll answer the question, how do we get it? Well, we get it through a mediator. We get it through someone like Moses. And Moses himself is pointing to another Moses who's greater than him.

[13 : 08] Now clearly, if you've been around in this Christian culture, for those of you who have been in the church, you've heard of the idea of trusting God. You know, just trust God.

Just trust him. You've heard the cliché that's been thrown around that says, let go and let God. Well, this passage is trying to shake us from the Christian jargon cliché and to give us a right standing and place under his work and his work alone.

So let's try to answer this first question. What does it mean to trust God? Now the issue of trust is at the forefront of this passage, isn't it? I mean, they are, the Israelites, they have this incredible story, just a chapter and a half of being delivered, being exited out of slavery, out of Egypt, just a chapter and a half before this chapter here.

And here at the conclusion of our passage in verse 31, we read, Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians. So they feared the Lord and they believed in the Lord and in the servant Moses.

You see, this belief, this trust in God is really in where the stasis, this new arrival of the passage is leading us toward. It's leading towards trust and belief.

[14 : 41] It's leading to verse 31. This post-climactic arrival of the narrative now is all about belief. It's all about trusting in Him. Trust.

Perhaps you as, perhaps you've played the trust game. You know, it's when someone says and challenges you, you know, just stand in front of us, lean back, close your eyes, and just fall backwards and we'll catch you.

And sometimes there's this idea of, am I really, is this person really going to catch me? We play this little trust game and sometimes if you've seen those classic YouTube videos, the person falls and hits their head.

Trust. What does it mean to trust? Well, let me just explain to you a little bit about our text here. Our passage begins with Pharaoh and the Egyptian people in verse 5 that recover quickly from being plundered by the Israelites.

I mean, perhaps they are now realizing that all their wealth is with Israel now. They've now realized that their whole work labor, their force, their workforce has stopped and they have no other nation now to serve them.

[16 : 03] Pharaoh now is set out to recapture the slaves and he realizes that Israel seems a little confused as they're navigating their way through this desert. Israel, they've now through spies have seen that they've come back and perhaps Pharaoh is thinking to himself, well, great, they're lost.

They have no idea where they're going. They went out to worship this God and now it's time to recapture those slaves. I mean, Pharaoh at this point will not be put to shame any further.

I mean, think about it. Here was Egypt, the greatest military army, the world's dominant powerhouse in politics and economics has just seen complete defeat after these ten plagues.

His son, his oldest son, is dead and Pharaoh wants revenge. Now he sends 600 chariots to pursue to get this revenge and Israelites then were overtaken at the seaside.

We see that in our passage. But Pharaoh has forgotten to some degree this God who's proved himself in the previous chapter, hasn't he? I mean, he is so hard-headed and so committed to recapture his own glory, then now he will pursue them.

[17 : 27] And so he has the Israelites right at their mercy, at his mercy. The people cry out, though, with this bitter anger and bitter kind of angst against Moses.

They beg him to let them return to serve the Egyptians rather than to die in the wilderness. And Moses responds and he makes a good kind of word here in verse 13.

Do not be afraid. Stand firm and see the deliverance from the Lord that the Lord will bring to you today. It comes there at a head in verse 13.

Moses has to recapture their minds and their hearts in verse 13. Be silent. Stand firm. Don't you remember what he's done?

How he's proven himself all these years? God has indeed redeemed his people and they were simply to wait, simply just to stand there and wait for his redemption.

[18 : 32] You see, redemption has always been God's work. And now deliverance of his people from this new peril has to be God's work as well.

in a sense what Moses is saying here in verse 13 he's saying listen, haven't you seen his work then? Why is it hard for you to believe today?

And why can't you see that he has proven himself faithful then and he set a precedent of saving and that precedent can never be undermined or broken.

God is a God who saves and he's proven himself victor after every war for the Israelites.

This event once again proves that they, the Israelites are powerless to save themselves and yet God intervenes in this moment.

[19 : 29] He acts in their midst. He parts the sea so that the Israelites can walk through it but when the Egyptians when they follow, when they stubbornly follow through the 600 chariots they all drown.

Pharaoh certainly knows that the Lord, who the Lord is now. Remember? He doesn't know who the Lord was when Moses initially came and asked and pleaded for the people to get out of slavery.

Pharaoh now knows who the Lord is and he has saved his people by defeating their oppressors and he's liberated them and he's shown his sovereign power, his complete rule over all things.

Salvation is won. Salvation is had through God's work. Alone and nothing else.

What does it mean to trust God? It means to utterly and completely put our full confidence in him alone and in nothing else.

[20 : 39] It means to understand that God is in the activity of saving his people day after day and he has proven himself faithful in history and ultimately will prove himself faithful in the present and in the future.

God is a God who has saved and who has acted and in his actions of saving our confidence, our full belief is to be in him alone.

It means to look at him and to see his redemptive act and it's to see and to place all of our trust in his work.

His work. My wife and I, we've been married for over 16 years and out of those 16 years, for five years, we pleaded night and day for children, for children and we cried out and we said, Lord, we want children.

You've got to give us children. We will not be complete without children for some reason. We cried out that way and as we saw other married couples celebrating in their children and yet God has graciously today given us three children through foster care and adoption.

[22 : 06] But we see that work, that little example and illustration of being completely and utterly incapable of having our own and yet God miraculously gives graciously.

Not because of what we've done, not because of our good works, but because of who he is. That's just this tiny illustration for those of you who are in the business world.

We see this day in and day out, don't we? We make this contract and a contract and a plea and agreement and we expect to receive this kind of funds to come in.

God faithfully has proven himself, not to procure our riches, but to demonstrate his power. And to demonstrate so that we would ultimately glory in him.

You see, God is a God who faithfully saves his people. Faithfully save. And so we can trust him. What does it mean to trust him?

[23 : 12] It means that we are to put our complete confidence in his work. Well, now that we've seen what it means to trust in God, now let's look at to answer the second question.

Why do we need to trust God? This is the second question in this passage. You see, I think we need to understand that if we're going to arrive at this answer, we have to be aware of our tendency and even the Israelites' tendency.

What was it that their tendency was to do here? Look at verse 9. It says, the Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's house and chariots and his horsemen and his army and overtook them encamped by the sea.

What's the tendency of the Israelites? It's to look at the immediate temporal situation and to be completely stagnant and fear.

Look at verse 10. When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord, Why do we need to trust in God?

[24 : 27] Why do the Israelites need to trust in God? Because of the great tendency of the human heart that is to fear the temporal situation in our lives.

and to leave us, leave them, leave God's people utterly stagnant and to forget the very work that he has done already.

Now, I do also want to just, on an apologetic level, just, it's human to fear. It's a human reality. The vulnerability of facing those temporal situations and to actually say, I don't know how we can get out of this thing.

we wouldn't be, you can't be not human. That was a double negative there, but you understand what I'm saying. This idea to say, they're silly, verse 10, to fear in this thing.

No, that's the human heart at play in this text to showing us that that is what, how we would have responded if we were there. Imagine that.

[25 : 30] 600 chariots coming at you with full force and full confidence ready to devour. And what's behind you? The sea. You have nowhere to run.

And you have almost a million people with you, treading, trudging through this dust, perhaps dehydrated. And what do you see? Of course you see that army coming.

And our tendency, as it was their reality, is to fear greatly. Look at verse 11. Fear, when they see this impending loss, they respond in fear, but ultimately, verse 11, they get angry.

They said to Moses, verse 11, is it because there were no graves in Egypt? You have taken us away to die in the wilderness. What have you done to bring us, and bringing us out of Egypt?

I mean, complete disdain, complete disregard against God's salvation that was just demonstrated, just a chapter and a half. Complete anger now.

[26 : 43] What does fear do to humans? It leads us to utter anger and rage and malice. And it leads us calloused and bittered and angry.

And it leads us to this illogical, irrational conclusions, doesn't it? So it is there in verse 12.

Is not this what we said to you in Egypt? Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians. Is that really what you wanted? Is that really what they wanted?

430 years of slavery in Egypt and they wanted to actually just, they were fine, they were content in Egypt? Absolutely not.

Chapter 2, we're told that they actually cry out to God, that the intense slavery was so high that they cried out. what do temporal, desperate situations cause God's people?

[27 : 58] It leads us to fear, it leads us to get angry, and it leads us to irrational conclusions. That's the condition of our heart, and that's the condition of my heart.

Why do we need to trust God? We need to trust God because you and I, we place our confidence in so many different things in this world.

For some, it's money. For some, it's career, family, fame, romance, sex, power, comfort, social, and political causes, or even something else.

The human tendency is to have a heart that's an idol factory, that's constantly producing idols and serving these idols, and to falling down and to say, no, God, we have this short-sighted reality.

No, God, I don't remember your saving work, and rather, I place my confidence in my own heart, in my own realities.

[29 : 17] And obviously, the results of finding comfort and identity in all of those things that I just listed, the reality is that it leads to loss of control, it leads to a thousand deaths by the time we die.

So the novelist David Foster Wallace, he said this before he committed suicide, and he spoke these words in the 2005 graduating class in Kenyon College.

Listen to what he says. To a graduating class, everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship.

And the compelling reason for maybe choosing some sort of God or spiritual type thing to worship is that pretty much anything else you worship will eat you alive.

If you worship money and things, if they are where you're trapped in real life, then you will never have enough.

[30 : 27] Never feel you have enough. Worship your body and beauty and sexual allure, and you will always feel ugly. And when time and age starts showing, you will die a million deaths before they finally grieve you.

Worship power, you will end up feeling weak and afraid, and you will need ever more power over others to numb you and your own fears.

Worship your intellect. Being seen as smart, you will end up feeling stupid, a fraud, always on the verge of being found out. But the insidious thing about these forms of worship is their unconscious.

They are our default settings. What's Israel's default settings? To look at the temporal situation that they cannot get out of and to lead them into fear and to lead them into anger and to lead them to irrational conclusions about who the God that actually just has done this incredible work.

And what is the temptation of our hearts and the tendency of our hearts? It's to do the same thing. It's to forget what he's done. We need to trust God because we are constantly inundated by so many other things that lead us astray and lead our hearts away and lead us into a short short-sighted reality and to forget what God has actually done.

[32 : 14] We do this every day. What does it mean to trust God? It's to trust in his saving power. Why do we do it?

Because why do we need to trust God? Lest our own hearts lead us astray. But how do we ultimately trust God?

How is it that this passage is pointing us towards believing and having complete confidence in this God who's created all things? We get to trust God in gratitude to what he's done.

how do we get this trust? We live in complete gratitude to his saving work, to his saving work alone and in nothing else.

And in gratitude to his accomplishments, we live in complete appreciation to that. And our appreciation to his work flows a life of confidence, obedience, and ingratitude.

[33 : 25] How do we trust God? We remember that God provides a mediator for his people. Look at verse 23.

The Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And in the morning watched the Lord in the pillar of fire of cloud, looked down on the Egyptian forces and through the Egyptian forces into a great panic, clogging their chariot wheels.

So they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, let us flee from before Israel. For the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians.

The Lord fights. The Lord proves his power. power. And now the enemy recognizes God's divine, supernatural work.

God's divine, supernatural salvation. And the enemy realizes that. And they start to fear themselves. God intercedes and intervenes to the point where their enemies are now articulating the very truth of what the Israelites had to remember.

[34 : 46] That's the irony of the passage. The Lord fights for his people. Once again, the act of salvation is this utter foreshadowing.

It's this utter view of what God has achieved and what he is going to do in the future through the death and the work of his son, Jesus.

You see, this passage here reminds us of one who will come after Moses. Look at verse 15 here before we move into Jesus.

The Lord said to Moses, why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. Lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground.

Verse 15 reminds us that God uses a human instrument to mediate, to intercede, to stand in place at a moment where he needs his actual tangible presence to remind God's people.

[36 : 07] And verse 15 is this one mediating Moses on behalf of God for God's people, standing to demonstrate God's supernatural power.

Verse 15. Look at verse 26. Then the Lord said to Moses, stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.

So, verse 27, the mediator has a complete obedience, and an immediate obedience, and he stretched out his hands over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared.

And as the Egyptians fled into it, the Lord threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. How do we trust? We trust by seeing in this passage the one who mediates between a holy and awesome God who is frightfully and understandably and logically full of wrath against his enemies.

And God himself uses one to intercede on behalf of God's people. Look at the end of the passage here in verse 30 to 31.

[37 : 35] Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great power of the Lord used against the Egyptians so the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

Moses. His servant Moses. This was an incredible act of God's saving power, and they, the people of Israel, were to simply put their trust and believe, not fear their enemies, but to place their full and utter fear and awe upon God's work and his saving power.

power. If you turn your Bible to 1 Corinthians chapter 10, I just want to just show you one more passage as it relates to God's intended purpose related to this passage for us this morning.

Here the apostle Paul writes, and he wants to remind God's people of that day about God's saving power in history in order to remind them of what God's people are not to desire.

So he writes there in chapter 10, verse 1 of 1 Corinthians, for I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea and all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink for they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them and the rock was Christ.

[39 : 31] Nevertheless, with most of them, God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things took place as examples for us that we might not desire evil as they did.

Why is Exodus 14 in the Bible? Exodus 14 is there in order that we might not have the same tendency of trusting in our own power or in our own position or trusting in the temporal hard situation that might seem as though you cannot get out of it.

Exodus 14 is here to remind us that there is one who is the rock, the Christ, and he himself seeks to have full reign and full rule over his people.

And so it is for us today, we need to trust God because of the one who mediates between God and a rebellious people, and that's the person and work of Jesus.

If what we saw in Exodus 14 was a tangible picture of God's salvation, and so it is for us this morning at this table, a tangible picture of what God has done in the person and work of Jesus.

[41 : 05] God has given us one who mediates so that those who need mediation might have access to his holy and awesome wonder and his glory so that we could be, in a sense, like Moses and see God's glory through the person and work of Christ.

This passage in Exodus 14 is to shake us from our doubt, is to move us from our fear, is to replace our embittered hearts about the temporal situations in our lives, and to lead us into full confidence and full trust in his salvation alone.

And his salvation is given freely to God's people. It's given freely to a people that actually don't deserve it.

That's why this example is there for us. So may you, this morning, trust in his work. Let me pray. My Father, we are thankful, Lord, for how you prove yourself faithful.

We're thankful, Lord, that you remind us, Lord, in this passage, you remind us that our full confidence is to be in you and in you alone.

[42 : 43] And we're thankful now that in faith we could come to this table, this Lord's Supper, and be reminded of your suffering and your death.

And so, Lord, we, in gratitude, live in utter obedience unto you. And we're thankful for your spirit who now intercedes in our behalf and ministers in and through us.

And we pray that you would give your people today resolve to have full confidence in you. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

Amen. Amen.