

# The Long Way is Not Always the Wrong Way

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 02 June 2024

Preacher: Dr. Wes Feltner

[ 0 : 0 0 ] skill skill All right, if you got your Bible, go to Exodus chapter 13.

Exodus chapter 13, continuing, working our way through the book of Exodus. I'm not really sure. I haven't decided yet whether or not we will take a break at some point this summer from the book of Exodus.

Don't worry, we will finish the book, but we might take a break and do a little summer series or something, or we may just continue on through the book of Exodus. This is week 16, I believe, working through the book.

We've just worked through the plagues of Egypt. We've worked through the specific final plague of the death of the firstborn, all the way through the Passover and the memorial that God gives to commemorate that event.

And so we pick up where we left off here in Exodus chapter 13. Are you ready to get after it?

Exodus 13 verse 17. If you're able to stand, please do so.

[ 1 : 3 6 ] You've been like up, down, up. That's almost like we're Catholics. Just kidding, right?

Exodus 13 verse 17. And we'll read down through the end of the chapter, but we'll cover a lot in chapter 14 as well.

Now, when Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near.

For God said, lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt. But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea.

And the people of Israel went out of the land up from Egypt equipped for battle. Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for Joseph had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, God will surely visit you and you shall carry up my bones with you from here.

And they moved on from Succoth and encamped in Etham on the edge of the wilderness. And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.

[ 2 : 5 3 ] The pillar of cloud by day, the pillar of fire by night, did not depart from before the people.

Let's pray together. God, thanks for the time now to worship through the proclamation of your word.

I believe there is so much in this passage to encourage us and instruct us as we too are on our journey of faith and following you in this world.

So come and talk to us. Come and teach us tonight from your word. And we pray it in Jesus' name and God's people said, amen. You can be seated. In his travelogue entitled *Roughing It*, Mark Twain recalls a time when he and his companions were lost.

They were traveling through a snowstorm on their way to Carson City, Nevada. The snow was deep, visibility was difficult, and there were no signs of any road.

So it appeared as though this was an impossible mission. But they mounted their horses, and one of Twain's companions, a man by the name of Ollendorf, said that even though the weather was bad, his travel skills were, quote, as good as any compass.

[ 4 : 0 9 ] So Twain writes, quote, We dropped into his wake, happy and content to follow his lead.

For the next half an hour, they traveled through the brutal conditions of the snowstorm until they came across fresh horse tracks in the snow.

I told you my instincts were as certain as a compass, Ollendorf declared. These tracks will show us the way. Hurry.

Let's join the others. Twain then writes, quote, We put the horses into as much of a trot as the snow would allow.

Before long, it was evident we were gaining on those ahead, for the tracks grew more distinct. We hurried along, and at the end of an hour, the tracks looked newer and fresher.

But what surprised us was the number of travelers ahead seemed to steadily increase. We wondered how so large a party could be traveling at such a time.

[ 5 : 19 ] Somebody suggested it must be a company of soldiers from the fort. So we accepted that solution and jogged on a little faster, close quote.

And sure enough, the faster and further they traveled, the tracks increased in number until an important discovery was made.

Boys, one of the men said, These tracks are our tracks. And then it all sank in.

They'd spent the last two hours going around in circles. Twain writes, quote, Ollendorf's mental compass proved to be a total disgrace.

Listen, anybody relate to that tonight? Oh, I know you do. Anybody ever relate to that feeling like you've been going through life, making progress? You're getting closer to your destination.

[ 6 : 23 ] You're certain you're on the right path, only to discover you've been doing this. You know, just kind of chasing your tail, like running around in circles, dizzy, thinking, Where in the world am I?

Maybe you went hiking and you ended up right back where you started. You spent all that time in school learning things you would never use again.

You know, a lot of people go to college for seven years. I know. They're called doctors. You were involved in that conversation that just went on and on and on for hours. I mean, you stayed up all night talking and accomplished absolutely nothing.

You went swimming and you swam and swam to get further out. And you looked at the shore and you had made no progress. Every single one of us knows what it's like to travel in circles.

I guess what we do is just drive around this circle here. It should be the second left exit. There's a hotel. Hey, look, kids. There's Big Ben and there's Parliament. There it is.

[ 7 : 28 ] There it is. There it is. I know. I can't seem to get over to the left, honey. I'll try next time. Sorry. We'll get out of this jam in a minute. Kids. Big Ben.

Parliament. Again. Kids. We know.

Big Ben. Parliament. Look, kids. Forget it. It's amazing.

It's amazing. I cannot get left. There's Big Ben kids. Parliament. I don't know.

Anybody? Come on. Anybody know what that's like in life? You just, you're running around. You think you're going somewhere and you realize the whole time we've just been traveling in circles.

[ 8 : 30 ] Let me ask you a question. Have you ever felt that way spiritually? Have you ever felt that way in your walk with God? Here's what I mean. That instead of God's will looking like this, it sure feels a lot more like this.

Anybody? And you want to ask God, hey, where are we going? And how much longer till we get there? And why are we going this way?

We know what that's like to feel like God's compass is sometimes a complete disgrace. Amen? Amen? Really?

That was your amen? Amen. Right? That is exactly how Israel feels here in Exodus 13 and 14. Now, remember the context.

The tenth and final plague, that is the death of the firstborn, has come upon all in Egypt. We talked about the fact that the only thing that made Israel exempt from that judgment of death, it was not their nationality.

[ 9 : 36 ] It was not their morality. It wasn't anything that they had done. They were exempt from the judgment of God because of the blood of a substitutionary lamb.

They had applied the blood, and because the blood had been applied, the result was for the first time in 430 years, Israel is now free.

They are no longer slaves. For the first time, they have hope. They have a future. They are bound for the promised land. And just as soon as they are set free, the story takes an unusual, pun intended, turn.

Verse 17. When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was, say it, near.

For God said, lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt. So, now, if you were coming out of Egypt at this moment and you pulled out your cell phone and you pulled up the Google app to get directions, what you would notice is that there's a very short way to get to the

land of the Philistines or to get to the land of Canaan.

[10:53] And this was a very, very common trade route. It was known as the Via Mars. It goes right alongside the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. And so, that was the obvious way.

That was the shortest way. And yet, God doesn't take them that way. He takes them, the yellow line, the long way around. I imagine Israel must be thinking, you know, I know the book of Genesis says you created the heavens and the earth, but have you ever looked at a map?

Like, this is not the way we should be going. And yet, God, oh, I hope you'll listen tonight. God is going to teach them a lesson, and it's a lesson that we have to learn as well.

Are you ready? Are you with me? Here we go. Notice it on the screen. Sometimes, God takes his people down the long road, but never the wrong road.

Sometimes, God takes his people down the long road, but it is never the wrong road. And the question I want to ask tonight, the question I want to ask the text is, why?

[11:58] Why did God take Israel the long way? Why does God sometimes take you the long way? Why the long way to marriage, or the long way to advancement in my job, or the long way in healing from a disease, or the long way to have children?

God, why am I going the long way? Notice, first of all, verse 17 again, that when Pharaoh let the people go, God doesn't lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near, because God said lest they change their minds and see war and return to Egypt.

Now, notice the first thing here is that God takes us the long way many times for our protection. God takes us the long way for our protection.

You notice the text says that God did not take them the way of the Philistines. Now, if you know a little bit about the Old Testament, you've heard of the Philistines before. The Philistines were a people of war.

They were an extremely violent people. In fact, the Philistines later on in the Old Testament will have one of the most famous warriors in all of the Old Testament.

[13:12] You learned about him when you were a little kid. His name is? Goliath. That's exactly right. These were a violent, brutal people. And so God does not take Israel that direction because he's protecting them from war.

Now, you might say, wait, wait, wait, wait. But I thought when you were reading earlier, I heard something in the text about them being equipped for battle. Look at verse 18. Verse 18 says, But God led the people around the way of the wilderness towards the Red Sea, and the people of Israel went up from the land of Egypt, say it with me, equipped for battle.

I don't understand. Wait, wait, wait, wait. Why does God not take them the way of the Philistines because of war, and yet they're equipped for battle?

And I think this teaches a very important point. Are you ready? Here it is. Notice it on the screen.

Just because you're equipped for battle does not mean you're prepared for battle.

Just because you have the weapons does not mean you know how to use them. Israel is equipped, but it's been 430 years since they have been a free people.

[14:29] They have not fought a battle in a long time, and I hope you're listening tonight. They're not ready to go that way. And the same thing is often true for us spiritually.

As a Christian, you have spiritual weapons. Amen? You have the belt of truth. You have the power of prayer. You have the sword of the Spirit, but that doesn't mean you know how to use them.

That doesn't mean you are what the Apostle Paul often talks about, trained in righteousness. That is, you have the weapons, but you haven't developed the ability to use the weapons you have.

And so God protects you because you're not ready. And they're not just only physically not ready. They're not mentally ready.

Look at verse 17 again. When Pharaoh let them go, he didn't lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, although it was near. For God said, lest the people change their, say it, minds when they see war.

[15:37] In other words, the mental psychology of a slave is often pessimism. One sign, one site of battle, and their response is going to be, I quit.

Let's go back. I'm out. In fact, you're going to notice later on in the text, when they see the chariots of Egypt coming after them, that is exactly what they will say to Moses.

Why don't we just go back to Egypt? What's the point, faith family? It's this. Sometimes God takes you the long way because he's protecting you from what you're not ready for.

He's protecting you from what you're not ready for. A situation, you think you're ready for it. God knows you're not. It may be an experience or whatever that might cause you greater harm, and God so loves you, he'll take you the long way to protect you from what you're not ready for. And it's frustrating to you because to you it feels like, God, you're the worst travel agent ever, right? You're like Ollendorf. Your compass is a total disgrace.

[16:46] But I'm here to tell you tonight, and I hope you're listening, just because it's the long way doesn't mean it's the wrong way. Just because it's the long way doesn't mean it's the wrong way.

Here's another reason why God often takes his people the long way. Look at verse 3 of chapter 14. For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, they're 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 hosts, and the Egyptians shall know I am the Lord.

And they did so. Here's the second thing, is that God takes us the long way to show us his power, to show us his power. Now listen, you do not need a background in military history or strategy to know that camping by the sea is the worst place you could camp.

You got the sea to your back, so you can't go that way, so you think. And all you have is open desert in front of you. You have no way to escape.

[17:52] In other words, God has put his people in an impossible situation. They got nowhere to turn. They got nowhere to go. Why?

Why is God doing this? He is setting up on purpose, divine purpose, a situation where the odds are completely against Israel so that they have no choice but God.

We got no other way out. We got no other strategy. God, you're going to have to do something.

You're going to have to take over. We cannot save ourselves.

Oh, that is exactly where God wants you to be. And it is all over the Bible. Do you remember Gideon when he kept downsizing the army until it got so small there's no way we could possibly win the battle?

And they did. Do you remember Jesus calling fishermen? You don't change the world with fishermen. Watch him. Or the book of Acts. How there's no way this could take off and take over the Roman Empire and spread to the ends of the earth.

[18:59] God has a way of putting us in situations where we know we have nothing left but him. I got no way out but God.

And Moses tells us here that what Yahweh is doing is he is ultimately putting Pharaoh in checkmate. Pharaoh is going to observe Israel and he's going to say they must be wandering. They must be confused. They must be disoriented. They must be, I don't know, drunk. You fellas been doing a bit of boozing, have you?

Sucking back on grandpa's old cough medicine? No. Oh, no, sir. No, no. No. Something is wrong with Israel. They're not acting like the kind of people that had just been set free.

There must be something going on here. And what God is doing is setting Egypt up for one final act of judgment.

[19:56] Here's the point, faith family. Notice it on the screen. Sometimes you won't see the power of God until everything's stacked against you. Are you with me tonight? I think I'm more excited than you are tonight, but that's okay.

You're not going to see the power of God until everything is stacked against you. Let me say it a different way. You'll never see that there is nothing impossible with God until you're in an impossible situation.

And when you're in an impossible situation and God does his thing, what do you see? His power, his glory, his might. And so God intentionally, oh, divinely leads them to this camping spot to demonstrate his power.

Let me say it another way. Oh, this will preach. Here it is. The Lord, if the Lord does not camp you by the sea, you will never see him part it. Yes, the shorter path would be quicker.

But are you listening? In the longer path, you get more God. The shorter path will get you to the destination quicker.

[21:12] But the longer path gets you more God. And notice this here, faith family. The ultimate destination is not the land of Canaan. The ultimate destination is the knowledge of God.

Listen, our ultimate destination is not a place called heaven. Our ultimate destination is the glory and presence of God because that's what makes heaven heaven.

And so if he takes you the longer way to show you more of himself, then that way is the right way. You see, it may be the long road, but it's not the wrong road.

And Israel is going to see more of God's power as a result of being camped in a place you'd never choose to camp. In fact, the text tells us one of the things that Israel will see of God.

Look in verse 13 of chapter 14. Verse 13 says, Moses said to the people, Fear not and stand firm. See the salvation of the Lord, which will work for you today.

[ 22 : 18 ] For the Egyptians whom you see today, you will never see again. Now watch. The Lord will, everybody say it with me, fight for you.

And you have only to be silent. What's going on here? Listen, I don't have a lot of time to unpack this, but for the very first time, we are introduced to a theme that is going to be extremely common in the Old Testament.

And that is the fact that the Lord is a warrior. The Lord fights for his people. And so Moses is like, I want you to get this in your minds.

Moses is saying, listen, I know there's a shorter way, but that's the wrong way. We're taking the long way here and we're camped by the sea. Why? Because God's going to show us something. What's he going to show us?

How he fights for his people in impossible situations and does for them what they do not have the power to do.

[ 23 : 19 ] Israel is going to see the power of God. Here's a second reason or third reason why God takes his people the long way. Look at verse 10 of chapter 14.

This is 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. Here's the third reason why he often takes us the long way. It's for our progression. Our progression. Listen, what does camping by the sea require?

Are you listening tonight, faith family? Come on. If you've zoned out, what do you do? Zone back in, okay? Here we are. What's going to have to happen by camping at the sea? Israel is going to have to face their fears.

Israel is going to have to face the thing they're afraid of. They're going to have to face the thing they're terrified of. And the psalmist even says that Israel did not handle this first test well as they're coming out of Egypt.

[ 24 : 20 ] Look at Psalm 106, verse 7. Our fathers, when they were in Egypt, did not consider your wondrous works. They did not remember the abundance of your steadfast love.

Instead, they rebelled by the sea at the Red Sea. Yet, even in their rebellion, you saved them for your namesake that his might might be known as mighty power.

In other words, they failed this test. They let fear overtake their faith. It is very remarkable how much it takes us to learn.

Amen? I'm glad you amen that. I'm glad I'm not the only one who's a little stubborn, who it takes a bit to learn. Because, listen, listen, don't you, come on, don't you want to just say, hey, I've been in this series 16 weeks.

We have seen everything that's happened in the first 13 chapters of the book. Like, oh my goodness, we have just witnessed the plagues, specifically the 10th plague of the death of the firstborn. Like, do you know all of the things we've seen God do?

[ 25 : 24 ] How could you doubt him now? And yet they do. They do. And so do I. And so do you.

It takes so much for us to overcome our fears. They have just experienced the Passover. And they're afraid. Do you know, this will help you if you're ever doing Bible trivia, do you know what the most common command in all of the Bible is?

The most frequent command is, fear not. There is something about us that gets so afraid when we're dealing with the things of the world.

And notice Israel's complaint in verse 11 of chapter 14. Israel kind of, as they have before, lets it out on Moses. They said to Moses, is it because there's no graves in Egypt that you've led us away to die in the wilderness?

What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? Is it not what we said when you were in Egypt? Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians.

[ 26 : 33 ] For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness. Did you know how many times in those few verses, Egypt, Egypt, Egypt, the Egyptians is said?

In other words, oh man, this will preach. Somebody say preach, preacher. Here it is. Look at it on the screen. It only took one night to get Israel out of Egypt. But it's going to take a lifetime to get Egypt out of Israel.

It took one night, one night to set them free geographically. It's going to take the rest of their life to set them free internally. Because they have so much fear and insecurity and doubt all inside.

Come on, tell me this isn't relevant to you. Prone to wonder. Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love. So you know why God camps them here by the sea?

So that they will face their fears. So that they will grow and learn how to live by faith and not by fear.

[ 27 : 41 ] Notice that on the screen, faith family, the road is often long because we have so much to learn. I know there's a shorter way.

But God wants to take his people the long way for their protection, to demonstrate his power, and for your growth and progression in faith.

Now, when God does this, there's some things for us to keep in mind. Are you still with me?

Everybody still with me? So that's why God often will take his people down the long way. But when we're going the long way and it feels like we're running in circles and we don't know what God is doing, there's some things we need to be reminded of along this journey.

First, look at verse 19 of chapter 13. Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for Joseph had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, God will surely visit you and you shall carry up my bones with you from here.

So when God does take us the long way, here's what you can know. He always fulfills his promise. He always fulfills his promise. Now, that's a verse that might be easy to skip over, but it's actually very important.

[ 28 : 50 ] It's a reference back to Genesis chapter 50, where Joseph on his deathbed asked that his bones would be taken to the land of Canaan. Now, that might seem like a weird kind of request, but the reason why Joseph does that is because he knew that God had promised them the land.

And he's saying, listen, God has promised the land of Canaan, which means God is going to give us the land of Canaan, and I want to make sure you take my bones there because that's where they belong.

It is in a very small way reminding us that God is faithful to the promise he made to Abraham, and he will be faithful to the promise he has made to you.

Amen? Listen, you want to talk about a long road? I mean, just think about Joseph's life. Holy smokes! Joseph's life was anything but a straight line.

It zigzagged everywhere. God, what are you doing? Have you ever looked at a map? Like, he's going to get his man right where he wants him to be, and he takes him the long way.

[ 29 : 55 ] And then you think just from Joseph all the way to the time where now they are free from Egypt. It has been hundreds of years. And by the way, by chapter 14, they're still not even in Canaan yet.

We have 40 more years to go. This is going to be a really long sermon series, okay? 40 years to go, and we're still not there. And you know what? It just kind of hit me. Oh, man, this hit me, and I want you to think about it.

I kind of have to keep going for time's sake. But I thought this was really helpful. Notice it on the screen. As a human being, 100 years is like an eternity. That's like forever. But with God, everything is eternity.

And this is what really helped me. I hope this will serve you. I hope it will encourage you. I'm thinking, 430 years, that's a long road. Amen? Like, that's a really long time.

And then it hit me. Some of you are mathematicians. I'm from Tennessee, so I'm not. I don't have enough toes. What's 430 years?

[ 30 : 56 ] What percentage of that is that in light of eternity? Like, maybe a second? And here's the point. You think it's taken forever.

You think this 430 years couldn't be any longer. But in the plan and purposes of God, it's a really short amount of time.

So listen. He's going to fulfill his promise. He's going to do what he promised he would do. And it may feel like to you the long road.

But it's not the wrong road. It's right where God wants you to be. Here's a second encouragement. And look at verse 21 of chapter 13.

Okay, we've got about three hours left. We're getting close. Verse 21. And the Lord went before them by a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night and a pillar of fire to give them light.

[ 31 : 59 ] They might travel by day and night. The pillar of cloud by day, the pillar of fire by night, did not depart from before the people. So here's the next encouragement. And that is, when God does take us the long way, he will always provide.

He will always provide. What we're introduced here in these verses is the first GPS ever. Right? Right. You thought, you know, your GPS is awesome.

Well, this is more awesome. Okay? I mean, how awesome must it have been to have a cloud by day that is guiding them and also protecting them in the desert.

And then at night, he's going to give them a pillar of fire that guides them and gives them direction so that they can travel at night. And God is what? Giving his people exactly what they need to get them where they're supposed to go.

It really is a reference almost back similar to the burning bush that Moses experienced in Exodus chapter 3. And what all of this is doing is saying, listen, I know you think you're going the long road, but I'm going to provide what you need.

[ 33 : 03 ] I know that you have a better direction in mind, but I promise you, if you will stay with me, I will give you what you need along the way. And the same is true for us, Faith Family.

It may be the long road to marriage or promotion or whatever it may be, God promises to give you what you need in the meantime. Look at Philippians 4.19. It says that my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Amen? Now, I don't like taking verses out of context. That verse is given as Paul is talking about a people who have sacrificially given. And because of their sacrificial giving, God is saying, you can give that way knowing that God is going to take care of you.

He is going to supply your needs. And I would remind you, Faith Family, we have been given something greater than a cloud. We've been given the Holy Spirit of God.

Amen. And we have been given the Word of God to guide us along the path. One more encouragement that we can remember when God takes us the long way in verse 17 of chapter 13.

[ 34 : 11 ] There's a lot in this passage. Verse 17 says, when Pharaoh let the people go, who did the leading? God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, although it was near.

Here's the next encouragement is that when God takes us the long way, know this, he always has a purpose. Do you believe that? No, I mean, do you really believe it? No, I mean, do you really believe it?

No, I mean, do you really, really believe it? That when God takes you the long way, he has a purpose behind it. And we've already seen what some of the purpose is, that God had a purpose in protecting them from the Philistines.

God had a purpose in showing his power over the Egyptians. God has a purpose in their progression from fear to faith. But there's actually another purpose. Oh, man, this is so important. Come on, if you've fallen asleep, wake up. This is good. And I want to show it from the map again. Now, if Israel goes the short way, if they go the way of the Philistines, what is it that they're going to miss?

[ 35 : 14 ] What is not on the short path? Answer, Mount Sinai. And what happens at Mount Sinai? What happens at Mount Sinai is this.

Israel goes from the chosen people of God to the covenant people of God. Notice it on the screen. Israel goes from the chosen people of God to the covenant people of God.

God had already chosen them as a nation. But he is going to enter into covenant with them in the Mosaic covenant, which happens where? At Mount Sinai.

God has a purpose in saying, no, I want you camped by the sea. You know there's a shorter way. Yes, I know. I kind of created the whole world. But I want you here because I'm going to show you my power.

I'm going to show you there's nothing impossible with me. And we're going to cross over. Sorry to ruin the story. But if you haven't already read that, catch up. Right? I'm going to lead you across the Red Sea.

[ 36 : 17 ] And I'm going to take you to Sinai. And there you will be my people. Come on. I got a purpose here. I got a plan. I know where I'm taking you.

And it may feel like the long road, but it's not the wrong road. Theologian and country music singer Darius Rucker. You may know him as Hootie.

Hootie and the Blowfish. He sings this. He sings. I won't sing it, but I'll say it. I got a baby sleeping in my bedroom and her mama laughing in my arms. There's a sound of rain on the rooftop and the game's about to start.

I don't really know how I got here, but I'm sure glad I did. And it's crazy to think that one little thing could have changed all of this. Maybe it didn't turn out like I planned.

But maybe that's why I'm such a lucky man. For every stoplight I didn't make, every chance I did or I didn't take, all the doors I had to close, all the things I knew but I didn't know, thank God for all I missed.

[ 37 : 23 ] Because it led me here like this. Now, take out luck and insert the divine providence of God and Hootie's onto something, okay?

He is. He is. Because what I'm saying is, it may have felt like the long way from Israel, but it brought them right where God wanted them to be at Sinai.

Where they become God's covenant people. When he takes you the long way, know that he's going to provide.

Know that he has a purpose. Know that all of this is a part of his plan. It feels like the long road, but it's not the what? Wrong road.

Now, what do we do in the meantime? And we'll close with this. What do we do in the meantime? Verse 13 and we're done. Of chapter 14, Moses steps up and he says to the people of Israel, fear not.

[ 38 : 28 ] Stand firm and see the salvation of the Lord, which he's going to work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you will never see again.

The Lord will fight for you and you have only to be silent. What is our response?

And can we just say like, way to go, Moses, buddy. Like, man, I remember the dude back earlier in the book. They're like, oh, I can't speak. And send somebody else. You know, he's making, and now he's someone who's gone from fear to faith.

And everybody around him is afraid. And he's saying, stand firm. See the salvation of the Lord before you. In other words, when God does take us the long way, we must be persistent.

We are to remain persistent. Steadfast in faith, knowing that he will fulfill his promise. He will provide what we need. He does have a purpose in all of it.

[ 39 : 32 ] So you stand firm in your faith and let God fight for you. And trust me, when you're at the water's edge and you got Egypt coming at you and all that fear begins to well up inside you, the last thing you want to do is stand your ground.

Amen? I got a better idea. Run! Like, it reminded me, some of you remember me sharing this like years ago. You know, like, I have a tradition with my kids where we do things called daddy days. And what that essentially is, is that my kids individually get to pick something within reason that we can go and do together. And we've made a lot of great memories doing this. And my son will remember this.

He's running the slides. One time he wanted to go fishing and camping in Canada. And so I'm doing my research for all of that, which I would normally do. And I came across an article, a real article about what you should do if you're camping in Canada and you encounter a bear.

Because I was already kind of freaking out about this anyways. And so this is literally what the article recommended. I'm not making any of this up. It's all true. Canada is home of both grizzly bears and black bears.

[ 40 : 41 ] And you can run into bears everywhere, whether in town or the remote country. And I thought that's really encouraging. I just walk out of the gas station and be like, bear! Like, good pick, son.

Way to go, all right? Both grizzly bears and black bears don't like surprises. So when you're in the woods, be loud. You know, like, sing a camp song.

So my survival is based on my singing skills? Like, now I'm really in trouble, okay? Now, if spotted by a bear, speak to the bear in a low, calm voice.

Slowly raise your arm in the air. Don't look it in the eye. If that doesn't work, okay, if that doesn't work, I'm dead, okay? But if that doesn't work, another option is to play dead.

So now I'm depending on my acting skills. But only play dead if you meet a grizzly, because a black bear will see you as a free lunch. It's not encouraging.

[ 41 : 40 ] Remember that many bears charge as a bluff. They may run at you and then veer off at the last second or stop abruptly. Stand your ground until the bear stops.

Then slowly back away. No chance. No chance. No chance. I'm out.

Like, imagine. So picture in your mind, bear, big bear charging at you. And here's what you're supposed to do, according to the experts. The experts say what you should do is remember that one place you read that bears veer off at the last second.

Sometimes they stop abruptly. And you are to stand your ground until the bear stops. You know that's insane.

And here's why. Look at it on the screen. It's really hard to stand firm when everything in you wants to run. It's really hard to stand firm when all the fear inside says, get out of here.

[ 42 : 58 ] And what God is saying to his people is, listen, trust that I am your warrior. I will fight for you.

All you need to do is stand in what you know. And I will deliver you. Amen. Spurgeon writes, I dare say you will think it is an easy thing to stand still.

But it is one of the postures which a Christian soldier must learn. I find marching much easier. It is perhaps the first thing we learn in the drill of human armies, but it is one of the most difficult to learn under the captain of our salvation.

And Mr. Spurgeon is right. It's the hard thing to do in the moment is to stand firm, to let faith overcome your fear.

But are you listening? I'm done. Are you listening? That's how you get free. That's how you get free. Every one of you, and I mean almost every one of you or those that are watching online, every one of you has a story about how God has led you down a path.

[ 44 : 15 ] And at the time of God's leading, it made no sense at all. Right? It was not the obvious path, and it was certainly not your preferred path.

In fact, it probably felt as though you were just walking in circles. But Exodus 13 and 14 is a reminder that God often guides his people down the long road.

The long road. The long road. Because I could ask some questions like, why did you wait over 4,000 years?

For Jesus to be born. And why did it take 33 years? Before you go to the cross. And then when he finally did go to the cross, why a long, suffocating death?

Couldn't you have done it a shorter way? But listen to Galatians chapter 4 and verse 4. When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son to redeem those who were under the law so that we might receive adoption as son.

[ 45 : 41 ] Everybody right here. Everybody listen. Do you know when Jesus was born? The right time. Do you know when Jesus was crucified?

The right time. Do you know when Jesus was resurrected from the dead? At the right time. It may have been the long road, but it was not the wrong road.

Whatever part of the journey you're on, remember tonight the words of Moses. Moses, don't be afraid. Stand firm.

And behold the salvation of the Lord. And all God's people said. Amen. Let's pray. Lord, you know, throughout this series, we've thought about how, is the book of Exodus really relevant for our life? But your word is true and relevant every day. And I know there are people in this room that are on a path that to them it doesn't make any sense.

[ 46 : 46 ] It is not the path they would choose. And quite honestly, they feel like something is wrong with your compass. So thank you for the gift of your grace to give us passages like this to remind us that we are not the first to feel this way.

And that the long road is not the wrong road. You may be protecting us from something we don't even know.

You may be trying to grow in us an area of righteousness or godliness or deepen our faith so that we don't live in fear. It's not for us to know.

It's for us to trust and to stand firm in faith and know that you are our warrior. You have fought for us the ultimate battle and won.

When Jesus walked out of the grave, you will fight for us now. And nothing reminds us of that more than the bread and the juice.

[ 47 : 55 ] As we enter now into a time of remembrance of our warrior who fought for us by giving himself.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.