

Exodus 14-15

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[0 : 00] And we've been walking through, step by step, sort of the high points, the summary, a survey of Genesis and Exodus.

! Understanding the beginnings of our faith.! Thank you, Jordan.

He sent Joseph ahead to prepare a way to save the whole world, actually through a great famine. Joseph's family essentially saves the known world and preserves this line through which the whole world will be blessed.

And as they grow, they become sort of a threat to the nation of Israel. They're so large, and so they're enslaved. And they cry out to God. God sends a Savior through a prophet.

He sends great signs that judge the nation. And eventually, as we saw last week, the last sign is a sign of judgment, not just a sign of a warning.

[1 : 13] But the last one is a sign of judgment through which Israel escapes, and Pharaoh says, go. So, this week, we're going to see what it looks like when these people, God's people, go out and leave the slavery.

And we're going to see how they respond. We're going to see how we sometimes respond to the Lord as well. See, at the end of the Passover, the Passover, we have the Lord visiting death on Egypt.

And so, at the end of chapter 12, we see Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron by night and said, up. Go out from among my people, both you and the people of Israel, and go. Serve the Lord, as you have said.

Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone. And bless me also. So, today, we're going to walk out of the land of Egypt with God's people.

And I want you to be encouraged. I want you to be convicted a little bit, but I also want you to be encouraged. This is a story of great grace. So, let's pray. Father, as we walk alongside your people, as they walked out of slavery, Lord, I pray that you would help us to see just how great our salvation is.

[2 : 42] The salvation to which theirs pointed. And Father, that you would help us to live out of that each and every day. We pray that in Christ's name.

Amen. When Pharaoh let the people go, this is chapter 13, verse 17. 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. And hold on to that thought, returning to Egypt. But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness towards the Red Sea.

And the people of Israel went up out of the land of 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 at 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.

[3 : 53] The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people. There's something here that we are just going to graze, but I want you to see it.

Because as we look through God's grand story, the story that leads us to a man on a cross for us, there is something very particular and very special about this God who dwells with and among his people, visibly even.

This goes back all the way to the garden. We see in Genesis chapter 3, the Lord was walking among his people in the garden. We saw this when he made a covenant with Abraham.

In Genesis chapter 15, the Lord was a burning lamp and a fire through the cut animals. In Exodus 3, he appeared to Moses in the burning bush.

Here in chapter 13 of Exodus, this is a tower of smoke and of fire. When the tabernacle is built, when the Lord dwells among his people, in the same way that they dwell in the land, he fills the temple when it is first made with smoke.

[5 : 12] And again, when the tabernacle gives way to the temple, a permanent place of residence, God's glory fills it with smoke. And then, when God's people abandon him, we see right before the exile, in the book of Ezekiel, we see Ezekiel has a vision where the smoke leaves.

And even when the Lord brings them back to Israel, and the second temple is made, his glory does not come back in a cloud. But, the last word we have in the Old Testament, before there's 400 years of silence, is in the book of Malachi, the final book of the Old Testament.

Behold, I send my messenger and he will prepare a way for me. That's John the Baptist. And the Lord whom you seek, will suddenly come to his temple.

And that is just a foretaste of Christ coming. And he goes to the temple and he cleanses it. Right? So that is just a brief picture. And I couldn't come here to this passage and not point this out to us. That this God who dwells among his people, he was with them and for them.

[6 : 31] There's something beautiful about it. And it is a picture of the last day. We see now that God's dwelling place is with his people. The closing chapters of Revelation.

And so, they are walking out of Egypt with the God who saved them from their slavery. If you had been rescued from the foremost world power, as Egypt was the world power of its day, if your God had embarrassed and defeated their gods, if your God stood by you in a tower of fire and smoke, never departing, never ceasing, how would you feel?

Would that put a bounce in your step? Would that put, you know, some steel in your spine? Well, here's how they reacted.

As we walk into chapter 14. And the Lord said to Moses, Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-Haharoth, between Migdal, the sea, and Baal-Zephon.

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.

[7 : 58] And I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord. And that is something very familiar to us. And so they did.

When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, in the mind of Pharaoh, and his servants was changed towards 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 600 chosen chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he pursued the people of Israel, where the people of Israel were going out defiantly.

And the Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them and camped at the sea by Piharoth, in front of Baal-Zephon.

And so what we see here is that the Lord has allowed a great salvation for his people, yet they are pursued. Now, what would you be feeling right now?

[9 : 08] I hope that you would be feeling we just we just kicked their butts, right? Our God has shown his incredible superiority over Pharaoh and Pharaoh's false gods and Pharaoh's ways.

If you haven't noticed, there's this pillar of cloud and fire protecting us, leading us, guiding us. Really? You're coming after us?

Well, it's not exactly how they responded. 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. 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 in 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. We don't forget like that, do we?

[10 : 25] I said to Moses, Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness?

There's never been any bitterness in your heart, is there? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? Saved you, maybe?

Is this not what we said to you in Egypt? Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians. No, that's definitely not what you said in Egypt.

That's definitely not what you said. Exodus chapter 2, verse 23. The people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. You never, I never, we never, look back and twist the facts just a little, do we? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.

[11 : 36] I think they're forgetting something. Did he promise, I will save you from slavery and leave you in the wilderness? Or did he say, I will save you from slavery and take you to a land of milk and honey?

See, there's a promised land in front of that. But they don't have eyes to see it anymore. See, guns people look ugly here, don't they?

their fear breaks out in foolishness, in forgetfulness, in ungratefulness, in bitterness, in twisting the truth about what has actually happened in their lives.

And I wonder, do we as Christians also do these things when we think of our salvation, or better yet, when we don't think of our salvation?

See, Israel was saved from actual bondage, physical slavery. And that's not really our case, but the Lord has set us free from sin and death.

[12 : 48] But oftentimes, I think, we see the world around us and react in the same way, with the same fear, and the same foolishness. I know I do. Do we look back with fondness at our old life?

Maybe with nostalgia. Do we look at unsaved people and say, man, I wish I was having that much fun? When Erin and I were engaged, she was, she spent that year in an orphanage in Peru.

I remember one day she was, we were talking about some of the things that she was witnessing and seeing and the brokenness in their lives, and she told me about these two teenagers that, at the, at the orphanage who were having sex, and, you know, you know what my first reaction was? I was jealous. I was like, I want to be having sex, like, you know, like, that was my reaction. It wasn't, man, that is brokenness.

That is just such brokenness. There's no joy in that. But, my reaction wasn't sadness over the brokenness.

[14 : 08] It was envy over the fleeting pleasures that they were experiencing. And, all sin is like that. All of it. Promiscuity is not joy.

It's squandering something beautiful. It's pleasurable only in the same way that vandalism is. Anger is not power.

It's actually being powerless before your own emotions. Greed is not gain. Greed is the inability to ever be satisfied.

St. Augustine said, our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you, Lord. See, don't envy the licentiousness, the sinful habits of the world.

Sin is not freedom, it is bondage. bondage that the Lord has set us free from. Don't ask to go back to Egypt.

[15 : 20] See, if you're looking to find your pleasure in the old sinful patterns of the world, you're turning back to Egypt. Israel wanted to return to slavery for their bodies, and we want to return to slavery for our souls.

So, when we look at this response, we see that God's people are frightened by an incoming army who wouldn't be scared, really.

And in verse 10, it tells us that they cried out to the Lord. But what comes out of their mouth is really a cry against the Lord, isn't it? And even more, God isn't mentioned in their cry.

They're talking to Moses. They're yelling at him. They said, to Moses, verse 11, not 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 and all the rest of that.

What's missing in their response here, in their thoughts here, in what they're saying here? It says they cried out to the Lord, but he's nowhere in what they say.

[16 : 35] And that's the problem. When men and women go to seminary and study pastoral counseling, one of the very first things, one of the most basic things in pastoral counseling is once we've understood where someone is, if they're suffering, if they are struggling with a sin, if there's anything going in their lives, they need to reach out for help.

The very first thing is to ask them, once they've said the story, where was God in that? So often when we need help, when we are hurting, when we are struggling, when we are listless, when we don't have a place to go, it's because we've forgotten about God, just like Israel has here.

And so when an army is bearing down on you, whether that is a suffering in your life, or whether that is temptation and sin, have you forgotten God?

Are we standing on a seashore, hedged between a rock and a hard place, right? Nowhere to go, and an army bearing down, have we forgotten that God is there with us? If you had a God who sent a prophet to you, who sent mighty judgments on your oppressors, who liberated you from the strongest power in the world, if you had a God who led you forward in a tower of fire and smoke, if you had a God who had done all of that for you, how could you forget him in your next moment of trial, your next trouble?

That's what Israel did in that's what I think we do all the time when we are scared. And so that's what Moses reminds them of, based on what they've seen in the very recent past.

[18 : 38] They shouldn't be grumbling, they should be asking for, they should be expecting the 11th plague, the next miracle, the next deliverance.

And that's exactly where he's going. Verse 13, 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. You have only to be silent. And that is the pattern that has happened for their deliverance all up to this point.

They did not lift a finger to be liberated from Egypt. The Lord fought for them. And friends, that is the gospel message, is it not? Our sin brought condemnation and there was nothing we could do.

But God fought for us. He went to the cross. And so here Moses injects God back into their thoughts. They didn't have to fight to get out of Egypt. God did all the fighting.

[19 : 49] He had shown up in huge ways, miracle after miracle. And friends, we have a bigger miracle to look back on. Yes, theirs was more visible.

Turning the Nile to blood is more visible. But what is our salvation? We were dead.

The sins and trespasses in which we once walked according to the ways of the world. God raised us up with Christ. Friends, every testimony of Christian conversion is a miracle.

The dead being raised. That is a greater miracle. A greater miracle than any of the ten plagues. A greater miracle than the one we are about to see in the parting of the sea.

And so when we look back we have something so much grander, so much greater to base our hope. The Lord said to Moses, why do you cry to me?

[21 : 06] 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. 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 host, 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. 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.

[22 : 28] 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.

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 their horsemen, all of the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained.

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. Egyptians and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. So friends, we see how great our God is. Now what is their response?

[23 : 50] 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.

when we face real troubles, armies bearing down on us, oceans ahead of us, there is a Savior who has delivered us and who promises that he will.

He doesn't do it a moment too soon, in this case, and in many times far, far later than we would like. But he is powerful and he is for us.

He has shown that at his cross, has he not? So what does the future hold? We won't read all of chapter 15, but we'll read a short bit.

The future contains the praises of his people. And Moses and the people sang this song to the Lord, saying, I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously.

[25 : 14] The horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my song. And he has become my salvation.

This is my God and I will praise him. My father's God and I will exalt him. You were saved to dwell with God.

We see that in a pillar of smoke and fire. And to worship him. You can't do that unless you've been reconciled to him first.

And so if you don't belong to Christ, there's nothing, just like the Israelites, there's nothing you can do that gets God on your side. There's nothing you can do to make him save you.

He opened up a way to the promised land through the waters. He did it sovereignly of his own accord because of his great mercy and love. And he offers a way to a greater promised land, one that that one points to.

[26 : 20] he has opened up a way to heaven. Not by parting a sea, but by shedding his blood on the cross for us.

The way is open. And he calls us to a narrow way, just like they walked through a narrow sea. It's a way of repentant faith, and the way is open.

Friends, walk away from Egypt. From the power, from its false promises, from the fading pleasures that it offers, and cast yourself on Christ.

And if you already belong to him, don't look back at Egypt and envy them. Sin is not the good life.

And when you walk through trouble, when the chariots close in on you, don't respond out of fear like Israel did.

Respond out of great expectation, knowing that he has already worked the miracle of reconciling you to himself, of raising you from the dead, of giving you a new heart.

[27 : 34] When you walk through trouble, instead ask for the 11th plague. Ask for the parting of the seas. When you walk through trouble, remember that God is with you.

we said earlier that this theme of smoke and fire indicating God's presence is a big one in the Bible. I didn't mention one of them. The day of Pentecost, where God settles as if by tongues of fire on his people. Lord is with us.

Don't be the person who cries out to a friend, to your community group, to a pastor, and doesn't bring God to mind at all. If we tell our stories of our troubles, if we tell it to ourselves, if we tell it to our friends, and God isn't a part of it, there's something really wrong there, because he is a part of our stories.

And finally, just like Israel, we worship. We have a greater salvation than Israel experienced that day.

[28 : 52] He kept them alive. But for us, he has made us alive. He has raised us from the dead with his son. He preserved their earthly lives, but he has raised our souls from death.

Praise his holy name. Let's pray. Lord, we will sing to you.

you have triumphed gloriously. You are our strength and our song. You have become our salvation. You are our God, and we will praise you. We will exalt you. Father, may we walk forward each and every day knowing that you are for us, that you have saved us.

Do not make us timid. Do not let us be fearful. Do not let us look back at Egypt and desire it.

[30 : 11] Lord, give us hearts that seek after you and are firm and confident knowing that you are powerful and that you are for us.

We pray these things in Christ's name who saved us and raised us from the dead. Amen. Thank you.