

Title: Extravagant Hope: The Lord Fights For Us

Text: Exodus 14:13-14

Date: Aug 23, 2020 at FBCW

Read the Scripture out-loud together.

INTRO. Have you ever felt your back is totally against the wall?

- Bills are due, overdue → and you can't pay.
- The doctors say, "There's nothing more we can try."
- False rumors spread about you...and people believe it.
- Spouse abruptly says, "It's over, I want out."
- Bank says, "We are foreclosing on your house."
- Assignment is due...you're unprepared...it's overwhelming.
- Addiction/abuse is squeezing you...you feel trapped.

One big theme in the Bible? When your back is against the wall...God is faithful.

STORY. The children of Israel were imprisoned as slaves in Egypt for over 400 years.

- Their ancestor Joseph passed away.
- A new king rose to power who did not know Joseph or Joseph's God (Exod 1:8).

Things went downhill quite quickly for the Israelites.

- The Egyptians saw how quickly the Israelites were multiplying/growing.
- They shrewdly took advantage of this vulnerable population.
 - They took away their rights.
 - Forced them into hard labor.
 - Put taskmasters over Israelites who beat them, threatened them.

As the people were beat down, they lifted up their cries/prayers to God.

Exod 2:23-25, *Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and God saw the Israelites, and God knew.*

God's plan was to send Israel a Deliverer – his name was Moses. We could make this entire sermon about Moses's uniqueness and unfitness for the job!

- Born to Israelite parents...put in a basket...adopted by the princess...raised in Egypt!
- Committed murder...runs away.
- Sheepherder in desert for 40 years...terrible stutterer...
- God says, "*This is just the man I want!*"

Lesson for us all:

- God isn't nearly as *impressed* with human achievements as we are. (Who we award?)
- God isn't nearly as *turned off* by human error/failure as we are. (Who we throw away?)
- All God wants from us is a humble, loving, obedient heart!

God sends Moses to be his spokesperson on Israel's behalf before the wicked tyrant of Egypt, a man called Pharaoh.

- Moses was given this objective: tell Pharaoh to let God's people go free.
- This wasn't easy: Pharaoh was hard hearted.
- God sent a series of plagues: *water to blood...frogs...lice/gnats...flies...dead livestock...boils...hail...locusts...darkness....death of firstborn son.*

Only after the death of the firstborn does Pharaoh relent and let the people go. And yet → Israel was spared every plague – God's protection over them became known as "The Passover."

God led Israel forward with a 1) cloud during the day and 2) a pillar of fire at night.

This is where today's text – Exodus 14 – picks up with the story.

- Moses was commanded to take the people into the wilderness near the Red Sea.

Exod 13:17 → a more direct path would have taken them near the Philistines...and God knew the Israelites would fear being in a battle/war.

- (KEY: God is known for not doing what human logic expects!)

Exod 14:3 → Pharaoh thinks Israel is wandering around lost in the desert. He views them as "trapped"

- Pharaoh regrets letting Israel go. His heart is calloused/hardened (14:4-5).

Exod 14:5-9 → Pharaoh assembles his elite army, including 600 lead chariots, and he pursues Israel to overtake them.

Exod 14:10-12 → Israel sees Egypt fast approaching – and melts down emotionally (14:10-12).

- They were terrified and they cried out:
- *Were there not enough graves in Egypt? Did you bring us out here to die?*
- *You drug us out here and we're sick of your decisions.*
- *Better for us to be slaves in Egypt than dead in this desert.*

But in Exod 14:13-14, we see the pinnacle of this miraculous story! Moses' words to the people:

1. "Don't be afraid" (v 13a). Fear not
 - a. Puritans used to say: If we fear God (trust him, revere him, believe in him) – then you should fear nothing else.

2. “Stand firm and see” (v 13b) Get ready to watch, see the salvation of the Lord.
 - a. Make sure you are prepared for the right perspective.
 - b. Position yourself to see God’s hand of power/deliverance.
 - c. ILLUS: like Zacchaeus in the tree.

3. “The Lord will fight for you, and you must be quiet” (v 14).
 - a. Some translations say: hold your peace...be still...do not move.

I love Charles Spurgeon’s commentary on Exod 14:14 –

- Despair says – lie down and die.
- Cowardice says – retreat and run.
- Presumption says – march out onto the sea.
- Impulsiveness says – do something, stir about.
- Faith says – “*The Lord will fight for me...I will keep my eyes on him.*”

Big Idea. Exodus 14:14, “The Lord will fight for you, and you must be quiet.”

Lessons:

One of the most gracious things God does for us: not let us see the future.

- If we knew what God knew...we would relax and trust.

But here’s what we can be assured of:

- Our names are written in the Lambs Book of Life.
- Christ is in heaven...but He is soon coming for us.
- Until then, we must walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor 5:7).

Everything that happens to us should be sifted through these facts:

- God loves me.
- God has a good plan for me.
- God is trustworthy and faithful.

FACT. God isn’t always interested in our circumstances being easy, comfortable, or logical.

- But God is interested in His glory being maximized.
- And God is interested in us trusting and obeying!

Think about this word the Lord uses – God will do the fighting →

But you must be quiet (silent) (at rest).

Jeremy personally → I’m certainly not known for being quiet! (yikes)

What does this word “quiet” mean in terms of application?

To operate far less in our flesh, and to trust more in God’s strength.
(ILLUS: riding as a passenger on airplane – you trust the pilot and the plane, so you relax).

To be diligent and intentional about sitting in God’s presence for the purpose of worship, hearing, remembering, learning, and resting.

Being quiet before God is actually a thoroughly biblical discipline:

Psalm 37:7, *Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him.*

Psalm 46:10, *Be still and know that I am God...*

Psalm 62:5, *For God alone, O my soul, will wait in silence.*

Job 33:31, 33, *“Pay attention, O Job, and listen to me...be silent, and I will teach you wisdom.”*

Ecc 3:7, *There is a time for silence.*

Ecc 5:2, *In the assembly of the Lord’s House...let our words be few.*

Question: what is the benefit of silence before God?

1. I can’t hear from God while I am also talking.
 - a. Very difficult to be super busy and also growing spiritually.
 - b. (ILLUS: Alina, 3 weeks in our home – you are always so busy!)
2. Silence gives me space for creativity/vision for my life.
 - a. Silence gives us rest.
3. In the quiet is where I often receive Spirit-prompted impressions to pray for others.
4. Being quiet is quite valuable – I don’t have to necessarily talk about everything I know.
 - a. Don’t have to get in the last word.
 - b. Don’t have to join the gossip crowd.

Psalm 141:3, *Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth, keep watch over the door of my lips.*

Prov 10:19, *Where words are many, sin is unavoidable.*

5. Being quiet is a great reminder: I’m not in control. God is!
6. Being quiet is a great way to avoid burnout. To let my mind/heart soak in Scripture and the love of the Lord.

CONCL. For 430 years, the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt. Served under an abusive tyrant. Pharaoh had sucked all of the life/hope out of these people. He used their labor for his own dynasty.

- But God sets them free by grace...God parts the Red Sea by grace...
- God says to them, "*Do nothing...just be quiet and watch.*"

GOSPEL: God has willingly redeemed and freed me from something far worse than Pharaoh.

- My heart was trapped by sin.
- I could do nothing. I was powerless.
- But God sent Christ to deliver me.
- Christ fought the battle for me on the cross.
- I now "rest" totally in Christ.

FACTS about our Extravagant Hope in Christ –

1. Satan will not stop pursuing me – he wants to take me back to be his slave.
2. I must daily remember: Christ is my strength. I cannot fight Satan with human warfare...only spiritual (Scripture, prayer, faith).
3. Obedience is a long road with many turns (Moses, plagues, desert, Red Sea).
 - a. Endure!
 - b. Do not quit!
4. God's presence in my life is more important than his explanations.
 - a. I don't always know why he does what he does.
 - b. But I know he is with me.
5. When God is on our side – nothing is impossible.