

## Back Against the Wall - Red Sea Crossing

Exodus 14:5-14

Have you ever felt like your back was against a wall? Ever been between a rock and a hard place, with nowhere to turn? Or maybe you've put in a lot of time going down a winding avenue of life only to find it is a dead end.

Moses was a great man, and a great leader.

At this point in the story he has led God's people from slavery to freedom, and all 2-3 million of them are marching toward the Promised Land.

It's the Exodus from Egypt! "Out of Africa!" Free at last for the first time in over 400 years.

The NT confirms this is a picture of our salvation from sin, the wicked taskmaster that seeks to hold us in chains of bondage, bitterness, and burdens.

They are marching out, 'high handed', rejoicing in their new freedom when suddenly they encounter...

A shady picnic pavilion? No.

A golden city of riches and happiness? No.

That's where the TV evangelist lives on the monies from the simple minded who believe that's what the Christian life is all about.

No, they encounter a big brick wall...a problem.

### The Problem

Being saved doesn't insulate nor isolate you from the problems of this sin cursed world?

For those who insist on believing salvation is the end to problems I say, ok, but it's the front end! Struggles and difficulties continue, and many times increase when you get saved, now you have a new enemy coming after you!

Pharaoh is a picture of Satan pursuing his losses.

The Christian life is not lived in straight lines.

God deals us detours along the way, and they are for our benefit.

A straight line from Egypt to Canaan would have been about 150 miles NE and would take less than 2 weeks to traverse.

But God takes them SE...the long way around.

13:21 The glory cloud seems to be leading in the wrong direction, though.

The same happens to all of us.

We have a goal, a destination in our mind, some place we want to go, something we want to become or achieve.

Sometimes we even know that God is in it and wants us to get there, but we just can't understand why it's taking so long. Can you relate?

God's delays are not denials.

Don't be discouraged if God has you on a detour route...He knows what He's doing!

"My Lord knows the way thru the wilderness...all I have to do is follow!"

God knows what we can handle.

If He led them in the straight line to Canaan, they would have passed right thru the land of the Philistines, brutal warriors who were blood thirsty.

But God's people were not ready for that.

They weren't seasoned warriors, they were slaves w/ no weapons of war.

Have you ever felt like the guy who traveled w/ the circus, scooping up what the elephants left behind them. Someone said to him, you ought to quit...this is the worst job in the world. He replied, "What? And leave show business?" God is preparing you, be glad for the time spent learning rather than leading, it makes me want to patiently wait even today for all God has planned for us right here!

Well, as if this detour God has them on isn't enough, God then leads them right to the banks of the Red Sea, just as the Egyptian Army is sent to pursue them.

Now they're hemmed in and pinned down. There's no way out.

Mountains of either side of them, a sea in front of them, and Pharaoh's military is fast approaching.

It's a dead end. Their back is against the wall.

Ever been there? Their problem now turns to...

### The Panic – (14:10-12)

Thanks a lot, Moses. And, um, we told you so! But you wouldn't listen.

"Let my people go!" You just had to have your way...and now we're all going to die!

They're questioning his leadership.

God has used him to lead them to freedom from slavery, and now they're questioning his ability to hear from God and do the right thing.

But God had seasoned Moses for such a time as this.

While they are speaking words of fear, Moses speaks words of faith...(vs. 13-14) 3 commands:

• **“Fear not.”**

It’s the same thing the angel said to the virgin Mary when she learned she was with child.

It’s the same thing Jesus said to His disciples in their little boat in the midst of a great storm.

It’s the same thing the angel said to Mary Magdalene when she was baffled at Jesus’ body missing from His tomb.

To each of these God was saying, “You may not understand your circumstances right now, but don’t worry, I’m still in control!”

III.—a little boy had 1 line to deliver in the church play, but his knees were knocking back stage. He just had to walk out and say, “It is I, be not afraid”. He walked out and saw the big crowd and said, “It’s me, and I’m scared!”

\*Fear is when we can’t see God thru our circumstances.

\*Faith is when we see our circumstances...but thru God!

We can be troubled on all sides, but not perplexed.

They looked left and right, front and back, and there was no way out.

But there’s still another direction to look...and that’s up!

I believe God wants our backs against the wall sometimes so we’ll do just that.

\*You see, He gives water to those who are thirsty, not full.

\*He heals the sick, not those who are well.

• **“Stand Still.”**

We don’t like to be told to wait, do we? We want to do something.

We want to try to help God out, or help ourselves out.

Just standing still is unthinkable in our society today.

The most popular words in advertising today are: Now, Instant, Immediate, Fast.

I can take my car title or even a post dated check down here to a place and get some ‘Fast Cash’ for the low APR of just 350%!

I can get my oil changed at ‘Fast Lane’.

I can eat ‘Fast Food’ and go pick up my ‘Fast Photos’ during that hour.

To pay for it all I can get another advance at ‘Fast Tax’ and if I want, maybe even pick up a Fast Woman!

We don’t like to wait. If someone is ahead of us in line, we are pacing.

No wonder the concept of waiting on God is foreign to us. But the Bible says...

(Ps 27:14) – *Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.*

Waiting on the Lord is when we quietly and calmly trust Him until He provides clear direction.

It is the opposite of panic.

It’s different than trying to fix things or make things happen.

God answers prayers all right, but unless He says ‘yes,’ we don’t like His other answers.

We don’t like ‘no’. And we also don’t like it when His answer is ‘slow.’

We take that as a ‘no’ as well!

Or when His answer is ‘grow’ [you’re not ready] we take that as a ‘no’ too.

We want Him to say ‘go’ when often His answer is ‘stop’. Let go and let God take over.

If God did let us have our way we’d quickly see how little we can do in our own strength and we’d never see what God can do in His time and in His way!

\*What if Moses hadn’t been a good leader?

For one thing, if he had taken a vote they all would have returned to slavery.

How about if he had weighed his options, humanly speaking, and tried to make a way across the sea.

What were his options? No boats, and too deep!

Stand still, stay with God, and don’t get ahead of Him.

You could try in your own strength to swim across the Red Sea, but if you would have just waited

He was just about to part the waters for you.

Fear not, stand still...

• **“And see the salvation of the Lord.”**

When our back is against the wall is when God does His very best work. “Man’s extremities are God’s opportunities!”

Because when God gets us out of such a jam it is clear Who deserves the glory and we are quick to credit Him!

**Notice that this miracle came in 3 stages:**

**1. The diverting of the glory cloud. (vs. 19-20)**

God gave them a cloud, not a map, compass, or gps. This cloud served 2 purposes.

To guide them, and also to shelter them.

They were in an arid desert place, very hot by day, very cold by night.

This cloud sheltered them from the searing sun and then it turned into a heavenly heater at night [pillar of fire] It's nice to sleep w/ a pillar!

Well, the cloud moved behind them like a wall between them and their enemies.

And He's not only our Savior, He's also our protector!

David in the Psalms said *He's my high tower, my refuge, my shield, my defense. No weapon formed against me shall prosper. Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand.* (Psalms 73:23)

**2. The dividing of the waters. (vs. 21-22)**

ill.-- Nine-year-old Joey was asked by his mother what he had learned in Sunday School. Well, Mom, our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When he got to the Red Sea, he had his engineers build a pontoon bridge, and all the people walked across safely. He used his walkie-talkie to radio headquarters and call in an air strike. They sent in bombers to blow up the bridge and all the Israelites were saved.

"Now, Joey, is that REALLY what your teacher taught you?" his mother asked. Well, no, Mom, but if I told it the way the teacher did, you'd never believe it!

I don't have a problem believing in this miracle.

God made the sea and the dry ground under the water.

The liberals say, no, it's a misprint; it was the Reed Sea, which was more shallow, only a few inches in many places.

Well then God did an even bigger miracle in drowning the entire Egyptian army in ankle deep water! Can you imagine being there for this great miracle?!

\*Moses was just a man, and in his hand was a simple rod, but when he held it in the air in obedience and faith, it became the rod of God!

**3. The drowning of the Egyptians. (vs. 23-28)**

Pharaoh was reaping what he had sowed. For what was it that Pharaoh had done to all the male Jewish babies? Drowned them! "*Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap!*"

**Maybe your back is against the wall. Be encouraged, fear not, stand still, and see what God can do.**

God didn't deliver His people from slavery only to drown them when they were cornered.

And God didn't save you only to forget about you now.

Got any rivers that seem uncrossable?

Got any mountains you can't tunnel through?

God specializes in things thought impossible.

And He knows a thousands ways to make a way for you!

**The problem and the panic led to this miracle and then the praise followed**

What Red Sea has God brought you thru?

What giant body of water are you still facing?

How can we encourage one another?