
Sermon Notes

August 23, 2015

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

The Way Forward: When Your Back's Against a Wall

Exodus 14:1-31

¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, ² "Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea. ³ For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, 'They are wandering in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.' ⁴ 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.

⁹ 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-zephon. 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. ¹¹ 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? ¹² 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." ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."

²¹ 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. ²² 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.

Lack of Understanding Does Not Mean Lack of Purpose

- ❖ Moses trusts even though he cannot understand
- ❖ Even when God's direction is clear, His way may remain mysterious
 - God leads, Moses follows
 - God sometimes uses challenges to teach us His truth in unforgettable ways
 - trial may be blessing in disguise

The Threat of Crisis

- ❖ Panic and distress break out as the enemy draws nearer
 - it is all too easy to revert to old patterns of thinking, behaving, and interacting when God confronts us with fresh challenges
 - we must pray and work hard to hold onto faith when fear strikes
- ❖ ***Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD which He will work for you today.*** (Exodus 13:14)
 - there is a time to stop all action. become inactive, and wait for the LORD to act on our behalves
 - Proverbs 3:5-6
- Waiting/Trusting on the Lord prepares us to be ready to act when the Lord says, "Move out"!

The Joy of Deliverance

- ❖ In the midst of what seems to be a hopeless situation
 - God makes a way
 - God fills His people with hope
 - God shows the way forward
- ❖ It is God's enemies who have a real reason to panic
 - for them, there is no deliverance
 - for them, there is no hope
 - for them, there is only devastation and destruction
- ❖ The Lord delivers His people!

Growing Faith

- ❖ God's ways are beyond our understanding
 - God often uses hard times and what seem to be impossible situations to help us grow
 - sometimes we must "hurt" before we can "heal (*e.g.*, Abraham & Joseph)
- ❖ God does not use challenging times because He is mad at us or punishing us
- ❖ tough times train us for what comes next

- having our backs against a wall does not mean God has turned His back on us
- ❖ God uses difficult circumstances and challenges to deepen our faith
 - having deep roots
 - trying times give us unique opportunities to demonstrate that we WILL be faithful to God
- ❖ Pray for a will, a strength, and a courage to consciously choose to look at God and not at our problems
- ❖ Nothing will separate us from God's love!

Personal Application

1. What seemingly impossible situation(s) are you currently being challenged by? How are you waiting upon God and listening for Him in the midst of that? What, if any, action do you think He is calling you take because of this?
2. Think of past ways in which God has led you through situations or circumstances when it seemed your "back was up against a wall". Thank God for His faithfulness in the past and ask Him to strengthen your faith, trust, and confidence that He will reveal His faithfulness to you in all of your current struggles.
3. Do you carry any unresolved "baggage" that gives Satan a place to plant seeds of doubt and try to convince you that God has turned His back on you? Read Romans 8:31-39 and rejoice in the fact that nothing can separate you from the love God has for you in Christ Jesus!