

**God Will Lead You Through:
Your Impossible Situation**

Exodus 14

Big Idea: God specializes in things thought impossible.

We have a lot of word pictures in the English language to describe being in a predicament. We hear phrases such as “you sure have painted yourself into a corner,” of being caught “between a rock and a hard place,” being “up against the wall” or “in a pickle.” At least one person has defined a predicament as being, “A lawyer who specializes in suing doctors for medical malpractice finding himself in need of major surgery.”

[Charles Swindoll. Moses: A Man of Selfless Devotion. Nashville: Word Publishing, 1999). p. 211.]

Moses and the people of Israel found themselves in such a situation. The Israelites found themselves trapped between Pharaoh’s Army and the Red Sea. After today’s message hopefully you are not like little 9 year old Joey who was asked by his mother what he had learned in Sunday School that day. ‘Well, Mom, our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind the 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 sat-phone to call 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!’”

Notice that God’s people are in a real impossible situation.

There is an uncrossable sea before them. Even if they had boats, they could not easily transport the all the people before Pharaoh's army got there. Scholars tells us that extra-biblical material reveals there were approximately 2-3 million Jews that left Egypt. This would explain the big problem that was behind them. The Scriptures say that Pharaoh sent 600 hundred of his best chariots, all the chariots of Egypt, and their officers. The Hebrew word used for "officers" is "salisim" which was used to describe three-man chariots. There were about 1800 men to man the best chariots. There was probably that many and much more for the rest of the chariots of Egypt. This is not even including the horseman described in verse 19. This was a huge army.

1. God lead His people into an impossible situation - vs. 1,2

Why do you think God told His people to go into that natural cul de sac?

"Often God seems to place His children in positions of profound difficulty, leading them into a wedge from which there is no escape, designing a situation that no human judgment would have permitted had it been previously consulted. The very cloud directs them there. You..., may be involved in a situation like this at this very hour. It does seem perplexing and mysterious to the last degree, but it is perfectly right. The issue will more than justify Him who has brought you there. It is a platform for the display of His almighty grace and power. Not only will He deliver you, but in doing so He will give you a lesson that you will never forget."

[F.B. Meyer. The Life of Moses: The Servant of God. (Lynnwood, Washington: Emerald Books, 1996.0 p. 80]

2. They responded in fear, not faith – vs. 10-12

Israel's response? - give in to fear.

notice what fear does in verses 11 and 12.

"The people began to panic, and they cried out to the LORD for help. Then they turned against Moses and complained, "Why did you bring us out here to die in the wilderness? Weren't there enough graves for us in Egypt? Why did you make us leave? Didn't we tell you to leave us alone while we were still in Egypt? Our Egyptian slavery was far better than dying out here in the wilderness!" (Exodus 10b-12, NLT.)

The people knew that Egypt specialized in graves. One third of Egypt's land was devoted to graves. They could have a more decent burial in Egypt. They saw the situation as hopeless.

Israel was afraid because they had their eyes on the Egyptians and not on the LORD.

Psalm 106:7-8, "Our fathers in Egypt did not understand Your wonders; They did not remember the multitude of Your mercies, but rebelled by the sea—the Red Sea. (8) Nevertheless He saved them for His name's sake, That He might make His mighty power known."

Fear's Responses:

Panic

Doubt

Unbelief

Forgetfulness

Complaining

It did not take the Hebrew people long to start complaining. This proved to be a running motif throughout their wilderness wanderings, Fear causes them to distort the truth, to be ruled by doubt rather than by faith. Their statement that it would have been better for them to have served the

Egyptians than to die in the wilderness exhibits a remarkably short memory. But then we as believers sometimes act as if we regret having stepped out on faith when we see what is involved!

we allow so many things to cause us not to trust. It is easy to come to church and give testimonies about trusting God for all your needs. It gets a lot more difficult to trust when:

1. You are diagnosed with a terminal illness.
2. Too much month is left at the end of the paycheck.
3. You have a prodigal brother or sister in your family.
4. You have a rebellious child and constant family problems.
5. You get a call from the local jail.
6. Your spouse calls from another state to tell you they are not coming back.
7. You lose all your material possessions.
8. Everything seems to be falling in on you.
9. You lose your job.
10. Nothing ever seems to go right. Etc.

Mackintosh said, "Unbelief...leads us to interpret God in the presence of the difficulty, instead of interpreting the difficulty in the presence of God. Faith gets behind the difficulty, and there finds God, in all His faithfulness, love, and power."

Arthur Pink said, "Unbelief creates or magnifies difficulties, and then sets us about removing them by our own bustling and fruitless actions, which in reality, do but raise a dust around us that prevents our seeing God's salvation.

Faith, on the contrary, raises the soul about the difficulty, straight to God Himself and enables us to stand still. We gain nothing by our restless and anxious efforts."

GOD'S PLANS DO NOT NEED YOUR HELP - ONLY YOUR OBEDIENCE

God's answer through Moses to the murmuring Israelites is in:

verses 13, 14 "And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."

3. Note God's four-fold instructions:

Fear not – 365 times in BIBLE

Faith is not looking at the things which we see, but the things which are not seen (2 Cor. 4:18). Hebrews 11:29 tells us by faith they passed through the Red Sea.

Faith is believing the Word of God and acting upon it no matter how I feel because God promises a good result.

Stand still - might be better understood to say, "Stand firm" – reflecting faith and confidence in the delivering power of Jehovah.

Psa. 46:10 Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

Christian, were you on the cross helping Christ redeem you? Were you with Him in the tomb and down into the depths of the earth? Did you hold His hand to help Him rise from the grave; or somehow give Him a boost so that He might ascend to the right hand of the Majesty on High?

He created the world, and you can't even make a pine needle!

He holds the world together by the word of His power, and you have trouble keeping your check book balanced.

Stop milling about; pacing about; running about; searching for some thing to do that will deliver you from your troubles.

Stand still! All that has been done for you up to this point has been done without your help, and in most cases, despite your interference.

Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today.

Watch – (with the eyes of faith)

Moses says “see... what the Lord will accomplish for you today.” God does not need your help. You don't need to fight, you need to stay out of the way. Just watch Him work.

Be quiet - “hold your peace.”

Keep your MOUTH shut. Most of life's important BATTLES are lost because people won't keep their mouth shut.

Proverbs 10:19 “Too much talk leads to sin. Be wise and keep your mouth shut.”

Don't let your peace get away from you.

The Lord will fight for you and you won't have to do a thing.

Often the hardest thing for us to do is this, because we feel that we just have to tell somebody about the predicament that we are in. But the only one who can do anything about our predicament already knows, He is waiting for us to look to him and be silent.

All of these instructions are directed to natural human responses to panic. First, we are afraid. Second, we run. Third, we fight. Fourth, we tell everyone who will listen. But God says, NO, do the opposite.

4. God's deliverance gave Him all the glory and honor.

Why do you think people hate this story so much, and try to mess it up and mongrelize it?

Some attempt to explain away the miraculous aspect of the crossing of the Red Sea. One popular view is that the Israelites crossed in a generally shallow and marshy district which had been cleared of water and made dry by the natural action of a strong wind. The difficulty with this naturalist reasoning is if this were indeed merely shallow water, it is difficult to see how the Egyptians could have been drowned.

How wide an area was provided for the crossing is not given in the text. But here is something to think about. To get the two to three million Israelites through the Red Sea in one night was quite a feat. "If they were to go through the Red Sea double file, that double file line would be eight hundred miles long, and it would take 35 days and night to get through. So, they had to have a space in the Red Sea that was three miles wide, so they could walk 5,000 abreast. By walking five thousand abreast they could get through in one night." [Fabulous Facts 'N' Figures, Theodore H Epp.]

Ex. 14:30,31 So the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Thus Israel saw the great work which the Lord had done in Egypt; so the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant Moses.

Josh. 2:9,10 ... I know that the Lord has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are

fainthearted because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt...

5. Principles from the Red Sea story:

- Typically – crossing the Red Sea speaks of Christ making a way through death for His people. The Red Sea is the figure of death – the boundary line of Satan.
- Doctrinally – the passing through the Red Sea sets forth the believer's union with Christ in his death and resurrection. Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21
- Practically – it reminds us of the absolute sufficiency of our God.

Isa. 43:1,2 “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.

Phil. 4:13 ...God shall supply all your needs...

2 Cor. 12:9 ...my grace is sufficient for thee...

- Prophetically – this foreshadows the yet future restoration and deliverance of the Jews, because the “sea” is a well-known figure of the Gentile nations (Rev.17:15; Psa. 65:7)

Conclusion: Gladys Aylward, missionary to China more than fifty years ago, was forced to flee when the Japanese invaded Yangcheng. But she could not leave her work behind. With only one assistant, she led more than a hundred orphans over the mountains toward Free China.

In their book "The Hidden Price of Greatness," Ray Besson and Ranelda Mack Hunsicker tell what happened:

"During Gladys's harrowing journey out of war-torn Yangcheng ... she grappled with despair as never before. After passing a sleepless night, she faced the morning with no hope of reaching safety. A 13-year-old girl in the group reminded her of their much-loved story of Moses and the Israelites crossing the Red Sea.

"But I am not Moses," Gladys cried in desperation.

"Of course you aren't," the girl said, "but Jehovah is still God."

When Gladys and the orphans made it through, they proved once again that no matter how inadequate we feel, God is still God, and we can trust in him.

When the situation seem impossible, just remember to have a personal confidence in God, practice obedience to God, and understand that God has a purpose in all the experiences we have with Him.

Practical Application: Why does God allow these impossible situations to happen in our lives? Because it often takes these tight place to get us to look up to Him for our help.

Coming to the Red Sea is just as much a part of God's plan as crossing it.

"A predicament in God's hands is only a highway to the Promised Land."