

CORONA CRISIS

3. STAND STILL

HVC, March 29, 2020

Exodus 13:17-14:31; 15:11-13 (NLT)

Have you ever faced an insurmountable obstacle that only God could resolve? What happened?

When in your life have you had the strongest sense of God's presence and provision?

When in your life have you experienced the most fear? What did God do in your life during that time?

Exodus 13:17-18 (NLT)

When Pharaoh finally let the people go, God did not lead them along the main road that runs through Philistine territory, even though that was the shortest route to the Promised Land... So God led them in a roundabout way through the wilderness...

What do you think it was like for the people, newly released from slavery, to wander about the wilderness?

Why were they so willing to trust a God that they hardly knew?

When in your life have you felt like you were wandering without a destination? What was that like?

Exodus 13:21-22

The LORD went ahead of them. He guided them during the day with a pillar of cloud, and he provided light at night with a pillar of fire... And the LORD did not remove the pillar of cloud or pillar of fire from its place in front of the people.

How do you think the people might have responded when these pillars showed up.. and then stayed with them?

Why might God's presence bring confidence?

Why does the author make a point of mentioning that the Lord did not remove these pillars?

Can you recall other places in the Bible where God's presence is signified by fire or a cloud?

(e.g. Moses on Mt Sinai, various visions of heaven, Pentecost, etc)

Why might God use physical symbols for his presence?

Exodus 14:1-2 (NLT)

Then the LORD gave these instructions to Moses: "Order the Israelites to turn back and camp by Pi-hahiroth between Migdol and the sea. Camp there along the shore..."

What might have gone through Moses' mind as he received and then communicated this message?

Have you ever felt God leading you into an untenable situation? How did you respond?

Exodus 14:3-4 (NLT)

Then Pharaoh will think, 'The Israelites are confused. They are trapped in the wilderness!' And once again I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will chase after you. I have planned this in order to display my glory through Pharaoh and his whole army. After this the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD!

Scripture says at various times that 'God hardened Pharaoh's heart' and that 'Pharaoh hardened his own heart' (or 'changed his mind' in 14:5). What's the difference? How do you reconcile those two descriptions? Do you have to?

What do you think "God's glory" means? Why was it so important to be displayed among the Egyptians (again- e.g. the plagues)?

Exodus 14:9 (NLT)

The Egyptians chased after them with all the forces in Pharaoh's army—all his horses and chariots, his charioteers, and his troops. The Egyptians caught up with the people of Israel as they were camped beside the shore...

Have you ever been in an life threatening situation? What was that like?

In what areas of your life do you most struggle to trust God?

What was Pharaoh trusting in here?

Exodus 14:10-12 (NLT)

As Pharaoh approached, the people of Israel looked up and panicked when they saw the Egyptians overtaking them. They cried out to the LORD, and they said to Moses, "Why did you bring us out here to die in the wilderness? Weren't there enough graves for us in Egypt? What have you done to us? Why did you make us leave Egypt? Didn't we tell you this would happen while we were still in Egypt? We said, 'Leave us alone! Let us be slaves to the Egyptians. It's better to be a slave in Egypt than a corpse in the wilderness!'"

Why might the people have have so quickly overlooked God's care and protection?

Have you ever wanted to "return to Egypt" (gone back to something/someone familiar although it was a bad idea)?

Have you ever experienced mass panic like that? What was that like?

Discuss: "*When hardship is encountered, the miserable past suddenly looks like the good old days.*"
- Douglas Stuart

Why is accusation, even when off target, so demoralizing and powerful?

Exodus 14:13-14 (NLT)

But Moses told the people, "Don't be afraid. Just stand still and watch the LORD rescue you today. The Egyptians you see today will never be seen again. ¹⁴ The LORD himself will fight for you. Just stay calm."

Do you identify more with the crowd or with Moses?
Why?

How would you describe Moses as a leader here?
Have you ever experienced a leader like this?

How hard is it for you to stay calm or stand still when others are panicking?

Have you ever been “rescued” by God? What happened? What was that like?

Does God always do the “fighting for us”? Why or why not?

Exodus 14:19-20 (NLT)

Then the angel of God, who had been leading the people of Israel, moved to the rear of the camp. The pillar of cloud also moved from the front and stood behind them. The cloud settled between the Egyptian and Israelite camps. As darkness fell, the cloud turned to fire, lighting up the night. But the Egyptians and Israelites did not approach each other all night.

Have you ever experienced God’s protection in palpable ways? What was that like?

How has God comforted you in moments of deep distress or panic?

Why doesn’t God always deliver his people from suffering and danger?

Exodus 14:21-22 (NLT)

Then Moses raised his hand over the sea, and the LORD opened up a path through the water with a strong east wind. The wind blew all that night, turning the seabed into dry land. So the people of Israel walked through the middle of the sea on dry ground, with walls of water on each side!

When have you ever seen God come through when you took a step of obedience?

How might we cultivate greater trust in God in normal life, especially in less dramatic circumstances?

Exodus 14:23-25 (NLT)

Then the Egyptians—all of Pharaoh’s horses, chariots, and charioteers—chased them into the middle of the sea. But just before dawn the LORD looked down on the Egyptian army from the pillar of fire and cloud, and he threw their forces into total confusion. He twisted their chariot wheels, making their chariots difficult to drive. “Let’s get out of here—away from these Israelites!” the Egyptians shouted. “The LORD is fighting for them against Egypt!”

Why might God have “thrown their forces into confusion” and made their chariots “difficult to drive”? (i.e. he was going to drown them anyway)

What is the significance of the Egyptians’ shouting “The Lord is fighting for them”?

Exodus 15:13 (NLT)

“With your unfailing love you lead the people you have redeemed.

In your might, you guide them to your sacred home.”

How does God’s ongoing work of redemption encourage you?

Can God use the Corona crisis to redeem us? To help us trust him more? Where might he be at work in the midst of it?

Pray for:

- Medical professionals, first responders, government officials
- Those whose businesses or employment is threatened,
- The elderly