

May 28th 2023
Pinecrest Baptist Church
a.m.

Sermon Series: Delivered; Rescued from Bondage
Sermon #19 Title: A Real Good Bad Situation
Sermon #19 Text: (Exodus 14:1-14)

It is easy to follow the God of the Bible, when He's using the same map that you would, and He's walking the direction you would go, if you were in charge. But it is another thing altogether, when He appears to be leading you somewhere you do not want to go.

- That's why it is imperative to know when it comes to following the Lord: *When He is the Person you are With, the Place you are going will become Irrelevant.*

This morning we look at this passage where God in all of His infinite wisdom led Israel right straight into a rock and a hard place:

- They have left Egypt
- Pharaoh has pursued
- The Lord has led them to place of no escape.
- An army attacking on one side, mountains on two sides, and an ocean at their back.

Four Real Life Lessons to Learn from Israel's Rock and a Hard Place:

*Note – One of the first things that I believe you have to understand, is exactly how, and why Israel appeared to have wound up in a fix.

- How did they get here and why? – Not to oversimplify things, but always remember, the only reason they were where they were, was because that was exactly where God wanted them to be.

I. The Omniscient Wisdom in God's Directions (vs 1-4)

*Note – One of the first things you have to remember about following the Lord, is that sometimes He leads, guides, and directs you right smack dab into the middle of what looks like fix.

When Peter wrote to the Christians scattered abroad due to persecution he wrote – in 1st Peter 1:6 – “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, **if need be**, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.”

He would go on to write in the very next verse, “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

David wrote in Psalm 119:75, “thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.”

You and I must recognize the fact that there are times when God in all of His divine wisdom will pick you up and set you down in right in the middle of what seems an impossible situation.

*Note – We will do well to learn why He sometimes does it today, because we know why He did it to Israel then.

- God has the Wisdom:

A. To Guide His Followers into a Test – “Speak unto the children of Israel that they turn and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon: before it ye shall encamp by the sea.”

1.) “Speak unto the children of Israel.”

*note – What is interesting to me at this time, is why God instructed Moses to say something at all.

a.) 13:21-22 – the Pillar of fire by day, and cloud by night, was already present!

- they could see where the Lord was leading. – Now if you can see where the Lord is leading, why say something at all?

*Note – He was showing them His presence, while informing them of their next stop.

- They has the “Sight of God” – they had “the Sound of His Word.” – there wasn’t much more for God to provide for them.

2.) Where was he taking them:

a.) “turn” – he had already lead them away from the normal, easy, public way.

*Note – Scholars and historians have argued and do argue about the exact rout of the Exodus.

Some believe that he came all the way down the west coast of the Sinai peninsula and then turned.

Some believe that half way down the west coast of the Sinai peninsula, they turned.

- Whatever the case, it does not appear to be a “reasonable course”

b.) Pihahiroth – “the mouth of the gorges”

c.) Migdol – place unknown to us.

d.) Baalzephon – “Baal of Winter” – location unknown to us.

e.) encamp by the sea

*Note – The Bible tells us that they “turned” from their original turn and headed directly to camp by the sea.

*Note – All of that being said, they were informed that God was going to lead them through the valley of gorges, past these two areas known to them, and park them right by the sea.

- (It is unclear if they knew at this time the Lord was boxing them in, but they did know they were headed for a boundary of ocean.)

(Now think about this, for a second. – The Lord had said to them, I am leading you to Canaan land! – Now, lets go the other direction, we are going to walk through this wilderness, through these gorges, and we are going to camp down there by the sea!)

Now they knew enough to know that the Mediterranean Sea, or “The great sea” was not this direction; and it was that sea that bordered Canaan land. – No sea in this direction was near the land of Canaan!

- Now here’s the short of it – Their current following of the Lord did not match the destination as they understood it – and as they followed Him more, their consternation would grow worse and worse!

- Furthermore He was leading them to a place of “no visible escape.”

This would be the question: - How would Israel respond when God lead them into a dead end? How would Israel respond when God put them between a rock and a hard place?

- How did they get into that circumstance? – They got there On Purpose!

*Note – Know this: God does not lead the straightest way, nor does He lead the safest way. But He is the straightest and safest person anyone can follow!

God has the wisdom to lead His followers into a Test! God also has the wisdom to lead His foes into a trap!

B. To Lead His Foes into a Trap – “For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, *They are* entangled in the land and the wilderness hath shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host;...”

1.) When Pharaoh would not follow the Lord in grace, He would be baited by the Lord in Judgment.

*Note – Here is one of the most ironic facts of Pharaoh’s life. – When he would not follow the Lord in obedience, the Lord still lead him in his disobedience!

- He could have followed the Lord to life willfully and joyfully – but would not.

- So he followed the Lord to death, being baited by his own sin.

*Note – Notice this. The Lord did not deceive Pharaoh. – The Lord used Pharaoh’s sinfulness against Him.

“Pharaoh will say...”

*Note – In other words the Lord didn’t say, “I’m going to get you lost in the wilderness; but when word gets back to Pharaoh, that’s what he is going to presume.... Let him presume it!

*Note – There is no greater danger to the one in rebellion than the Lord God Himself, using your own rebellion and disbelief against you; leading you right into the place of judgment.

Job 5:13 – “**He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: ...**”

David prayed in the 5th Psalm and 10th verse – “**Let them fall by their own counsels...**”

Psalm 9:15 – “**The heathen are sunk down in the pit *that* they made: In the net which they hid is their own foot taken.**”

Psalm 94:23 – “**And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, And shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the LORD our God shall cut them off.**”

*Note – You get the idea... There many, many more times the Bible speaks of God using someone’s own sins, own false beliefs, own wicked devices, to bring them into the place of judgment!

(Someone may be marching to their own tune, but they are walking in the Lord’s parade; and they will still end up where He leads them.)

God has the wisdom to lead His followers into a test; His foes into a trap; and the Fallen into the truth!”

*Note – Notice the motive behind God’s movement as He explains it.

C. To Bring the Fallen into the Truth – “that the Egyptians may know that I *am* the LORD. And they did so.”

*Note – This has been the Lord’s motive for the Egyptians since the day He called Moses at the burning bush.

- He destroyed their gods before their very eyes; that they might know that there actually is only One God and it is Him.

- He will destroy the mightiest army on earth at the time – that the Egyptians might know that there actually is only One God, and it is Him.

- He will humiliate Pharaoh before the eyes of his nation and the known world, that the Egyptians might know that there actually is only One God, and it is Him.

*Note – Egypt had seen all the mighty power of God in Judgment! Imagine would have been if they had been able to see the mighty power of God in Blessing!?

- They would reject the God of Blessing that Blessed Egypt in Joseph -but they would not AVOID the God of Judgment who showed Himself mighty for all to see!

There is an Omniscient Wisdom in Gods Directions! – He will be leading His people into and through tests. He may be leading His foes into a trap they set for themselves. But He is

always leading to show heathen the truth of Who He Is! – never question the wisdom of God.

II. The Infinite Folly in Human Defiance (vs 5-9)

One of the most amazing things in this entire event is the sheer foolishness of the most powerful leader in the civilized world at that time.

*Note – By the time you get to verse 5, of course the Plagues are over, the clean up has begun, and Israel has been out of the land for at least a few days, maybe even a week.

*Note – Now would be a great time for some introspective, self-evaluation, meditation and thought. This would be good time for old Pharaoh to move on, and get right with the Hebrew God.

- But now Sin would not let God’s work be!
- Pharaoh no doubt had been convinced, but he had not been converted. He could not deny what he saw, but he would not conform to it.

- Notice three things that moved Pharaoh to move; when sitting still would have served him better.

- *The Infinite Folly of Human Wisdom* is:

A. To be Hooked by Pride – “And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people...”

- 1.) Pharaoh could not live with the fact that he lost!

- a.) He lost to uneducated slaves

- b.) He lost to the Hebrew God

- The war was over but the battle still raged inside the heart of Pharaoh; and his heart would not let him concede his loss.

(God's enemy and enemies are seen continually through the Bible in this theme of trying to take back lost ground.

- God kicked Satan out of Heaven – and Lucifer said, “I will ascend to the Most-High” – or die trying
- God freed Israel from Bondage – Pharaoh would get them back or die trying.
- God gave land to Israel – the Philistines would get it back or die trying; - (see the story of David and Goliath)
- Jesus gave life to Lazarus – The Pharisees wanted him killed again, or they'd die trying.
- The entire book of Job is a chronicle of when Satan tried to take back a man, already given over to God.)

*Note – Now all of that being said, when Pharaoh was awakened to his loss to God, to Moses, and to Israel, he decided he would not allow God's victory to stand!

(Know this: - The Bible tells us to **“Take heed where ye stand, lest ye fall.”** –(1st Corinthians 10:12) – Just as Pharaoh beat a path to take Israel back, Satan's engines are always steaming to take back God's gains in your life; and it is his pride in his heart, and his hatred for God that drives him.)

- There is no greater folly than letting Pride set its hook in your heart, and move you against God, or His people. Pride is never a good reason to do a wrong thing.

Pride is never a benevolent master, with good intentions, looking out for your best interests!

- Pharaoh's folly was that he was Hooked by Pride -

B. To be Wooed by Profit – “and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?”

1.) Pharaoh didn't just lose face when Israel left, he lost finances as well.

*Note – In addition to all of Egypt's ethical depravity; they were now facing economic disaster. – Unbeknownst to them in these terms; Egypt would rather live in Ethical Depravity than Economic Disaster.

a.) You will never be more like Pharaoh than you will be if you are willing to trade righteousness for riches.

When it came to Israel, Egypt could show mercy or make money, but in their previous arrangement they could not do both.

- When Israel walked out of Egypt, Pharaoh watched no doubt millions if not billions of dollars of free labor walk right out the door with no way to ethically or otherwise to replace it.

- No man has ever become more righteous through riches, but many have fallen deeper into depravity because of them.

*Note- Note the first two steps that moved Pharaoh right into the trap of judgment:

- Hooked by Pride – Wooed by Profit – and Fooled by Power.

C. To be Fooled by Power – (vs 7-9) – “And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the children of Israel: and the

children of Israel went out with an high hand. But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses *and* chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baalzephon.”

*Note – Pharaoh had at the time the most sophisticated military in the world. He may have had the largest, I don’t know.

- Here is what we do know –

1.) the “chosen” chariots typically carried two men: - a driver and a warrior.

2.) “All the chariots of Egypt and captains” according to our customs teachers identifies possibly an “added” or “third man”

*Note- The term – “captain” – has been translated in some places as “third man” – meaning that these chariots would have two weapons possessors and a driver!

*Note – All right, preacher what does all of that mean?

- 600 chosen chariots carried 1200 people.

- All the chariots of Egypt carried as many as 3000, if there were a thousand chariots. (Maybe a few more)

- Less than 5000 men were sent after what is estimated to be between 2 and 3.5 million Israelites.

- By what metric on earth has 5000 soldiers ever captured 3 million people with bows and arrows and spears?

-(preacher that’s possible...)

- By what metric on earth has 5000 soldiers ever fought, captured, and conquered a rain storm? Have 5000 soldiers ever fought off a warm front moving through? Have 5000 soldiers ever forced the stars to reverse course? Have 5000

soldiers ever gone against a death angel at night? Or a pillar of fire filled with the glory of God?

- There is nothing so pitiful as a man who thinks he will overpower the God that just unleashed ten dominate, destructive, and deadly plagues on him?

- Will he set his troops in array against a virus to shoot at it with bows and arrows?

- In Pharaoh’s madness and folly, he actually believed he had a modicum of power!

- Pride will always make you make something of yourself, when there is nothing to make!

- Pharaoh was hooked by pride – wooed by profit, and fooled by power; and God used all of those things to bring him to the bottom of an ocean.

1. – We’ve seen the Omniscient Wisdom of God’s Directions

2. – We’ve seen the Infinite Folly in Human Defiance

-Now -

III. The Inherent Traits of Immature Devotion (vs 10-14)

*Note – As Moses records this, he now turns our attention back to the Israelites. They have been placed in this circumstance on purpose. On Divine purpose!

- And all that shows up in them is the immaturity of their devotion, and it shows up four ways:

A. Unnecessary Panic – vs 10 – “And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and

they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord.”

1.) They already had a Word from God as to where they were going.

*Note – Here is the ultimate test of faith. – To live by What God says, not by what you see! – Furthermore, maybe an even greater test of faith is to tether your nerves to the Word of the Lord, not to the sight of the eyes.

- get your nerves from the Bible – not from your circumstance.

- get your fears not from him that can destroy the body, but from him that can destroy both body and soul in hell – I believe is what Jesus said.

*Note – We are growing mature, when our mental, emotional, and spiritual stability actually are increased, and actually do function in connection to the Bible.

Listen – You let a man you don’t know walk across your front yard with a gun in his hand; your ire is up, you are on high alert, you watch from your window like a hawk, and you may call the police. – You see it, and it plugs in all of your senses!

- YET

- You read, “It is appointed unto men, once to die, and after this the judgment.” – and you yawn and turn the page.

- You watch a wild animal come into your backyard foaming at the mouth, and you run your children in, call animal control, and tell the neighbors.

- You read - “Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour.” And you don’t even have to shift in your seat.

Immature faith is always more moved by the sight of the eyes, than the Word from God’s mouth.

Unnecessary panic

B. Undesirable Blindness – (the pillar of fire)

1.) Their fear has blinded them to the presence of God. – Not only did they forget His Word, they forgot His presence!

C. Unwarranted Slander – vs 11-12 - “And they said unto Moses, Because *there were no graves in Egypt*, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? *Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.*”

*Note – They saw things that weren’t true, said things that weren’t so, and blamed men not at fault.

-It is as though this hard spot made them forget everything about being delivered!

Note what these foolhardy people said – “It is better to live in bondage with Pharaoh, than die in freedom with Moses”

- That kind of fear makes idiots of all men.

(Saved person – Have you forgotten that Christ Saved you?! – Why on earth or heaven would He let you down now?! – He went to the cross for you, its okay if He needs you to be in a

hard spot right now. Lost man – He went to the cross for you! – He’s done all He’s going to do till you come to Him. – You want Him to get you a job – He got you out of hell. – You want Him to make Aunt Mildred better – He went to the cross for you. – You talk about what HE wants to talk about – Then – you may forget all about what you thought was important.)

D. Unavoidable Rebuke – vs 13 – “And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will shew you today:

*Note – It is as though Moses is talking to children.

1.) Calm down. – Fear not.

2.) Stand Still – and Watch.

*Note – Never, ever react on page 5 of a 20 page book!

- Israel had seen more than enough – they had heard more than enough, they had experienced more than enough, to rest in the wisdom, and work of God.

1.) The Omniscient Wisdom of God’s Directions

2.) The Infinite Folly in Human Defiance

3.) The Inherent Traits of Immature Devotion

Conclusion: – IV. The Ever-present Hope in God’s Deliverance – (vs 13-14)

- These two things are true in spite of all you have ever experienced, or will experience – These two things are true regardless of anything that may ever happen to you.

- The Lord Shall Destroy His Enemies – The Lord Shall Deliver His People.

A. The Lord shall Destroy His Enemies – “for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever.”

B. The Lord shall Deliver His People – “The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.”

Biblically speaking – Until you are one of His people, you stand as His enemy!

Romans 5:10 – “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

