

The life of Moses

BACK TO THE WALL

Exodus 14:10-14

Chapter 8

Chapter 8

MOSES BACK TO THE WALL

“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 out unto the LORD. 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. And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.”

(Exodus14:10–14)

“Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.”

(Exodus15:1-2)

The purpose of this lesson is to see this meek and mild man, Moses, as he leads the Children of Israel through the most difficult and challenging trial of their faith. In the last lesson it was noted how God had used the plagues of Egypt to break Pharaoh's will and delivered the people of Israel. We saw how they had not gone in the direction that we would have expected them to go. The most direct route would have been along the northeastern road that led by the Mediterranean Sea. Had they gone that way they would have been in Canaan in just a few short days. God, however, wanted to take them in an entirely different direction. He led them into the wilderness, away from Canaan. This put the Red Sea to their left and a range of Mountains on the right and to the front. God knew that had they gone the easy way that the people would have turned back when they saw Pharaoh's guards posted along the way. They would have fled before the Philistines through whose land they would have to travel. They would have been easy targets for Pharaoh when he decided to retake them. Remember that several times in the midst of the plagues Pharaoh had repented and given permission for the people to leave only to change his mind and deny their exit. The trial of the plagues would convince him to let them go but when the threat was over he would relent. He is like a lot of people today who, in the heat of a trial pray to God. Then when the trial has passed they forget all the promises that they made to God. They then continue to live in the same godless way.

In chapter fourteen and the first two verses we

see God reverse the direction of the people and put them on a course that, humanly speaking, was the wrong direction. Verse two gives the name of several places. The exact location of these places is not exactly known but when one would have expected the children of Israel to proceed out of Egypt in to the desert, where the chariots could not follow because of the soft sand, they turned around. They put themselves in a box. There were mountains on one side and the ocean on the other and more mountains to the south that formed a *cul de sac* to entrap the people. Moses must have known that this was a bad tactical place to put his people. Yet, he followed God's leading. How often do we second-guess God and refuse to follow His leading in our lives. To Moses' credit he followed God's direction. However, God was not yet finished with Pharaoh. He tells Moses in verse four of chapter fourteen, "*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; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD.*" God had demonstrated his power and presence with the plagues that had destroyed the food, resources and morale of an entire nation. God had destroyed the cattle, the grain, the health of the people and would soon destroy the army of this foolish king. After all the hard lessons he tries to retake Israel. It would be thought that he would have learned his lesson. Do not forget that this is the same stubborn man who asked for one more night with the frogs. Before we become too hard on Pharaoh we should pause to remember how hard-headed we can be at times.

How many times have we sinned and failed God? He will then deal with us as a faithful father and we repent. We repent only to repeat the same thing a few days later. Satan is the great deceiver but we all too often are very easily deceived.

When the people made this turn away from the expected track Pharaoh sees what he thinks is Moses' mistake and begins his pursuit. Scripture says that, "*He took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them.*" When the people of God saw this they began to panic. They had not yet realized that God had not come all this way to let them die in the desert. He needed to make one more demonstration of his power to deliver. God gives Moses the grace and power to lead the people in a remarkable way. We see his leadership in verses thirteen and fourteen. First of all, he tells the people to "stand still." Literally, he is saying, "stand firm." He is reminding the people that they did not come this way on their own. God had led them into the predicament. They were simply to wait and see what God would do. There are times when this is good advice for you and me as well. Some times we get into tight spots ourselves and need to repent of our foolishness and ask God to direct us out of the mess. However, if we are sincerely following God's leadership and we find ourselves in a difficult place we should review how we got there and then realize that God, for his own purposes, had led us here. Then we simply wait to see what God will do. The fear of the people came from an immature faith. Isaiah 26:3 tells us that, "*Thou wilt keep him in*

perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.” Peace in times of trial comes from standing still or firmly on the promises of God. Frankly, that is easy advice to give but hard to follow. After the crossing of the Red Sea and the defeat of Egypt there would be rejoicing. However, at this point before the deliverance all we can do is to trust.

Next Moses told the people to stand still. They were beginning to panic which would result in their being scattered and destroyed in the sea or by the army of Pharaoh. They needed to stop all the fleshly activity and wait on God. When we get into difficult place it is natural to try with all we have to solve the problem. At times God wants us to do what we can. We must learn, however that when we have done all that we can we must stand back and watch the deliverance of God. Moses told the people to watch and *“see the salvation of the Lord.”* God stood between them and the foe. He was a pillar of fire to the people of God but a cloud of great darkness to the Egyptians. We must learn that God is standing between us and our problem. There He is watching and protecting. He only allows contact with our enemy to show His strength and power and to show His ability to deliver. We know how the story played out. God brought a great east wind in the night and the waters parted and stood up on each side. The people of God walked through on dry ground. In the early part of the next day Pharaoh sees that the people have escaped across the sea and attempts to follow only to have his chariots bog down and his best men drown as the sea comes back

to cover them. Pharaoh's army is destroyed and the Children of Israel are free at last.

Try to imagine the joy of the people. From this great time of rejoicing comes the great psalm of praise that we find in Exodus fifteen. Moses is lifting up the greatness of God. In this Psalm we can see just how God has revealed Himself to Moses and His people. We will not take the time to fully examine the entire psalm but I would like to point out several important things that should be considered.

It should be noted first of all that Moses says that God is his strength, song and his salvation. They had just been delivered by God at a time when all their strength was useless before the enemy they faced. At this time of weakness God became their strength. God wants us to learn with the Apostle Paul, "*My grace is sufficient for thee for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*" Paul's conclusion should be our own. "*Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*" (II Corinthians 12:9) God was Moses' song. I believe that this meant that God was the evidence of his joy, faith, and peace. Arthur Pink once said, "Only the redeemed sing." Believers are the only ones who truly have a reason to sing. Our sins are forgiven. We are in fellowship with our creator. We look forward to Heaven as our eternal place of dwelling. Why should we not sing? The world has a song. Often its dissonance is a reflection of the discontent that they feel being separated from God. The most beautiful music ever written has always been music

that was dedicated to God. God was Moses' joy and song. He should be the subject of every song that we sing because he is the source of all our joy, hope, faith and peace. God also was Moses' salvation. I believe that in this context the word salvation is not dealing with his eternal destiny. Surely, our ultimate salvation depends solely on God. However, this use of the word includes the meaning of the deliverer. God was the one who delivered or saved them from the army of Egypt. Is God not our deliverer in our time of trouble? We look to Him because the arm of man will fail us. I think that the reason that God allows us to have trouble is so that we will look to Him. We look to Him for our salvation from sin and for our source each day. We look to Him for His fellowship. He gives us purpose in life. He has our home in Heaven secured and each day we look to Him for our joy and peace.

In verse three of chapter fifteen we find that God is the "Man of Way." He is the "Mighty God." Our *El Gabor*, or our warrior God. What a thrill to know that when Satan, the great enemy of my soul, threatens, God is the one who fights for us. He hinders Satan. He will fight for us. The Apostle John tells us in his first epistle, "*Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*" Finally, Moses sees the greatness of God's nature. Notice verse eleven of chapter fifteen. "*Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?*" There is a word that is used very

often in these days to describe God. He is said to be awesome. It is almost used so much that it has become trite, but the truly God is awesome. He inspires awe in all that really understand Him and know Him. God is our friend but He is also high and holy. Isaiah saw Him as “High and lifted up.” (Isaiah 6) He does wonderful things that we cannot do for ourselves. He is our high and lifted up, awesome God, and He will reign forever and ever. God is not only the great God for today but He will be God for all eternity. His work in our lives will be to make us to be more like Him every day from now through out eternity. Moses’ song of deliverance is almost entirely God centered. We need to get our eyes off of this world and ourselves and on Him who loves us and fights for us.

Maybe, as you read this today, you are facing the Red Sea with Egypt at your heels. Your Egypt may be finance. It may be poor health. Maybe you have family members who are unsaved. Perhaps you battle with things within your own nature that no one else knows about. Whatever your struggle is learn from Moses and the people of God. Claim God as your strength, salvation and your song. Learn to rest in Him and let Him do the fighting. Psalm 37:7 tells us to, “*Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.*” He will accomplish His will for our lives and His glory. He will keep us each day. Psalm seventy-three tells us that God will, “*Guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory.*” Sometimes God allows trials in our lives to break the hold of this world on our souls. Through the fight we gain strength to be used of God.

Our God is an awesome God. The most important thing that a person can ever come to understand is that God exists and is interested in him. Do you know the God of Heaven today? Do you have a real and vital relationship with Him? Are you still trying to live your life in the strength of your own character? Even the strongest person is doomed to failure because of sin. We have offended the God of Heaven. Our sins have separated between God and us. There is nothing that we can do to close that separation. There is nothing that we need to do to be reconciled to God. It has been rightly said that the difference between religion and true salvation is simply two letters. Religion says “D,” “O,” “do”. True salvation says “D” “O” “N” “E”, done. We try to sacrifice to God. We think that good works and good intentions will please God, and we do all that we can to please God. However, all that we do cannot deal with the question of our sin. That is why Christ came and died. He has done all that is necessary to reunite us to God. It is not what we do but what He has done. What do you trust in today to get you to Heaven? Scripture tells us that it is, *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”* (Titus 3:5) Scripture tells us to make sure of our eternal home in Heaven. Have you ever seen yourself sinful in the eyes of God? Have you ever reached out to take the gift of eternal life from the Lord Jesus? If not, by faith, today reach out to Him. In prayer tell Him that you realize that you are a sinner and that you believe that He is the

Son of God who came to save us from our sins.
“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”
(Romans10:9)

The Lord saved the people from the armies of Egypt. It was very evident that the Lord had done it. Moses and the people first mistrusted then feared and then honored and worshiped the Lord. God showed Himself as a trustworthy guide. They learned that He loved them very much. God accomplished His purpose in revealing Himself to His people. Now they are ready to move on to learn more and more about His grace and goodness. That should be our goal spiritually every day. Do you really want to learn more and more about the Heavenly Father each Day? Let’s not fret and fight when the battles come. Let us learn to give the battles back to God who loves us and will never let anything come to us that is not for our good and His glory. Moses grew and changed. In chapter five of Exodus he was weak, confused, and frightened. Now in chapter fifteen he is strong in the Lord. He is looking only to God for strength and guidance. This is what God wants for us to do as well. Let us submit to Him and let Him have His way in our lives.

TO AID OUR LEARNING:

1. How have you second guessed God in your life?

2. In light of Isaiah 26:3 why is it so hard to simply trust the Lord in difficult times?
3. Have you ever tried to “fix” a problem that only God could fix? What was it and how did it work out for you?

4. What did Dr. Pink mean when he said “only the redeemed sing.”?

5. How will putting our focus on God and taking it off of ourselves helpful to our faith?

6. What does religion expect us to “do” in order to please God? What has God already “done”?