

Keep Faith in God

Exodus 14:1-12

Hello and welcome; thanks for joining us as we continue our study in Exodus. It is encouraging to hear from God and learn more about Him in the Bible. This happens no matter which book of the Bible we are focusing on. This is an amazing aspect of the Bible, and it is one of the things that sets the Bible above all other books. This is not just a book. It is alive, and in every section of the Bible, there is more for us to learn.

Looking at the children of Israel, we can see how God directed and led them from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. And really, that is what God longs to do for each of us. He has provided the way for us to go from slavery to freedom. We can be free from the slavery of sin and experience true freedom by following Jesus and living according to the commands Christ gave.

And think about Pharaoh. He is an example of someone who, despite all the evidence and proof for God, rejects God and continues in his own way. Time after time, God reveals His power, and each time Pharaoh's heart becomes harder and harder. This pattern has been repeated by many men down through the ages. God, in His mercy, shows Himself alive and real in many incredible ways. This turns some hard hearts even harder, which is exactly what Pharaoh was doing.

We look forward to what J Mark Horst will teach us from Exodus and how these truths will teach us more about God and how we can live for Him. Let's give him our attention now.

From our experiences in life, we know that we all need help to keep our hope alive and vibrant. And faith and hope are closely linked together.

The Bible puts it this way in I Corinthians 13, "Now these three remain, faith, hope, and love." In life, faith is the foundation of hope; we rest our hope on our faith. All of us have uncertainties which put us into places similar to Israel's situation, and at those times, we must work to KEEP FAITH IN GOD.

In Exodus 14:1-12 Israel faced a test of faith.

- 1. And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying,*
- 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea.*
- 3. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, they are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in.*

4. *And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honored upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD. And they did so.*

5. *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, and they said, why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?*

6. *And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him:*

7. *And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them.*

8. *And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand.*

9. *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.*

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 out unto the LORD.*

11. *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?*

12. *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.*

In this text, three WORDS stand out, which all of us need to keep our faith in God alive.

First is the word,

Precaution

A precaution is a warning beforehand. The LORD told Moses that certain things were going to happen. He based His precaution on His foreknowledge. The LORD knew what was going to happen before it happened. The information He gave Moses enabled him to prepare the people. We don't know exactly

how God spoke to Moses, but we see in this account that Moses understood God. He was instructed by the LORD exactly what to do. It was a precaution.

God wanted Moses and the people to know beforehand what was going to happen, so He instructed Moses where to camp, and He told them what to expect. He told them that Pharaoh was going to chase after them and try to overcome them. But the LORD said to Moses that He was going to be victorious over Pharaoh and over all his hosts. He was going to show His power over Pharaoh. Pharaoh did not know his plan was not going to work. He thought he had an easy victory ahead of him. But by this word of precaution from the LORD, Israel was prepared. Pharaoh's actions did not come as a surprise.

There are four words at the end of verse 4 which are of highest importance: "And they did so." What God told them to do, they did. God gave them a forewarning of what was going to happen. He told them how to get ready for it. They got ready exactly the way the LORD told them. This precaution came to them, and they accepted it. We know they accepted it because they acted upon God's command. That's how you know if someone really believes; it moves to action.

My friend, the LORD has told us also in His Word what is going to happen in time to come. He has warned us to look for certain signs that will signal the end of time as we know it. He has told us beforehand what is going to happen to alert us to prepare. You can keep your faith in God if you will accept that word of precaution.

The second word is,

Pursuit

Pharaoh did exactly what the LORD said he would do, even though his pursuit was based on false information. The people told the king that Israel had fled when in fact, as we can read earlier in Exodus, he and his people had told them to "get out!" They did not want them to stay any longer after the firstborn in all the Egyptian homes had met death. But now, apparently, the urgency of the moment had vanished. Pharaoh began to reflect upon what had happened. His servants came to him and said, "Why have we done this that we have let Israel go from serving us?" They questioned their wisdom in releasing their workforce.

So, Pharaoh gathered together his best men, six hundred chosen chariots, all the chariots of Egypt, and the captains over them. He gathered together his best army to overtake the children of Israel. I can see it in my mind. I can almost see Pharaoh's army glisten with golden shields and the horses' plumes waving in the wind while the charioteers crack their whips as they approach the children of Israel. It must have been a fearful and awe-inspiring sight.

How did these children look who were departing? Certainly not like an army. They were a large crowd. Carrying their dough troughs, walking along having perhaps a few wagons to carry the heavier goods. Men, women, and children of all ages were walking in an orderly march. But there wasn't one weapon among them. And Pharaoh, king of Egypt, is pursuing them with a large well-ordered and well-equipped army.

In life, we all come to difficult places, too, when the future is unsure, and the opposition is closing in. The question is, what are we to do under those circumstances? The descriptive word is pursuit. Pharaoh was in pursuit of the enemy. The children of Israel were in pursuit of God's promise. Through faith in God, we don't need to fear the pursuit of the oppressor.

The third word is,

Protest

The protest was based on fear. When the children of Israel looked back and saw Pharaoh's army approaching with the chariots, there was nothing they could do. They foresaw being captured and taken back to their slavery. So, they cried out to God. Well, that's a good thing to do when you are in trouble. Cry out to the LORD. Lift your heart and voice in prayer to Him. He is there to hear and to help.

But then they complained to Moses. They cried to God and complained to Moses. They said, "Were there no graves in Egypt that you brought us out here to die in the wilderness? Why didn't you let us alone that we could serve the Egyptians?" But you know, God had something else in mind for these people of Israel. He had another purpose for them. They said they would have served the Egyptians, but God wanted them to serve Him. So, this is the word of protest.

When times are hard, we are inclined to cry out to God and then blame someone else. It is part of our human nature to look for others to blame when we are in trouble. But the LORD is working out His purposes, His own purposes, and we can't always see those purposes because we have made up our own minds. Well, the word is protest. It wasn't all in vain. When they cried unto God, the LORD heard them.

Out of this very difficult condition, God was developing faith in Israel. Out of your very difficult condition, faith can develop. In fact, it will develop if you keep looking to God. I urge you to hold fast when there seems to be no way out. It's ok to protest, but be assured, God knows what He's doing.

You know, these three words we looked at can help keep your faith alive too. Precaution: God warns us that following His plan will not always be easy. Jesus told His disciples, "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."

Pursuit: if you pursue a relationship with God and learn to rely on Him, then you will have courage when you are facing pursuit by your enemies. You will have the assurance that God has some bigger plan in mind than you can see at the moment.

Protest: fear is a natural reaction to unexpected circumstances. But we must not let our fear control us. We can cry out to God in protest, He understands and will show us what to do.

All of these will help you keep your faith in God alive!

Thank you, J. Mark, for this teaching from Exodus, and we thank you for joining us. As Christians, it is a privilege to serve and trust our God. Our God, Who is above every nation. As His people, it is good for us to remember the important principle in Daniel 4:17. It says, “that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdoms of men, and gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men.” This verse teaches our sovereign God is over the kingdoms on earth. What happens here among our leaders is known and directed by Him.

Our leaders may be powerful and important or minor and less known, but it is our God who has placed them there, and our God is using them to accomplish His will. I admit we don’t always know how this can be, and when I don’t, I usually tell God I don’t know why this is happening or why You are allowing this, but I trust You and pray that Your people stay faithful. Be encouraged from this story from Exodus, that our God was in control, and the same God who was in control back then is still in control now.

Do you have any thoughts from today’s teaching? If you want to share them with us, here are a few ways you can contact us. One of the best ways is via email. Our email is hope@heraldsofhope.org. If you don’t have email, no problem, our address is Hope for Today, Box 3, Breezewood, PA 15533. Or you can connect with us on our website. Our website is Heraldsofhope.org. While you are there, please check out the listen tab and listen to other teaching. Again, the website is www.heraldsofhope.org.

This brings us to the end of today’s program; thanks again for being there. Please join us next week for another lesson from Exodus. Go with God this week and know that He is big enough for your circumstance. Trust Him because “the Most High rules in the kingdoms of men.”