

**I. The Exodus**

**A. Okay boys and girls, settle in for a story...**

1. *When word reached the king of Egypt that the Israelites were not planning to return to Egypt after three days, Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds. "What have we done, letting all these slaves get away?" they asked. So Pharaoh called out his troops and led the chase in his chariot. He took with him six hundred of Egypt's best chariots, along with the rest of the chariots of Egypt, each with a commander. The LORD continued to strengthen Pharaoh's resolve, and he chased after the people of Israel who had escaped so defiantly. All the forces in Pharaoh's army--all his horses, chariots, and charioteers--were used in the chase. The Egyptians caught up with the people of Israel as they were camped beside the shore... (Exodus 14:5-9, NLT)*

**II. Welcome**

- A. Welcome to Camp Neighborhood, here on Campfire Hill. Welcome to our summer series called Campfire Stories. We've been looking week by week at the great stories of the Bible.
- B. A lot of us grew up in Sunday School and church hearing the stories.
- C. But a lot did not.
- D. So we thought it would be good to remind you of the stories, and to dig into their meaning.
- E. Today, we're looking at one of the main stories in all of Scripture, the story of the Exodus and God parting the sea.
- F. The story has two parts and asks a question.
  1. Part one: The people were slaves.
  2. Part two: God set them free.
  3. The Question: Would they live in their freedom or not?
- G. Let's look at how the story speaks to our minds and hearts from the Word of God.

**III. The Exodus**

**A. The Backstory: When a new normal isn't normal.**

1. The story begins over 400 years before the Exodus. Let that sink in. The history of the United States is only 241 years old. But the history of the Exodus goes back over 400 years.
2. A long, long time ago, the people of God lived in the promised land. Because of a famine, they moved to Egypt.
3. Four hundred thirty years have come and gone, and still they are in Egypt.
4. And you have to ask the question — why are you still here? Why aren't you in the place God designed you for?
5. See, God promised the Jews a land, and they weren't in it. The reason is because they made themselves a new normal.
6. And that normal wasn't normal, because it wasn't God's plan.
7. God's plan is God saves you, God blesses you, God grows you, God uses you.
8. Their plan was this is a nice place. Let's forget God and live here.
9. So what happened?

**B. *He told his people, "These Israelites are becoming a threat to us because there are so many of them. We must find a way to put an end to this. If we don't and if war breaks out, they will join our enemies and fight against us. Then they will escape from the country." So the Egyptians made the Israelites their slaves and put brutal slave drivers over them, hoping to wear them down under heavy burdens. They forced them to build the cities of Pithom and Rameses as supply centers for the king. But the more the Egyptians oppressed them, the more quickly the Israelites multiplied! The Egyptians soon became alarmed and decided to make their slavery more bitter still. They were ruthless with the Israelites, forcing them to make bricks and mortar and to work long hours in the fields. (Exodus 1:9-14, NLT).***

1. The ruler of Egypt was called the Pharaoh. He ordered the slaughter of all Israelite baby boys. That decision will come back to haunt him.
2. The people of God were created for freedom. They were created for salvation, and blessing, and growth, and usefulness to God — the Grace Pathway (God saves, blesses, grows, and uses you).
3. But they thought life was good and they neglected all that. Until, like the proverbial frog in the kettle, they delayed their growth in God, and delayed and delayed and delayed until they woke up one day, and their slavery was complete. They drifted into it. They wandered into it. Slowly. Imperceptibly. Choice by choice. Not a conscious enslavement. But a matter of degrees.
4. That's how this kind of slavery always happens.
  - a) 1. *Inner bondage comes upon you slowly, by degrees.*
5. And even then, they lived with it. They tolerated it. They accepted it as their normal.
6. Until the slave-masters made their lives unbearable.
7. Then what happened?

**C. *Years passed, and the king of Egypt died. But the Israelites still groaned beneath their burden of slavery. They cried out for help, and their pleas for deliverance rose up to God. God heard their cries and remembered his covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He looked down on the Israelites and felt deep concern for their welfare. (Exodus 2:23-25, NLT).***

1. This is the grace of God.
2. When you're at your worst, God's at his best.
3. They allowed themselves to become slaves, and God went to work setting them free.
4. This would be a very good time to look inside and contemplate what have you drifted into? Who's really running your life?

- a) It could be addiction... alcohol, drugs, pornography, sex, shopping, gambling, gaming.
- b) You might say, my debt is running my life. It depresses you and runs your life.
- c) Or you might say brokenness from your past — a loss, a trauma, a stress — is running your life. It has taken over, slowly, by degrees, and now everything is about that point in time when something precious was taken from you.
- d) For some it could be greed, or hatred, or bitterness, or revenge.
- e) For some materialism. Or being popular.
- 5. Whatever it is, your life can be very good. Successful.
- 6. But it's slowly ebbing away. Inch by inch. Degree by degree.
  - a) 2. *Whatever force dominates your emotions and drains your energy is your master and you are its slave. (Romans 6:16,19)*
- 7. It's the ring of power.
  - a) It's not about bad luck. It's not about the alignment of stars. It's not payback for a past life, or past behavior. Your past doesn't own your emotions. Your labels, your DNA, your crazy family tree, your past mistakes, your rap sheet...
  - b) When something dark is the center of your solar system and everything inside you orbits that, you're going to have a really painful life.
  - c) The great news of Christ, is that God can break you out of that orbit, and put something new in the middle.
- 8. The Jews cried out to God, and God sent a deliverer. His name was Moses.
- 9. Moses commanded Pharaoh to let God's people go.
- 10. But let's just say it took some persuading. Ten plagues later, and the Jews are on their way. Pastor Ken told that story three messages ago. So let's skip to the next part.
- 11. And now, they find themselves trapped.
- 12. Let's see what happens.
- D. *As Pharaoh and his army approached, the people of Israel could see them in the distance, marching toward them. 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 14:10-12, NLT).*
  - 1. They do two things side by side that just don't belong together.
    - a) They cry out to the Lord.
    - b) They began to panic.
  - 2. Why did YOU bring US out here to DIE in the wilderness?
    - a) They make themselves victims, as if Moses dragged them out of Egypt. Last time I checked, they were dancing in the streets when they escaped their slavery.
  - 3. They say, Our slavery was better..." Think about that.
    - a) What are they doing?
      - (1) They are telling themselves stories.
        - (a) Listen, there are the facts of your life...
        - (b) and there are the stories you tell yourself about the facts.
      - b) All the facts can be assembled into more than one interpretation, more than one story.
        - (1) The facts can say, "I have struggles."
          - (a) The story can say, "I have struggles. I will rise above my struggles."
          - (b) Or the story can say, "I have struggles. I have no hope."
      - c) And here the people are in so much trouble. They are caught in a trap. That is the fact. And what do they say to themselves?
        - (a) "I am in deep trouble. My slavery was better." My alcohol was better. My addiction was better. My violence, my time in prison, my time of singleness, my childlessness was better."
    - 4. 3. *Your life shrinks or expands in direct proportion to the quality of stories you tell yourself.*
      - a) When your life feels boxed in, crushed, on the defensive, it's time to listen to what your inner voices are saying. What story are you telling yourself?
        - (1) Why were they so long in Egypt?
        - (2) Why did they never return to the Promised Land?
        - (3) Why did 400 years go by, and they still weren't home?
          - (a) *Because the familiarity of being slaves was easier than the adventure of being free.*
      - b) The fallen side of the human heart, in the Bible, is called the Flesh. We all deal with it.
        - (1) And the flesh prefers the boring routine of other people's dictates.
        - (2) It prefers the safety of excuses, and the mindlessness of predictability over the adventure God designed you for.
          - (a) The flesh says, "I can't," but the spirit says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."
          - (b) The flesh says, "God won't," but the spirit says "The God of my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, My stronghold and my refuge..." (2 Samuel 22:3, NKJV).
        - (3) The spirit roars like a lion for liberty.
        - (4) The flesh bleats like a sheep for security.

- (a) Everybody here... we all deal with the same facts.
- (b) The world is a morally broken pain machine for *everybody*.
- (c) We all have pain. We all have loss. We all have heartache. We all have confusion. We all have problems that bind us, addictions that tug us, and lusts that could enslave us. Those are the facts. The facts are just the raw material.
  - i) *4 It's the story you weave from the raw material that creates or destroys the freedom that could be yours.*
- (d) You need to burn the useless story of permanent victimhood. You need to shred the story of perpetual slavery that runs in your deep imagination.
  - i) Refuse the slave mentality.
- c) And this is why God Grows You is so important on the Grace Pathway. Because God uses all the theology of Scripture for a purpose. He is writing a story of victory into the deepest recesses of your soul. That takes time. That takes persistence with Bible study.
  - (1) God is writing an epic story of victory into your psyche.
  - (2) A saga of deep satisfaction.
  - (3) A tale of total triumph.
    - (a) The Word of God, installed your soul, makes you tell yourself and your world a story of victory. Because, with God on your side, redemption is never more than a heartbeat away.
    - (b) Bible study changes everything. It changes the story you tell yourself about yourself...about your God, about your world, and about your destiny. The Bible enables you to seize a better future... the Bible shows you Christ as your trailblazer, and glory as your destiny, and freedom every single day.
- d) And that is the story Moses, the deliverer now rises up to declare.
- E. *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." (Exodus 14:13, 14, NKJV).*
  - 1. What is the word that means God does the work, not us?
  - 2. That would be the word GRACE.
  - 3. Why did the people panic? Because they took on themselves a thousand pound weight God never intended them to bear. God promised to set them free. He promised them a land flowing with milk and honey. He promised them the sovereignty of their own lives. That was God's job. Not theirs.
  - 4. And now, they are trapped against the Red Sea, and the mighty Egyptian army is bearing down on them. There is NO human solution.
  - 5. They panic because they want to do something.
  - 6. Moses tells them to do nothing. Because whatever something has to be done, it can only be done by God.
  - 7. Fear not. Stand Still. And see the salvation of the Lord.
  - 8. What a beautiful statement of grace, right here in the second book of the Old Testament.
  - 9. You know, you could put those exact words of Moses on a T-shirt, and they'll still be true today. Do not be afraid. Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.
    - a) Grace is God doing by his power what you could never do by your power.
    - b) Grace is God giving and you receiving.
    - c) Grace is God paying the price and you being made rich.
    - d) Grace is God working while you're resting.
    - e) Grace is God's effort, God's sacrifice, God's loss and your gain.
    - f) If you lost it, grace finds it.
    - g) If you wreck it, grace restores it.
    - h) If you need it, grace supplies it.
    - i) Where you're weak, grace is strong.
    - j) Where you're broken, grace is whole.
    - k) Grace always looks to Christ, and to his cross.
    - l) Grace satisfied the justice of God at the cross so the kindness of God could flow to your life.
    - m) Grace means justice wins AND love wins, both.
    - n) Grace is all that God stands ready to do in you, for you, and through you, strictly and entirely on the basis of the Cross of Jesus Christ.
    - o) When Jesus died on the cross, he opened the floodgates of grace.
  - 10. If you have received Jesus Christ, his grace has set you free. There is a name for this setting free. It is redemption.
    - a) *5. Redemption is the astounding fact that God has set you free, by his grace, through the shed blood of Christ, once for all!*
  - 11. He has set you free from sin.
  - 12. He has set you free from the penalty of sin.
  - 13. He has set you free from the power of sin.
  - 14. And one day, he will set you free from the presence of sin.

15. He has broken every chain that holds you from your true calling. He has opened every door between you and your destiny. He has made smooth the path to the life he sets before you.
  16. Redemption means the doors have been opened; why do you keep yourself stuck in the life you only halfway want? Step out the door.
  17. There were the Jews, the grace of God was there, yet they panicked. The promise of God was there, but they didn't rest in it. Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, Moses said. Then what happened?
  18. Well, God told Moses to hold his staff over the sea. That night, he sent a strong wind, and piled up the waters. He also sent his own presence to create a cloud behind the Israelites. To them, it looked like a whirlwind. To the Egyptians on the other side, it looked like blackness. God himself held off the Egyptians, as he slowly parted the sea.
  19. And then this happened:
- F. *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 sea on dry ground, with walls of water on each side! (Exodus 14:21, 22, NLT).*
1. They walked through the Red Sea on dry land.
  2. That was a miracle of grace, and there is no explaining it away. The same sea that they walked through, later washed away the pursuing army of Egypt. It was a mighty miracle. It stands throughout the Old Testament as the greatest display of God's power for Israel. This was redemption day. This was liberation day.
  3. They were slaves, and God set them free.
  4. He's set you free too. You are no longer a slave, Christian.
    - a) Your past doesn't define you.
    - b) Your family tree doesn't own you.
    - c) There's a land of blessing for you, on the other side of your depression.
    - d) There's a place of victory for you, on the other side of your fears.
    - e) Recovery—lasting, full, and free—is waiting for you to walk the steps of grace.
    - f) Relationship—love like you've never known before—can be yours.
    - g) Prosperity—an inner sense of riches that money can't buy—is your birthright.
      - (1) You are not a slave. You are a freeborn child of God.
    - h) You may have problems, and losses, and headaches forever, but they don't define you, don't label you, don't own your emotions.
    - i) Because every day, the Word of God that you have taken into your heart, reminds you, "I am bought with a price, and I belong to God, and he belongs to me."
      - (1) *6. The Word of God, mixed with faith, makes you experience the freedom that is already yours in Christ.*
  5. The people panicked, but Moses said Fear Not.
  6. What made the difference between them?
  7. They were both in the exact same spot and in the same danger. Moses was in more danger as the leader. Yet *they* panicked and *he* didn't. What made the difference?
    - a) The heart of Moses was filled with the knowledge of God, and that made all the difference.
  8. Your heart can be filled with the knowledge of God too. Bible study, time in the Word, prayer...
  9. Do you want to know the voice of God? Open your Bible. Day after day. Sermons, small groups, Bible studies.
  10. This book, hidden in your heart, over a long time, makes you the kind of person who doesn't panic when armies of evil attack.
  11. Why? Because...
    - a) *7. Your God is mightier than any force that can hold you captive and he has set you free.*
  12. And it takes the Bible, in your heart, to align all the voices in your head with this amazing truth.

## IV. Conclusion

- A. They were slaves. God set them free. Would they live in the freedom or not?
- B. The story of the Jews gives a very sad answer. No. God had redeemed them, but they didn't live like it. Even after they crossed the Sea, even after they reached the Promised Land, they still didn't have abiding faith in God. They made a gold calf and worshipped it. They whined that they were better off as slaves. No, they did not live in their freedom, and that generation died in the wilderness.
- C. The high price of a redeemed life living an unredeemed lifestyle. The tragedy of redeemed people telling themselves unredeemed stories—trapped, stuck, addicted, in bondage, I'll never, I can't, God doesn't, it's impossible.
- D. If there is any message I can leave you with from the story of the Exodus it's this one:
  1. *8. All the power of heaven is committed to your freedom.*
- E. Silence the stories that tell you otherwise. Step through to your freedom, and live the life God has called you to.
- F. There's a verse in Psalm 107:2 that says, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." And that is my prayer for you.