

Unlocking The Mystery & Treasure Of Our Inheritance

#29 When Your Back Is Against The Wall

Have you ever felt your back was against the wall?

- a bill is due (or overdue) and you have no way to pay it
- the Doctor says, "there is nothing more that can be done"
- False Rumors about you have been spread and everyone is believing the worst
- A spouse tells you the relationship is over
- You are worried about a wayward child

Asaph felt the Desperation Of His Circumstances:

Ps. 77:2, 4 In the day of my trouble I [desperately] sought the Lord;

In the night my hand was stretched out [in prayer] without weariness;

My soul refused to be comforted.

You have held my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

Ps. 77:11-12 I will [solemnly] remember the deeds of the LORD;

Yes, I will [wholeheartedly] remember Your wonders of old.

I will meditate on all Your works and thoughtfully consider all Your [great and wondrous] deeds.

Asaph Found Strength:

Ps. 77:19-20 Your way [of escape for Your people] was through the sea,

And Your paths through the great waters, and Your footprints were not traceable.

You led Your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron [to the promised goal].

Truth: God will make a way when there seems to be no way.

Isa.43:19b I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.

"No sea is deeper than the love of God."

Joni E. Tada: "When loneliness settles over...When pain and grief and anxiety conspire to push you to the edge of despair, remember God's mighty deeds in your life. Remember His kindness. Remember His special tailor-made graces that fell out of the sky like a gentle spring rain."

God's battle plans for each of us are drawn to meet our personal requirements with regard to our strengths and weaknesses. God never leads us down a road we are unable to walk in His strength and power, though there may be others roads, which seem easier and shorter.

Exodus 13:17-18 When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, Lest the people Change Their Purpose When They Face War and Return To Egypt.¹⁸ But God led the people around by way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea.

1. Israel's exodus from Egypt was the BEGINNING of their experience with God.

2. God knew the Israelites weren't ready for battle with the Philistines.

If He made them face the Philistines they would have been back in Egypt before nightfall.

God could have struck the Philistines dead, but He had a greater purpose in mind.

3. God led the Israelites to a place where they had to face their own fears. No Way Out!
4. My lack of spiritual maturity may limit what God can and will do for me when I encounter personal problems. He will not lead me into a situation that is over my head, but He will lead me into situations that will prepare me for deeper waters.
5. There are times in our lives when God leads us to a place where: No Way Of Human Escape

Exodus 14 teaches us how to Biblically process difficulties by faith as WE FOCUS ON God's Presence, His Providence, Promises and His Power.

Key Point #1 Realize God Means For You To Be Where You Are

Ex. 14:1-2 Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "Speak to the children of Israel, that they TURN BACK AND CAMP before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal Zephon; you shall camp before it by the sea.

Question: What facts did Moses know?

1. God had guided them to this difficult place between the Red Sea & the Egyptians.
2. The Pillar had led them there. [Ex. 13:21-22; 14:19]
3. God explained this to Moses so God could gain glory through Pharaoh and his army. [14:1-4]
4. Moses knew God had promised to bring the Israelites into the land of Canaan which was across and beyond the Red Sea. [Ex. 3:7-8, 16-17; 6:4; 12:25; 13:5]
5. Moses knew God had given him power through the use of his staff.
6. When God had Israel turn back, it seemed unreasonable at first.
 - a. God revealed His purpose to Moses: Cause Pharaoh to think the Israelites were lost!
 - b. This belief of Pharaoh prompted his attack.
 - c. God's actions were very reasonable when seen in terms of God's purpose.

Question: Why are the Israelites in this corner?

GOD told Moses to take this route and Deliberately Led the Israelites to this location.

1. This time of trial was a blessing in disguise. Through this circumstance God was going to teach the Israelites of His Greatness In An Unforgettable Way.

Note: The Israelites were initially thrilled with their new freedom and followed the pillar of cloud and fire, but then God deliberately led them with specific instructions to a difficult and seemingly impossible place.

Note: People in the Bible who, through no fault of their own, found themselves in difficulties.

1. Abraham was asked to sacrifice his son.
2. After Joseph received divine dreams, he was seized, stripped, sold into slavery and imprisoned in a dungeon in Egypt.
3. Moses was caught between splendors of Egyptian royalty and thankless affliction with the Israelites.
4. David, after being anointed king, was pursued by Israelite troops.
5. Hezekiah, seeking revival, was trapped by the most powerful army on earth, and bent on annihilating his people.
6. Jeremiah was thrown in jail as a traitor.
7. Hosea's wife deserted him.

8. Job lost everything.

9. Jesus commanded His disciples to set sail on Galilee where they faced a terror-filled night of storms and waves.

10. The apostles were persecuted, beaten and imprisoned because of preaching Jesus Christ.
Note: Apostle Peter later wrote: I Pet. 4:12 Beloved, do not be amazed and bewildered at the fiery ordeal which is taking place to test your quality, as though something strange (unusual and alien to you and your position) were befalling you.

Remember: We have a determined enemy seeking to devour us.

John 16:33 In the world, you will have tribulation.

A.W. Tozer: "To the child of God, there is no such thing as an accident. He travels an appointed way. Accidents may indeed appear to befall him and misfortunes stalk his way; but these evils will be so in appearance only and will seem evil only because we cannot read the secret script of God's hidden providence."

God will test our faith by leading us into a hardship and difficult trial. Don't panic.

God either placed you there or allowed you to be there for reasons known only to Him.

Truth: God's will never puts me where His presence cannot sustain me.

Key Point #2: God's Battle Plan Is for His Glory

Exodus 14:3-4 For Pharaoh will say of the Israelites, They are entangled in the land; the wilderness has shut them in [hemmed them in]. I will harden (make stubborn, strong) Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them. I will gain honor *and* glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord. And they did so.

The Egyptians ready their chariots and head off after the Hebrews.

Chuck Swindoll: "Israel is in trouble. It was like driving into a dead end street with a car full of gang members chasing you. To the West the Egyptian army was bearing down on them. They could go south into the desert but they would be overtaken quickly. Going north was to head back toward Egypt. And to the East . . . there was the Red Sea!"

C.H. Mackintosh - "The sea was before them, Pharaoh's hosts behind them, and the mountains around them. All this, be it observed, Permitted And Ordered Of God."

God was in the process of revealing Himself as never before!

His greatest glory is our salvation. The world is focused on Israelites' God who has brought His people between Satan and the Red Sea with no way of escape.

What do you do when there is nothing you can do?

When Dr. David Livingstone was working in Africa, a group of friends wrote him:

"We would like to send other men to you. Have you found a good road into your area yet?"

Dr. Livingstone sent this message in reply: "If you have men who will only come if they know there is a good road, I don't want them. I want men who will come if there is no road at all."

Question: Have you found yourself trapped between that proverbial rock and a hard place?

God uses Difficult Times to:

1. To Correct Us - Face the painful consequences so we can repent and grow.
2. To Deepen Us - Roots of a plant only get deeper if they don't have water available on the surface. Deep roots make a strong plant.
3. To Provide Unique Opportunities - Demonstrate faithfulness and trust. "The person who is faithful in tough times speaks more effectively than the preacher in the pulpit."

Note: "If you allow Him, the same God who led you into the difficulty or trial will lead you out."

Spurgeon: "The Lord will make a way for you where no foot has been before.

That which, like a sea, threatens to drown you, shall be a highway for your escape."

Key Point #3 Impossible Situations Should Be Faced With Peace - Not Panic

Ex. 14:10-12 When Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked up, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them; and the Israelites were exceedingly frightened and cried out to the Lord.

And they said to Moses, Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you treated us this way and brought us out of Egypt?

Did we not tell you in Egypt, Let us alone; let us serve the Egyptians?

For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.

Consider: When we face a tough time we often panic and then,

- We turn on those who love us
- We say things that we will regret
- We make decisions that are unwise
- We act with desperation rather than wisdom
- We turn away from God rather than toward Him

1. When we find ourselves in an unbearable situation we must look for God's deliverance instead of looking for an easy way out. If God had led the Israelites through the land of the Philistines, they would have turned and surrendered to the Egyptians. We want to revert to our old lifestyles when things become unbearable, but there is no going back.

Luke 9:62 No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back [to the things behind] is fit for the kingdom of God.

2. Paul enumerates lessons he learned in deadly circumstances beyond his ability to endure.

II Cor. 1:8-10 For we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about the affliction and oppressing distress which befell us in Asia, how we were so utterly and unbearably weighed down *and* crushed that we despaired even of life. Indeed, we felt within ourselves that we had received the [very] sentence of death, but that was to keep us From Trusting In And Depending On Ourselves instead of on God Who raises the dead. [For it is He] Who rescued *and* saved us from such a perilous death, and He will still rescue *and* save us; in *and* on Him we have set our hope (our joyful and confident expectation) that He will again deliver us [from danger and destruction and draw us to Himself],

Lesson #1 *We must not rely on ourselves.* "This happened that we might not rely on ourselves."

Lesson #2 Paul said he learned to place his hope in God.

Lesson #3 Paul says God raises the dead; therefore his conclusion was that God could save him from deadly circumstances.

Lesson #4 Paul says, "He will continue to deliver us." Our future is as bright as our hope in God.

Ps. 124:6-8 Blessed be the Lord, Who has not given us as prey to their teeth!

⁷ We are like a bird escaped from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we have escaped! ⁸ Our help is in the name of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.

Daniel 3:16-18 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, it is not necessary for us to answer you on this point. If our God Whom we serve IS ABLE TO

DELIVER us from the burning fiery furnace, He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.

But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up!

Consider: Many go through a prolonged period of pain, stress and darkness. We feel trapped by our circumstances. We feel we are facing impossible odds. The valley we are traveling seems dark with no light at the end of the tunnel. We WORRY it will never be resolved.

John R. Rice: "Worry is putting question marks where God has put periods."

Bishop Sheen: "Worry is a form of atheism, for it betrays a lack of faith and trust in God."

Consider: God put the Israelites between Satan and the Red Sea because He knew that was THE ONLY HOPE OF PRODUCING FAITH despite their weaknesses.

God works with our weaknesses to make us strong in faith.

Question: How can I not worry when fiery trials [Red Sea] engulf me and the "soldiers of Egypt are speeding toward me with drawn swords?"

Key Point #4 God's Battle Plan Requires Action

Exodus 14:13-14 "Fear not. Stand still [firm, confident, undismayed] and WATCH THE LORD RESCUE YOU. The Egyptians that you see today will never be seen again.

The Lord will fight for you. You shall hold your peace and remain at rest.

"Just because you don't see a way doesn't mean God doesn't have a way."

Can you imagine being one of the Israelites? You are standing at the Sea with the Egyptians racing toward you from one direction and the devastating desert in the other direction.

You are in trouble. Your leader Moses stands up, grabs the microphone and says,

"Relax, don't sweat it, God's got it all under control."

How do you respond? You would get angry. You'd scream, "That's your plan? What kind of a leader are you?" When a faithful person is filled with anxiety it shows that they are focusing on the problem rather than the Lord. To focus on the Lord in tough times takes an act of the will.

Adrian Rogers: "Glance at the problem. Focus on the Lord Jesus."

We look for temporary solutions or refuse to deal with it.
Meanwhile, God has promised a solution to our circumstance.
Our job is to remain faithful. God's job is to rescue us. "Watch The Lord Rescue You!"
These are words of anticipation and excitement.

Ex. 14:15-16 The Lord said to Moses, Why do you cry to Me?

Tell the people of Israel to GO FORWARD! Lift up your rod and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, and the Israelites shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.

Problem: They had forgotten that God had been faithful in the past. They saw God do incredible things in Egypt. They had seen God guiding them with the cloud and pillar of fire. Trust Him!

Requirements To Discover God's Perspectives For Our Lives.

1. Reject the Fear which usually comes without an invitation.
2. "Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring."
3. "Be Still." When you turn a snow globe upside down or shake it, it looks like a snow storm. The snow storm will stop by keeping the globe still. If you keep shaking it, it will keep snowing. It's fun with a globe but it is not so much fun when it is your life.

In difficult times panic is like shaking the jar. Peaceful trust allows you to let God work.

4. We must move on with our lives."Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Stop whining and complaining and move on."

Don't ask: "Why do I have this problem?" Ask: "What lesson does God have for me in this difficulty?" It is vital to see God's perspective. Then the reasons pale into insignificance.

Sometimes the waiting is long, maybe years. It may not be in our lifetime.

Key Point #5 The Faith That Pleases God

Heb. 11:32-40 And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they Might Gain A Better Resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

Key Point #6 God's Miraculous Deliverance

Exodus 14:19-22 And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

Much of our lives are spent between the banks of the Red Sea and the onslaughts of Satan. The Red Sea you face serves God's purposes in your life. God will use it to glorify Himself and strengthen your faith in Him. Have you ever noticed when God delivers you from your Red Sea experiences how easy it is to shout praises because of His glorious work? Praise Him in the storm! If you will trust the Lord you will know peace in the midst of conflict, find endurance for the struggles, and learn the lessons of graduate school level faith. You will see the power and goodness of God in ways that stagger us and bring us to our knees.

Andrew Murray: "First, He brought me here.

It is by His will that I am in this strait place; in that fact I will rest.

Next, He will keep me here in His love, and give me grace to behave as His child.

Then, He will make the trial a blessing, teaching me the lessons He intends me to learn, and working in me the grace He means to bestow.

Last, in His good time He can bring me out again- how and when He knows."

Question: Are you in a difficult spot? You are there by God's appointment. You are in His keeping, under His training and according to His timing.

When you're up against a struggle that shatters all your dreams
And your hope's been cruelly crushed by Satan's manifested scheme
And you feel the urge within you to submit to earthly fears
Don't let the faith your standing in seem to disappear.

Now Satan is a liar and he wants to make us think that we are paupers
When he knows himself - We're children of the King
So lift up the mighty shield of faith for the battle must be won
We know that Jesus Christ is risen so the works already done.

Praise the Lord! He can work through those who praise Him
Praise the Lord! For our God inhabits praise
Praise the Lord for the chains that seem to bind you serve only to remind you
That they drop powerless behind you when you praise Him.