

Exodus 14:13-15

“Between a rock and a hard place”

Prop. Statement: what do we do when we’re in a tough place with seemingly no way out?

1. Introduction:

- a. Jesus said in John 16:33, **“I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation: But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”**
 - i. Someone has well said that the Christian Life is characterized by trials and that as it pertains to trials the Christian is either “going into a trial”, “in a trial”, or “coming out of a trial”.
 - ii. Now trials are not a very perky subject but it is the fact of the matter.
 - iii. So what do we do when we find ourselves in a serious trial – and I mean a real, live, **“I don’t think I’m going to live through this”** kind of a trial?
 - iv. The passage before us gives some priceless insight into what we are to do when we find ourselves in a tough place with seemingly no way out.
- b. The children of Israel are in just such a trial - a real predicament.
 - i. They have the Egyptian army pursuing them from behind with murder in their eyes, and they have the Red Sea in front of them – They are between a **“rock and a hard place”**.

- ii. How did they get there? Surely they must have done something wrong.
- c. If we turn back to Exodus Chapter 5:1-2 we see that God sent Moses to Pharaoh with a very specific command and Pharaoh's response to the command of Almighty God.
 - i. **Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness." And Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, nor will I let Israel go." Exodus 5:1-2**
 - ii. For the next 10 chapters God introduces Himself to the people of Egypt, and His own people, as their Deliverer: ***The One Who is mighty deliver and to save.***
 - iii. God led the Children of Israel on a specific route to the Red Sea for a specific purpose and He knowing that Pharaoh would follow.
 - iv. God knew that they would be in this place.
 - 1. Listen - God led them to this place.
 - 2. They are trapped – no way out.
 - 3. Why? **So that He would be glorified.**
 - a. **Exodus 14:17-18, "And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horseman then the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."**
 - v. Maybe you're here this am and you realize that God has led you to the place you are in – you didn't do

anything to get there yourself – But He has led you here and you don't see any way out.

vi. What do you do?

1. Moses is going to give us ***3 specific things*** that we are to do when we find ourselves in this kind of situation – **Between a rock and a hard place.**

2. Exposition:

- a. Notice with me in **verse 13** the **first** thing Moses says to do is, **“Do not be afraid”**.
 - i. The Bible never says that there is nothing to be afraid of – but it does tell us **“not to be afraid”**.
 - ii. Why would he tell us not to be afraid? Because our natural tendency when things are closing in on us is to be afraid.
 - iii. Fear is an **improper** and **illogical** response for the Child of God.
 1. God led them to this place and He will lead them out.
 2. What they are in the midst of here is the process of being delivered.
 3. I believe God is just as interested in the process as He is in the actual deliverance itself.
 - a. We can get so overwhelmed by the circumstances that we fail to see the Lord in the midst and though He will be glorified we not only don't see it we don't reflect it in our lives because we're too busy walking in unbelief.

b. What does fear do?

- i. Fear focuses on **“Self”** - me; my situation; and my human understanding of the outcome.
- ii. Fear is the opposite of Faith. (The adventures of Gulliver) Glum, **“IT’II NEVER WORK WE’RE ALL GOING TO DIE”**.
 1. Faith says with Job, “though He slay me; yet I will trust Him”.
 2. No matter what I’m in the midst of, He knows my name, He knows where I’m at and He knows what I’m facing – And though He slay me; I will trust Him right here, right now.
- iii. Fear also causes us to take matters into our own hands and do what seems best to us.
 - a. It was fear that caused Elijah to run from Jezebel after a great victory over the prophets of Baal at Mt Carmel in 1 Kings 18.
 - b. It was fear that caused Peter to deny Jesus.
2. The children of Israel driven by fear could have given up, threw up the white flag and surrendered to the Egyptians and went back into the bondage that had been their portion for a few hundred years under a man who forced them to kill their babies.
- iv. **(The Lord desires that we Walk by Faith)** Faith says, **“He led me here and He will bring me out”**.

1. Faith focuses on God, His character, His nature, and His reputation not just in the lives of others but in my life as well.
 - a. Hebrews 11:6, “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”
 - b. Faith looks to the LORD and says, “In spite of what is going on right now, I trust you and I want to know you, reveal yourself to me – show me Your Glory.
 - c. Show me what I am to do and not to do here in this situation.
 - d. Faith says to the Lord, “I’m afraid – forgive me and strengthen me.”
2. When we find ourselves in impossible situations and choose to walk by faith – **that impossible situation becomes an opportunity for God to be glorified in and through us.**
3. God didn’t lead the children of Israel to this place to let them be destroyed.
4. The Lord hasn’t led you here to let you be destroyed either.
 - a. God and God alone will have the final say in your life and mine.
 - b. And God and God alone will have the final say in our circumstances.

5. He's promised to provide for us here on earth and to provide for us a home when we leave this earth.
 - a. He's got it all under control.
 - b. **"DO NOT BE AFRAID"**
- c. Notice the **second** thing Moses tells them to do in **verse 13**, **"Stand still"**.
 - i. What Moses is saying here is – don't be hysterical, stand still. In the Hebrew it's like a partition wall.
 1. Anchored
 2. Immovable
 3. Secure
 4. Solid
 5. Example of anchoring a pony wall down in construction with an iron post.
 6. The pony wall is standing still – anchored into the post.
 - ii. This is fascinating isn't it? The children of Israel are literally facing annihilation.
 1. They are completely helpless.
 - a. No weapons. No way to defend themselves.
 - b. No knowledge of how to fight.
 - c. No understanding of military strategy.
 - d. What is about to happen to them if God doesn't intervene is completely weighted toward the Egyptians.

2. We can read this in a room like this and say, “uh huh, uh huh, yeah, Red Sea, Pharaoh, right”. I **wonder what kind of samples they’re going to have at Sam’s Club after church?**
 3. It is completely different when you are there in the middle the situation.
 4. If something doesn’t change they are going to be the victims and observers of an absolute blood bath.
- iii. And in the midst potential chaos God speaks through Moses and he says, “Stand still”.
 - iv. Standing Still – is also quiet or quietness – calm in the midst of a storm.
 1. This is essential for hearing the Lord.
 - v. The children of Israel are in turmoil, turbulence, running around frantically. **(Barney Fife)**
 - vi. In the common language of today – they are “freaking out”.
 1. They are not in a place to hear from the Lord– which is what they need. They are frantic.
 2. We are much the same. When we get into a pickle we think that we need to do something.
 3. We become a flurry of activity – **like a tornado with just about as much effectiveness.**
 4. When really what is needed is **to stand still, immovable and quiet** – listening to the Lord for direction. God led them to this place and He will to lead them out.

5. **But if they don't calm down they won't hear further instruction.**
 6. Something happens between us and the Lord when we stop and quiet ourselves before Him. He gives a peace that is other worldly because it comes from Him. **(Story about my finger)**
 7. We see this "Standing Still" in the life of Jesus – no matter what was happening around Him He was the picture of calm. Quietly waiting on the Lord.
 - a. Why? Because He trusted in the Father and realized that He was in the Father's will. And that the Father was having His way in His life.
 - b. And when you and I find ourselves in situations in life where there is no way out and things are closing in around us we are to do the same thing.
 - c. Don't be afraid, and stand still.
- vii. Notice with me in verse 13 the promise of what is going to happen;
1. He tells them that they will **"See the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today, for the Egyptians whom you see today, you will see again no more.**
 2. The Lord was going to deliver them. But they might have missed it because they weren't looking.

3. They were in such despair and hysteria that if the LORD would have parted the Red Sea they would might have missed it.
 - a. Turned around and there is a path.
 - b. Much better to actually see it happen.
 - c. The LORD doesn't just want to deliver – He wants us to see it happen.
 - d. Why? Because He is glorified when He does.
 4. The Lord delivers today as well.
 5. It's not a matter of "if" but a matter of "when".
 6. God has a 6,000 year track record of faithfulness in the lives of His people and if you or I think he is going to break it in 2012 in your life – you've lost perspective.
 7. The Lord was not only going to deliver them but He was also going destroy the Egyptians and the children of Israel were going see it happen.
 8. For sure there would be other battles, other armies to fight –
 9. But He is going to deliver them from Pharaoh and His armies once and for all.
- d. Notice the **third** and last thing that he tells them to do in verse 15. The Lord says to Moses,
- i. **"Why are you crying to me tell the children of Israel to go forward"**
 1. There is a time for crying out to the Lord and there is a time to quit crying and get going.

2. Moving forward without seeking the Lord is presumption but crying out to the Lord when we have direction and should be moving is lackadaisical.
3. So what does the Lord say?
 - a. Stop crying and go forward. (Be on your way)
 - b. For the children of Israel it meant to look forward and begin to move in that direction.
 - c. They are tempted to give up or go back which would have been insane.
 - d. Drowning in the Red Sea would have been better than going back to Egypt.
 - e. The Lord says, “No, don’t go back – move forward.
 - f. Move intentionally – decision to go forward.
 - g. Move expectantly – the Lord is going to do something here I don’t know what it is but He has led us here and there is no going back. **(Abraham – I and the boy will return) and off he went.**
4. What does it mean for us today in the middle of the troubles that we find ourselves in?
 - a. It means to move forward in our relationship with Jesus.

- b.** Do the next thing that the LORD has put before us. (J. Vernon and Smart golfer get out of the rain).
- c.** Put one foot in front of the other and get going.
- d.** Story about the job in Sacramento when Dad was sick.
 - i.** Have no idea how it got done – there was only two of us.
 - ii.** But I'll tell you, the Lord was glorified and He showed Himself strong on my behalf and I have never forgot it to this day.
- e.** But what if we don't know what it is that we are supposed to do? – Pray.

3. Conclusion:

- a.** What are you in the middle of this morning? Some of you here are in a trial like this:
 - i.** Marriage – failing and you don't see any way out.
 - ii.** Kids – are in rebellion and you don't have any control over their actions.
 - iii.** You've lost your job and you don't see any hope.
 - iv.** You've watched a retirement that you put away just vanish into thin air.
 - 1.** Your afraid – what's going to happen
 - 2.** Your frantic – I just got to do something, anything. I've got to make something happen.

