

## I Will Gain Honor

Exodus 14:10-18, "And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord. 11 Then they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? 12 Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness." 13 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. 14 The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace." 15 And the Lord said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. 16 But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. 17 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 horsemen. 18 Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

Let's Pray. Oh Lord, our God; we thank you and praise you for your mighty works. We thank you that we can consider the work that you did and the days of Moses, the Israelites, pharaoh, and the Egyptians. Oh God, I pray that you would help us remember that you are still a mighty God today. Oh Lord, we do pray that you would help us to be ones who would believe in your words. We pray that you would help us that we would not be unfaithful, as the Israelites were. They often forgot your works; they often refused to believe. We do pray that you would help us to hear, and to listen, and to go forth and do the things you call us to do. Oh God, we do pray that you would help us to learn the lessons you have for us today. We pray you would give us ears to hear. We pray that you would work in the hearts of the unbelievers among us, and call them to yourself. Lord, we do pray that you would fill Mr. Horn with your spirit, and cause him to preach words of truth and words of life to us. We pray that you would bring conviction upon us, and you would give us grace to be able to be your servants. In Jesus' name, we pray, amen.

And here we see in this passage the response of the Israelites, how they accused Moses and made claims about what they have told him. Before we deal with this passage, I thought it was worthwhile going back and reviewing how the Israelites responded before to all the things that happened in Egypt. As do you go through the plagues, as you go through the setup to the plagues about the rod turning into a serpent, and the hand turning leprous, Exodus doesn't talk much about how the Israelites responded. The focus of Exodus is actually how Pharaoh responds and how the Egyptians respond. It doesn't talk much about how the Israelites respond. And I thought it was worthwhile for us. Though, as we went through those (passages), we didn't consider that very much, for obvious reasons, because it wasn't in the text much. I do

think it's worthwhile for us to go back and review how the Israelites responded through all this because we know they didn't have faith. Last week, I talked about Ezekiel 20: 8-9, "But they rebelled against Me and would not obey Me. They did not all cast away the abominations which were before their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said, 'I will pour out My fury on them and fulfill My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.' But I acted for My name's sake, that it should not be profaned before the Gentiles among whom they were, in whose sight I had made Myself known to them, to bring them out of the land of Egypt."

God saved the Israelites, not because of their faithfulness, but for the greatness of his name. And we know the states of their hearts; God wanted to pour out his fury on them. So as we think about this and consider these passages and consider their response, we need to consider their response in the context of unbelievers' behavior. So going back early when we first see Pharaoh oppress them with labor, it doesn't record at all what the Israelites' response is. It doesn't say they were faithful, so God multiplied them greatly. It talks about the faithfulness of the midwives, so God builds them houses. But it says nothing about the Israelites. It just says that God multiplied them. The first time we hear about the Israelites responding is after Moses has already had children, about the time just shortly before he sees the burning bush, at the end of chapter two. Exodus 2:23-25, "Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them." So they're groaning because of the slavery they are under because of the wickedness of Pharaoh and the way he is treating them. But God doesn't look at them and go, "I'm going to help them because of their faith." He looks at them and says He's going to help them because of the covenant He made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not because of anything they were doing, not because of their righteousness, not because they were repentant. It's because God is saying, "I remember the covenant I made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Their next response is when Moses returns in Exodus 4:29-31, "Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. And Aaron spoke all the words which the Lord had spoken to Moses. Then he did the signs in the sight of the people. So the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped." This time they believed, which doesn't mean they believed into salvation, because we know they didn't believe unto salvation. But they believed the signs. Moses came with signs from God, and they believed the signs. So because they believed the signs, they believed that Moses was sent by God, which is more than their offspring did, because when their offspring see the signs of Christ; when the lame walk and the blind see, they don't believe the signs. They say "You are from Beelzebub." They don't say "You are from God." But when these Israelites see the signs, their response is, "Moses is from God" so they honor God and bow their heads and understand that they are truly worshipping and they are unbelievers. Don't think unbelievers can't assign glory and honor to God. It doesn't mean that you're saved because you worshipped God once, it means you're saved when you have faith in the promises of God, not just that you honor the God who saves you from disaster, not just because you honor the God who is relieving your slavery. Their next response is when Pharaoh responded to Moses going in and demanded that God's people go to worship Him in the wilderness. Exodus 5:21, "And they

said to them, "Let the Lord look on you and judge, because you have made us abhorrent in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us." Notice their response when they start to make them make bricks without straw, the response of the Israelites is he was trying to get them killed, you have put a sword in the hand of Pharaoh to kill us. They forgot that they believed Moses was sent by God. They forgot that they believed that Moses was sent by God to deliver them from their oppressive slavery. This is only probably a few days later and their response is, 'How dare you come here and cause Pharaoh to want to kill us.' Their fear of death overruled the idea that God had sent signs to show that Moses was sent by Him. They were so afraid of death, even though there was no threat of death that we know of, there was just the threat of them having to make bricks without straw, but their response was that Pharaoh is going to kill them for what Moses did. The next response is in chapter 6, after God told Moses to tell them of His promises for them. Exodus 6:9, "So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel; but they did not heed Moses, because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage." Because of their slavery, they wouldn't hear the promises of God, they wouldn't hear how they could be delivered. Understand this is still true today. Unbelievers, because of their bondage to sin, they can't see the deliverance that is through Christ. They didn't believe the promises of God. God promised that He would deliver them, He promised that He would give them a land that flowed with milk and honey and their response was to not heed Moses, to not hear what Moses said because of their cruel bondage. Through all the first eleven plagues we hear after the first three that God made a difference between the Egyptians and Israelites. We know at the end of it that Moses is great in the land, but through all of that there is not one word in Scripture that tells how the Israelites are responding. It's easy to read into it and say they are acting this way because of this or that. No, it was clearly God that was creating the division. It has nothing to do with the Israelites or Egyptians. God said He was going to put the Israelites in one camp and the Egyptians in the other camp. It has nothing to do with faith, it has nothing to do with them being the people of God except God taking them and using them as an example, not because of their response but all because of what He was doing. The next thing we hear about them and hear them respond is when Moses tells them to prepare the Passover and they did it, including going and plundering the Egyptians. We know that God put them in enough of a category that they felt separate enough to kill the lamb, that they obeyed that and they went to their neighbors and knocked and asked for their gold and silver and they collected the gold and silver. We know how they went out all in one day in orderly ranks, they went out in these armies, but notice that there's no talk about them believing. It's God separating a people to use as an example. The main reason that I thought it was worthwhile to recap what we know about them is because these next verses don't come as a surprise to us. There is no testimony that they have faith so when we read this we shouldn't think they now have faith, we should be reading this and saying we're not surprised that their response was, 'Were there no graves in Egypt?' Their response when they have to make bricks out of straw was, 'Why did you make Pharaoh try to kill us?' The heart of the Israelites is the fear of death. They obey and they paint the blood on the doorposts because they're afraid of death. Fear of death is the sign of unbelief. That's how we have bondage to sin, through fear of death is what it says in Hebrews 2. The other indicator is trusting in the promises of God as the indicator of having faith, it's trusting and saying God has put these things in front of us and we will trust in those rather than trusting in what we see in the world. Their response, even though they have been told God will deliver you,

even though Moses just said in the first couple verses of this passage that God is going to destroy this army and show His honor on Pharaoh and the army and the chariots and the horsemen, that God is sending them so He can show His power and might. Instead of them responding by sitting back and watching what the Lord does, they respond with they are all going to die. Belief is about not fearing death and trusting the promises of God. The Israelites feared death and they didn't trust in the promises of God. They are a picture, even though God made this separation between them and the Egyptians, they are a picture of unbelievers, they are not a picture of believers. Even as they are the people of God and God is using them as an example and type for the church, it's not because of their faithfulness, it's because God decided to separate them. God is just treating two groups of unbelievers differently and that's what we need to make sure we understand before we go into this passage.

Verses 10-12, "And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord. Then they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness.'" I talked about this verse some last week, "And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them." They looked up, they had marched through Pi Hahiroth, the mouth of the gorge. They went through this path through the mountains to the Red Sea and they were by Baal Zephon which literally means Baal of the north. So it's probably a fortress that was along the Red Sea. They have the Red Sea behind them, they have the mountains on the right hand and mountains on their left hand and in front of them is the army of Pharaoh. "So they were very afraid." They were filled with terror "and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord." Moses had already told them what was going to happen, that God was going to gain honor over Pharaoh and all of his army. They had just been given that promise, they had received it from Moses who was great in their eyes. They painted the blood on the doorpost, they went to their Egyptian slave masters and asked for their gold and silver and they received their gold and silver. They had seen the ten plagues come upon the Egyptians, they had seen Egypt become destroyed, but their response is no different than the Egyptians. The Egyptians responded and they say they don't believe it and Israel responds and they don't believe it. They don't believe they are going to be delivered, he brought them out there to die because they did not believe the promises of God, it didn't matter how much evidence they saw. Because they didn't have faith, as soon as their sight failed them, as soon as they didn't see a way out, as soon as they saw the mountains around them and the Red Sea behind them, they say there is no way to escape this. They don't have any hope in God, they don't have any faith in the promises of God. Instead what they do is they are filled with fear, they were not a people who were walking by faith. Hebrews 3:5-6, "And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end." Moses took a group of people out that had no hope, Christ is not Moses. Christ delivers a people who are filled with hope. A sign of unbelief is to fear

death, another sign of unbelief is to have no hope in the promises of God. Moses couldn't give them hope in the promises of God, Christ gives us hope in the promises of God. Moses was just a faithful servant in Christ's house, Christ is the One who builds the house because He truly gives hope. Moses in the end could talk about leading them from the destruction of house, talk about leading them into the Promised Land. Moses was faithful in God's house but he couldn't build the house. That's the work of Christ. Then they respond. "Then they said to Moses." Even though they had seen God in their presence in the pillar of fire and the cloud, they ignored that. There's no reason to think it disappeared, it's there but they still see Pharaoh's army so they ignore the sign that God is with them because they see Pharaoh's army. Understand this will be the same thing they do when they make the golden calf. They see the power of God and their attitude is to look towards a calf. Here they see the power of God and their attitude is to look towards Pharaoh's army and say Pharaoh's army is clearly more powerful than God. Even though God is in their presence, they don't go after God, they go after the messenger, they go after Moses their leader. This is the normal behavior of unbelievers, they don't believe the supernatural even though it's right in front of them so they go to the natural. 'How dare you do this to us?' They ignore the evidence of supernatural things so they take the explanation of natural things and they blame the person standing in front of them rather than God who they know they have no power over. They ignore Him and what He is doing and they just look to Moses. "Because there were no graves in Egypt." Notice where they start. They start in the same place they did when they complained about Pharaoh and the bricks, you just put a sword in his hand to kill us and now they say, "have you taken us away to die in the wilderness?" They complain about Pharaoh increasing their labor when they were told to make bricks without straw, instead they say this is about us dying and here they say it's about them dying. Even though they're in the presence of God, even though the pillar is there, even though He had killed all the firstborn sons of the Egyptians and passed over their firstborn sons, they still don't believe that God has the power of life and death. They think the world has the power of life and death, they think Pharaoh's army has the power of life and death. They don't say God kills and God makes alive. They put the power somewhere else. Have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? They follow a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night and they say Moses is the one who took them and led them out there. They would have seen what they were following, but yet they ignore all that because then who could they blame? All they could do was blame God and they wanted someone to blame so they blame Moses. They ignore how devastated Egypt was, they ignore how easy it would be for them to die there, instead they say all these events and plagues are just a set up by Moses to get them out of Egypt so he could kill them in the wilderness. Never expect logic from people that are filled with terror, don't expect logic and reason from those filled with terror because they reason out of their fear. They won't look at the world the way it is, which is why they are filled with terror in the first place. So they come and they make a totally irrational statement. We shouldn't say that's surprising, we should instead see this is what's happening in our country now, this is what always happens. When people are afraid they become totally unreasoning. This is the nature of people. So they ask how could he take them in the wilderness to die, "Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt?" Why do you hate us so? Remember Moses started this when he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter and instead suffered the affliction of the people of God. He was on the other side and he chose instead to suffer with the people of God. Their response is, 'Why do you treat

us like this?' even though his testimony was just the opposite. Instead of being seen associated with the powerful people in Egypt, he chose to be associated with them and their response is that he was just trying to kill them. Understand the blindness that comes without having faith, understand the ease of accusation, understand the unreasoning nature of it, understand the turmoil and the chaos that comes into thoughts when you don't say there is a God who is unchanging. Moses, through the eyes of faith, he sees the promises, he trusts in the promises, he leaves the burning bush and he goes back and he leads the people out even as he says, 'Who am I? How can I possibly do this?' He goes and does it and we have a testimony that Moses believed the promises and we have a testimony that the Israelites didn't believe the promises at all. Even as they had seen everything come to pass just as God promised it would come to pass, it doesn't mean they believed the next promise. Their answer was that he had to show them again. Just like with Christ, He keeps doing miracles, they see the miracle and they say to show another miracle. That's unbelief. Moses sees the burning bush and he believes so he trusts the promises. He thinks God is picking the wrong guy, but he believes the promises and he goes back. Do you believe the next promise? Do you believe the other promises that God has made to His people? In the next situation will you believe or will you be like the Israelites- when the pressure comes and you ask why He brought you out here just to die? All of a sudden they forget what it was like, they forget that they are making bricks without straw, they forget that they were begging God to take them out of Egypt and instead they say, 'Why did you ever take us out of Egypt? We want to be back in Egypt.' Remember, these are people that had just cried to God and yet that cry was not a cry of faith, that cry was not a cry with trusting in the promises of God. Don't think just because someone in the midst of fear, in the midst of struggle, that it means they have faith. It doesn't mean that they necessarily have faith. It doesn't mean they don't have faith, but there are lots of people that cry out to God without faith. Then they say, "Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt?" In a sense they rewrite history, but they're not exactly rewriting history because in ten things they say, they remember one thing they said. This is what we do, we ignore that we did go and we did paint the blood on the doorposts, we ignore that all we did was knock, we ignore that we intentionally set up to leave Egypt. Instead they 'remember when we said such and such?'. How often do we do the same thing, where our positions change and then get under pressure so we want to go back to the old position and say that's where we always were. No, that's being tossed to and fro, this is what it looks like to be tossed to and fro. When events change what you're thinking, events change what you believe. Something goes wrong and all of a sudden you remember something you said before when you were upset and you say, 'This was always my position'. This wasn't always their position, it wasn't their position two or three weeks before. Their position three weeks before was going out with joy as they had plundered the Egyptians. Always understand people cherry-pick their memories. They remember the things that are most advantageous to them at that point and time. Don't be surprised when people do this because it is normal and this is what people do. Christians are not supposed to be like that, Christians are not supposed to change what they believe, what they think, and how they reason about things based on the circumstances because circumstances aren't supposed to change them because they have the Spirit of God. When they were going and knocking on the doors of their Egyptian neighbors asking for their gold and silver, they weren't saying that what they really wanted to do was stay in Egypt. They know they weren't saying that, but yet now they rewrite it and say that's what they were really

thinking. Make sure you're not tossed to and fro like they are. Then they go on, "saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians?'" It's so wonderful being a slave in Egypt! We want the opportunity to continue being a slave in Egypt. Undoubtedly there were points in time where they said that, after Moses went and confronted Pharaoh and said that God said to let His people go so they could worship Me, undoubtedly some people said to leave them alone so they could serve the Egyptians. They hadn't said that for a while. "For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians." Now they move on to regret. Even as God had just promised them that God would be honored with how He dealt with the Egyptians, this is God clearly demonstrating the reality that Christ spoke of in the parable of the sower. When it falls on the shallow soil and it springs up but has no depth in the earth, as soon as Pharaoh's army is sitting there, they wither and die. All of a sudden they are not the people of God and they want to go back to being slaves in Egypt. Remember, this is very early in the Scriptures and God is making us make sure that we understand from early on that when persecution arises, those who don't have faith, they fold. This isn't something new that Christ came up with, this is something Christ taught them in the first few chapters of Exodus, that unbelievers, the people of God that are called the people of God but don't have faith, when the pressure comes they fold really quickly. This has always been true. It's really easy when things are going well when you're plundering the Egyptians, to say you're going to follow God. It's when you're standing there and they say you must recant or they will kill you and you say, 'Here I stand and I can do no other', that's when you have a testimony of faith. It's not when everyone stands and applauds you for your faith like Luther, nobody was saying they would kill him unless he recanted. Understand that's when you see your faith. It's not when you knock on this door and they give you gold and silver, that's not how you see your faith. Children, understand how true this is for you, every parent in this room would love to see their children make a profession of faith. Not really, they would love to see their children have faith because there's a sense that you make a profession of faith and your parents are happy with you, they're thrilled that you made a profession of faith. It's like knocking on the door and getting gold and silver, none of it means anything if when the pressure comes, you wither and die. It means nothing. The reason that the Israelites fade when they see the Egyptian army in front of them is because they had no faith, the gold and silver doesn't matter if you go to hell for eternity. It doesn't matter if you go to church and have the pleasantness of being with the people of God, these things do not matter if you have eternal damnation. They wanted to return back to the world because all of a sudden all they can see is death, they can't believe the promises of God. They thought it was better for them to serve the Egyptians than that they should die in the wilderness. All they can see is their impending death even though Moses just said what God had told him- I'm going to be honored by them.

Verses 13-14, "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." Now we see the response of Moses, what Moses has to say. Moses doesn't need God to say, 'Listen! I'm going to deliver you!' Moses trusts the promises of God. He's the faithful one here, he trusted the promises of God. When the Egyptian army gets here, I'm going to deal with His army so now Moses is trying to convince the people. Moses remembered what God

promises and he walked by faith and not by sight. The Israelites are seeing the army and they're not walking by faith, they're not walking and trusting in God, they are walking by sight "and Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid." Don't be afraid, remember God said the army is going to come after you. They're out in the middle of the wilderness and an army shows up. Moses had told them an army was going to show up and instead of saying God was fulfilling His promises, and instead they say they are all going to die. Moses sees God fulfilling His promises so there is no reason to fear. He spoke to what the real problem was. He doesn't say you're concerned about the graves, he doesn't try to persuade them. He goes to the heart of their problem and the heart of the problem is they are fearing the wrong thing. Do not be afraid of Pharaoh and his army, don't be afraid of what the culture is going to do to you. We live in a very fearful society that people wander from the faith all the time because of fear. We live in a society that constantly tries to inspire fear of things that you shouldn't be afraid of. The answer is really simple, don't be afraid! God didn't just bring you here so that you could be killed, so that you wouldn't bring glory and honor to His name. That's not why He saves people, He saves them for the good works He prepared beforehand so we could walk in them. That's what He said. It's really easy to get caught up in debates when someone is filled with fear about why their fear is irrational. That's not where Moses goes, he just says to not be afraid. Part of that is that's what we need to be saying, especially when we are in this pandemic of fear. We need to be saying to people to not be afraid, fear God instead of fearing the covid19, instead of fearing all these other things that our society wants to teach us to fear, fear God. Don't be afraid of these other things. Then he says, "Stand still." He gives them simple commands. They're in the middle of panic and they are filled with terror. He doesn't make an effort to reason with them, he just says to stand still, keep your place is what it literally means. Stay where you are. He's expecting, it seems like, that all the Israelites will start to run and turn themselves over to the Egyptian army and say, 'Don't kill us, we will become your slaves again.' He says to stand still and just wait. He wanted them to just give some time because the deliverance wasn't based on their strength, but on the strength of God. So be still "and see the salvation of the Lord." See the salvation that the Lord provides. This is so typical of God's salvation, and again it's being demonstrated near the beginning of God's revelation so this is a normal thing God does. He causes us to wait until things appear to be hopeless so He gets the glory, He gets the honor rather than it being by our strength that we receive glory and honor. Instead He takes us to the edge of the cliff and we see no way out, and then God provides a way out so that God is glorified and God is honored. This is what He is doing here so He receives greater glory and this is what He does repeatedly. When you look and you don't see any way out and then God moves, that's how you honor God, that's how you see the hand of God moving. He does the last minute delivery so that people will say there is no other God that can deliver like that. So Moses said to be still, see the salvation of the Lord "which He will accomplish for you today." While the Israelites saw the danger, Moses saw this as a promise that was just given. God would receive honor from Pharaoh and his armies. Notice how the belief defines the interpretation. They both see the army come up and the Israelites say, 'They're going to kill all of us' and Moses says, 'God is going to be glorified'. What you believe changes how you interpret what you see. God is fulfilling the promise. So he says, "For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever." God is going to cause them to honor Him, He is going to take them away, they're never going to see them again. I do think, I mean he is adding things to what God said, but I think also like he did

when God said to consecrate to Me your firstborn son, he starts out talking about remembering the Passover before he gets to consecrating the firstborn son. Moses is rightly interpreting what God is doing, he is saying God is going to overthrow the army, just relax and be still, you will see them no more again forever. "The Lord will fight for you." There is truth that the Lord is fighting for them, but God said the reason these things are happening was because God was fighting for the sake of His own honor, not because of these unbelievers, but because of the greatness of His name. We see the honor of God as directly tied to what He does to and for the people that are called by His name. That's still true today, the perceived honor of God is how He is seen by the nation as very dependent on what He does for His church, how He treats His church. Understand, God is not honored in our culture, God is not honored in most cultures in the world and one of the reasons for that is for the last hundred and fifty years, the visible church has listened to con men, listened to hucksters that say God hates His bride and is going to cause terrible things to happen to her. If you say God hates His bride and things are just going to get worse and worse and she will get more defiled and wicked instead of being made more holy, which is what it says in Ephesians 5, if you believe that, how are you going to think about God? You're going to think of Him as powerless and useless and no place in society. How people think about how God treats His people does show how they will think about God. When we lie about the nature of God, don't be surprised that nobody in our culture wants to honor God. The church hasn't wanted to honor Him, the church says He's a horrible husband so why would society say He is wonderful, why would society say He is powerful when the church says He can't do anything about the terrible things that are happening in our society, when the church denies what God has done over the last 2,000 years? Why would we expect the society to honor God when the church does not? "And you shall hold your peace." To hold your peace starts with being silent. You don't need to say, 'This is horrible! We need to go over to the Egyptians.' What you need to do is just be quiet and wait and be still. To hold your peace means more than that though. It starts with being silent, but it means to not be tossed to and fro. That's what it means to hold your peace, it doesn't mean to say, 'I think this and this, let's cry out to the Lord for deliverance, let's flee to the Egyptians!' Moses is saying to keep your peace, rest on what you believe, rest on what you have seen. They couldn't keep their peace because their peace was not from God. We're supposed to be able to keep our peace because with the Holy Spirit, in the midst of turmoil, we can be steady if we have been built upon the rock of obedience to the commandments of Christ, which is what Christ said in the Sermon on the Mount. Can you hold your peace in the midst of turmoil? Can you hold your peace in the midst of things going wrong, going differently than you want them to go? Can you say all things work together for good to those who love God and to them that are called according to His purpose? If you can say that with sincerity, you are holding your peace. So the first part of this passage was the Israelites speaking, then it was Moses speaking and now we get to God speaking.

Verses 15-18, "And the Lord said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. 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 horsemen. Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the

Lord, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.” God speaks and notice He doesn’t speak to the people, He speaks to Moses. “And the Lord said to Moses.” He continues to establish that Moses is part of His house even as the rest are not. He says to Moses, “Why do you cry to Me?” In the NKJV you can’t tell, but this is singular. In the KJV it says, ‘wherefore criest thou unto Me?’ He is speaking specifically to Moses, ‘Why are you crying to Me?’ He’s speaking to Moses as an individual. It could be that He is speaking to Moses as a representative because we just had recorded that all Israel was crying out to Him, but I think it’s more likely that even as Moses is saying, ‘Be still, be quiet, keep your peace’, at the same time he is crying out to God and asking Him to deliver them, there’s an army here about to destroy us. I think the reason that God says this is that he is like the man and Moses is a faithful man. We know that, but he is like a man who says he believes, help my unbelief. This is not wrong to cry out, ‘God fulfill Your promises, I trust that You will fulfill Your promises, now would be a good time.’ That’s a reasonable response, but still God goes, ‘Why do you cry out to Me?’ He’s also going, you should know what to do. “Tell the children of Israel to go forward.” He told them God is going to destroy the army this day, you will see them no more. True statements, and then God says, ‘Why are you just standing there? You told them to be still, tell the children of Israel to go forward’. That word ‘forward’ really means ‘to pull up’, pull up the stakes, get ready to move. Why did you tell the people to stand still? You’re moving out now, you need to pull up the stakes of your tent. We don’t know how long they were there, but they were supposed to camp by Baal Zephon for at least a few days while they waited for the army to get there. So he should have told them to pull up their stakes because it was time for them to leave. “But lift up your rod.” This is the same rod that God had used to bring on the plagues. God is saying, ‘Don’t just stand there, use the rod again “and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it.” It’s really easy for us to hear these words and wonder how in the world was Moses supposed to know this? How does Moses get rebuked by God for not doing this when who would think that he would hold out his rod over this sea and something would happen that’s never happened in the history of the whole world? You could argue that it happened in Genesis 1, but Moses was supposed to know and we know Moses was supposed to know because God said Moses was supposed to know so he should have been able to figure it out. He stretched it over the Red Sea “and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground.” They have this Red Sea behind them, but God can part the waters just like He did in creation when He separated the waters and let the dry land appear. That’s one of the other places where this term ‘dry land’ is used. When you think about going through on the dry ground, there are some really practical reasons. Remember there are some stories in the history of the world where the army starts to march out where the ground is muddy and you’d be amazed how bad the road gets if you have a little bit of mud on the road and you have hundreds of thousands walk on it. Fredricksburg had something called the Mud March where the people were having a hard time moving because they tried to move an army on roads that weren’t dry. This is a real problem, you need to have really firm ground. If you tried to march an army of millions of people through the Red Sea where the ground wasn’t dry, it would be a huge mess. So there’s a real basic reason, God has to have the ground be dry. It would quickly become impossible to move through it if it was all muddy when they started. The Egyptians wouldn’t have followed because if men have trouble walking on it, chariots don’t travel well. Men can travel on a lot more marshy soil than a chariot can and horses can. They have a lot more weight on a smaller footprint. I think there’s also a

reason that this is stressed because you look at this and the term is used quite a bit and in almost all the cases that it's used, 'dry ground', it's related to this except like I said in Genesis 1, where it talks about dividing the ground from the sea. That dry ground is a picture of something that won't grow. When you think of the oceans, when you go to the oceans there are all kinds of seaweed and stuff in them, but when God makes this dry ground it's like parched ground, it's dry. Nothing can grow in it. So when we think about the picture in 1 Corinthians 10, the picture of dry ground is the picture of death, it is the picture of having no life because trees grow where there is water in the soil. If you have it that dry it can't go. I think this is still part of the picture of them dying, the picture of them going through where there is no life. This is used like I said in creation and it's also used in Jonah where Jonah is spit out of the fish onto dry land. The other place that it's used is in Isaiah 44:1-4, ""Yet hear now, O Jacob My servant, And Israel whom I have chosen. Thus says the Lord who made you And formed you from the womb, who will help you: 'Fear not, O Jacob My servant; And you, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, And floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, And My blessing on your offspring; They will spring up among the grass Like willows by the watercourses.'" It's a picture of the need for the Holy Spirit, that's what Isaiah says. As they go through this death and they rise to walk in the newness of life, the dry ground is a testimony that they need newness of life from God. In Christ, through the giving of the Holy Spirit, that dry ground becomes productive. So they will go through on dry ground "through the midst of the sea." Paul also says that there was a cloud above them so they were submerged in the water. This is the picture, we die with Christ and we are raised to walk in newness of life. "And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians." Even though God is promising to do a clear miracle in front of them, understand the Gulf of Suez, the average depth of the Gulf of Suez is a hundred thirty feet so it's not like there is water stacked up as high as this building when they walk through, it's water stacked as high as a ten story building. On both sides of them, the ground is dry in between, nobody could look and say that's not a miracle unless their heart was truly hardened towards God. If your heart is truly hardened towards God you will always come up with natural explanations to things that are only explicable with God. So God hardens the Egyptians' hearts so they see this clear miracle, the water stacked up as tall as a ten story building on both sides, twenty miles long and they say the wind must have blown the water strangely. That's how firm unbelief is in rejecting the truth of who God is. They will see water stacked as high as a ten story building and they will still say they can go through there, it's just windy. Don't deny yourself about the greatness of unbelief, the great blindness that comes with unbelief. When you're witnessing to that person don't ask why they didn't get it. Understand the Egyptian army could look at this water that's divided and the ground is dry and say it's just natural. Every unbeliever is not really that different, it's just how God works on them and reveals to them. "And they shall follow them." They draw conclusions based on their interpretation and they say it was safe for the Israelites so it must be safe for them so they head off with their chariots and horses into this huge valley with water on both sides and think that it's going to work. "So I will gain honor over Pharaoh." They wouldn't see it as the hand of God, but everybody else would. It would be remembered when they went to Jericho forty years later, and we're talking about it 3,400 years later. People will remember and God will be honored. They had hard hearts so they couldn't see. He will have honor "over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen." Pharaoh and his whole army are destroyed so it's not just the people in the army

that are destroyed, but all the means that they have to make war, their horses, their chariots, all their weapons of war. It's not like if we just had our army all die and you just go recruit more soldiers. For us this would be all our airplanes, all our aircraft carriers, all our tanks. This was all their weapons of war just disappearing. They go from being probably the most powerful country in the world to one filled with starvation through the plagues and now they have no ability to defend themselves against anybody because all their means of war are destroyed. We're supposed to look at that and say, 'This is what God does to those who stand against His people.' "Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord." The Egyptians who survived, even though there is plenty of evidence from the plagues, when Moses came back to Egypt God had repeatedly told Moses these things were happening so the Egyptians may know that God is the Lord. It was always dependent that they may know. God was putting these things out there so it was there and knowable, but now the language changes here and it becomes 'so they shall know'. At this point they actually get it. This is what it takes for them to actually know that God is the Lord, He is the self-existent One, He is the One that was, is and always will be. The language changes to say God is done with the Egyptians here. When the army gets swallowed up, the story is no longer about the Egyptians, it's about the Israelites. The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord "when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen." Then it's finished and the Egyptians know.

#### Applications:

1. How is your testimony of faith? Are you like the Israelites? Are you more afraid of death than you are afraid of God? It says in Hebrews 2:14-15, "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." That's why Christ came, that's why He was resurrected, so we could not fear death. Salvation is you don't fear death. Are you like the Israelites or are you like Moses? They both see the same army and the one goes, 'We're here to die' and the other goes, 'We're going to see the glory of God.' Which one are you like? Are you like the Israelites? Are you more concerned about your current circumstances than trusting in the promises of God? They believed the promises of God when they were plundering their neighbors, but they didn't believe the promises of God when the army was standing in front of them. Are you believing in the promises of God like Moses is doing in both cases? He had promised the Israelites to be a blessing in their lives, to deliver them to the land flowing with milk and honey. Do you trust the promises of God? Understand, the church has a terrible testimony of that right now. They think everything is going to get worse and worse, that Jesus Christ is going to abuse His bride. The promises of God are not that, it's that the bride will fill the whole earth. This stone that's cut without hands will become this great kingdom that destroys all the kingdoms of the earth. That's the promise. Do you trust the promises of God or do you see the Israelite army and see the people who say, 'Look at how bad our nation is, how can God possibly be telling us the truth?' Which do you trust? Are you like the Israelites or are you like Moses? Which do you trust, which do you believe?

2. Do you live and make choices based on the idea that God has the power of life and death? Deuteronomy 32:39 says, “Now see that I, even I, am He, And there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; Nor is there any who can deliver from My hand.” It is so easy for us to say we’re scared of getting cancer or covid9, I’m scared of this or that, thinking that death comes from some other source other than God. God says He kills and He makes alive. If we make our choices based on that, we don’t say are we at risk of getting covid19, we ask if we are disobeying God and risking getting the wrath of God? It’s a fundamental difference in how you view the world, it’s why we can have a worldwide pandemic of fear. It’s because the people who profess the name of Christ do not believe that God kills and makes alive, they think the world is in charge of life and death. So did the Israelites and they will all perish in the wilderness. Moses did not see it that way. Are we like Zipporah? Remember the story of Zipporah and Moses is going back to Egypt and he hadn’t circumcised his son so God goes to kill Moses. Your husband is dying and you say you should get him medicine or something to help him. What does she do? She goes and circumcises her son because it’s God who kills and God who makes alive. That’s how we are supposed to think, is that how you think and how you make the choices you make?
3. We should have an expectation that people will go after the messenger. This is what they always do so we shouldn’t be surprised at this and we should resist our own temptation to do this because you will have temptations to do this. You don’t like what God says and you can’t really lay a hand on God so you lay a hand on the person you can. This is what unrighteousness always does. There can be saved people that act unrighteously so I’m not just saying unbelievers do this, I’m saying unrighteous people do this instead of saying this is from God and they go after people. This is the pattern of Scripture, this is what they do with Moses. Again, God is setting these things forth so we look and say, ‘I get it’, because this explains another thing in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:10-12, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” That’s exactly how they persecuted Moses, they lied and said he brought them out there because he wanted to kill them. This is what they do when you tell them the truth of who God is and what He said and this should be our expectation that this is what the response will be. That’s why God tells us, rejoice and be exceedingly glad. Don’t think the world will hear this and say it’s wonderful. No, the world will hear and say, ‘How dare you say that, how dare you do that’, and they will want to kill you. That’s the promise of Scripture. Again, we see that from the second book of the Bible. Moses is the prophet that they reviled and said false things about.
4. Don’t expect logic and reason from people that are filled with fear. We are at a time in our nation where so many are filled with terror. I read an article yesterday about a sports broadcaster that was so excited that basketball season was going to start and then he got covid19 and he said the worst thing about covid19 was every minute he thought, ‘I’m going to die, this is horrible, what’s going to happen to me?’ He was running a

temperature of 102. People can live with a temperature of 105 or 106 and he said unquestionably the worst symptom of covid19 is the terror that comes with it. We need to understand, don't expect logic and reason when people have been taught to be terrified. He didn't say at sixty-one years of age that approximately 99.9% of people recover without any serious side effects, instead he said every minute that he was going to be the one out of the thousand that dies. Let's make sure we're not thinking like that. When we're talking to people like that, make sure you don't think you're going to be able to reason them out of that situation. Instead what you need to say is, 'Repent, don't be afraid or fear the One who will kill you, don't worry about covid19.' The solution isn't to try to persuade them. Or if you try to persuade them, I did finally persuade my parents but it took around fifteen hours before I could finally talk them out of their fear. Understand, it takes real work to persuade somebody who is afraid. Don't think you can just show the statistics and say only one out of a thousand in your physical condition is going to have anything that serious. Don't expect that to be persuasive because fear wipes out logic and reason. This is why there's so much work in our culture to stir up fear. You should be afraid of the police! They've killed six unarmed black men in the last year, or something like that, so every black man is supposed to be afraid if they get pulled over by the police. Fear does not get conquered with reason. We need to make sure that we're speaking to people the way they need to hear. Don't expect the riots to stop because of reason, expect them to stop because they hear something else. Expect the fear of the pandemic to stop because people start fearing something else. We are the ones with the message of who to fear. Don't expect them to stop spitting up stories to incite fear, of course they're going to do that. I haven't checked, but I suspect it's not even able to qualify as an epidemic in the United States anymore according to the CDC's definition of an epidemic, but how many people are scared to death they won't even send their children to school. It's a lot more likely that children will die of a lightning strike than covid19. We all know how many children die of lightning strikes in this country. We're all scared to death to have our children live because the lightning might get them, but yet they refuse to send them to school because of something that's less likely to kill them than lightning. We're in a pandemic of fear and the solution of it is to fear God.

5. Does your position change depending on your circumstances? I don't mean that you don't say you've learned something new and I was wrong in my interpretation of that Scripture. I'm not saying that, I'm saying that things aren't going the way you want them to go and does all of a sudden your position change that this might not have been the right thing to do, maybe this wasn't true? Our truth is not determined by our circumstances, it's determined by God's word. When you let it be determined by your circumstances, you're going to toss to and fro. It's wonderful to obey God because He is allowing us to plunder the Egyptians! Oh no, He's trying to kill us because He sent the army after us. They just swing back and forth. We're not supposed to be like that, the righteous are not tossed to and fro. Does your position change depending on your circumstances? It's not supposed to. Isaiah 26:3, "You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You." Hold your peace. Moses said to Israel to hold their peace and that's what Christ says to us, hold your peace, you don't

need to be tossed back and forth based on circumstances. If you trust in God it let's you hold your peace. You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind it stayed on You because he trusts in You.

6. Do you look at the world through the lens of faith? Do you ask yourself the question, 'what is God doing here' or do you just see what's happening and just say 'we're all going to die by the Egyptian army'? Do you take a step back and ask what God is doing here? When we look at the world and treat it as sovereign, when we treat it as being the first cause that drives all things, our interpretation is always going to be on the world. That is never the interpretation we're supposed to use because God is the first cause of all things and the way we're supposed to look at the world and interpret it is not 'China is trying to kill us because this virus came from there'. What we're supposed to do is say, 'What is God doing here?' When we look through the lens of faith we ask what God is doing and we are not driven by the world. We should be asking ourselves, 'Why did God send this virus on the whole world? Why did God shut down churches?' I have a sister in law in Chatham county that's been looking for a church to go that's open and she can't find one. She can't find a church even though there are probably 150,000 people that live there. There's no church there that's open. Think about that. Why is God shutting down all the churches for six months? That's the question we should be asking. Not why is there covid19, but what is God doing to His church? What is God doing to the visible church because we know He writes history for the bismol church. That's what it looks like to look at the world through the lens of faith instead of looking at the world through a lens of materialism. It all happens because God is doing something. What is He doing? Do you look at the world like the Israelites or do you look at the world like Moses looks at the world?
7. He who knows what is right and does not do it, to him it is sin. God rebuked Moses in this passage and at the first reading of it, it's so easy to say, 'How is Moses possibly supposed to know he was supposed to take his rod and divide the Red Sea?' We know God rebuked him for it, 'Why are you just standing there? Tell them to pack up and head out, tell them to get moving. Take your rod and split the Red Sea.' God's right, God's saying Moses should have known. Think of the picture right? It's a Father dealing with a son. How many times, like with the dishes sitting in the sink, and your older son walks by and he doesn't wash them and he keeps walking by and you say, 'Why do you just keep walking by them? Why aren't you doing the dishes?' And he says, 'I didn't know I was supposed to wash the dishes, no one told me to wash them', and he sincerely believes that even though you have taught him that if he sees dishes to wash the dishes if you're not doing something else. Don't think you're any different than that with God. That's exactly what Moses is doing here. God has shown him time and time again to take the rod and do this or this and he is standing there saying God is going to deliver us, He's done it all these times before and now what should I do? God is saying, 'I gave you the rod, how many more times do I have to tell you what to do?' It's easy for us to look at it from Moses' perspective and say, 'How is he supposed to know?' When we're the teenage boy who's walking by the dishes who says, 'How was I supposed to know to do them?' You were supposed to know, you've been taught, you've been told, and you've

been shown. We just need to recognize how much and how often we are like Moses. God has put plenty of things in our hands and we're not doing what we're supposed to be doing. He's given us the means and we sit back and go, 'But God, I don't know what to do. I'm going to go to the Lord in prayer.' God isn't saying, 'Moses you're wonderful for sitting there crying out to Me.' He's saying, 'Moses why are you sitting there crying out to Me? You have what you need.' Are we like that? Where God has put the things in our hands and we're sitting back saying we're going to pray about it, we're going to look for guidance from God and God is just saying, 'Reformation Baptist Church, why are you just sitting there looking at things that I have given you plenty of capability to do?' God isn't pleased with Moses here even though he is the one acting in faith because he's not as faithful as he should be. I'm not saying Moses is not being treated like a son, he's being treated exactly like a son because we've all had sons and daughters where they walk by something they know they should be doing and they don't bother to do it. That's what Moses is like. Let's ask ourselves how we're like that. I'm not saying we're being more faithful than Moses, we should be asking ourselves how we are like Moses in this passage. The corollary of that is, what do you have in your hand today? Moses was standing there with the rod. He had what he needed. What do you have in your hand today where you've already been given the means to do something and you're just not doing it. Let's talk about the most basic thing- evangelism. I have been in so many churches that people are saying, 'Just train us in evangelism and we'll go evangelize', but God says faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. You already have it in your hand people! You don't need training, you already have it. I've used the same excuse so this is towards me too. It's really easy for us to say we don't have what we need instead of saying that God told us we have exactly what we need. What do you have in your hand that you should be using and instead of using it you're telling God you don't have what you need? Moses had what he needed. You have the rod, you have what you need to evangelize, you have His word. That's what we need and that's what we've been given.

8. The faithful and mature still require sanctification. Think of Moses. He's standing in the midst of these unbelievers and he's telling them to just believe the promises of God, God is going to fulfill His promises and at that point in time it would be so easy for Moses to think he is mature in the faith. He's standing there and saying the right thing, I'm trusting in the promises of God and God goes, 'No, no, no, no, why don't you do what you should be doing?' We need to remember Moses is not Christ. Christ always did what He was supposed to do, He did not fall short of the glory of God, Moses did. So part of that is for us to remember and see even though Moses is standing in the midst of the unbelievers, it's easy for him to think how mature he is, but Moses needed to be matured. The standard is not the people that you listen to on the radio, the standard is not the culture around you, the standard is Christ. Moses still needed to be matured, he still needed to be sanctified. Everyone in this room, somebody can look and say they're so much more mature than this other person. The answer is, you're not like Christ yet, you still have a lot of sanctification to go. In a family, the ten year old is the oldest and they're looking at the three year old and thinking how mature they are, but we look at the ten year old and ask why they are behaving so immaturely. That's how God looks at us, that's how God

looks at the most mature person in this room and He asks why we are acting so immaturely. That's what He did with Moses. Let's make sure we approach God recognizing we have a lot of sanctification to go. I think it's pretty generous to call everyone in this room a ten year old in God's kingdom, more like the three year old telling the one year old, 'Why don't you do this? Why can't you walk yet?' Make sure you realize how much sanctification you require. God reminds Moses just how much maturing he still needs, even though he is standing and in the midst of probably three million people and he's clearly the most mature and God goes, 'No, no, no, no, you're not doing what you should do.'

9. Do you believe God still protects His people? In Genesis, what He says to Abram in Genesis 12:2-3, "I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Paul makes it very clear in Romans that He is talking about the church there. Those who bless the church will be blessed, those who curse the church will be cursed. Do you believe that? Do you walk like you believe that? Moses is standing there with the army there going, 'God blesses His people'. Do you act like you believe those promises today? Those who bless the church God will bless and those who curse the church God will curse. If this is what God does to a group of millions of unbelievers, with the exception of Moses and Joshua and Caleb, what will He do for the church of Jesus Christ? Do you believe the promises of God? Do you believe that God still blesses those that bless His church and curses those who curse His church? These are the people He wanted to take them out in the wilderness so He could kill them outside of Egypt so that people wouldn't say He couldn't deliver them if He killed them in Egypt. If this is what God would do for those people, how much more will He do for those who are pleasing to Him through faith? It is impossible to please God except through faith. These people were not pleasing to Him, but yet this is what He did for them. How much more will He do for His bride? Do we believe that and do we act like that?

Oh Lord God, we do thank You for this word. We thank You for the passage. Lord, You have so much to teach us from Exodus. Let us be a people that are willing to hear. Give us ears to hear and give us ears to take these things that we hear and put them in practice in our lives for You are a God who does train up Your children. You are a God who does take Your children who are so immature in faith and You mature us and You train us and You teach us. So often it's not about plundering the Egyptians, it's by seeing the Egyptian army in front of us. Lord, give us the faith and the boldness to stand firm on those things. Give us the faith and the boldness to speak and to use those things that You have given us so that You gain honor in this world. Lord, Your church has caused great dishonor to come upon Your name. Grant us the gift of repentance, amen.