

**The Parting of the Red Sea**  
Message 4 of 8 in the series: "Exodus"

**A. After God rescued His people from slavery in Egypt, He did NOT take them directly to the Promised Land.**

"When Pharaoh finally let the people go, God did not lead them along the main road that runs through Philistine territory, even though that was the shortest route to the Promised Land. God said, **'If the people are faced with a battle, they might change their minds and return to Egypt.'** So, God led them in a roundabout way through the wilderness toward the Red Sea. Thus the Israelites left Egypt like an army ready for battle. Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for Joseph had made the sons of Israel swear to do this. He said, **'God will certainly come to help you. When he does, you must take my bones with you from this place.'** The Israelites left Succoth and camped at Etham on the edge of the wilderness. **The Lord went ahead of them. He guided them** during the day with a pillar of cloud, and he provided light at night with a pillar of fire. This allowed them to travel by day or by night." Exodus 13:17-21 (NLT)

**Good News!** God will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear. "The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. **He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand.** When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure."  
1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)

1. Joseph had so much faith in the promises of God that he prepared 400 years in advance for his bones to be taken back home. "Now **faith is confidence in what we hope for** and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for." Hebrews 11:1-2 (NIV)

**IMPORTANT!** "...without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him." Hebrews 11:6 (NIV)

2. The Lord went ahead of His people guiding them and watching over them day and night. All they had to do was follow the pillar of cloud. "Now **whenever the cloud lifted from the Tabernacle, the people of Israel would set out on their journey, following it.** But if the cloud did not rise, they remained where they were until it lifted. The cloud of the Lord hovered over the Tabernacle during the day, and at night fire glowed inside the cloud so the whole family of Israel could see it. This continued throughout all their journeys." Exodus 40:36-38 (NLT)

**Good News!** God promises to guide us, too! All we need to do is follow Him. "The Lord says, **'I will guide you along the best pathway for your life.** I will advise you and watch over you. Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control.'" Psalm 32:8-9 (NLT)

**B. Soon after the Israelites left Egypt, Pharaoh changed his mind about letting the nation's entire unpaid workforce go, and he chased after them to bring them back.**

"When word reached the king of Egypt that the Israelites had fled, Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds. 'What have we done, letting all those Israelite slaves get away?' they asked. So Pharaoh harnessed his chariot and called up his troops. He took with him 600 of Egypt's best chariots, along with the rest of the chariots of Egypt, each with its commander. The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, so he chased after the people of Israel, who had left with fists raised in defiance. The Egyptians chased after them with all the forces in Pharaoh's army—all his horses and chariots, his charioteers, and his troops. The Egyptians caught up with the people of Israel as they were camped beside the shore near Pi-hahiroth, across from Baal-zephon." Exodus 14:5-9 (NLT)

1. Amazingly, this was all part of God's plan. "Then the Lord gave these instructions to Moses: 'Order the Israelites to turn back and camp by Pi-hahiroth between Migdol and the sea. Camp there along the shore, across from Baal-zephon. Then Pharaoh will think, "The Israelites are confused. They are trapped in the wilderness!" And once again I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will chase after you. **I have planned this in order to display my glory through Pharaoh and his whole army.** After this the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord!' So the Israelites camped there as they were told."  
Exodus 14:1-4 (NLT)

2. When the Israelites saw Pharaoh and his army coming, they freaked out. "As Pharaoh approached, the people of Israel looked up and panicked when they saw the Egyptians overtaking them. They cried out to the Lord, and they said to Moses, 'Why did you bring us out here to die in the wilderness? Weren't there enough graves for us in Egypt? What have you done to us? **Why did you make us leave**

**Egypt?** Didn't we tell you this would happen while we were still in Egypt? We said, "Leave us alone! Let us be slaves to the Egyptians. It's better to be a slave in Egypt than a corpse in the wilderness!" **But Moses told the people, 'Don't be afraid. Just stand still and watch the Lord rescue you today.** The Egyptians you see today will never be seen again. The Lord himself will fight for you. Just stay calm." Exodus 14:10-14 (NLT)

**IMPORTANT!** God's ways of working often don't make sense to us. "Jesus replied, '**You don't understand now what I am doing**, but someday you will.'" John 13:7 (NLT)

**IMPORTANT!** "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."  
2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)

"God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. **So we will not fear** when earthquakes come and the mountains crumble into the sea... '**Be still and know that I am God!** I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world.'" Psalm 46:1-2 & 10 (NLT)

### C. God miraculously led the Israelites through the Red Sea on dry ground.

"Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Why are you crying out to me? Tell the people to get moving! Pick up your staff and raise your hand over the sea. Divide the water so the Israelites can walk through the middle of the sea on dry ground. And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they will charge in after the Israelites. My great glory will be displayed through Pharaoh and his troops, his chariots, and his charioteers. When my glory is displayed through them, **all Egypt will see my glory and know that I am the Lord!**' Then the angel of God, who had been leading the people of Israel, moved to the rear of the camp. The pillar of cloud also moved from the front and stood behind them. The cloud settled between the Egyptian and Israelite camps. As darkness fell, the cloud turned to fire, lighting up the night. But the Egyptians and Israelites did not approach each other all night. Then Moses raised his hand over the sea, and **the Lord opened up a path through the water with a strong east wind.** The wind blew all that night, turning the seabed into dry land. So the people of Israel walked through the middle of the sea on dry ground, with walls of water on each side! Then the Egyptians—all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and charioteers—chased them into the middle of the sea. But just before dawn the Lord looked down on the Egyptian army from the pillar of fire and cloud, and he threw their forces into total confusion. He twisted their chariot wheels, making their chariots difficult to drive. 'Let's get out of here—away from these Israelites!' the Egyptians shouted. 'The Lord is fighting for them against Egypt!' When all the Israelites had reached the other side, the Lord said to Moses, 'Raise your hand over the sea again. Then the waters will rush back and cover the Egyptians and their chariots and charioteers.' So as the sun began to rise, Moses raised his hand over the sea, and the water rushed back into its usual place. The Egyptians tried to escape, but the Lord swept them into the sea. Then the waters returned and covered all the chariots and charioteers—the entire army of Pharaoh. Of all the Egyptians who had chased the Israelites into the sea, not a single one survived. But the people of Israel had walked through the middle of the sea on dry ground, as the water stood up like a wall on both sides. That is how the Lord rescued Israel from the hand of the Egyptians that day. And the Israelites saw the bodies of the Egyptians washed up on the seashore. **When the people of Israel saw the mighty power that the Lord had unleashed against the Egyptians, they were filled with awe before him. They put their faith in the Lord and in his servant Moses.**" Exodus 14:15-31 (NLT)

**Good News!** God can make a way when there seems to be no way. "You are the God of great wonders! You demonstrate your awesome power among the nations... When the Red Sea saw you, O God, its waters looked and trembled! The sea quaked to its very depths. The clouds poured down rain; the thunder rumbled in the sky. Your arrows of lightning flashed. Your thunder roared from the whirlwind; the lightning lit up the world! The earth trembled and shook. **Your road led through the sea, your pathway through the mighty waters—a pathway no one knew was there!**" Psalm 77:14 & 16-19 (NLT)

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### Connect Group Questions:

1. Read Exodus 13:17-22 & 1 Corinthians 10:13. After rescuing His people from slavery in Egypt, why didn't God immediately lead his people along the most direct route to the Promised Land? How might this change the way we look at delays/detours in our lives?
2. Read Exodus 14:1-14 & John 13:7. Share with your group a time in your life when you were confused by the way God was handling things. Why does a relationship with God require faith? (Hebrews 11:1-2 & 6)

3. Would you have been willing to follow the pillar of cloud? Which is easier, following a cloud or reading the Bible? (Exodus 40:36-38, Psalm 32:8-9, 2 Timothy 3:16-17)
4. What do the following verses say about overcoming worry and fear? (2 Corinthians 5:7, 2 Timothy 1:7, Isaiah 26:3, Psalm 46:1-2 & 10)
5. Read Exodus 14:15-31 & Psalm 77:14-20. Share with your group a time in your life when you saw God come through in a way that you had previously thought impossible. Why are stories like the parting of the Red Sea important for us to know and pass on to our children? (Psalm 78:4-8)

6. Discuss the following quotations:

“Fear stifles our thinking and actions. It creates indecisiveness that results in stagnation. I have known talented people who procrastinate indefinitely rather than risk failure. Lost opportunities cause erosion of confidence, and the downward spiral begins.” Charles Stanley

“Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear. The brave may not live forever, but the cautious do not live at all.” Meg Cabot

“I went to America to convert the Indians, but oh, who shall convert me? Who, what, is he that will deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief?” John Wesley

“Come and see what our God has done, what awesome miracles he performs for people! He made a dry path through the Red Sea, and his people went across on foot. There we rejoiced in him.”

Psalm 66:5-6 (NLT)