

Message 8: When the Enemy Pursues

Part 2

2.28.2021

Exodus Series

Exodus 14:1–31 (CSB)

Then the LORD spoke to Moses: ²“Tell the Israelites to turn back and camp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea; you must camp in front of Baal-zephon, facing it by the sea. ³Pharaoh will say of the Israelites: They are wandering around the land in confusion; the wilderness has boxed them in. ⁴I will harden Pharaoh’s heart so that he will pursue them. Then I will receive glory by means of Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD.” So the Israelites did this.

THE EGYPTIAN PURSUIT

⁵When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds about the people and said, “What have we done? We have released Israel from serving us.” ⁶So he got his chariot ready and took his troops with him; ⁷he took six hundred of the best chariots and all the rest of the chariots of Egypt, with officers in each one. ⁸The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the Israelites, who were going out defiantly. ⁹The Egyptians—all Pharaoh’s horses and chariots, his horsemen, and his army—chased after them and caught up with them as they camped by the sea beside Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

¹⁰As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up and there were the Egyptians coming after them! The Israelites were terrified and cried out to the LORD for help. ¹¹They said to Moses, “Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? ¹²Isn’t this what we told you in Egypt: Leave us alone so that we may serve the Egyptians? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.”

¹³But Moses said to the people, “Don’t be afraid. Stand firm and see the LORD’s salvation that he will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians you

see today, you will never see again. ¹⁴The LORD will fight for you, and you must be quiet.”

ESCAPE THROUGH THE RED SEA

¹⁵The LORD said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to break camp. ¹⁶As for you, lift up your staff, stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide it so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. ¹⁷As for me, I am going to harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them, and I will receive glory by means of Pharaoh, all his army, and his chariots and horsemen. ¹⁸The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I receive glory through Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”

¹⁹Then the angel of God, who was going in front of the Israelite forces, moved and went behind them. The pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and stood behind them. ²⁰It came between the Egyptian and Israelite forces. There was cloud and darkness, it lit up the night, and neither group came near the other all night long.

²¹Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back with a powerful east wind all that night and turned the sea into dry land. So the waters were divided, ²²and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with the waters like a wall to them on their right and their left.

²³The Egyptians set out in pursuit—all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots, and his horsemen—and went into the sea after them. ²⁴During the morning watch, the LORD looked down at the Egyptian forces from the pillar of fire and cloud, and threw the Egyptian forces into confusion. ²⁵He caused their chariot wheels to swerve and made them drive with difficulty. “Let’s get away from Israel,” the Egyptians said, “because the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt!”

²⁶Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the water may come back on the Egyptians, on their chariots and horsemen.” ²⁷So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea returned to its normal depth. While the Egyptians were trying to escape from it, the LORD threw them into the sea. ²⁸The water came back and covered the chariots and horsemen, plus the entire army of Pharaoh that had gone after them into the sea. Not even one of them survived.

²⁹But the Israelites had walked through the sea on dry ground, with the waters like a wall to them on their right and their left. ³⁰That day the LORD

saved Israel from the power of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. ³¹ When Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD and believed in him and in his servant Moses.

Intro. Twist and Turns are part of God's design.

A. It is generally understood that men like straight lines and boxes.

1. There is a great book entitled "Men are like waffles, women are like spaghetti".

2. Men love straight lines.

a. When we build stuff, we strive for clean, straight lines.

b. Our houses, our phones, our laptops, our buildings, and even our calendars reflect our love of straight lines, squares, and rectangles.

B. God builds in circles.

1. Hunters and survivalists know that if you see a straight line in the wild, then that is a sign of human involvement.

2. God created the Universe as spheres and balls.

3. God created sceneries that extend up, down, sideways, twists and turns.

C. Therefore, it makes sense that the journey God has in store for His people Israel does not involve a straight line.

1. The big question: **Can we recognize God's divine guidance when the journey does not make sense?**

2. Within Exodus 14, God explains His reasons for the round-about journey.

3. But God doesn't always explain himself.

a. Someday, in eternity, God may explain some of the Divine Background that took place.

b. But, more than likely, we will be like Job who, when confronted with the power and presence of God, all of our questions and concerns are washed away.

c. As people of faith, we must believe that God is upright in everything He does even when we do not understand.

1. God leads Israel to set a trap for Egypt.

A. Pharaoh is feeling remorse for letting Israel leave.

1. After all the firstborns are buried and the shock has worn off, Pharaoh is ticked.

2. One last time, he changes his mind, and intends to destroy Israel.

B. From Pharaoh's perspective, Israel looks confused.

1. The "Wilderness has boxed them in".

2. The situation is perfect militarily for Pharaoh.

3. The Wilderness and the Red Sea looked are the anvil, and Pharaoh was the hammer.

a. With Pharaoh's professional army and superior weapons, Israel is easy prey.

b. In fact, Israel did not have any weapons with which to fight Pharaoh.

C. Yet, Israel has two things that Pharaoh doesn't:

1. They have God's Presence.

2. They have God's Protection.

3. God was with them in the form of a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

4. When God is leading you, your difficulties become opportunities for God to do the impossible.

- a. As we read Exodus, we are often reminded that some battles are avoided.
- b. Other battles, however, God orchestrates.
- c. These are the situations that test us and prove God.

2. Why does the enemy pursue?

A. Sometimes, the enemy doesn't know he is already defeated.

1. Pharaoh saw a legitimate chance to win a final victory.
2. He didn't realize how defeated he really was.
3. **Pride is a powerful blinder.**

B. A defeated enemy is dangerous.

1. Take Satan for example.
2. We know he is defeated, but that final battle hasn't be waged yet.
3. In the meantime, Satan will do whatever he can to kill, steal, and destroy.
4. Don't be surprised when Satan does what he does.

C. Israel finds herself pursued by the best of Pharaoh.

1. She is boxed in by the wilderness and the Red Sea.
2. In this moment, God proves the kind of God that He is.
3. He is a powerful God, saving God, and a faithful God.
4. This encounter always provides several lessons about what we can do when we are pursued by our enemies.
5. Last week was BIG picture, this week is more practical.

3. When your enemy pursues, Will you mourn and complain?

A. When confronted by their first obstacle, Israel does what comes natural.

¹⁰As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up and there were the Egyptians coming after them! The Israelites were terrified and cried out to the LORD for help. ¹¹They said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? ¹²Isn't this what we told you in Egypt: Leave us alone so that we may serve the Egyptians? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness."

1. 400 years of slavery created a spirit of poverty.
2. For 400 years, all Israel could do was murmur and complain about her oppressor.
3. Israel was about 300 years into slavery before she ever cried out to God (Exodus 1-2).
4. People who feel powerless about their situation complain.
 - a. We do that at work.
 - b. We do that with our relationships.
 - c. If we can't do something about it, or feel like we can, we murmur and complain.

B. Israel's situation is dangerous.

1. In the natural, they would be defeated.
2. But, they forgot that they hadn't been set free by natural means.
 - a. There was nothing natural about their deliverance so far, so why should this day be any different?
 - b. The plagues and the pillar of cloud and fire are supernatural expressions of God's deliverance.
 - c. Why shouldn't they have believed God would deliver?

3. Peter Enns writes:

At the first sight of trouble, they are willing to march straight back to Egypt, ignoring the mighty acts of God that have brought them out in the first place. With Pharaoh in hot pursuit, they do not give a second thought to the promise God made to the patriarchs. They still have not learned that God's purpose for bringing them out of Egypt is not simply to save *them*, but to maintain his covenant tie to *all* his people, past, present, and future. They have still not learned that *their* circumstances are not the final standard on which to view the work of God.¹

C. We are not much better.

1. We often make our first response to crisis a complaint instead of a prayer.
2. When we murmur and complain against God, we are calling His character into question.
3. We disregard the promises of God when we murmur against him.
 - a. It is ok to complain when talking to God.
 - b. David did this a lot in his prayers and so did Moses.
 - c. But it isn't appropriate to murmur and complain about God if you aren't talking to God.

D. When your enemy pursues, what are you going to do?

1. You can complain or you can pray.
2. You can murmur or you can worship.
3. How do we fight our battles? Through worship.

¹ Peter Enns, [Exodus](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 273.

4. When your enemy pursues, will you let the Lord fight what you cannot?

¹³But Moses said to the people, "Don't be afraid. Stand firm and see the LORD's salvation that he will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians you see today, you will never see again. ¹⁴The LORD will fight for you, and you must be quiet."

A. Israel did not have any weapons, yet.

1. Some commentators have proposed that after this battle, Israel gathered some of the weapons from the dead to fight later battles.
2. Whatever the case, notice that Moses said "the Lord will fight for you."

B. Some battles are meant for you to fight, other battles are meant for God to fight.

1. Rob Ketterling put it this way: Who owns this problem?
 - a. Is it a you problem,
 - b. a me problem,
 - c. or a God problem.
2. He talks about approaching problems as a pastor.
 - a. When someone brings a problem or issue to him, he asks:
 - b. Is this a problem that you need to fix.
 - c. Is this a problem that I need to fix.
 - d. Or is this a problem that only God can fix.
3. When we face problems or battles, there are some that only God can fight.
 - a. God tells Israel, THIS IS MY FIGHT.
 - b. This is my BATTLE. So watch what I do.

C. Are there battles happening in your life that you are fighting instead of letting God?

1. Sometimes God asks for our involvement.
2. Other times, God fights without us.

5. When your enemy pursues, will you give room for God to be glorified?

¹³But Moses said to the people, "Don't be afraid. Stand firm and see the LORD's salvation that he will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians you see today, you will never see again. ¹⁴The LORD will fight for you, and you must be quiet."

A. Not only does God tell them, He will fight, He basically tells them to stop talking.

1. Israel was in danger of getting in God's way.
2. So He tells them, to be quiet or to be still.
3. Stop complaining, stop fussing, stop throwing a tantrum.
4. Be still.

B. Sometimes, we need to get to work (that comes next).

1. There are times when you just need to be still.
2. God is not glorified in your frantic activity.
3. Our busyness is not what brings God glory.

C. Too often we are more like Martha, staying busy for Jesus, when what is needed is to be like Mary.

1. There are times to be busy.
2. There are times to worship.
3. Our default is set to busy.
4. One of the ways the enemy is pursuing us is to keep us distracted and busy.

6. When your enemy pursues, will you break camp or die on the spot?

¹⁵The LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to break camp. ¹⁶As for you, lift up your staff, stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide it so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. ¹⁷As for me, I am going to harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them, and I will receive glory by means of Pharaoh, all his army, and his chariots and horsemen. ¹⁸The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I receive glory through Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

A. The people are crying, and fussing, and begging to die.

1. Moses is before God saying, "What should we do?"
2. God responds, tell Israel to break camp.

B. God tells Israel to not stay there but to prepare for a miracle.

1. Preparation precedes miracles.
2. If Israel would have waited for the miracle to move, she would have died.
3. Israel had a task or job that she had to do, and only she could do that.

C. God tells Moses to stretch out the staff for the waters to part.

1. Only Moses could do this.
2. Not Aaron, not some kid down the street, no one else.
3. Moses had a role that he was called to do.
4. Obedience is a necessary ingredient for miracles.

D. God had a role to do:

1. He hardened Pharaoh's heart so that, even after a supernatural event lasting all night, that Pharaoh would still desire to kill Israel.

2. Even after Pharaoh saw Israel go through the water without drowning, he expected that to happen for himself too.

3. "There are people living in sin who are expecting to receive the same miracles you are receiving. What they don't realize is that those miracles are for the Children of God, not for Pharaoh."

a. Heaven is not for everyone, it's for those who follow Christ.

b. There is no healing for people apart from the Blood of Jesus.

c. There is no salvation apart from Christ.

Closing. When your enemy pursues, what are you going to do?

A. You have choices.

1. You can complain and murmur.

2. You can stay where you are, do what you do, and not change.

3. You can distract yourself with busy and avoid the issue.

B. Or you can:

1. Worship.

2. You can trust God.

3. You can do what God has made you responsible for.

C. This morning, if you feel pursued by the enemy.

1. If it feels as though the enemy is constantly chasing you down, I want to pray for you today.

2. I want to ask God for victory, power, wisdom, and protection.

3. I want us to call upon the God that parts the waters and sets captives free.