

Wilderness Escape

The Wilderness Escape where God guides and provides...this was the theme for our VBS this last week. What a great reminder of the amazing things God has done!

For us this morning, I want to look at how this Wilderness Escape applies to us adults too.

We have to take ourselves back to the place of the Israelites when they were in Egypt. They were overworked prisoners. And God wanted them to be free so they could worship Him the way they should.

So this Wilderness Escape is not an escape FROM the wilderness, but TO the wilderness.

The Israelites needed to escape Egypt and travel to the unknown, trusting God all the way.

There was just one problem, Pharaoh (the enemy) did not want to let them go. They belonged to him...they were his prisoners...they were captives...

So God sent Moses to demand that his people be set free to worship God. Pharaoh refused and God sent a series of 10 plagues upon the land of Egypt.

- Nile River to blood
- Frogs
- Lice
- Flies
- Killed all the livestock that were in the field (stabled livestock survived)
- Boils and sores
- Hail and fire rained on the land
- Locusts
- Darkness came that was so heavy it could be felt

After each plague, Pharaoh refused to let God's people go. So God sent one last plague...the death of every firstborn from Pharaoh who sits on his throne to the slave in prison.

God declared that there would be a great cry come from Egypt that had never been heard nor ever would be again. But as for the Israelites, it would be so quiet that not even a dog would bark.

God had each Israelite home sacrifice a lamb and He told them to roast the meat but then to put the blood of the lamb on their doorposts.

GOD SAVES

Exodus 12:13 (CSB)

The blood on the houses where you are staying will be a distinguishing mark for you; when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No plague will be among you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

So when the Angel of Death came, all the firstborn of the Egyptians were killed, but not a single Israelite household was touched because of the blood of the lamb.

“It will be a distinguishing mark for you...when I see the blood, I will pass over you.”

Church, this is a foreshadowing of Jesus....

1 Corinthians 5:7 (CSB)

Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new unleavened batch, as indeed you are. For Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed.

1 Peter 1:18-19 (CSB)

For you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb.

The blood of Jesus was shed for your sin...because without it, you are captive to the enemy!

The wages of sin is death...but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord!

It's the blood of the lamb that is our distinguishing mark...that God has saved us! Without the blood you are still dead in sin...still a captive...But Jesus made a way...accept His gift of life and you are FREE!

But how many of you know that the enemy doesn't want to let you go?

This is the mistake we make...I'm saved...and I'm good to go....NOPE...you've just been awakened to the war you were already in...it's just that you're now in the winning army.

But the enemy will continue to pursue you!

Too many believers are surprised when this happens...because at first everything is perfect. You are saved, you are free, then the enemy is like “hey...I want them back!”

This is where the Israelites find themselves...free from Egypt...until they hear the horses coming

They are backed up against the Red sea with nowhere to go...the enemy in pursuit...

Were they still free? YES!

Was God still with them? YES!

But it **SEEMED** like there was no place to go...but

GOD MAKES A WAY

Exodus 14:13-14

But 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. 14 The Lord will fight for you, and you must be quiet."

As Moses raised his staff, the Red Sea parted and made two walls of water on each side with dry ground in the middle for the Israelites to walk through the sea!

Church this is not a fairy tale...God really did this!

When the enemy pursues...and he will...it may seem like there is no way of escape but God makes a way where there is no way! He's the God of miracles!

He was then and He still is today! Listen to what Jesus did on the cross!

Colossians 2:15 (NKJV)

Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

In Christ, the victory is YOURS...and so when it seems like there is no way out - "Don't be afraid. Stand firm and see the Lord's salvation that he will accomplish for you today"

If He is for us, who can be against us? Nobody can stop MY GOD!

God saves...God makes a way when there is no way...

Did you notice that the Israelites left together? They helped each other along the way. They were there for each other. I bet there were lots of people who thought they couldn't do it...the journey was too hard...but I believe that there were encouragers in the group too. "Come on, don't give up, you can do this, God is with us."

GOD GIVES US STRENGTH

And that strength doesn't always come the way we think it should...

During their Wilderness Escape, Israel came up against the Amalekites in Exodus 17. Joshua gathered the best men and went down to battle.

Moses went to the top of the hill with his boys Aaron and Hur. When Moses held his staff in the air, the Israelites would prevail, but if he lowered his arms the Amalekites would prevail.

Moses' arms got heavy...he couldn't keep them up on his own but he didn't want to see his people overcome by the enemy. So Aaron and Hur moved a stone under him so he could sit on it, and they got on each side of Moses and held his arms up until sunset.

Israel defeated the enemy!

There are a number of things at work here to defeat the enemy.

- God gave Moses an army
- The army went to battle
- Moses held out his staff...and when he did...God gave the army power!
- But Moses couldn't sustain it on his own...his friends helped him stand firm

Man...how this relates to us today! Do you know that God has given us an army?

In 2 Timothy, Paul calls us soldiers of Christ Jesus! And this is why we have to get off our butts and go to battle! The enemy keeps pursuing...and if Christians stay boarded up in their homes and places of worship...we could get overtaken

God has given us the power...by the Spirit of God...resurrection power lives in US. Church we are the hope on earth...because of the hope we have in Jesus! But we've got to get out there and battle...hold out that staff...

But no one can do it alone...and you were never supposed to!

Philippians 4:13 (NKJV)

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

We can hang on this verse. But know that it's saying you can **press forward** in any circumstances...yet instead we'll use any circumstance to **prevent us** from moving forward...

And that's why we need each other! You need someone to hold your arms up when you can't do it anymore...but sometimes you need to be that one to hold someone else's arms up...

Philippians 2:4 (CSB)

Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others.

We're in this together. God gives us power and He gives us strength...and sometimes that strength comes from those around us!

Jesus saves...He makes a way...He gives us strength...

But He doesn't leave us right there...

GOD GUIDES US

Do you know that God wants you to live a life of victory? And I'm not just talking about going to heaven one day...

I'm talking about an overcoming life filled with power and His presence right here, right now, today!

There was this time in the wilderness when Moses went up the mountain at Sinai. Do you know what he went up there for? God's presence....

Let me show you something. Moses went up the mountain to be in God's presence. He came down the mountain with the Ten Commandments.

- Do not have other Gods besides Me
- Do not make an idol for yourself
- Do not misuse the name of the Lord
- Keep the Sabbath Day holy
- Honor your father and mother
- Do not murder
- Do not commit adultery
- Do not steal
- Do not give false testimony
- Do not covet

The first 4 are about loving God, the last 6 are about loving people. This is what God gave us as a guide...

Church this is a guide to an overcoming life. Not that we can follow rules...but that we spend time seeking God's presence and we come out with a love for Jesus and a love for people.

Love is the guide. But hear me...it starts with love for God...

All of the tolerance love that is spewed in society right now is not real love. If it doesn't first start with a love for Jesus...it's a love with absolutely no power. It's false. It's a fraud. It's a love that leads to death...because it doesn't come from God.

He has to be the source. We love God, only Him, no other Gods, no idols, we view God's name as holy, we spend time to worship and honor Him, seek His presence...

That's the first 4 commandments....seek and love God! Put Him first. Then the last 6 about loving people come supernaturally because the love for people FLOWS out of the love for God!

God guides us to love. And love guides us into the unknown. In total surrender to God, trusting Him with our lives....

Who likes good news/bad news?

Bad news...sin leads to death. We all need a Savior.

Church there is **GOOD NEWS** today!

God has made a way for salvation! His name is Jesus! And His blood is the distinguishing mark that God knows we belong to Him!

More bad news...the enemy does not stop pursuing you.

Good news...the Holy Spirit that is in you is the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead! He is with you and will make a way when there seems to be no way!

He's given you the power to overcome the enemy! But when you're too weak...He's also given you the presence of others around you to give you strength when you don't have enough.

Then you go where He leads you to go...into the unknown...all you know is to love God and love people