

# **CITYWEST CHURCH**

**17.08.2025 - 10 AM**

## **PRESENCE PEOPLE #2 - LED BY HIS PRESENCE.**

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.” **18** So God led them in a roundabout way through the wilderness toward the Red Sea.<sup>[c]</sup> Thus the Israelites left Egypt like an army ready for battle.<sup>[d]</sup>

**19** 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.”

**20** The Israelites left Succoth and camped at Etham on the edge of the wilderness.

**21** 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. **22** And the LORD did not remove the pillar of cloud or pillar of fire from its place in front of the people.

**Exodus 13:17-22 (NLT)**



*After 400 years of slavery in Egypt, God was ready to deliver them. But instead of taking the shortest, easiest route, God led them a longer, uncertain path through the wilderness.*

*Because God's presence isn't about shortcuts or convenience. It was about **faithful guidance**.*

*The shortest way, known as the Via Maris, was the coastal route, the shortest route to the promised land.*

*It would have been easy for the Israelites to think that the Via Maris was the way to go; it had good, easy roads, the shortest distance, it was a trade route so food and water could be bought. But the dangers of the way were too great, though they could not see them. God anticipated dangers they could not see.*

*God took the israelites the long way, and even with the presence their was opportunities to grumble and repent.*

*Fear at the Red Sea – Exodus 14:11–12*

*Bitter water at Marah – Exodus 15:23–24*

*Hunger in the Desert of Sin – Exodus 16:2–3*

*Disobedience with manna – Exodus 16:19–20*

*No water at Rephidim – Exodus 17:1–3*

*General grumbling at Taberah – Numbers 11:1–3*

*Craving meat – Numbers 11:4–6*

*Miriam and Aaron oppose Moses – Numbers 12:1–2*

*Refusal to enter the Promised Land – Numbers 14:1–4*

## **1. GOD LEADS BY PRESENCE, NOT OUR PLANS.**

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.”

### **Exodus 13:17 (NLT)**

- *The Israelites likely wanted the quick fix — the fastest way out.*
- *But God’s leadership is about more than speed — it’s about security and faith.*
- *God’s presence guides through the unknown, not just the easy.*
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*“Faithfulness in little things brings us into the presence of God, where greater faithfulness is revealed.”- Dallas Willard*

*You may be tempted to choose your own way — the easy way, the popular way, the predictable way. But God invites us to trust His presence, even when the way feels unclear.*

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

### **Romans 8:14 (NLT)**

## 2. THE PRESENCE OF GOD IS VISIBLE

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. **22** And the LORD did not remove the pillar of cloud or pillar of fire from its place in front of the people.

### Exodus 13:21-22 (NLT)

- *God gave them a clear sign of His presence — visible, tangible, consistent.*
- *This was God's way of saying: "I am with you, I am guiding you, don't be afraid."*

*Think about a lighthouse on a dark night. Ships don't need to see the whole ocean, just the light to navigate safely.*

***God may not show you the whole plan — but He shows you enough to keep moving.***

Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.

### Psalms 119:105 (NLT)

### 3. FOLLOWING GOD'S PRESENCE REQUIRES TRUST AND OBEDIENCE.

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 13:21 (NLT)

- *The Israelites had to learn to respond to God's presence daily.*
- *Faith was lived out step by step — not just in moments of clarity but in the waiting and uncertainty.*
- *Following God's presence means obeying even when you don't have all the answers.*

*"Faith is deliberate confidence in the character of God whose ways you may not understand at the time."*

- Oswald Chambers

*If you want to step into all that God has for future, be willing to step into all he has for you today.*

*The wilderness, and the call of God always ends in promised land. It might not be the route you would take, it will involve some moments of humility and surrender and is always guided by God's presence.*

## **CONNECT GROUP QUESTIONS.**

- 1. God avoids taking His people the shortest route because He knows what they cannot see. Where in your life do you sense God protecting or redirecting you in ways you don't fully understand?**
- 2. The Israelites struggled with fear, grumbling, and control even while God's presence was visible. What does this reveal about the human heart, and how does it mirror our own struggles with trust today?**
- 3. Following God's presence requires surrender in the wilderness before entering the Promised Land. What "wilderness season" in your life has taught you the most about God's character, and how might that shape your future obedience?**