

Title: Instruction in the Way

Text: Exodus 14: 1-31

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As children born of the Spirit of God, we ask our heavenly Father to lead us.

Psalm 17:5: Hold up my goings in thy paths, *that* my footsteps slip not.

Ps 119:133: Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.

Our heavenly Father promises the believer with this soul assuring word:

Psalm 32:8: I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

Psalm 121:3: He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

1 Samuel 2:9: He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.

Yet, the path by which God leads us is not usually what we have in mind when we ask God to lead us.

Proposition: IN OUR TRIALS, GOD TEACHES THE BELIEVER THE SAME THINGS HE TAUGHT US WHEN HE BROUGHT US TO BELIEVE ON HIM AT THE FIRST.

The believer finds ourselves going through sort of a conversion again. That is how the Lord described Peter's trial,

Luke 22:32: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

In Exodus 14, we see an illustration of what a sinner experiences when first saved by the power of God's grace. Paul used this as such an illustration of faith and baptism:

1 Corinthians 10: 1: Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2: And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

So first let's look at this chapter in light of God's grace saving a sinner. As we look at it in this light, may we see our faithful Father teaching us the same things now in our trials.

I. What does God do when he saves a sinner? What did God do when he called you by his grace?

A. The LORD took us out of the way we were going. He brought us to behold our total inability to save ourselves. (Exodus 14: 1-9)

They could have went straight across the desert and been home free. But the LORD commanded Moses to bring them another way.

1. *Moses brought them here*—a picture of the law

Galatians 3: 24: Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

2. *Pi—Hahiroth* was a valley between two great mountain ranges--mountains they could not cross. When the commandment comes sin revives and the sinner is made to see our spiritual death—we found ourselves in a deep valley surrounded by God's law we have broken.

3. In front of them was the Red Sea-- the only way that sea could be dried up so they could go across is by a rod—a picture God's rod of divine justice being satisfied.

4. This took place *Over against Baal-Zephon*—a place named from one of the idol gods which was supposed keep the slaves from fleeing—God made and continues to make our idols vain unto us.

Isaiah 30: 22: Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.

5. Pharaoh and his army pursuing them—Satan roars upon us and our guilty conscious will not give us rest

Application: Was it grace that shut them up—that enclosed them about? Was it grace that shut all your ways up? That shut you up to Christ? How about now? What was it God was teaching them? What was it God taught you in the beginning? What is it God is teaching you now?

B. When God first saves a sinner he brings us to this place of total inability so that we cry out unto god. (Exodus 14: 10.)

1. When do we truly call upon God to save us? We cry out for God when we truly behold our utter inability? Remember the apostles in the ship when the waves came upon them-- "And his disciples came to [him], and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish." (Matthew 8:25)

2. Notice in our text that their cry was of desperation at first with much confusion of unbelief (Exodus 14: 11-12). Their argument refers back to when Moses and Aaron delivered the word of the LORD back in Egypt. Pharaoh made their lives even more bitter to turn them against Moses. (Exodus 6: 9). Now in this fix, they again begin to fear the enemy and to turn away from God. Nothing blinds us to God's glory like a high opinion of ourselves. (Exodus 14: 12).

3. No doubt, most here would prove to be idolaters, but let us remember how often we are filled with the same fears and unbelief they expressed. We panic, just like they did; but though true believers are so full of unbelief, the promise of our heavenly Father is:

Isaiah 30: 19:...he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.

Nehemiah 9: 9: And didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heardest their cry by the Red sea;

Psalms 106:8: Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known.

C. When the LORD first saved us, though our hearts were mixed with unbelief, the LORD will not deny them that are his but makes us to hear his gospel effectually (Exodus 14: 13-15). These are the four actions the LORD caused us to pursue the first hour. And they are the four actions he causes us to pursue in every trial.

1. *Fear not--*

2. *Stand still*—as opposed to murmuring and panic in hopeless despair

3. *See the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you today for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall them again no more forever*—your condemning sins are put away never to be brought up even as the Egyptians were destroyed.

4. Go forward—when God commands faith, we will go forward in faith. Here is why? (Exodus 14: 14)

D. In the beginning, having brought us to the end of ourselves, the Spirit of God revealed Christ the Way (Exodus 14: 16, 21)

1. This is that rod which Moses used to smite the rock from which the living water came out.
 - This is a picture of the rod of the law, of holy justice
 - The chastisement of our peace was upon Christ Jesus and with his stripes ye are healed.
 - The satisfaction of justice, the perfect righteousness of Christ Jesus, demands his children be saved out of the hands of the enemy. Christ's finished work makes us to cross the sea of wrath on dry ground. But this same rod of divine justice which demands the salvation of all for whom Christ died, also demands the destruction of all God's enemies (Exodus 14: 26)

E. God effectually gives his children Light and protection (Exodus 14: 19-20)—the pillar is Christ Jesus—blinding the enemy but giving Light to his children.

F. The Spirit of God makes his children obey and follow the Lord. (Exodus 14: 22)

1. This is a type of faith and of submission to Christ in believer's baptism (1 Cor 10: 1-2).
2. It is an illustration of faith, of consecration to Christ, of commitment to him who we trust has, is and shall deliver is.
3. Baptism is a public avowing of consecration to Christ.

Romans 6:4: Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5: For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

G. When God saved us, as promised, he made us to behold that the LORD destroyed the enemy (Exodus 14: 23-29), making them to behold that salvation is of the LORD (Exodus 14: 30-31). The effectual result was that they praised the Lord for his glory in their salvation (Exodus 14: 30-15: 1).

These are the things the LORD does when he first calls us by his grace. These are the things the LORD reminded Peter during his trial. These are the things the LORD reminds his children of over and over again through trials.

II. BRIEFLY, THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN IN OUR TRIALS

A. The trial best reveals the power of God's love and grace.

- We are in the best place we can be when we see that we cannot save ourselves.
- Then are we brought down.
- Then do we cry out for God to save us
- Then God's promises become precious.

B. The LORD rules the trial, even the enemy

1. The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he would pursue the children of Israel--
V4:...and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD.

2. As we see God's sovereign power in destroying Pharaoh and his Egyptian army, remember God is sovereign in the salvation of his people—destroying all our enemies and so he is able to deliver us from any temporal trial (Romans 9: 15-24).

C. Remember these four things to pursue in every trial (Exodus 14: 13-15).

1. *Fear not--*
2. *Stand still—*
3. *See the salvation of the Lord*
4. *Go forward—believe and run the race set before you...looking to Christ.*

Let this word be the comfort of your souls:

Isaiah 41:10: Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. 11: Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish. 12: Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. 13: For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. 14 Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

Amen!