

“Red Sea Faith” // Exodus 13:17–15:21 //

Rescue: The Book of Exodus #7¹

BUMPER: (Series/[PJoby](#))

As of right now, we’re at 2025 kids sponsored in one weekend! BTW, we still have 500 packets out, like we told you, the one thing we can’t do is take a packet and keep it out because you take a kid out of rotation. So, I anticipate even more to come in and for that number to be much higher. And, btw, if you missed the fun last week and you want to sponsor, you can do that by texting **“SUMMIT” to 83393**

Summit, thank you for your generosity. There was one little scene at the end of our last service Sunday that captured it all: one of our members at CPC came up and gave Jonathan the Air Jordans literally right off his feet. (As in, he went home barefoot so Jonathan could have a pair of J’s.) So Summit, thank you for always responding so generously, and giving not only your money but your very selves and literally, at times, the shoes right off your feet.

VAMP: Let’s pray for those kids... know and understand the gospel; be blessed materially and flourish

¹ Sources consulted: Mike Wilkerson, *Redemption: Freed by Jesus from the Idols We Worship and the Wounds We Carry*; Tony Merida, *Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary: Exalting Jesus in Exodus* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2014); Tim Keller, [“The Great Escape,”](#) October 6, 2002,

Introduction

Exodus 14 if you have your Bible. You’ve probably heard the name “Harriet Tubman” before. She was the incredibly valiant woman, a former slave, who led a whole movement of slaves to freedom via the Underground Railroad.

One surprising fact I learned about her, that I didn’t know, was that she carried a small pistol on her person at all times, but it wasn’t for the reasons you’d suspect--to ward off pursuers or those trying to block their escape. The **pistol was for slaves** who lost their nerve and wanted to turn back. Her biographer recounts how during one escape, while they were still just a few miles from the plantation, this one big, male slave began to weep loudly. He was confused, and scared--and at least back on the plantation he was guaranteed a bed and a meal and he didn’t have to worry about being hunted down and shot. This man’s fear totally enervated the group and put the entire mission at risk and so Tubman, a very small woman, gently took out her gun and pressed it into the slave’s back, and told him either to stop crying or die. (*She used the old, classic, “Either stop crying or I’ll give you something to cry about” line.*) He stopped crying, and they started moving again and eventually they all made it to freedom. Years later this freed slave was immensely grateful for Harriet’s leadership in that moment, including putting a gun to his back.

Exodus 14:10 tells us that as Israel fled from Egypt, they got news that Pharaoh had changed his mind. The verse says they **“feared greatly,”** and many wanted to turn around and go back.

sermon delivered at Redeemer City Church; Jen Wilkin, “A People Called Out”, Session 8 of God of Deliverance Bible Study, February 28, 2022; Tyler Staton, Joby Martin, [“The Red Sea”](#), January 25, 2015, The Church of Eleven22; Bethany Allen, [“Red Sea Salvation”](#), July 16, 2023, Bridgetown Church.

What we're going to consider today is the issue of faltering faith and how to overcome it--meaning, you had the faith to let God deliver you from Egypt, to get saved, but the faith to actually live out the Christian life--well, that's proving to be much more challenging. Showing the faith to come to Jesus for salvation is relatively easy, but the faith required to trust God, for example, during a season when you see no discernible evidence of his activity, or the faith required to really sacrifice something significant for his mission, or the faith required to resist a temptation that just seems so appealing and so satisfying and necessary to life right now--well, that's a much harder task.

And during a time of difficulty like that, you actually start to have the thought, like the Israelites did, that life felt easier when you weren't all tangled up with God. You're like, 'I used to just do whatever felt good and whatever seemed right in the moment, and things just seemed to work out. Life felt so much simpler then.' I'm not saying that's an accurate perception--it's quite insane, actually--it's just sometimes how you feel. (Ever been there? Ever felt like this?)

Let me set the context real quick: Exodus 13 tells us that on the night of the Passover, as Israel fled Egypt, God met them in the form of a gigantic pillar of cloud that led them by day that turned into a pillar of fire that led them by night. Which is kind of awesome--God's presence had a day mode and a night mode, like the little screen on your car dashboard.² God thought of everything. This was first class service.

That cloud led them straight to the Red Sea, a gigantic body of water. And when I say gigantic, I mean it: the Red Sea is bigger than any body of water within the continental borders of the United States--it's about the size of Lake Michigan & Lake Superior COMBINED. It's massive, and they don't have any boats, and that's when they

suddenly get a report from the back of the camp: *Pharaoh's army is coming after them; he's changed his mind and he wants 'em back.*

14:11: And (the people) said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? (IOW, 'Was this like a trick you and Pharaoh cooked up to get us all out here because all the graveyards in Egypt were full?') **What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt?**" Which has to reckon as one of the dumbest sentiments ever expressed in Scripture. Moses was like, "Really? You think after all that you've seen--the plagues, the Passover, the striking down of Pharaoh's firstborn--that God was just bringing you out here in the wilderness to let you die?"

I've told you before--every parent I know has this experience at some level. When my kids were young I did the obligatory thing and took them to Disney World and one afternoon, we got like 45 minutes behind schedule for eating lunch. And my son Adon, who was 7 at the time, was like, "Dad, are you just going to let us starve?" And I'm like, "Kid, do you have any idea how much this trip cost me? Do you think I'm standing in a 2-hour line to ride Dumbo because this is what your mom and I wanted to do with \$5000 this summer? Just BEING here should be proof of my commitment to you. If I care enough to haul you all the way down here and stand in this line for 2 hours--when it's 118 degrees out here and it feels like we're standing on the surface of the sun--I think you should trust me to provide lunch." Can I get an Amen, parents?

On the one hand, I can understand Israel's fears. You can too, probably--*I mean, the mightiest army in the world is closing in on you to kill you, and this cloud has led you to the shore of an impassable ocean?* But on the other hand, what they are saying is completely irrational. It just wouldn't make sense for God to lead them all this way just to kill them.

² 13:21

Well, as if their first statement is not dumb enough they manage to take it down another level. **14:12: Is not this what we said to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'?"** "Moses, didn't we tell you back in Egypt how happy and satisfied we were in slavery?" And Moses was like, *"I don't remember you saying that. What I remember is you crying out to God to deliver you. And when Pharaoh decided to throw all your baby boys in the river, I definitely don't remember you saying how much you enjoyed it in Egypt."*

Here's what's going on: Israel does not yet understand what's required to actually be free. Freedom, you see, was *as much about the state of their hearts as it was the location of their bodies*. God's rescue operation was about more than simply removing their bodies from the land of Egypt; it was also about getting the spirit of Egypt out of their hearts. The Promised Land God wanted to take them to was not just a place of prosperity flowing with milk and honey; it's a place of trust in God, flowing with obedience and faith.

So God is taking them on a journey where he is going to teach them to trust in and rest in him--because that's **true** freedom.

BTW, DO NOT miss that GOD sovereignly set this whole situation up. God didn't get to the Red Sea and say, "Whoops--what is that doing there? The maps on my GPS must not have updated since they added the Red Sea there!"

No, **the first 4 verses of chapter 14** make it clear that God *intentionally* led them this way--in fact, here's the irony: this wasn't the shortest route, by a long shot. God led them out of their way to this spot by the Red Sea; **and then, vs. 4, it says that God hardened Pharaoh's heart** so that he would come after them. Everything that is happening here is intentional, because get your mind around this--freedom is more about the condition of their hearts than it is the location of their bodies.

Here's my question: What if God was doing something similar in YOUR life right now? What if through all the difficulties, the obstacles, through all the seemingly unanswered prayers, these long times of waiting... (You're like, "God, why aren't you providing me with *that*? Why aren't you delivering me from *this*? Why have you closed your eyes and ears to this request?") And God says, "It's because I'm teaching you to trust me. I want you to learn to stand there with the Red Sea to your front and Pharaoh's army to your back and say, "Ain't no big thing. I know God is with me, and if that's true, I've got nothing to worry about." If you understood what God was doing here with Israel he's doing with you, maybe that would change your attitude toward God during difficulties like these. Listen: **The most accurate test of your faith is not how you respond when miracles happen, but how you respond when they don't.**

13 So, Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. **14** The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."

BTW, real quick: **Exodus 14:14** is one of those verses that often gets misquoted and misapplied. I've heard people use it to justify inactivity. "I don't have to do anything, God does everything." But be careful here. You see, multiple times throughout the Exodus God uses the activity of the Israelites as the means of his provision. They'll often go out to fight in battle and God uses their labor to bring them victory. A lot of the Bible is God telling us to get busy!

This is not some kind of blanket instruction that you don't ever do anything and God does everything ("Let go and let God"). It means that in this ONE situation, God would take care of salvation all by himself--and that's going to provide an important bedrock for their faith. I'll come back to that. But first, let's finish the story:

15 The Lord said to Moses, "...Tell the people of Israel to go forward. 16 Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. 17 And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host... 18 And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord.

19 ...Then the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, 20 coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel.

21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. 22 And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

23 The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea... 24 And in the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, 25 clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily.

27 Then... Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and... 28 the waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen... not one remained.

30 Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. 31 Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

I told you on week 1 of this series that Exodus establishes for us the melody line of salvation--meaning that it lays down patterns and

sketches out an outline that Jesus one day steps into and fulfills perfectly.

You see, the Apostle Paul makes clear in the New Testament that this Red Sea deliverance was a picture of our salvation.

He says in **1 Corinthians 10:1**: "I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers... all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

The Israelites' journey through the Red Sea, Paul said, is like our baptism. Think about it: they literally walked along the very bottom of the Red Sea, underneath, so to speak, gigantic walls of water on either side, and when the Egyptians, who wanted to recapture them, tried to follow, God brought the waters down on their heads and buried them at the bottom of the ocean, so that Israel emerged on the other side of the Sea completely out of range of the Egyptians.

In the same way, when Jesus died and was buried, he carried our sin down into the grave with him and 3 days later when he emerged, our sin stayed in the grave just like those Egyptians stayed at the bottom of the Red Sea. That's why the writer of Exodus points out that none of the Egyptian soldiers made it out—because **not a one** of your sins will ever come back for you.

One interesting note here: Ancient peoples, including the Egyptians and the Israelites, associated the depths of the ocean with the underworld. They literally called it "the abyss." To them, the bottom of the ocean WAS hell. So, in taking Israel along the bottom of the sea bed, it was as if God had split the gates of hell open and led his people right through them. On the cross, Jesus went into the abyss--he suffered hell in our place and split it wide open so that he could put away the slavery and condemnation of sin forever and we could emerge with new life.

This is all pictured in our baptism in water: “Therefore (Paul says in Romans 6:4) we were buried with Christ by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”

In baptism, you get put under the water, showing that you were buried in the grave with Jesus, and then you get brought up out of the water, showing you were raised with Jesus--with the implication being that all your sin and shame and condemnation stayed at the bottom of that grave--just like the Egyptian soldiers stayed at the bottom of the Red Sea. Not one condemning, threatening Egyptian soldier remains alive for us; there is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus; old things are passed away, behold, all things have become new! **You, took my place, and laid inside my tomb of sin; You were buried for three days but then You walked right out again; And now death has no sting and life has no end; For I have been transformed--set free!--by the blood of the Lamb!**

What a beautiful picture, right? BTW, if I could just say here, this is another reason we don't sprinkle when we baptize, we immerse you. You see, in the biblical imagery of salvation, there is always a going under--a going down into the Red Sea, going down into the grave of Jesus--before coming out alive and new. It's an important part of the picture, not just an insignificant tradition. I mean, not to take a cheap shot, but God didn't send an angel to scoop up water and throw it at the Egyptian army, he covered the Egyptian army over with the water. **I don't know about you, but I don't want my sin dusted with dirt, I want it buried and put away.** So, that's why we do baptism by immersion, because, as Paul explains, it's an important part of the

biblical imagery of salvation. You say, “Well, when I got baptized I got sprinkled.” I got good news for you--you can take care of that in a couple of weeks. You can renew your baptism and do it by immersion.

So, let me return to my central question in this message: If Exodus establishes for us the melody line of salvation, what notes do we hear in this story? I'll give you 4 notes:

1. God delivers his people all at once through one miraculous act

This salvation happened in a moment. One moment they were standing on this side of the Red Sea, completely vulnerable to the armies of Pharaoh--they didn't launch guerilla warfare and slowly chip away at the Egyptian army--one minute they were completely exposed, the next they were on the other side of the Red Sea with every Egyptian soldier destroyed and an impassable ocean of protection between them and anyone who wanted to hurt them. **ON ONE SIDE** of the Red Sea had been certain death; on the other side awaited untouchable life.

In Christianity, *unlike in every other religion*, salvation happens in a moment. You see, in other religions you start a process whereby you move closer to God, or enlightenment, or whatever. But, in Christianity, salvation is a one time thing that God does to you. I'm not saying you don't grow in your relationship with God and get closer to him over a lifetime--of course you do--but SALVATION happens all at once. And that's because in Christianity, salvation is not about what you do for God that God rewards you for, it's about what God has done for you that you receive.

I've often told you that there are 2 distinct ways to spell salvation: **D-O vs. D-O-N-E**. Every other religion in the world spells salvation D-O. It's what you **DO** that earns you heaven. (Now, they'll switch out different things in the "do" list. Different things to believe or practice, but the basis of your salvation is always D-O.) Christianity, by contrast, is spelled D-O-N-E because it's about what God has DONE that you can only receive as a gift.

Here's how Jesus says it in **John 5:24**. (And notice how *Jesus draws from Exodus imagery* here): "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and has passed over from death into life."

When you believe on Jesus, **you PASS FROM DEATH to life**. People say, "When you say, "Believe on Jesus," you mean, like BELIEVE that he was a real person?" No. "**believe**" in the New Testament is the Greek word "*pisteuo*," and it literally means, "to lean your whole weight upon" something. The **old King James Version** I grew up on translated it as "believe on" (and it always irritates me that MS Word puts the little squiggly line underneath "believe on" saying it's incorrect English, but I actually think "believe on" better translates what the Bible means with the word *pisteuo*. **You *pisteuo* (believe on) Jesus** when you lean your weight on what he did.

I often compare it to sitting down on a **CHAIR**: Everyone I can see this weekend is sitting down in a chair, which means there came a point where you *believed* the chair would hold you up. It was likely a subconscious thought; I doubt many of you consciously thought, "Well, based on the size of that support structure, the width of that

seat... a few quick physics calculations... yep, I believe it will hold me up and I do hereby commit myself to it." You probably just glanced at it, but you did in fact believe that chair would hold you up. Other people around you may not have been so sure, but you believed. BUT--get this--that conviction didn't become **biblical** belief--it didn't become *pisteuo*--until you transferred your weight onto the chair. This is what it means to "believe on" Jesus--not to believe certain truths about him or to understand theological ideas--but to transfer your weight to him. **You see, Jesus claimed to be Lord and Jesus claimed to do everything necessary to save you.** To believe on him means you surrender to him as YOUR Lord and trust in his finished work as your salvation.

It happens all at once. To go back to **OUR DOORWAY** here, one minute you're on the death side, the next you're on the life side. Just like you have to be either standing or sitting, you have to be on one of the two sides.

Listen, you may not know the exact moment that it happened. Just like you may not know the moment you sat down in a chair. But there was a moment, right? There was a moment where you were standing and then in the next you were sitting. There's no middle ground. In the same way, there was a moment where you passed from death to life.

You say, 'Well... but it FELT like a process for me. I didn't have this clear, singular moment--where I was a drug-dealer and one day I blew out a puff of pot smoke and it came out in the form of a cross and I knew that was a sign that I should go to church and I came and you gave the invitation and I came forward where I was met by a sweet

old lady who cast 7 demons out of me and called me into ministry on the spot..." You say, "That wasn't my story. Instead, I grew and learned over time and I'm not sure when I officially accepted Jesus..." Yes, I understand, I know it felt like a process, but that process was simply you coming to understand that God had done it all--but at some point, you may not have known when it happened, you transferred your trust to Christ. And the proof is that you're seated in him now.

Of course, that raises the question: **Are you right now seated in him? Are you trusting in his finished work as your salvation?**

You see, when I ask someone if they are a Christian and they say, "Well, I'm trying..." That's a sign to me that they don't get it. Becoming a believer means you're trusting in what God has done to save you and resting in it. Sitting down in it. There's no 'trying' about it. You're either trusting in what he's done to save you or you're not. You're either surrendered to him as Lord, or you're not. People say, "Well, I'm not sure my faith is strong enough to be saved." Listen, the strength of your faith actually has very little to do with it. **You can have a lot of doubts and still SIT DOWN, right?** If you think, "I'm only 70% sure this chair will hold me up" but then you sit down, you're still seated! **It's not about the strength of your faith, it's about the strength of the object of your faith.** The weakest faith in Jesus still saves, because it's not the strength of your faith that saves you; it's the strength of your Savior.

(Listen, I'm sure that as they were passing through the Red Sea that day, there were all different levels of faith among those Israelites. Vs 22 of Exodus 14 says that the water stood up on the sides like the

walls of a canyon. And I'm sure some, who were strong in their faith, walked through without a doubt, just in wonder, saying, "Wow, look at our God!" but others were like (tiptoeing, fear). And they saw some little kid notice a fish swimming in the water and they reach out to touch that fish and the doubter is like, "Stop it! Don't touch those walls! They might break!"

But regardless of the strength of their faith, 100% of those who passed through--both those with strong faith and those with weak faith--made it safely to the other side.)

*So, the **first thing** we learn is that God saves his people all at once through one miraculous act. The **second thing** we learn is that...*

2. God saves his people all by himself

As we saw in **Exodus 14:14**, this salvation was something God did all by himself. All they could do was watch and believe.

That's an important part of the salvation melody. Ultimate salvation is something God accomplished all by himself. When it came time to die for sin, Jesus went to the cross alone. All his disciples had either rejected or abandoned him. *(He took...)* All we could do is stand amazed, and watch, and believe.

I've described salvation before like suddenly waking up in an ambulance; you can hear the siren but you have no idea how you got there. Then you look down and notice all these tubes and machines hooked up to you, and then you see the commanding, friendly face of an EMT looking kindly down at your face and he says, "You were in a

terrible accident. In fact, you died, for a moment, but we got there just in time and we revived you. You're going to be ok. We've got you." That EMT is not asking for your help; in fact, if you try to get up and help him, you're just going to make things worse. He does all the saving, all you can do is receive it.

Conversion is God waking you up to tell you he's saving you. And truly, even the waking up part is something God does! Eph 2:8 says, "For it is by grace we have been saved through faith, and *that not of yourselves*, it is the gift of God." What does the "*that*" refer to? *The faith itself is a gift of God*. Sometimes we present salvation like it's a joint project between us and God. Like we are thrashing and drowning in an ocean and Jesus comes along in a lifeboat and calls to us, "I can save you!" and we swim over to Jesus' boat and say, "Please save me!" and Jesus pulls us into the boat. The better picture of salvation is that you were face down in the water, breathless, when Jesus came to us, pulled us back up in the boat and brought us back to life. Our salvation is something God does all by himself. All you can do is believe and receive it and consent to it. Again, **John 5:24**: "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and has passed over from death into life."

You just believe that what he said he did, he did, and "**SIT DOWN**" in it. Or "**CROSS OVER**" into it.

3. This defining act becomes our defining moment

The Red Sea was supposed to function like a line-in-the-sand, defining moment that they would come back to again and again in

their hearts to remind themselves how present God was with them and how actively he was working on their behalf.

God's presence would not always be as tangible, you see, as the pillar of cloud or fire--right now, in fact, God dwells with us through the person of the Holy Spirit, a presence we can't usually see or feel. I mean, I wish we could, right? How cool would that be? Say, "God are you with me right now?" And look up and see this little glowing cloud above you. A little traveling nightlight when you have to get up and go to the bathroom. Or, you're trying to decide who to marry and the little cloud goes and hovers over whomever God wants you to marry. That would be amazing, but that's not how it works now. (BTW, **single guys**, great pickup line for Christian girls: I think the cloud hovers over you. Or maybe that's 'state's evidence, exhibit 1' in her request for a restraining order, I don't know. Be careful with that.

The point is, God's presence with his people would not always be as tangible as the pillar of cloud, and his miraculous working on behalf of his people wouldn't always be as demonstrative or clear as his intervention in the Red Sea. As I mentioned, a lot of times God works through OUR efforts and activity. It's invisible, it's almost hidden, and because it is, we can start to forget that he is with us or we might even start to doubt that he is present with us.

And so, God gave them an event he wanted them to come back to again and again, a defining moment that reminded them of God's presence and his faithful activity. And it worked:

- Chapter **14:31** says, "(At the Red Sea...) Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.
- And it wasn't just that generation. Throughout the book of Psalms, written 500 or so years after the Exodus, the **Psalms** continually bring up the Red Sea as the proof of God's commitment to Israel.

- In fact, the Red Sea deliverance is the most frequent image of salvation referenced in the Old Testament.

Here's the point for you and me: What the Red Sea was for them, the cross and resurrection is for us. So, Paul, for example, tells the Romans:

"He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?" *It's just simple logic, Paul says, Look at the cross! If God was that committed to you then, when he was dying for your sin, don't you think he'll take care of you now?*

- **Are you worried about some provision...** your future, some situation, some obstacle, some need? *If God provided the bigger thing--giving Jesus for your salvation--can't you rest assured he'll provide the lesser things? He didn't go to the cross to rescue you just to bring you into the wilderness to die.*
- Jesus said to a group of anxious Israelites who were worried about their futures, "Consider **the ravens!** They don't even save and look how abundantly God cares for them!" And, to those who worried that they wouldn't get enough stuff to enjoy life, he said, "Consider **the wildflowers!** They spend zero on clothes and God dresses them more extravagantly beautifully than the stars on the red carpet at the Oscars! And much less cringy! And you are of so much more value to your heavenly Father than birds and wildflowers! God didn't give his son to redeem birds and flowers, but he did that for you. *"He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"* It's like the Puritan John Owen always said: The greatest insult you could ever give to God, after the cross, would be to doubt his love for you or his commitment to care for you.

Or, how about this? Paul says, "**Do you hear internal voices from your past condemning you?** Maybe a voice inside of you reminding

you of all the mistakes, all the shame from your past life, or some struggle you can't shake now--and that voice tells you: "You can't escape that! There's no way you're a child of God. Who are you kidding? *Real* Christians, they don't struggle with that right there!"

- **Paul says:** "But who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us."
- Paul says: Between you and your sin now is an impassable ocean called the cross of Jesus, and not one accusing, condemning Egyptian can make it across that ocean. Those voices you hear taunting you are your old masters in Egypt, but they can't get to you.
- I think of it like that glass at the zoo between me and those scary spiders. I don't mind snakes, but spiders are part of the curse of hell. There were no spiders in the Garden of Eden, I'm quite sure, and there will be none in heaven. But as long as that glass is there, I don't have to be afraid. I'm actually pretty relaxed. I lean up real close to the glass to see if I can see things on the spider... but if that glass was suddenly gone, I'd squeal and run away like a middle school girl. But with that thick glass there, it can't touch me.
- Martin Luther felt like that devil constantly brought up his sins to him and tormented his conscience with them, whispering stuff to him like, "*There's no way you're a Christian. God can't love and accept you. You'll never be good enough. You're too inconsistent. Too weak. Too sinful.*" And eventually, rather than try to argue with Satan or prove he wasn't as bad as Satan suggested he was, Luther began to say: "Yes, Satan, all those things you say about me are true. And, by the way, here's a few more of my faults you forgot about that you can add to your list of things to accuse me of before God. But you've forgotten that Jesus has already seen these and died for them to put them away. So you can present all these sins and 1000 more. "And by the way," he would tell Satan, while you are up there before God accusing me, maybe you

should consider your own soul, because last I checked things don't turn out too well for you."

- It's like one of **Charles Spurgeon's** favorite hymns said: *"Long may the accuser roar, of sins that I have done; I know them all and thousands more, Jehovah knoweth none."*³

Live your life in the new reality of where God has you. Which leads me to...

4. It's time for you to leave Egypt behind

For many of you, God has saved you, but you still live like slaves. Your lives lack the peace and joy and freedom of being the sons and daughters of God. It's like you've trusted God to do the first part of salvation--taking you out of Egypt. Now comes the more important part, getting Egypt out of you.

I **started this message with the story of a captive** wanting to go back to captivity because he was scared. Let me end with another one, this one from one of my favorite all time movies: *Shawshank Redemption*. In fact, before I tell you the story, let me set it up with a little side story: Two years ago, I was standing in the TSA line at the San Diego airport and I looked up and the guy in front of me was Tim Robbins, the co-star of *Shawshank Redemption*. Andy Dufresne. But nobody recognized him. He had a beard and a hat and sunglasses on. And we weren't even in the precheck line, just the regular, hoi polloi, commoners line. And I kept looking over at him to make sure it was him, but y'all I've watched that movie enough that I knew it was him,

so eventually I sidled up to him, literally as we were taking our belts and shoes off and putting our carry-ons on the little belt and I locked eyes with him and said, "Hey man, I know." And he looked at me for a few seconds and then he smiled, and I said, "I won't tell anybody." He said, "Thanks." I said, "but you gotta know that *Shawshank Redemption* changed my life, and that's saying something because I'm a pastor and I'm in the business of life change... and you should check out Jesus some time." He smiled and said, "Thank you." And that was the end of our encounter. Y'all I was really hoping he'd get pulled by TSA for having something still in his pockets so I could say something as I walked by like, *"Oh, so you can break out of a maximum security prison but you still can't still get through a security line without being flagged."* But he didn't get pulled, so I lost my opportunity. It would have been great.

What's that story got to do with this scene I want to tell you about in *Shawshank Redemption*? Nothing, really. But how could I not share that story?

VAMP

But, the point: there's a scene in *Shawshank* where Red, played by Morgan Freeman, is explaining to Andy Dufresne (that's Tim Robbins' character) how prisoners often get used to prison conditions, and eventually freedom becomes scarier to them than captivity. He says, *"These walls are funny. First you hate 'em, then you get used to 'em. Enough time passes, and you get so you depend on 'em."*

³ Samuel W. Gandy, in *Our Own Hymn-Book: A Collection of Psalms and Hymns for Public, Social, and Private Worship*, edited by C. H. Spurgeon (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1883). <https://www.graceupongrace.net/p/what-though-the-accuser-roar>

Andy won't have it; he thinks, "I've got to get out of here" and he hatches this ingenious escape plan. Well, after Andy escapes, Red eventually gets paroled, but after he's out he really struggles with the outside world, and even contemplates giving up--either taking his life or doing something to get himself back in prison. But then he recalls something Andy had told him in the prison yard before he escaped: "I guess it comes down to a simple choice, really. Get busy living, or get busy dying."

Friend, it's like I've told you: The most miserable people in the world are half-committed Christians. They're just enough into Jesus that they're miserable in the world; but just enough into the world that they are miserable in Jesus.

Choose where you want to be: Egypt or the Promised Land. It's like the old Chinese proverb says: *"He who try to walk down both sides of the road will split his pants."* Pick a lane and just go with it.

And listen, I know it's not easy: the faith that is required to go into the Promised Land is hard. But I'm telling you, slavery in Egypt is harder. And if you decide to go with Jesus, go all the way. Let him transform the fearful, idolatrous heart of a slave into the trusting, joy-filled heart of a son. Yes, it's hard. But every bit of it is worth it. True joy is given only to those who trust him all the way and go with him all the way.

It's time for you to leave Egypt behind. God has put an impenetrable ocean between you and your previous captivity, and all Pharaoh's

condemning soldiers are dead on the shore! So, like my TSA security line buddy Tim Robbins said: "Get busy living or get busy dying."

Invitation

So how should you respond to this? I want to open up this altar at all campuses. Some of you need to come down here and pray and say, "I'm ready to go all the way! Jesus, I need you to give me the heart of a son, not a slave." Maybe there's some area where you're having trouble trusting or obeying him, and you just need to come down here and pray it through. I'll put 3 or 4 prayer team members or pastors at the front of every campus in case praying with them is helpful. If not, you can just kneel and pray on your own. Or bring a friend with you.

Before I call you for that, some of you have never been baptized. If not, here's what I want you to do: come down here and tell one of the prayer team members you want to be baptized, and they'll start that conversation. Or maybe you just have questions about it and want to talk about it. Come down and tell them. Or, you can **text "BAPTISM" to 33933** and that will let us start the convo that way.

Maybe you've never trusted Jesus, and crossed over to the side of life. You can receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior today. All you do is believe on him! Trust in him as your Lord and Savior. I want to invite you to come down and take the hand of one of these people and tell them that's what you're doing today. You're ready to take a seat in Jesus.

Our worship teams are getting into place at all campuses. I'm going to pray, and then they're going to lead, and you come!

"God, give us courage to be Promised Land people, all the way, and may many take that first step toward that by stepping out to come do business with you. In Jesus' name, Amen."