

What To Do When You're At A Stand Still Exodus 14:13-14

Introduction

Waiting out these past couple of months trying to get the upper hand on the Coronavirus has been a real strain on our world and on each one of us. It just goes against our instincts to stand still and do nothing when faced with perplexing problems. As Christians, one of the most challenging things to learn is to wait for God to act and direct us. I would imagine that some in recent days have even prayed, "God, why don't you do something?" Even the most devoted believers are tempted to panic when the Lord doesn't act immediately to our cry help. If fear gets the upper hand, we can quickly become prime targets for the Devil.

But God follows his own will and plan. That means He doesn't react according to our desires and plans. God does allow us to encounter alarming and even life-threatening circumstances to develop us and to test our progress in faith. David tells us in Psalm 37:23 that, "The Lord orders the steps of a righteous person: and he delights in his way." So, if I understand that verse correctly, God directs and guides those who follow Him and gives order and purpose to their steps.

You may not like this, but Jesus even leads us into difficult situations. The difference is Satan sets traps to ensnare us, but Jesus leads us through the valley of the shadow of death to teach us how to rise above our fears. Because of hard times, it's tempting to cry out, "Lord, why are you allowing me to go through this situation?" But that only reveals we are more connected to the circumstance than to the Savior. I'm sure the disciples felt this way many times during their discipleship training. How many times did Jesus say to them, "Fear not!"

The New Testament truth is that God does allow us to face hardships, even when He's not the cause. God allows us to experience hard times to teach us the faith life. God's goal is to make us examples of godly faith so that our lives become a clear testimony to those who need faith and hope. It's important to know that God is always watching over you. He will not test us beyond our capacity to overcome. Unfortunately, many times we think we've reached our capacity long before God knows we have. But if we keep following the Lord, we will develop an unshakeable faith. God also promises He will never lead you to the brink of a difficult situation only to abandon you.

Now, death and destruction are always a part of Satan's plan. (He cares nothing about God's creation.) But God promises, "I will never leave you, I will never forsake you, I will be with you always, even until the end of the age." And God is always faithful to his plan, and His children in every crisis. God doesn't want you to panic in the face of adversity or even death. He wants us to remember we already have eternal life, and that He will help us face every life-threatening situation we encounter. He wants us to learn that faith conquers fear! In Psalm

56, King David wrote, "Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), In God, I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me? (Psa 56:3-4 NKJV)

During any crisis, we can lean on our faith and trust in the Lord to see us through. When we say YES to God and trust Him, no matter how difficult things may seem, we demonstrate our faith before the whole world. It is that kind of faith in action that brings glory to God.

We find many examples of that in The Old Testament. One particular example is a crisis the children of Israel faced at the Red Sea. It was not a circumstance instigated by the Devil or by Pharaoh. It was a crisis completely arranged by God, set up by His very own commands to Israel. Scripture says God hardened Pharaoh's heart and caused him to pursue after Israel and allowed the Egyptian army to overtake Israel by the sea. Let's take a look at Exodus chapter 14, beginning with verse 1, "Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "Speak to the children of Israel, that they turn and camp before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal Zephon; you shall camp before it by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, 'They *are* bewildered by the land; the wilderness has closed them in.' Then I will harden Pharaoh's heart so that he will pursue them; and I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, that the Egyptians may know that I *am* the LORD." And they did so." (Exo 14:1-4 NKJV)

God specifically told the people to camp between Migdol and Pi Hahiroth, located between two mountain passes, with the sea bordering on a third side. The only possible way of escape was back into the wilderness, and which was entirely blocked by Pharaoh's approaching army. You can imagine why the Israelites were horrified at their situation, especially when you realize that God was the one who led them there! But the first lesson here is, let God be God!

I. Acknowledge God's Greatness

You see, God could have prearranged to knock the wheels off the Egyptian chariots any time He wanted. He could have stranded them in the wilderness a hundred different ways. He could have sent a cloud of fog down upon the Egyptian camp to confuse them. And the Egyptian army could have walked around for days in that dense fog, while Israel made their escape. But instead, God positions the cloud between the Egyptian camp and the camp of Israel as a protective barrier.

It would have taken only one of God's angels to slay the entire Egyptian army in the blink of an eye if His goal was just to destroy the Egyptian army. But the Lord didn't do any of those things. Instead, He squeezed Israel into an alarming and life-threatening situation. It was a crisis that was impossible to escape by any human means. The Egyptian army blocked the only escape route. Israel has nowhere to turn for help but to God. And God waits until the Egyptian Armies are right between the walls of the separated sea before destroying them.

God had a two-fold purpose in allowing this impossible situation. 1) He was determined to deal with Israel's enemy right in front of her so they would never again have to look over their shoulders in fear. Israel knew how powerful the Egyptian army was. So, for God to become all-powerful to Israel, He had to deal with the mighty Egyptian army right in front of the Israelites. 2) God wanted to provide an opportunity for his people to put their lives in his hands. They were to stand still and trust God to give them divine direction.

How do you handle your crisis moments? We know God arranged this frightful situation to test his people because he says so in Deut 8:2. Moses writes, "And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you *and* test you, to know what *was* in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not." (Deu 8:2 NKJV)

Remember, it was God who led them to the Red Sea, not the Devil. God did this to humble them and prove them so He could bless them. God gives us hard places, hungering places, thirsting places, places that are alarming and terrifying, to teach us how to have a trusting heart. As the Egyptians approached, there was no place for the Israelites to run. Exodus 14:10 says at this point, "When Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD." (Exo 14:10 NKJV)

II. Replace Fear with Faith

The second lesson God has for us is to learn to replace fear with faith. Try for a moment to place yourself in their situation. Your whole family is about to be wiped out, children, grandparents, and relatives. All you can hear is the rumbling of chariot wheels, the rattling of sabers, and the fierce war-cry of a murderous, bloodthirsty army. Tell me you wouldn't be afraid!

God promises that should a crisis fill us with fear, He is more than capable of handling the situation. God knew this lesson would frighten Israel. He would have been glad to hear a prayer like, "Lord, we're afraid! But we know you have always been faithful to deliver us. You delivered us from the death angel and the plagues, and we know you have the power to deliver us even now from this Egyptian army, so no matter how bleak it looks, we commit our lives into your hands."

But unfortunately, that was not Israel's prayer. "They said to Moses, "Because *there were* no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? *Is* this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For *it would have been* better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness." (Exo 14:11-12 NKJV) That is not the cry of faith!

Many people are facing their own similar crisis right now! Sickness, death, lockdowns, struggling businesses, and record layoffs are producing incredible fear and uncertainty. Maybe your burden has become difficult to bear. You may be under incredible pressure and stress. But if you are a Christian, the fact remains that God wants to lead you through your difficult situation.

God doesn't cause bad things to happen to us, but he does know where the landmines and pitfalls of life are, and He can guide us through even the most difficult trials we face. The simple, biblical truth is; because of Christ, you are His, and He is watching over your steps and knows where you are and what you need. The struggles of life allow us to evaluate our obedience to God and make any adjustments we need to receive His blessing. If you aren't a Christian, the struggles of life allow you to acknowledge and receive God's help and guidance!

God can use the tragedies of your life to help you learn how much He loves you and wants to help you if you let Him. You may ask, "What am I supposed to do when everything seems so hopeless? I have nowhere to turn and no answers to my problem. I can't even talk about what I feel or get advice on how to get out of my troubles."

Here's how God answered Israel. Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace." ([Exo 14:13-14 NKJV](#))

The Lord was saying to them, "The first matter you have to deal with is your fear! Then I will fight for you. And I will save and deliver you. Let that promise be your strength and let it drive out all your fears."

III. Ask God To Help You

God wants to help you, but He waits for you to ask for His help. The lesson He wants you to learn is that you can always depend upon Him!

In scripture, Egypt is a type of the world and sin. And Pharaoh is a type of Satan. Satan would just love to enslave you and bring you into bondage this morning by terrorizing you with all the things that can go wrong! Sadly, Satan is very persuasive when he tells you that you will never recover from your situation. Satan wants to ruin you, but God wants to bless you!

God allows us to encounter difficult situations to get our attention and help us realize how much we need His help. These trials of our faith develop patience. They show us how helpless we are and how wholly dependent we must be on Him to deliver us through faith.

God will never lead you into temptation. But he does allow us to come to our wit's end to teach us trust and faith in Him. The Pharaoh's of life will come against you time and time again, trying to enslave you. His lying spirits will tell you you're not going to make it. You're going down this time. You will end up destroyed. You'll hear the rattling of chains as Satan tries to bind you and destroy all your hard work.

You can't outrun the enemy, and you're no match for him in a fight. You know you can't go back to your old master. If you turn back now, you're just going to become a slave again. Deserting Christ in your hour of trial can actually cost you your life! How many Israelites do you think would have been spared if they would have returned to Egypt. I suspect Pharaoh wouldn't have let very many of them live. The bloodthirsty enemy we call Satan is a killer, and he'd love to destroy you and your faith in Christ this morning.

But God's way of deliverance is for you to stand still and let Him set you free. The Bible gives us example after example of how we have no power in our flesh to fight spiritual battles. Alone, we are feeble and powerless against the Devil. What we need is the power of Christ living within us. When we submit our life totally to the Lord, even though we know there is no possible way out, Christ, who now lives within us, by the power of the Holy Spirit will deliver us entirely from the destroyer.

Conclusion

Are you tired of the fear and helpless feeling life is throwing your way? Jesus wants to provide you with supernatural strength to resist all the negatives and grow in faith and a positive expectation. There may not be much you can do right now, but there a lot God can do! So stand still and give it over to God. Let God be God! Trade-in your fear for some faith, and don't be too proud to ask God to help you! When you do that, you become an incredible testimony of God's great deliverance.

What was once a terrifying and challenging experience becomes part of your faith story. The Apostle Paul writes, "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God (2Co 1:3-4 NKJV)

There is one way out for you! And that way is Jesus. When the mountains have you hemmed in, and the Red Sea is in front of you; When Pharaoh and his armies threaten to destroy you, stand still and cry out to God and let Him save you! God's plan of deliverance is twofold: First, He wants to destroy the stronghold of doubt and despair in your life, and secondly, He wants to open a brand new door of opportunity for faith and spiritual discovery for you. God wants you to know that not only can you be free from the past, but there's also

a wonderful future that lies ahead for you.