

“Out of Egypt Through the Water” - Pr Jim Sprengle - Lent Midweek 3

March 23, 2022

- I. **Exodus 14:13-31; Mark 1:9-13 previously read.**
- II. **The Hebrew people were suffering greatly under Egypt’s rule.**
 - a. As slaves, they had no standing in that land...and their lives were used up without mercy.
 - i. It was a hopeless and demoralizing situation – and hundreds of years had gone by without any change in sight.
 - b. It wasn’t always that way, because four hundred years before this time... Egypt was a refuge and a place that rescued the Israelites.
 - i. Egypt was the place that Jacob’s son, Joseph had become the second in charge... and through his interpreting pharaoh’s dreams, Joseph helped Egypt avoid a huge famine.
 - ii. Pharaoh was so grateful he offered all of Joseph’s family free land and a great place to grow crops and raise families.
 - iii. The Israelites had it made...
 - c. But all that changed.
 - i. A pharaoh came to power who did not care about what Joseph had done... instead, he saw the Hebrews as a threat because they kept having more babies and growing in numbers.
 - ii. So the Hebrew people became a source of cheap labor.
 - iii. They were enslaved to carry out these building projects for the pharaoh... which as you know, were incredible feats of engineering that required a huge amount of labor.
 - iv. All the Hebrews had to look forward to was slavery, brutal taskmasters, heavy burdens... and death.
 - d. No one could blame them for going to Egypt in the first place...
 - i. It was the land that blessed them with plenty of food and water... the leaders were their friends... the land of Goshen was set aside for all of them.
 - ii. But the refuge and safety they found in Egypt wouldn’t last... it became a place of slavery and death... a land of exile... a horrible place where their baby boys were tossed into the Nile River like trash.
 - e. And when you consider 400 years of living and growing as a community, the Hebrews were so established in this place that they probably couldn’t envision how life could change... or leaving all they had known.
- III. **The people needed a savior.**
 - a. They needed a leader who understood their plight and could unite them as a people.
 - i. They needed someone to remind them of who their God was... to remind them of their relationship to Him.

- ii. They desperately needed someone to lead them out of this land of slavery and death.
 - iii. And for someone to stand up to pharaoh, probably the most powerful man in the world at that time.
- b. So, God sent Moses.
 - i. I spent a whole sermon a few weeks ago talking about Moses and his special relationship with God.
 - ii. I didn't talk much about his weaknesses, and his reluctance to do what God wanted.
 - iii. He was a unique individual who had all the right gifts of education, experience within pharaoh's court, and a heart for his own Hebrew people.
 - iv. However, Moses also had a temper... felt inadequate... and perhaps had some physical weakness in how he spoke.
 - v. I could go on and on about Moses, but simply put, God equipped him for the task of rescuing His people.
 - vi. Pharaoh's hardness of heart was no match for the plagues that came to the Egyptians, and the Hebrews were finally allowed to get out of there after four hundred years.
 - vii. Moses and the Israelites headed back to the land that God promised them way back in the days of Abraham... and they finally had something to look forward to after all the hopeless years.
- c. And yet, for all the excitement and relief they must have felt, it wasn't long before they were crying out to God again.
 - i. They had two big issues to contend with – one was a huge body of water – and second, pharaoh decided to send his army after them.
 - ii. The Red Sea loomed ahead while death and destruction came from behind... which neither one looks too comforting at this point.
- d. So God tells Moses to raise his staff over the waters of the Red Sea... and not only does the water part, but the sea floor is dry and ready for hundreds of thousands of people to cross.
 - i. As the people go through the waters... they are rescued from slavery and death.
 - ii. Pharaoh's army rushed in behind them and was obliterated by the water that allowed the Hebrews safe passage...
 - iii. The evil is washed away...and the Hebrews were saved by that same water.
- e. That water became both death... and life.
 - i. The Egyptians are drowned, and the Israelites walk away alive.
 - ii. The waters that killed also preserved and gave life.
 - iii. By the way, this will not be the last time God uses water to destroy the enemy and give life to His people... to bring His people back from exile.

IV. Sin, death and the devil.

- a. These things are what we face as God's people... in much the same way His people were enslaved in Egypt.
- b. These are the enemies of God – always trying to enslave us with a false attraction... that somehow they can rescue us.
- c. In fact, they are successful much of the time, because we often cry out to God because of the trials and trouble we face because of them.
- d. What we need is a Savior... a Deliverer to rise up.
 - i. We need someone who will unite us and lead us out of the land of exile.
 - ii. We need a Savior who will restore and rescue us... who will stand up to satan and his evil.
- e. So God sent Jesus.
 - i. I suppose we could spend hours and hours talking about Jesus and His abilities... His power, His family tree, His sacrifice, and His love and mercy toward all people.
 - ii. But main point is that Jesus, God Himself, came into the world to dwell among us... He became flesh to rescue us out of our land of exile.
 - iii. He even went through baptism – not because He needed to be cleansed of evil (He was perfect) – but to take the world's sin upon Himself.
 - 1. In a strange way, it was like the water that would normally cleanse a person was doing the opposite – Jesus was already clean, so He was taking on the pollution and sin of the world.
 - 2. He would then take that pollution and sin and go out into the wilderness and face satan directly.
- f. By the way, Jesus won (if you didn't get the memo)
 - i. The huge obstacle in our way from returning from exile – sin, death and satan – was removed.
 - ii. The waters were prepared for us by our Savior Jesus, who knew that we would need them on our own journey to the promised land.
- g. And so down into the waters of Baptism we go, and our old Adam is drowned as all sin is washed away.
 - i. Out of the waters we rise up - a new Adam, a new creation, a child of God.
 - ii. Through these waters God delivers us from sin, death and the devil and gives us the promised land of eternal life
 - iii. Returned from exile, returned from a land of slavery, through the waters, into the arms of God. In Jesus' name. Amen.¹

¹ based on the sermon series, "Return from Exile: A Lenten Journey," Concordia Publishing House: St. Louis, 2017.