

The Exodus: The Lord Will Fight for You

Exodus 14:13-14

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Good morning, Chapel Hill! For those of you who don't know me, my name is Gunnar and I lead the worship ministry here at the church. And I just want to say that whether you're joining us in person or online, it's so good to be with you this morning, as we continue our journey through Exodus. And today, we come to a pivotal moment in the story—You could even say that it's the climax of the whole book. Today we find ourselves in Exodus chapter 14, where God makes the Israelite's exit out of Egypt official by parting the Red Sea. We're going to find that God shows up in great power to demonstrate that *he* is the one who fights for his people. In fact, that's the title of our message today: The Lord Will Fight for You. Would you say that together with me? *The Lord will fight for you.*

Now, our story begins with God telling the Israelites to do something quite strange. He commands them to reroute and then to camp out. You see, instead of taking the logical direction on land through Philistine territory, God has them back track to sit right in front of the Red Sea. And even though those instructions may seem odd, God assured Moses that it was all a setup for his master plan— a plan to miraculously defeat the Egyptians and free the Israelites to bring him all the glory.

It was a pretty incredible plan, really. But the sad part was that the Israelites didn't really understand the plan—they didn't get it. When it came time for them to move out, the Israelites saw the Egyptians coming up *behind* them, they saw the Red Sea *in front* of them, and they came to a stark realization: They realized that their little trip to the Promised Land may have reached a swift and dreadful end. And so, they tell Moses how they really feel, starting in verse 11:

“They said to Moses, “Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.”

They lay it all out there... This is where we find the Israelites in our story. They're freaked out, overwhelmed, at the end of their resources.

I wonder if anyone here is feeling that way today? Freaked out, overwhelmed, at the end of your resources. Honestly, I wonder how many of us *don't* feel that way right now. In fact, I think most of us are in a similar place to the Israelites in many ways. I mean, here we are in the middle of the summer and we're still living in this pandemic. We have not yet resumed

normality. And I think we all have this sense that life is still up in the air—that we’re not sure what tomorrow brings, let alone next month or next year. And so, we’re having to come to terms with all that... Again, many of us are probably feeling freaked out, overwhelmed, at the end of our resources.

And so, in light of all that, the question for us is this: What’s the solution? What do we do when we’re at the end of our rope—when we face what feel like impossible obstacles on the horizon? Well, I think Moses’ reply to the Israelites offers a tried and true solution for us right here in our text. And here it is in verse 13:

“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. *The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.*” (14:13-14)

That last sentence is so important. And so, I want us to say it aloud together: *The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.* ... What does that mean? What does that look like? That’s where we’re headed. Let’s pray. **[Prayer]**

So, here we are. We’ve heard the Israelites complaining about their seemingly impossible situation. And Moses says these powerful words, “The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.” I want to apply this important sentence to us in two ways today: (1) I want to apply it to the obstacles you face in your life. And then (2) I want to apply it to the salvation of your soul.

Point 1: The obstacles in life

Let’s start with the obstacles that we face in life... What we read in this passage is that God is the one who fights for us. *We* don’t fight for ourselves. And that’s really crucial when it comes to facing life’s challenges.

In fact, let me show you something quite interesting at the end of chapter 13. This is what it says in chapter 13, verse 18: “But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle.” Now, many commentators have no idea what to do with that last little phrase. I mean, why were they equipping themselves for battle when they left Egypt? Several scholars even suggest that we should translate the Hebrew there differently, because it really doesn’t make any sense. And the only problem with that is that pretty much every English version translates it the same way: “equipped for battle.”

I think there’s actually something really important here. This little phrase shows us just how ridiculous the Israelites’ thinking was. They were crazy enough to think that, even though they faced impossible battles on the horizon, that they could muster up their strength to fight for themselves. They put on all their battle armor only to approach a whole host of problems that were *way* beyond their ability—*way* beyond their capacity. And the same is true of us! In the

process of trying to handle all of life's trials on our own, we totally miss God's point in bringing us to these battles in the first place. And that's this: *God often brings us to face the impossible to bring us to the end of ourselves, so that all we can do trust him fight for us.*

I love how this idea was put by one of my favorite preachers of all time, Charles Spurgeon. He said, "Among the huge Atlantic waves of bereavement, poverty, temptation, and reproach, we learn the power of Jehovah, because we feel the littleness of man. Self-esteem is that speck in the eye which most effectually mars human vision; the Great Surgeon of souls removes this from us chiefly by sanctified afflictions."

Sanctified afflictions. I think that's what many of us are facing right now, folks. This moment in time, this season in life, is bringing us to the end of ourselves. Whether it's in your work, your family, your spiritual life—whatever it is—when you look at this present moment, I'd venture to guess that you're starting to come to terms with the fact that you're in over your head...

And if that's true, let me just tell you, you're in good company! Because the Israelites were in the same position. They had the Egyptians right on their tails and the Red Sea right in front of their faces. They didn't stand a chance! This puny nation, with all their people, all their kids, all their belongings, faced the impossible.

And it all looks bleak, it all looks grim, until the story takes a noticeable shift... This is what we read in chapter 14, beginning in verse 21 [video visuals here]:

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. 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. The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. 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, clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel, for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians."

Friends, can I just tell you that *the Lord is fighting for you*? Can I just tell you that: yes, you are beyond your resources, but *God is not*? Can I just tell you that nothing that you face in front of you, nothing that's coming up behind you, stands a chance against the Lord God Almighty? Because the Lord is a Mighty Warrior! God stands victorious over any obstacle that stands in your way! And you can stand firm in the confidence that God will act on your behalf...

Whatever you're facing—whether it's illness, or temptation, or conflict, or fatigue—whatever it is, your mantra needs to be the mantra of Moses, which is: "The Lord will fight for me. I have only to be silent." In fact, let's say that together right now: "The Lord will fight for me. I have only to be silent." We stand tall, right where we are, and with great faith, we say to our soul, "*The Lord will fight for me. I have only to be silent.*"

You can use this just like a daily affirmation. It's so important that we remind ourselves of the truth: that our lives are in God's hands, that our future isn't ultimately on our shoulders. And knowing that strengthens our trust in the Lord. It molds us into people who face the challenges of this life with quiet confidence. That's who we want to be... that's what we want to do... And so, as you put your trust in the Lord, trust him to do what's best for you, even when times are tough. Friends, *the Lord will fight for you. You have only to be silent.*

Point 2: The salvation of our souls

So, that's how we apply this to our obstacles: We trust in the Lord to fight on our behalf and rest confidently in his presence—affirming that he will, in fact, fight for us... But the Red Sea account is also a picture of something deeper, something greater than the obstacles of this life. And that is, secondly, a picture of *the salvation of your soul.*

If we were to use this picture of the Egyptians and the Red Sea, we could articulate our spiritual condition, our natural, spiritual state, in this way: We rightfully deserve to be overcome by the Egypt of our *sin* and thrown into the Red Sea of *hell*. The Bible says that we are all “by nature children of wrath.” That's what we deserve for our rebellious disobedience to the Lord— we deserve God's righteous anger.

And if we want to be rescued from that wrath to come, this story reminds us that we definitely cannot do that for ourselves. And even though we often know that to be true, there are still many times when we find ourselves doing the same ridiculous thing we did with our life obstacles: We come in equipped for battle! We gear ourselves up in battle array, only to find that Egypt is impossible to escape and the Red Sea is impossible to cross. We foolishly attempt to equip ourselves with efforts to earn God's favor, only to find that sin has a massive upper-hand and that a future in hell is unavoidable. Because we cannot save ourselves...

And so, the question is, if we face this impending doom—if that is our future—and if we cannot save ourselves, then what hope do we have? Well, this is when I get to tell you the good news of the gospel... The only one who can rescue you from the Egypt of sin, and carry you out of the Red Sea of hell, is the true and better Moses. He is the one who raised up his hands on the cross of Calvary to destroy the Egypt of sin. He is the one whose resurrection split the Red Sea of hell. He is the one whose perfect life parted the waves so that you can walk safely on dry ground into the Promised Land of heaven. There is only *one* who could save your soul from certain destruction and that is the Savior of your soul, the Lord of your life—and that is Jesus Christ! Amen?

He *alone* can give us the freedom we long for. He *alone* is the hope of our salvation... We cannot save ourselves. All we do is *receive* the salvation of the Lord by faith...

Now, one of the reasons I'm so passionate about this is because it reminds me of my own salvation moment. I can remember when I first came to terms with my sin and received the

salvation that I desperately needed. I was in high school at the time. I think we have a picture of high school Gunnar somewhere, don't we? [PIC] Quite the look, right? High school was a weird time for me, man. And I think it's a weird time for everybody, isn't it? One of the reasons it was so weird for me was because I was living sort of a double life.

On the outside, I'd been leading worship at my youth group. I was actually pretty religious. But I was also pretty self-righteous. In fact, I was so self-righteous that, even when I knew deep down that I'd done something wrong, I'd always find ways to justify it—to prove to myself and to others that what I did wasn't really that bad after all. And so, I worked to appear self-assured and like I had all my stuff together spiritual.

But on the inside, I was in turmoil. And the reason I was in turmoil was because of some of the things that I was keeping secret. You see, I had been dating a girl and our relationship was really messed up. We were ridiculously jealous of each other. We fought all the time. And what was worse was that, while everyone thought we were pure little Christian kids, we were anything but that. We were covering up just how inappropriate our relationship had become. And it was honestly wearing me out.

It was during that time, while I was becoming more and more weighed down by my guilt every day, that God brought all of my sin out into the light. I had been having a conversation with my parents one night when something came out that made it so I couldn't keep my sins secret anymore. And I had to come clean. In that moment, I recall having an emotional breakdown. It was as if my body was reacting to the spiritual battle going on within—that I was being freed by God's grace from all the evil powers that had been at work within me.

It wasn't too long after that conversation, that I recall going into my room alone, kneeling on the ground in front of my bed, and asking the Lord to forgive me. I pleaded with God to save me, based on what Jesus had done for me. And it was as I said that prayer that I felt God lifting the burdens of my sin, of my guilt, off of my shoulders. And I was saved. God had rescued me. And all I did, with his help, was receive the salvation he offered me.

I love recalling this moment in my life. Because it's a way to remind myself of the Lord's salvation. And that's exactly what God calls us each and every one of us to do: to *rehearse* our salvation. In fact, that's what the Israelites did in the following chapter of Exodus—chapter 15. They actually sang out in worship, rejoicing in what the Lord had done for them. Israel looked back at this pivotal Exodus moment and rehearsed the *Yeshua Yahweh*—the Salvation of the Lord. And that's what *we* need to do, over and over again...

And so, to help you do this, we have a little gift for you. We're going to have these little crosses available in the lobby for those of you with us in person. You can keep them on your keychain or place them in a spot that you'll see them. And for those of you with us online, I'd encourage you to find a small object that you can take with you to remember your salvation—to remember how the Lord has fight for you. And when you see this little cross or whatever object

you choose, my encouragement to you is this: take a moment to rehearse your salvation—to remember that the Lord has fought for you in the past and that he will fight for you in the future...

Now, as we close, I'm sure there are some of you with us today that have never made the decision before to receive the salvation of the Lord—to ask Jesus to save you from your sins and from hell. And so, I want to invite you to make that decision right here, right now.

In fact, I'm going to give you an opportunity to do that as we close our time together in prayer. If you want to be freed from your sin, if you want to be rescued from hell—all that is required of you is to receive what Jesus has done for you on the cross... Receive the salvation of the Lord. And so, if you want to do that right now, would you do that with me in prayer?