

The Lord Your God is in Your Midst

Passage: Exodus 14:1-31

Then the LORD said to Moses, ² "Tell the Israelites to turn back and encamp near Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. They are to encamp by the sea, directly opposite Baal Zephon.

³ Pharaoh will think, 'The Israelites are wandering around the land in confusion, hemmed in by the desert.' ⁴ And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them. But I will gain glory for myself through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD." So the Israelites did this.

⁵ When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds about them and said, "What have we done? We have let the Israelites go and have lost their services!" ⁶ So he had his chariot made ready and took his army with him. ⁷ He took six hundred of the best chariots, along with all the other chariots of Egypt, with officers over all of them. ⁸ The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, so that he pursued the Israelites, who were marching out boldly. ⁹ The Egyptians—all Pharaoh's horses and chariots, horsemen and troops—pursued the Israelites and overtook them as they camped by the sea near Pi Hahiroth, opposite Baal Zephon.

¹⁰ As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the LORD. ¹¹ They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? ¹² Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!"

¹³ Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. ¹⁴ The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still."

¹⁵ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on.

¹⁶ Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. ¹⁷ I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them. And I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. ¹⁸ The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen."

¹⁹ Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, ²⁰ coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long.

²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, ²² and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.

²³ The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea. ²⁴ During the last watch of the night the LORD looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. ²⁵ He jammed the wheels of their chariots so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, "Let's get away from the Israelites! The LORD is fighting for them against Egypt."

²⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen." ²⁷ Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing toward it, and the LORD swept them into the sea. ²⁸ The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen—the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived.

²⁹ But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. ³⁰ That day the LORD saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. ³¹ And when the Israelites saw the mighty hand of the LORD displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant.

Background

The story we read earlier is a well-known passage. It's about God leading the Israelites out of Egypt to the Promised Land but before that, they need to cross the Red Sea. Just a quick summary - Israelites were living in Egypt and Pharaoh, The King of Egypt has been treating them badly and cruelly. The people were oppressed & Pharaoh made their lives bitter with harsh labour and they were treated worse than slaves. Due to his own insecurity, Pharaoh even gave instructions to kill all the Hebrew baby boys as he feared the Israelites will one day outnumber the Egyptians & will join the enemies and wage war again them.

Exodus 2:24-25

The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. ²⁴ God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. ²⁵ So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.

So, God revealed Himself to Moses, spoke to him and led him to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. It's not an easy task for Moses as he knows God is asking him to stand before the King of Egypt to deliver His people. Moses kept giving excuses but God assured him of His presence. The Lord sent ten plagues on the Egyptians, the last being the death of all the firstborn. Pharaoh finally allowed the Israelites to leave Egypt but later changes his mind and started to pursue the Israelites. As we look at Exodus 14, we will see how God has actually been revealing Himself to the Israelites in the midst of the battle.

Our God is an All-Knowing God

Exodus 13:17-18

¹⁷ When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, "If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt." ¹⁸ So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea.^[a] The Israelites went up out of Egypt ready for battle.

Points to consider:

- God did not lead the Israelites through a shorter journey which is by the road through the Philistine, instead He took them through a longer route.
- God knows the Israelites would allow their fear & doubts to control them if a war breaks out and will turn their back on God
- Having said that, it doesn't mean when Israelites followed God's way it's going to be a *danger-free zone* (no battle / hardships / challenges to face.).
- It simply means, God knows the Israelites well and knows what & how much they can bear and would not allow them to face a situation beyond their means. He knows everything about His children.

Psalms 139:1-2

¹ *You have searched me, LORD,
and you know me.*

² *You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.*

- We serve an All-Knowing God. A God who knows everything about each one of us. He is the Creator who holds the Universe in His hand and at the same time knows every small thing about us, which no one else knows.

Our God is a Counsellor

Exodus 14:1-4

Then the LORD said to Moses, ² "Tell the Israelites to turn back and encamp near Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. They are to encamp by the sea, directly opposite Baal Zephon. ³ Pharaoh will think, 'The Israelites are wandering around the land in confusion, hemmed in by the desert.' ⁴ And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them. But I will gain glory for myself through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD." So the Israelites did this.

Points to consider:

- God had specific plans for the Israelites, right from which route to take, where to encamp, why you should stay there and so on.
- God knows the Israelites are walking towards an unknown Promised Land, having stayed in Egypt for 430 years and hence they needed direction and plans
- So, God counsels them & even shared to Moses on why He is asking them to do certain things and how later it can benefit them.
- If we look into the counsel of God, again it's not a danger-free counsel but rather He knows when the Israelites follows His plans, the Egyptians will change their mind and pursue them.
- God, in His wisdom, counsels His people for their benefit and eventually it will glorify His name. God's counsel sometimes might not be what we want to hear, but it is a father's voice that we just simply not ignore.

Isaiah 30:21

"Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

- God counsels His people. He counsels us on which path we should be taking, He counsels us about our workplace, ministry, relationship, future, the current battles we face, challenges in our relationships and so on.
- Sometimes we don't have the answer on why God allows us to go through a difficult path. Sometimes we worry too much on the outcome but what God is asking us to do is to rely on His wisdom & know ultimately everything will work out well for His glory.

Our God is always in control

Exodus 14:14 "The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still."

Points to consider:

- The Israelites didn't have any chariots, horses, swords or even weapons to go against Egyptians or to defend themselves.
- Yet, God didn't leave them to face the battle on their own, instead He stood with them and fought the battle for them.
- When Israelites thought they were losing the battle and the situation is beyond their control, God showed them that He is still in control. He is Sovereign and has full control of the entire situation. God actually orchestrated the whole situation.

Exodus 14:23-25

²³ The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea. ²⁴ During the last watch of the night the LORD looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. ²⁵ He jammed^[b] the wheels of their chariots so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, "Let's get away from the Israelites! The LORD is fighting for them against Egypt."

- Even the Egyptians knew that God was with the Israelites and fighting for them
- So, at the end the people realized Pharaoh is not a god they should fear and serve. There is only one God, "Yahweh", the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- With Covid19 situation, how we live and do our daily routine work has been impacted greatly. We know many people, including our own selves how we have been affected with the pandemic
- There is no situation beyond His control, and nothing is impossible for Him

Psalms 118:6

"The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"

- We need to let go the control of our lives and doing things "my way" and allow God to have complete control over our lives.
- It is submitting to His lordship over everything in our lives and allowing His presence to lead us

Our God is Faithful

Exodus 14:29-30

²⁹ But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. ³⁰ That day the LORD saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore

Points to consider:

- God heard the cries of His people and He delivered them from the hands of Pharaoh.
- God is faithful and true to His word. He delivered Israel from Egypt just as He promised.
- Because Moses listened to God's counsel, He was able to lead Israel safely across the Red sea and see God defeat the armies of Pharaoh.
- God has called each one of us, He is working in each one of our lives and He is with us in our daily walk. We need to believe this.
- He is faithful and will fulfil all that He has planned for us. He truly cares for each one of us.

Numbers 23:19

"God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfil?"

How did the Israelites Reacted

Exodus 14:10-12

¹⁰ As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the LORD. ¹¹ They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? ¹² Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!"

- Despite of seeing God revealing His power to deliver them (many plagues), Israelites hearts were still hardened and didn't put their complete faith in God
- They still feared and believed that Pharaoh is greater than the Living God Himself & He could not save them from Pharaoh's hands
- They grumbled, doubted and could not hold on to what God has promised them.
- In our hopelessness, in our weakness & in our lost state, can we still see God's mighty hand leading, guiding and protecting us?
- It is easy to let our focus be on the things we face and be totally overwhelmed with it. If we are not careful, we can easily drift into a place of not trusting God.

Closing Points

- All of us are facing battles right now, whether be at personal or family level. These battles are real, and they are intense, but we don't have to fight the battle alone.
- God's main intention is not to bring the Israelites out of Egypt and take them to the Promised Land, so they have good houses to live in or better clothes to wear.
- It was God's love for them that compelled Him to deliver them from the hands of Pharaoh so the people will know Him personally and live for Him in the Promised Land
- Moses' reaction was so different than the Israelites because He rested his leadership on who God is and believed in God even when people around Him didn't.
- It is important that we trust and allow someone who knows everything, someone who is in control, someone who is faithful to counsel and lead us through in difficult times. No matter how many "Pharaohs" we might have around us, none can be compared to our God
- Because He is All-knowing, He is in control, He is faithful and able to counsel us, we can trust Him with each battle we are facing today.

Prayer Points

The Lord Your God is in Your Midst:

- Rely on God to lead us through each battle we face in our current situation
- Pray we will have more of His revelation in our lives
- Hearts to be aligned to His Word

Life Church:

- Give us a heart for God – hungry for the Word, a desire for His presence, a yearning to grow spiritually, to grow strong in faith and obedience in Word
- Give us a heart for the lost – break our hearts for people who are far from God: those who live in hopelessness, depression and loneliness
- Open doors for the surrounding community of Sg Way
- Deepen our love for one another and make us eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit

Ministries:

- Life Explorers
- Redeeming Roses
- Destiny Kids & Teens
- Sunday School
- Lifeline
- Worship

Healing:

- Si Yun (colon cancer)
- Jayden
- Lee Kim Sang & Lee Khay Chen (Recco's dad and brother)

Covid-19 Pandemic:

- Vaccine
- Economy
- Sick, foreigner & the poor

Malaysia:

- Churches
- Salvation
- Leaders
- Economy
- Unemployment
- Unity