



Looking Inwards (15 mins)
Caring For Each Other

Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an opportunity to share, not something you have to do, however, 'It's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?



Looking Outwards (15 mins)
Concern For Others

Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours or church, which you would like to share (please be sure not pass on anything that is confidential or which you think the person concerned would not wish to be shared) for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?



HG160 Moses: The Prince Of Egypt
Crossing Of The Red Sea

Exodus 14:1-31

Home Group Study Notes

4 March 2018 - Pauline Woolnough



PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION BEFORE THE MEETING!

Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group with you, along with any previous notes and other resources which might be helpful for your discussions.



Welcome (10 mins)
Ice Breaker

Consider three popular gods in our culture: wealth, success and reputation. What do they promise? What do they often deliver?



Looking Upwards (10 mins)
Worship

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...

Emmanuel Church, Laindon Road, Billericay, Essex. CM12 9LD

P 01277 632120 **E** emmanueloffice@billericaychurches.org

T @EmmanuelCM12 **W** emmanuel-church.info **FB** EmmanuelChurchBillericay

Part of The Billericay & Little Burstead Team Ministry



HG160 Moses: *The Prince Of Egypt* Crossing The Red Sea

Exodus 14:1-31

Home Group Sermon

4 March 2018 - Pauline Woolnough

Introduction

The Egyptians worshipped hundreds of gods with their formal religious practices centering on the Pharaoh who was believed to possess a divine power by virtue of his position. He acted as the intermediary between his people and the gods. God's main purpose in sending Moses into Egypt was to lead His people out in order to redeem them and make them into a great nation, but he wasn't interested in redeeming Israel *just* from their slavery to Egypt, but also from their false worship and slavery to the pagan gods.

God is passionate about His glory

Between chapters 5 and 14 God hardened Pharaoh's heart nine times and he did this to prolong the Israelites stay in Egypt in order that he could perform miracle after miracle displaying his power, showing his glory so that all would know that he is the One and only True God with total sovereignty over all the gods of the most powerful nation in the world. This is seen most clearly at the final plague where the Lord says, "*and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment*" (Ex. 12:12). Likewise in Num. 33:4 He states that the plagues were an "*attack on the gods of Egypt.*" V4 tells us that he does what he does for his own glory. He says "*And once again I will harden Pharaoh's heart and he will chase after you. I have planned this in order to display my glory through Pharaoh and his whole army. After this the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord.*" That all nations know that He is God and that He gives His glory to no other is central to the message of Exodus.

He does things His way

When Pharaoh let the people go God didn't choose the most direct and shorter route through Philistine territory, (Ch 13:17) so they ended up camping between the desert and the sea which made them very vulnerable. The whole of Pharaoh's army was used to pursue them and it wasn't long before the Israelites saw them approaching and they started to argue, grumble and panic. As the Egyptians got closer there was nowhere for the Israelites to go and the sea was an obstacle that they believed was too difficult for them to overcome. Their eyes focused on the problem and they forgot about the greatness of their God. They turned against Moses and for the first time of many they complained to him despite all they had witnessed and gone through. Fear and panic led them to forget who it was who had led them out of Egypt and brought them to this place and so they cried out to Moses. "*Why have you brought us out here? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone'? Didn't we say that it would've been better to serve the Egyptians?" v 11-12.*

4. What are ways you help yourself remember God's faithfulness to you in the past?

5. When is it appropriate to "*stand still*" and see God's salvation? When does obedient activity come into play?

6. How do you respond to people who say the Red Sea dried up due to strong wind and good timing?



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



Looking Upwards (40 mins) Bible Study

Read the text for this study, and any references given, then answer the following questions. You may find it helpful to listen to the sermon and/or read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, your answers with your Home Group and, remember, these questions are only a guide to start your discussions.

1. Why do you think that Israel, despite having been protected through the 10 plagues still couldn't trust God? How difficult do you find it to trust God?

2. Can you share any Red Sea experiences when you have felt trapped and the Lord has rescued you.

3. The Lord delayed the Israelites exit from Egypt several times. Have you ever felt that he has delayed answering your prayers? How can your experiences help you face more delays?

Saved from bondage

Although they had been freed from their slavery, as soon as they saw that Pharaoh had pursued them fear took a hold of them and they quickly reverted to old ways of thinking revealing that at heart they weren't free at all, they were still slaves. They deceived themselves into thinking that they were better off in captivity. You can take the people out of slavery, but you can't take the slavery out of the people very easily. What in effect they were saying was, *'We don't believe that God will look after us. We don't believe that He is really good. We don't believe that he actually does care for us,'* and sadly isn't that what we often say ourselves when things happen to us in our lives that cause us to doubt and to fear? *"Is God really good? Does God love me? Is he punishing me?"* The Israelites had been given their freedom but they had to take it, hold on to it, and live it out, just as we do.

Moses the mediator

Moses stays calm and encourages them to watch and see how God would save them, he says, *"Don't be afraid, just stand still and watch the Lord rescue you today. The Egyptians you see today will never be seen again. The Lord himself will fight for you. Just stay calm,"* but although it is the people who are complaining, it is Moses that God rebukes. Now nowhere does it say that Moses was crying out or that he was complaining yet the Lord told him off. v 15 *"Then the Lord said to Moses "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the people to get moving!"*

Just as Pharaoh is the mediator between his people and their gods, so Moses is mediator between the Israelites and their God. He is so identified with the Israelites that their fear and lack of faith is upon him. They are the ones complaining but God rebukes him because he stands between God and the people, and because he is so identified with God, he becomes the vehicle for God's saving power and the one He chooses to work through. He picks up his staff, the seas divide and the Israelites crossed over whilst the waters came down on the Egyptians swallowing them up and drowning every one, giving us a clear picture of salvation and judgement. The Israelites, (the believers), passed over to the other side safely whilst Pharaoh and his army, (the unrepentant sinners and all those who refuse to believe), died in the sea of judgement. The reason that the Egyptians died while the Israelites were saved was not because they were better or blameless, it was due solely to the protection they enjoyed through their mediator who stood between them and God. The Israelites mediator was Moses, but we have a better one, his name is Jesus and he is not just a man who is close to God and identified with him, our mediator, Jesus Christ, is God Himself.

Jesus the mediator

Moses led the people through the waters of judgement safely to the other side. We on the other hand are accompanied by our mediator Jesus Christ through the waters of death because of his mighty resurrection. The Red Sea is a place of both judgement and salvation and an image of baptism when we pass from death through to life, and we say *"I have died with Christ, I have been buried with Him, and I have been raised with Him,"* In 1 Cor 10:1-4. Paul says that the Israelites were baptised into Moses whereas we are baptised into Jesus, Rom 6:3.

The waters crashing down on the Egyptians, drowning them all represents what happens to us when we live in darkness having turned away from God.

Jesus sets us free

The Lord sent Moses to free the Israelites from slavery and to do something that they could not do by themselves. He sent Jesus to free us from slavery to sin for the same reason, we could not do it by *ourselves*. Jesus was sent on a mission by the Father to seek and destroy all barriers that separate us from Himself, and he has done it. Everything has been radically, decisively fulfilled. Before Christ we were trapped in rebellion, corruption and death, we lived under God's condemnation and judgement, now in Jesus we are free from guilt and all our past transgressions, and we are no longer under the law, instead we are under grace, no longer condemned, because we are in Christ. The moment we accept Christ as our Saviour we are set free from anything in our lives that distances us from God, but there is more to freedom than just freedom from our past because Jesus frees us in order to *live* in freedom.

Freedom is at the very heart of the gospel but it's a gospel that we can easily distort and like the Israelites we too can revert to old ways and go back to living like slaves held captive in bondage to all sorts of things. Freedom, assurance, peace, hope, these are things that Jesus died to gain for us but it is not always our Christian experience as so often our souls are lethargic, despairing and fearful and we remain captive to all manner of things.

In Jesus Christ the real Exodus has taken place. In him we have been delivered and brought to the Promised Land and set free from the shackles of sin, alienation and brokenness. He has delivered and established a whole new covenant between us and God. The old covenant saw God on one side and the Israelites on the other but with the coming of Jesus, God has crossed over to Israel's side of the relationship and He is now on both sides. Jesus crossed the chasm of separation, (the Red Sea), he stands alongside us and brought us in himself to his Father. He has made us holy and blameless and now there is a new relationship between us and the Father. Now we are living in a position of grace and at peace with God. This is not a place where slaves live, this is a place of freedom with no going back to legalism and trying to please him with our works which appeals to our pride, and the idea that we can somehow improve our relationship with God by our own works, because the gospel is rooted in God's works, not ours!

Its all about Grace

The Red Sea crossing is all about grace. Grace versus fear. Moses hears them crying out in fear and this is what he says. *"Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance of the Lord, the salvation of the Lord."* He says, *"Be still. The Lord will fight for you."* That's grace! Stand still, you cant do anything to help yourself, you are absolutely helpless and powerless, so just stand still and God will fight on your behalf. The Israelites crossed over by grace. Romans 4:5 says broadly the same thing *"However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness."* Be still, don't look at your works, have faith. Receive your salvation not by your works but through faith in Christ.

Christianity is unlike any other religion or belief system. Whilst the others tell you to work hard, earn your way into heaven, pray so many times a day, go on pilgrimage and so on, Christianity is different because God does it all for you. Bow to Him only, accept his Son Jesus and, - you're in, you've crossed over, you're saved, you're free and everything changes. One moment you're living in bondage, the next moment you are free, one moment your not adopted, the next moment you are, one moment you are lost, living in the kingdom of darkness the next moment you are thrust into the light and being transformed into the likeness of the Son. You are either in or you are out, and its not about how much faith you have, that doesn't matter either. There would have been thousands of Israelites who were terrified as they crossed over, doubting the Lord's goodness as they were being chased by the Egyptians. But of course, it was never about them and about how much faith they had, it was, and is always, about God, its about the wonderful Grace of God.

Born to be free

We are born to be free, freedom is in our DNA and we need to be on our guard at all times that we do not revert to slavery again. We need to live out our freedom that Jesus won for us. Some of us may be facing our own Red Sea at the moment with the enemy is hot in pursuit, nearby and whispering lies and defeat, trying his best to trip us up. Maybe we feel like the Israelites and have obstacles looming before us which seem way too hard to overcome. We want to turn back. We want to give up. We may find ourselves questioning God and doubting His care and love for us. Regardless of what we are facing it still doesn't change this one Truth. God is with us and He is for us, and He fights for us today. If we have made the choice to put our faith and trust in Christ, we can stand on the assurance that He will never leave us or forsake us and even when we face the hardest trials in this life, He is with us, strengthening and guiding us. John 8.36 says, *"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."*

The key to the Christian life is knowing, really knowing, what the Father has done for us, through His Son Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. That is the truth that will set us free from all slavery. The plans the Father has for our lives will never be defeated by the enemy's attacks and though it may feel at times like he's winning, he does not have, nor will he ever have, full control. God is, and always will be greater, and when times are tough and we have done everything we possibly can, when we are at our wits end, His Spirit whispers these words deep down into our soul, *"...you need only to be still. The Lord Himself will fight for you."*

Emmanuel Church Text for 2018

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the spirit of sonship. And by him we cry 'Abba Father.'

Romans 8:15