

# The LORD Will Fight For You

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[ 0 : 00 ] For many things that come about, there's usually a defining moment. Some event between when something is in its infancy stage and when it is established.

Take a company, for example. It slowly grows and people are added in. And then at some point, maybe it's when it goes public. Maybe it's when the product is first produced. But it becomes defined.

And that could be the same for a lot of things. Let's take a house as an example. A house is really defined when it's finished and sold. A marriage is defined when two people come together.

Or two people, their life together is defined when that marriage takes place. And our passage this morning in Exodus 14 describes a defining moment for the Israelites.

We know they were there before. God's covenant with Abraham and the blessings and the growth that happened. And Joseph bringing his family into Egypt. We know those things.

[ 1 : 02 ] They were there before. But here in this chapter, Exodus 14, God wants to define them and himself in a bigger way. And so we're going to read this passage this morning.

If you would turn to Exodus 14. And we're going to stand, if you would, if you're able to, as we read this together, the whole chapter.

Then the Lord said to Moses, Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-Hahareth between Migdal and the sea. In front of Baal-Zephon, you shall encamp facing it by the sea.

For Pharaoh will save the people of Israel. They are wandering in the land. The wilderness has shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart and he will pursue them. And I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his hosts.

And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord. And they did so. Then the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled. I'm sorry. When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people.

[ 2 : 10 ] And they said, What is this we have done that we have let Israel go from serving us? So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him and took 600 choice chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over them all.

And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. And he pursued the people of Israel while the people of Israel were going out defiantly. The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them and camped by the sea by Pi-he-harath in front of Baal-zeephan.

When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes. And behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord.

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.

[ 3 : 22 ] And Moses said to the people, 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. The Lord said to Moses, Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward.

Lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his hosts, his chariots, and his horsemen.

And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen. Then the angel of the Lord, who was going before the host of Israel, moved and went behind them.

And the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was a cloud and the darkness, and it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night.

[ 4 : 30 ] 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 all his horsemen.

And in the morning watch, the Lord and 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. Then the Lord said to Moses, Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back over the Egyptians, upon their chariots and upon their horsemen.

So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the Lord threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea.

[ 5 : 40 ] The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen. Of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained. But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

You may be seated. Lord, we ask that you would work this morning. We know that you are here with us, and we ask that your spirit would be at work as we look deeper into this passage, that you would comfort those who are struggling with their trust and their faith in you, that you would encourage us and open our eyes to how you desire us to live and how we should see our salvation in light of what's going on around us.

Lord, be lifted up and magnified in your word today, and we ask amen. This is an awesome passage. There's a lot stuck in here.

Tomorrow's a holiday, right? So we have a lot of time. Amen. The crossing of the Red Sea is arguably one of the most significant events in the Old Testament.

[ 7 : 13 ] It's mentioned numerous times for the purpose of emphasizing God's amazing act of salvation, which he brought to his people. And in the history of the Israelites, it's their pinnacle event, their defining moment.

Not their defining moment because they defined it. Their defining moment because God defined it. He defined it. He put his seal and his name on them. And the crossing of the Red Sea is the final act of their rescue from slavery that we've read about up until this point.

The crossing of the Red Sea is not just key to the Israelites in the Old Testament. It also plays an important role in the New Testament as well. And we're going to talk about that in a couple minutes. If you're like me, you like knowing where things happen.

And as we start out this chapter, the first couple verses kind of help us out a little bit. At least we think from the beginning. I think we have a map up here if it's visible.

As we look at verse 2, we seem to get a lot of locations, right? Tell the people of Israel to turn back in a camp in front of Piharath, between Migdal and the sea, in front of Beelzefin, camp there facing the sea.

[ 8 : 26 ] Sounds like we can almost know where that is. So just to get a quick idea, that's what the area is that they're looking at. The Red Sea, portions of the Red Sea that go up. Egypt in the top left, there in the gray area, would kind of be the area of Goshen where the Israelites are coming out of.

The problem is all these locations, when you dig into them, are pretty vague. So Piharath means mouth of water. I think there's a couple mouths of water there.

We're not sure. There's two here, but also there's smaller tributaries up at the top that people could look at that and say, well, that's the mouth of water, mouth of the canal. Now, there's also Migdal, which is mentioned here.

That just means watchtower, which actually related to these military outposts that Egyptians set up throughout Egypt. So now we have something that could be located in various areas.

And then we have Beelzefin. So they were told to camp on one side, and they could look over and see Beelzefin on the other side. The problem is no one really knows where Beelzefin is either.

[ 9 : 31 ] So nothing helpful there. But what we do know is that they were told to come up to the Red Sea. And what we do know is God provided a way of salvation across the Red Sea.

And what's interesting is back in the beginning of Exodus, if you remember, it's Pharaoh who tells his people to throw the Israelite boys into the sea to get rid of the Israelites.

And now we find that the Egyptians are getting rid of by that same very sea. So there's this ironic twist here taking place. The Lord will fight for his people.

It's our title this morning. And by his people, we're talking about the Israelites here, but we also know that as that continues on and God's people becomes the church that he died for, the Israelites that he fought for becomes you and I, believers in Jesus Christ, who he also fights for.

And so under that theme, there's three areas we want to look at. And the first one is that God directs. Moses is given these directions here in the beginning and told the people of Israel where to go and what to do.

[ 10 : 46 ] We see God's plan if you look at verses three and four. For Pharaoh will say to the people of Israel, they're wandering in the wilderness or in the land and the wilderness has shut them in.

From a military perspective, it really seems like God has a really bad idea. Going on. Take a big group of previously released slaves, take them out into the wilderness with their children and their grandparents, with all their belongings.

Oh, and also they have valuables taken from their former owners. Now, take them in the wilderness, spin them around a little bit, make them look like confused ducks and then sit them out there by the sea. Like, that's what it looks like.

Like, it's funny though, but because how often does God's plan and timing to us not look the most efficient, the most timeliest, the most obvious?

I think we can all attest to that. But God's thoughts are not our thoughts. His plans, his ways are not our ways. In verse 4, he gives us his plan.

[ 11 : 55 ] He says, I will harden Pharaoh's heart and he will pursue them and I will get glory over Pharaoh and his hosts and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord. So we see here that God is using the Egyptians and how they are going into the wilderness in a way to taunt the Egyptians.

He also hardened Pharaoh's heart again and it makes them question why they let the Israelites go in the first place. In the end of verse 5, it says, the Egyptians say, what have we done that we have let Israel go from serving us?

The NIV says, we have lost our services. I think it's kind of comical that they think that they let them go. It's kind of like the loser of a battle wondering why he gave up his possessions.

You got beat, right? That's why they left. You had no choice. But they didn't see that. They saw their loss of a slavery force.

They saw them defenseless in the wilderness and God hardened their heart. That was a big thing too. All that came together and you have this irresistible situation that is too much for Pharaoh and we see in verse 6 his response.

[ 13 : 11 ] He readies his chariot. He readies 600 choice chariots and all the chariots of the land and his army. And he says that he places officers over them.

Meaning that they're not just some massive force going out into the wilderness but they're a massive force with logic, with tactical groups so that in the middle of battle they can adjust and attack from different sides.

That's what's going out to meet the Egyptians. The Egyptians are going out to war and in verse 8 it says the Israelites, not knowing that they were being pursued, are going out defiantly.

That description seems odd at first but it lines up if you look back at the previous chapter in verse 18 where it says the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle.

So they're defiant, not against God but against the Egyptians. They're ready for battle. They feel strong and obedient because there it says that they do what God tells them to do and where he directs them.

[14:16] Everything seems good, right? Seems that way. That is until the enemy gets close. Isn't that when we struggle?

When the circumstances stop being easy and the problems get bigger, we follow God and have a great relationship until our plans get changed and our comforts get squeezed.

We don't see a way out and there's something too big standing right in front of us. That's what's happened to the Israelites. The Egyptians have caught up to them.

Verse 10 says, When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them and they feared greatly and the people cried out to the Lord. Sounds good at first. People of God, we need to keep our, or people, children of God like the Israelites, we need to keep our eyes on him.

[15:20] Their view changed and at first it seemed like they are doing a good thing by crying out to the Lord. But as we look further, verse 10, we see that actually their heart attitude and where they're actually thinking was self-focused and lacking in faith.

Actually, I think you could say that their cries for help were almost godless. See, in verse 11 and 12, their cries were filled with sarcasm and unbelief and lies.

They say to Moses, Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us to die in the wilderness? Really? Like, there's not enough land in Egypt that they could be buried in?

Or, that the Egyptians were not professionals at dealing with dead people and knowing how to bury them? That's their sarcasm. And then next they say, What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt?

Really, you have to ask that too. You know why you were brought out of Egypt. You know that God was the one leading you. He was just leading you. But did they yet have real belief in what God was doing?

[16:45] Did they have any trust he had a plan for them? Not a plan that was going to fail. And then they just start lying.

Right? In verse 12, they say, Is not this what we said to you in Egypt? Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians. No, they didn't. That's a lie.

They never said that. If anything, when Moses came to the leaders and told them why he was there and told them that God heard their cries, they were encouraged and ready to go.

They didn't say, Leave me alone. Anybody else start lying when bad things happen? Now, we might not say it's lying, right? We'll call it complaining. It's kind of our way of exaggerating about things when we are fearful and frustrated.

We don't understand why things are the way they are. It's too hard for me. God must be confused. He doesn't understand how I feel.

[17:52] Or I can't live without that job. I can't go another year without that thing. God's forgotten about me. I don't even think he has a purpose for me.

If I wasn't a Christian, maybe I wouldn't have to deal with these trials and temptations that I'm going through. These are all lies, brothers and sisters.

These are lies that we tell ourselves. These are lies that the enemy feeds us when we're struggling and we don't understand the difficult situation that we're in.

They're lies and they're godless. And they pull us away from him. They admit to that practically in verse 12 because they say they have two options.

One, serve the Egyptians or die in the wilderness. Those are the two options that they say that they have before Moses. God's presence, his plan of deliverance were not even options in their mind.

[19:02] Why? Because they stopped looking to God and they instead focused on Pharaoh and his army. They're still living in the past and not yet embracing the freedom that God was providing for them.

thankfully, God knows their struggle. Knew their struggle, he knows our struggle. And he graciously stays with them like he graciously stays with us.

Directing them as they go. As they're fearful, they're anxious, they're melting down from the stress of not trusting God, Moses steps in and he gives them this pep talk in verses 13 and 14.

He says, fear not, stand firm and see the salvation of the Lord. The Egyptians that you see and are fearful of today, you will never see again.

The Lord will fight for you and you have only to be silent. As I thought about these two verses, it reminded me of an old slogan that was used as a warning at railroad crossings.

[ 20 : 13 ] And the warning was, stop, look, and listen. And this is what we have Moses saying to the people. Fear not and stand still.

Just stop. Stop your anxiety. Stop your running around. Stand firm. You have no reason to fear. And next is, look.

Moses said, see the salvation of the Lord. Look at what he does. And then lastly, listen. The Lord will fight for you and you only, you have only to be silent.

Listen to what God is doing. This is for us now. Listen to what he is doing.

Listen to how he has fought and is fighting for you. We can all benefit from a pep talk like that.

[ 21 : 20 ] Stand firm, see his salvation, and be silent. As we get to verse 15, it can seem a little strange at first because it was the people who were crying to Moses, but it says, the Lord says to Moses, why do you cry to me?

But it makes sense. If we remember that Moses is the mediator, right? He is God's spokesman to the Israelites.

He is like God to them. But at the same time, he represents the people. He is like the Israelites before God. So, as the Israelites are crying before God and addressing them, God says, why do you cry to me?

Now is not the time to complain. Now is the time not to cry out, not even to pray to me. God says, tell the people to go forward.

I have brought you out for a purpose. I am leading you. Now go. He instructs Moses to lift up his staff, stretch his hand out over the sea and divide it so that the people may go through the sea on dry ground.

[ 22 : 34 ] Don't we need a kick in the pants like that sometimes? We know what to do and maybe we fall back on, I just have to pray about it.

I don't know. There are times when we face a situation where nothing wrong with prayer but we just need to go and do it. We know what the right thing is. We don't need to sit longer and pray about it. You know what God has called you to do. You know what he says in your word. Now just go and do it. Up until this point we see the Egyptian army getting ready to attack.

The Israelite people are told to stand firm. Their backs are to the water. And we get to verse 19 and 20. We find a pause in the battle.

Like a pause in a movie right where you have two sides that are getting ready to have this battle and all of a sudden the movie writers decide to kind of pause that scene and they take you over and they show you something else.

[ 23 : 36 ] The reason for that is because that something else is important to look at. The battle is still going to go but it's kind of paused for a moment and we see that here. The author wants to make sure we see God and his presence with the people before this battle begins.

To see how he moves from directing his people to protecting his people. And that's our second point. The God that directs his people is also the God that protects his people.

The angel of God that Sean talked about last week was going before them. He's leading them. He's moving now and is going behind them. Not because he's left them or he's giving up his post.

No, he is moving into a position of protection. Pharaoh and his army have called up to the Israelites and peer to have them trapped by the sea. And yet they can move no closer than what God allows them to move.

Just when it seems there's no time, there's no escape, the people are fearful, the anxiety and stress is building, God moves in and creates this wall that creates all the time that God needs.

[ 24 : 53 ] really the time that we need to get ready for what's about to take place. And as God holds back the Egyptian army, Moses stretches out his hand and God causes the waters to become divided such that the Israelites would be able to cross on dry land.

That would be an awesome sight to see. I'm thinking the Charles River is probably not a good example. It's a little small. I don't know how deep it is, but if you were to go to Revere Beach, now stand on the shore and you see the waters divide, that would be pretty awesome.

I think it would also be a little frightening. Like at first it's not very deep. It's not a scary thing, right? But as you look further down the path, the sea is deep.

The waters on the side are, they're huge. The sea used to be right there and you want me to go across it?

Sounds a little scary. Anyone claustrophobic out there? I don't know. It did take some faith for the people of Israel to cross the Red Sea.

[ 26 : 10 ] But to be saved, they needed to go through the sea. They needed to follow the way that God was providing for them and trust what he was doing.

A connection back to the New Testament. Hebrews 11 29 says this, by faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians when they attempted to do the same were drowned.

Some might have run across to the other side full of faith, loving the opportunity just to run through the water or just escape. Their fear was more for the Egyptians.

Christians, but some people, maybe not so ambitious, a little slower to run across, checking the walls of water out first, maybe testing the land that they were walking on to see if it was really steady.

It took them longer to go across. Their faith was a little smaller. Isn't that generous of God, even for those with small faith? God takes that small faith and he protects it and he walks them through.

[ 27 : 21 ] He holds the walls back, he holds the Egyptian army back long enough for even the small, slower, struggling in faith, but I'm giving God everything I've got.

Their faith still had to be placed on him, maybe not as strong as a lot of other guys. And God takes that and blesses it and protects them.

Now here's a question. If you were an Egyptian soldier riding a chariot, would you chase them into the Red Sea? Remember, they're first-hand witnesses to the ten plagues that led to Israelites being pushed out of Egypt.

They were just held back by a supernatural wall of light and darkness. And then once that wall is taken away, they see this path that's now where the sea used to be.

I'm thinking I've seen a lot of movies with ambushes in it, and I'm not going there. I'm going to stay on this side, I'll just keep guard, you guys go ahead. But that's not what happened.

[ 28 : 30 ] If we look at verse 17, we see that not only was Pharaoh's heart hardened, but God also hardened the hearts of the Egyptians so that they would follow the Israelites into the sea.

All those things that might cause us to pause were quickly ignored as their stubbornness, the hardness that God put on them drove them into the sea. And they thought it would be an easy victory.

As we get to verse 24, we see God begin to do battle with the Egyptians. And it really isn't a battle of all, a battle at all. The Lord looks down and first he throws them into a panic.

The chariots that once gave the soldiers speed and protection now begins to slow them down. Their wheels become heavy and clogged and some begin to break.

The horses are now struggling to continue. Panic sets in as the ground around them becomes thick and the walls of water that in the beginning offered this great path to victory become these mountains of imminent death.

[ 29 : 42 ] It quickly becomes evident to the Egyptians that they are fighting against a force that is much stronger than them. And it's a force they cannot even see. It's probably at this point where they remember the ten plagues and how God protected the Israelites through all of them and none for the Egyptians.

In the second half of verse 25 it says let us flee from before Israel for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians. We must retreat because we can't win against the Lord.

And then we get to this last horrific scene in the battle as the Lord tells Moses to once again stretch out his hand but this time it's to cause the waters to come back.

First they're thrown into a panic and now they're thrown into the sea as two walls of water come crashing down fighting to return to their normal flow in the sea and as a result verse 28 says that not one of them remained.

There stood the Israelites safely on one side looking down on their previous captors that lay on the beach. the once massive Egyptian army was just obliterated right in front of them and they never had to mount a chariot they never had to raise a spear they only had to be silent move when they were told to move because God fought for them.

[ 31 : 26 ] That brings us to our last point God saves. The God who directs and protects his people is also the God who saves his people.

Earlier I mentioned how this passage played an important role not only in the Old Testament but also the New Testament. The salvation given to the Israelites was a precursor a pointer towards the salvation that was available through Jesus Christ on the cross.

Jesus Christ the better Moses. 1 Corinthians 10 verses 1 and 2 says this for I do not want you to be unaware brothers that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

the crossing of the red sea was a kind of baptism into Moses. That's what Paul is saying here. It's the event where Israel in verse 31 believed the Lord.

They believed the Lord and his servant Moses. Similarly in Christian baptism we are baptized into Christ united with him in his death and his resurrection.

[ 32 : 44 ] For the Israelites the crossing of the sea was a journey from their old life of death and slavery into a new life with the Lord as their director and their protector and their savior.

So also for the Christian baptism represents a death to our old self. Our former life of slavery to sin and into a new life of freedom in Jesus Christ.

The Israelites were slaves and their only escape that they saw was death. We're born slaves to sin and death and separation from God is the only future that we see apart from Jesus Christ.

God through Moses provided a way of salvation the Israelites could never provide. God through Jesus Christ provides a way of salvation that we could never provide.

If you are not a believer in Jesus Christ this morning then I want to ask you just to think about the salvation that Jesus Christ offers.

[ 34 : 03 ] Talk to someone today before you leave. There will be people up here praying at the end. I'll be up here as well. if you struggle with that.

If you struggle with your belief in God and your trust in him then I would ask you to don't just push that off but take time to seek the Lord and allow him to give you that strength and help you with that faith that might be struggling to protect and grow that.

Jesus alone provides a way to the other side and like Moses he stands with his arms open holding back the walls of judgment allowing any who believe to freely come to him for salvation.

Freedom from our slavery to sin. Freedom from the ultimate death. Freedom from being separated from God for eternity and becoming part of his family.

Freedom from weight pain and brokenness that is all around us. freedom from the gods that we build and the gold that we protect that in the end weigh us down and keep us from the joy and the happiness that God wants for us his people.

[ 35 : 20 ] That's the freedom that we have in Jesus Christ when we rest on the salvation made available to us. So let us trust the one who has fought and continues to fight for us.

Let's trust the one who provides salvation. Jesus Christ has provided the victory. Now let us go and walk in it.

Let's pray together. Let's pray together. This is a great chapter Lord that you have given us in your word.

It's also graphic and strong. Lord help us to see that you are not a God that plays around. You are a God who directs and controls and saves and you have a purpose.

You've had a purpose from the beginning and you continue to have a purpose. Thank you for showing us these things. Lord we ask that your spirit would work in our hearts and give us faith to move past those times where we forget to look to you and we get caught up in the things of the world.

[ 36 : 37 ] Help us to stop what we're doing. Stop being fearful. Help us to look and see what you have done and are continuing to do and help us to listen to you and go forth in the salvation that you provide so that you are great God and Savior would get glorified in the lives that we lead.

We ask these things in your great name. Amen.