Osceola Sermon Moses: Stuck between a rock and a hard place: Exod. 14:1-31 August 19th, 2012 Bluegrass Festival Pastor Bob Vale

Biblical Focus: Exodus 14:14 “The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.”

Scripture Lesson: Exodus 14:1 – 31

EX 14:1 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.

EX 14:5 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.

EX 14:10 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!"

EX 14:13 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."

EX 14:15 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."

EX 14:19 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.

EX 14:21 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.

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EX 14:26 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.

EX 14:29 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 great power the LORD displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant.
Traditional Worship:
Hymn Of Praise:  # 261 Lord Of the Dance
Apostles Creed: # 881 & # 70 Gloria Patri
Prayer Chorus: # 399 Take My Life and Let it be:  (verse one only)
Hymn of Response:  # 143 On Eagles Wings

Solid Praise Worship:  See Matt & Katie’s notes.
Put your hand in the hand of the man who stills the water….

Sermon Notes Main Points:
   II. Those Fearful, Soft Hearted Israelites:  Exod. 14:10-18
   III. The Protection of the Lord is all around:  14:19 – 20
   IV. Put Your Hand in the Hand of the One who…Exod. 14:21 - 31
Show the brief video clip of Moses parting the water of the Red Sea in the famous movie: Moses with Charleston Heston. Only about one or two minutes.

I remember watching that movie as a boy and it was amazing. It was everything I learned in Sunday school, suddenly on Television. It became very real to me at that point in my life.

Today I want to highlight a verse that was powerful three thousand years ago and it still powerful today. Exodus 14:14 “The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.”

**God continues to fight for us today and wants us to be still in His presence.**

Let’s jump into the story of Moses leading the Israelites across the Red Sea.

I. **Those Lazy, Hard Hearted Egyptians: Exod. 14:1-9**

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*I’ve heard it said, A thick head can do as much damage as a hard heart. The Egyptians had both.*
1. **The Egyptians were Lazy:**
   a. Rather than work the land themselves, the Egyptians used their power and might to enslave another people. (The Israelites.)
   b. This is truly the pinnacle of pride, arrogance and elitism. To feel you are more important that others, so you force them to work for you, for free….or else.

   Paul tells us we are all one in Christ. Galatians 3:28-29 “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

   c. Perhaps we have also become lazy in our walk with Christ? (I have served in a “country club church.” This is a church who is blessed with finances and gives strongly to the church, so they can hire plenty of staff to accomplish ministry that they should be doing voluntarily.) James tells us that faith without works is dead. We need to get our hands dirty a bit and jump into the field of serving God doing….whatever it takes to bring people to Christ.

2. **The Egyptians were Hard Hearted:**
   a. Exodus 14:8 “The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, so that he pursued the Israelites, who were marching out boldly.”

   b. What does it take to get a hard heart against the Lord? King David was a man after God’s heart. Jesus tells us to love the Lord our God with all our heart. The word heart is used 800 times in the Bible. The prophet Ezekiel talks about a stony heart. The Old Testament refers to the heart that can be turned towards, evil, perverseness, and wickedness. Isaiah talks about the pure heart of the believer. But how does one get a Hard Heart?
c. **One gets a Hard Heart: by continually drawing away from God rather than towards Him.**
   1. David walked towards God….man after God’s own heart.
   2. Pharaoh wanted to destroy the God of Moses….Hard Heart.
   3. David asked God to create within him a “Clean” heart.
   4. King Saul wanted his own glory rather than giving God the glory….which gave him a hard heart.

d. When we purposely pull away from the work of the Holy Spirit, then end result will be a hard heart towards God.

e. I believe when we draw closer to God….God will draw closer to us. (James 4:8 “Come near to God and he will come near to you.”) When we come close to God….our hearts will soften.

**Illustration:** Don’t ever tell John “Tex” Teixeria that prayer doesn’t work. Tex spent his life as a fisherman in the channels of the Hawaiian Islands. On a deceptively calm night in 1967, Tex guided his 40-foot fishing boat toward the beach of an otherwise inaccessible canyon on the north side of Molokai. He had agreed to allow some friends to go ashore, using the fishing vessel’s small skiff, for some wild pig hunting while he and the rest of the crew did some night fishing.

   Returning to the rendezvous spot early the next morning, the men found that conditions had changed. Huge waves ripped through the channel and crashed into the boat, nearly capsizing it and (unbeknownst to the crew) fatally weakening it.

   The fate of the small skiff full of hunters waiting on the shoreline was immediately apparent. Its bottom had been torn off by the rugged lava rocks.

   With great difficulty, a tow line was brought to the shivering hunters who, while holding on to inflated plastic tarps and an ice chest filled with their kill, were dragged by the boat’s winch through the surf to the vessel. When all the men were safely on board, the huge craft gunned away from the island.
Exhausted after fishing all night and the adventure of the morning, Tex went below deck to sleep. A few hours later he was awakened by his panicked friends. The boat was sinking.

By the time Tex got to the deck, there was nothing he could do except order everyone into the water. Without the skiff, the eight men on board the fishing vessel had only life jackets and inner tubes to keep them afloat.

Bobbing in the water, Tex remembered the ice chests full of freshly slaughtered game and fish. He knew that sharks would be in the area within minutes, so he encouraged the men to paddle as fast as they could away from the sunken boat.

All eight of the men knew they were in big trouble. The currents in the channel were sweeping them into the open ocean. But as night approached it seemed that their salvation was near. Bouncing up and down in the inky sea, the men thought they could make out the lights of a boat in the distance. Two of the men decided to swim toward the lights.

It turned out that they weren’t boat lights at all. They were the airplane warning lights on the top of Koko Head, a far-distant mountain. The two men were never seen again.

By morning the situation had worsened. One of the inner tubes was losing air. The men had no food or water. The planes that passed overhead could not see them bobbing in the middle of the Pacific. It was then that Tex decided to call a prayer meeting. No one objected. With all hope gone, the group of tough, self-sufficient sailors had only one place to turn. They huddled together in their life jackets and inner tubes and, with loud cries, pleaded for God to intervene. The moment the last man finished his prayer, Tex looked up. “A stick!” he cried out.

The stick was standing vertically out of the water. It appeared to be a fishing buoy or a marker of some kind. If they could get to it, Tex reasoned, someone might come along to check it and find them. At the very least, it might support the ones who were losing air in their inner tubes. Using all of their energy to fight the current, the men paddled toward the stick.
Suddenly the stick began to move rapidly in their direction. The six men stopped paddling, stunned and puzzled. Seconds later there was an incredible whoosh that seemed to pull the ocean out from under them. At the same moment, a monster emerged from the depths.

It was a nuclear submarine. The hatch opened and the captain of the sub came to the observation deck as the men in the ocean screamed wildly. They had been rescued.

Huddled below deck and nursing hot coffee, the six tired survivors listened awestruck as the captain explained that it was against orders for him to surface his sub anywhere outside of Pearl Harbor and that he expected to face disciplinary action for what he had done. “But,” he explained softly, “something beyond my control told me to go to the surface. I can’t explain it. Something just told me to bring the sub up, right then and there. I did...and there you were.”

This true story is just one example of how **God answers prayer.** When we draw close to God, He will draw close to us. On occasion, God’s intervention in our lives is obvious and spectacular. At other times, however, he works quietly in our lives and asks us to trust that he has everything under control—even when things don’t work out the way we expected.

We can be confident that God is faithful. He hears and answers when we pray. “Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be made complete” (John 16:24).

**II. Those Fearful, Soft Hearted Israelites: Exod. 14:10-18**

**EX 14:10** As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the LORD. 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? Did 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!"

**EX 14:13** 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
The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.”

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. 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. 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. The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen.”

Mark Twain once said, “The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time.” (I think coming out of Slavery from Egypt for 400 years, the Hebrew people had not truly lived and were deeply afraid of death.)

**A. Why were they so terrified?**

B. God had just delivered them from the hands of the most powerful people in the land. They just witnessed the following plagues poured upon the people of Egypt.

1. Water turned into blood in the Nile and all drinking water: Exodus 7:19
2. Frogs: Exodus 8:2
3. Gnats or Lice: Exodus 8:16
4. Flies: Exodus 8:21
5. Livestock diseased Exodus 9:3
6. Boils Exodus 9:8
7. Thunder & Hail Exodus 9:18
8. Locust Exodus 10:4
9. Darkness Exodus 10:21
10. Death of the firstborn Exodus 11:4

Finally after 400 years of slavery.....One million people were finally free by the hand of God.

1. Did they think the Lord was going to lead them through all of that and then abandon them?
2. I love their sarcasm….”were there not enough graves in Egypt that you had to bring us out here in the middle of the desert to die?

3. They actually wanted to go back to slavery and serve the Egyptians. (My how easily they forgot the power of God.)

C. I also love God’s response back to Moses: “Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. 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.”

1. I wonder if the Lord doesn’t look at us 20, 30, and 40 year Christians and say, “what are you looking at me for….just go and do it in my name!”
   a. Go serve the lost and hurting in Henryville, Indiana.
   b. Go serve the homeless at Hope Rescue Mission.
   c. Go reach out to the children in your community through Kids Club.
   d. Invite your friend or neighbor to church.
   e. Begin new and exciting ministries!!!!
   f. Just Go!!!!!

Just as God has called Moses to lead his people out of Egypt….God has called us to Make Disciples for Him. He has called us to love our neighbor as our self. Matthew 25; God has us serving the homeless, the hungry, naked, imprisoned, and hurting. We don’t need to ask for God’s permission, we need to just do it.

**III. The Protection of the Lord is all around: 14:19 – 20**

EX 14:19 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, 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.
Sermon Illustration: Pastor John Paton was a Christian missionary in the New Hebrides Islands, off the coast of Australia. One night hostile natives surrounded the mission station, intent on burning out the Paton family and killing them. Pastor John Paton and his wife prayed during that terror-filled night that God would protect and deliver them. When daylight came they were amazed to see their attackers leave.

A year later, the chief of the tribe was converted to Christ. Remembering what had happened, Paton asked the chief what had kept him from burning down the house and killing them. The chief replied in surprise, "Who were all those men with you there?" Paton knew no men were present--but the chief said he was afraid to attack because he had seen hundreds of big men in shining garments with drawn swords circling the mission station.

God was protecting the people of Israel from the Egyptians with the Pillar of Cloud, bringing light to one side and darkness to the other. I like to think the light was on the side of the Israelites and darkness to the Egyptians.

Do you believe in Guardian Angels?
Matthew 18:10 “See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.”

The scriptures tell us that angels watch over us and protect us in this life.

I remember singing this song when I was little, and it still rings true today.
All night, all day, angels watching over me, my Lord.
All night, all day, angels watching over me.
Sun is a-setting in the West; angels watching over me, my Lord.
Sleep my child, take your rest; angels watching over me.
All night, all day, angels watching over me, my Lord.
All night, all day, angels watching over me.
I also remember as I was little saying my bed time prayers:

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,
If I shall die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take. Amen.

IV. Put Your Hand in the Hand of the One who: Exod. 14:21–31

EX 14:21 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.

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A. Moses performed a miracle by stretching out his hand.

1. However, it was the Hand of God who controlled the waves that day!
2. Do you remember the famous 1960’s song, “Put your hand in the hand of the man who stills the water.”

“Put your hand in the hand of the man who stilled the water
Put your hand in the hand of the man who calmed the sea
Take a look at yourself and you can look at others differently
By puttin your hand in the hand of the man from Gallalee.”

This song encouraged us to place our hands into the hands of God.
To Live By Faith!

Two of the great passages of God’s protection is Psalm 91 & Isaiah 40:31

Psalm 91

Ps 91:1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. Ps 91:2 I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." Ps 91:3 Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. Ps 91:4 You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. Ps 91:5 A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. Ps 91:6 You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked. Ps 91:7 If you make the Most High your dwelling-- even the LORD, who is my refuge-- then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. Ps 91:8 For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;

Isaiah 40:31

ISA 40:31 but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Sing the Hymn Song: On Eagles Wings

# 143
Pastor Bob’s Sermon Notes


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