

Why Does Everyone Love a Redemption Story?

Feb. 3, 2019

To KNOW Christ and one another more deeply,
To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW as followers of Jesus.
- CG Mission Statement

Worship: Exodus 15:1-3

(Here is a psalm/song to help your group as you worship.)

Meditate on Exodus 15:1-3 as a group.

Icebreaker

What was the last movie you saw? How did you see the V of redemption (high, low, higher) played out in the movie?

Text for Discussion: Exodus 2:23-25; 14:1-7, 10-14, 21-23; 15:1-3

Turn in your Bibles and read this passage aloud together.

Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary

As Exodus opens, God's people have endured Egypt's enslavement for 400 years. What has become of God's promise to bless the world through Abraham's family? One of the Bible's enduring themes is *God's long providence*, His sovereign control over all that comes to pass. Even things men intend for evil, God will use for good. Because above all, the story of the world – both collectively and individually – is one of redemption.

It can be difficult to bridge the gap between our experiences and God's promises. Life can be so hard and unfair that we find ourselves doubting God's faithfulness. But asking hard questions and crying out to God is part of the life of faith. And so is God's response. He calls Moses to be their unlikely and unwilling leader. This is a reminder that just because we don't feel like it, doesn't mean God hasn't called us to do something. In fact, often when we follow God, things will get *more* difficult for us. And God's response isn't to encourage us saying, "You've got this." Our Father assures us "I will be with you," because our strength comes when we accept our dependence on God.

God has Moses lead His people away from Egypt, yet deliberately places them in a terrible position. They're trapped. And there is valid reason to fear, because neither the Israelites nor we can handle such events on our own. But just because we cannot understand how we got into a terrible situation (or how we'll escape it) doesn't mean that God isn't still leading us. If anything, these trials reinforce that our lives are played out in God's timing, not ours. We must take to heart the truth that we aren't in control... but we have a loving Father who is, Who does for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

The path to freedom can be terrifying. It was for the Israelites, who would rather return to slavery than embrace the path God had set before them. "And Moses said to the people, 'Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord... The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent'" (Ex 14:13-14). God is telling them to stop complaining and to keep moving forward! For as we press on, we will see the salvation of the Lord which He will work for us.

Exodus doesn't end with the Israelites' celebration of their rescue, though. First they are set *free from* slavery; then God gives His people instruction in how to live this saved, free life. The story is incomplete without both. First comes grace that redeems us and sets us free. Then comes grace in the form of God's presence. This too is our redemption: God has set us *free for* a new way of life. Our call to follow God's commands is an expression of His care (not as a means to prove ourselves worthy of His care).

Recognizing the miracle of our deliverance is about recognizing that God is always on time. He brings His redemption at just the right moment so we might see His glory. We have to experience these valleys – when it

feels like everything could come crashing down on us – to experience the freedom God has already pronounced over us. God takes what was supposed to be the object of our doom and turns it into the means of our deliverance. This is exactly what happened on the cross. When God used death to defeat death, God took the very thing which looked like certain defeat and turned it into the means of His victory. This is the glory of God.

Guiding Question of the Week

(This question is intended as a target for the whole conversation. Do not ask for responses now. It will be repeated later in the study.)

How do you see God's presence going with you in the high, low, higher V of your redemption stories?

Questions for Discussion

(Remember it is better to wrestle deeply with two good questions than gloss over many. Sub-bullets are intended for potential follow-up.)

- God allowed His people to spend 400 years as slaves before freeing them and bringing them out of Egypt into the land which He had promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. What did they do when life became unbearably hard? See Exodus 2:23-25.
 - What did God do in response and what do we learn about Him and His promises?
- Read Exodus 14:10-12. How did the Israelites feel when they saw the Egyptians coming towards them?
 - Where did they turn for help? What does this tell you about people in general? What does it tell you about you?
- Read Exodus 14:13-14. How is it that Moses knew that God would fight for them? What does this show us about Moses' faith?
 - What does this tell us about the process of growing to maturity in our faith? How does this encourage you in what you are going through right now?
- There are many redemption stories within the story of our lives. Redemption stories have a V shape - high, low, higher. Do you have a story of redemption to share or are you in the middle of one right now not knowing the outcome? Explain your answer or tell the story.
 - How do you see God's presence going with you in the high, low, higher V of your redemption stories?
 - How is Exodus 15:1-3 the ultimate outcome of all redemption stories and God's redemptive purposes.
 - How does the Cross prove that God's hidden and often unfathomable will is always redemptive?
- We see our redemption from sin through Christ as God's grace toward us in the New Testament. Explain how the Old Testament is all about God's redeeming grace as well.
 - How are God's commandments also grace and an expression of His care?
- Did you learn anything new or do you have any new life applications from this sermon? Explain.

Prayer

Spend time praying through a passage of scripture. Read any passage that comes to mind or use Exodus 15:1-3. Listen to one another pray with the aim of matching what you read with what you need. For example, someone may need wisdom regarding a decision they are facing. What in the passage just read gives wisdom? In this way prayer is rooted in the truth of God's Word. Prayer like this is quite powerful and very simple. Pray in this way to pray rather than tell prayer requests in your CG prayer time.

Experiment of the week

(A suggestion for engagement in following the way of Jesus this week)

Share one of your redemption stories (high, low, higher) with someone you are in a relationship with who does not know Christ's ultimate redemption yet. Pray for ears to hear for that person first. Ask the CG to pray for that person by name.