

**2022 Theme - Extraordinary God + Ordinary People = Transformed Lives**

**Sermon Series - Transformed Leadership (Moses)**

**Sermon Title - Transformed Leadership by Trust**

**Sermon Text - Exodus 13 & 14**

**Sermon Presenter - Pastor Larry**

Full Sermon Notes:

“A thousand hallelujahs, And a thousand more!” When I look back over my life and see how God has been with me throughout my life and how His grace, mercy, forgiveness, presence, strength and guidance has been there for me, I think a thousand hallelujahs and a thousand more would just not be enough to say thank You Lord! So I just try to live my life in such a way that shows my eternal gratitude for all that He has done, is doing and will continue to do! Let’s pray and ask God to teach us today why He can be trusted to guide our lives in every way! Pray!

Ever see a movie where they start off with the ending and then go back and tell the story of how the ending happened? That’s what we’re going to do today! Last week we talked about Moses taking the Children of Israel out of Egypt and getting them through the Red Sea on dry ground. So we already know they made it across. But there are some amazing things we just don’t need to miss when it comes to that event in history! First of all, let me say a word or two about the Red Sea. I know you’ve probably heard about the debate over whether it was the Red Sea or the Reed Sea. There’s programs about this on National Geographic or the History Channel. When it comes to debates about things in Scripture, the first thing I suggest is that we go back to the original Hebrew or Greek language and see what it says. If you look in the margin of your Bible or the footnote section you will probably see these words written: *yam suph*, which is the original Hebrew and literally means “sea of reeds.” Conservative commentator and Bible Scholar, Roy L. Honeycutt, Jr. stated the following in the Broadman Bible Commentary...

“The location of the sea should be determined on bases other than the name. It is not likely that the sea is what we know as the Red Sea today. The location of *yam suph* is most likely (1) the southern edge of Lake Menzaleh, a lake in northern Egypt which may well have been involved, or (2) Lake Timsah, a lake lying midway between the Gulf of Suez and the Mediterranean, or (3) the Gulf of Aqabah.”

Roy L. Jr. Honeycutt, “Exodus,” in *Genesis–Exodus*, ed. Clifton J. Allen, Broadman Bible Commentary (Broadman Press, 1969), 380.

Now let me just set the record straight on something here. Regardless of whether it was the Red Sea or the Reed Sea, or a Sea of Reeds, the miracle of the Israelites walking through a huge body of water on dry ground is a miraculous act of God Almighty! Amen! Some have suggested that it was more like a marsh. Well, if you’ve lived in Louisiana for any amount of time you would know that drying out a marsh overnight with a strong wind would be a miracle in and of itself,

and a wall of water on the left and right would be another miracle altogether, and the fact that the Israelites got through and then the Pharaoh and his army and chariots perished is yet another miracle. So whether it was the Red Sea that we know today, or some other sea that was at one time called The Red Sea, and it was a sea with reeds in part of it, the truth remains that God worked a miracle to deliver His children and got them through the sea to the other side and He handled those who were trying to force them back into slavery. So I will continue to call it the Red Sea. God knows exactly what body of water it was, so I don't have to worry about that. Of course we saw last week that the Israelites were terrified when they got to the shore and looked back and saw Pharaoh and his mighty men and chariots headed their way. They just lost it, remember?

Exodus 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.

Exodus 14:11 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?"

I've got a question for you: Have you ever been there? Have you ever felt like Satan was coming after you just like Pharaoh was coming after the Israelites? We're going to talk about that in just a few minutes. I've got another question for you. How important is trust when it comes to leadership? Do you think it's important for us to be able to trust our leaders? Do you feel like you are a trustworthy leader when it comes to your family and others that you have leadership over? Do you believe that God is a leader who can be trusted? Do you believe it enough to trust him with your life? Just want you to be thinking about these questions as we go back and look at some things we didn't have time to discuss last week, which are so important to how you live your life and how you lead with your life! Let me just give you an overview of the things we've talked about in this Moses series on transformed leadership. We've seen how his leadership was transformed by finding his identity in God, by rejecting the fleeting pleasures of sin, by what he valued, by having faith over fear, and by living in obedience. The writer of Hebrews makes it clear that Moses did each of these things by faith, right? Yes! And we've talked about how faith is believing God can and trust is believing God will! Today we need to dig down into the trust factor a bit because transformed leadership simply cannot happen without a deep level of trust! Why do I say that? Because you and I won't always, or maybe I should say will rarely understand exactly what God is up to and why He chooses the route He chooses to take us on. I want you to read with me a passage we didn't have time to read last week and we're going to see some really amazing details about God's route for the Israelites and it will amaze you how applicable those details are to our lives as well! Let's begin with Exodus 13:17-18 where we will discover our first route detail.

### **Detail #1 - God's route may not be the shortest or easiest!**

Exodus 13:17 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."

Exodus 13:18 So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea. The Israelites went up out of Egypt ready for battle.

Why would God take them a long route when they are trying to escape a ferocious enemy? Sometimes, in our eyes, in our minds, it may seem like God doesn't know what He's doing or doesn't have a clue or doesn't understand our lives, but He knows us better than we know ourselves. I love the way King David put it in the Psalms...

Psalms 139:1 You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.

Psalms 139:2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.

God knew what He was doing back then and He knows what He's doing today. Let's look for a moment at the situation back then. We have the benefit of history. Dr. Honeycutt says...

"Despite the fact that the coastal route, "the way of the Philistines," was much more direct, the Israelites followed a more circuitous route to their destination. There were two reasons for the decision to move southeastward across Sinai rather than along the Mediterranean Sea. First, had Israel followed the coastal route, numerous Egyptian fortifications would have been encountered."

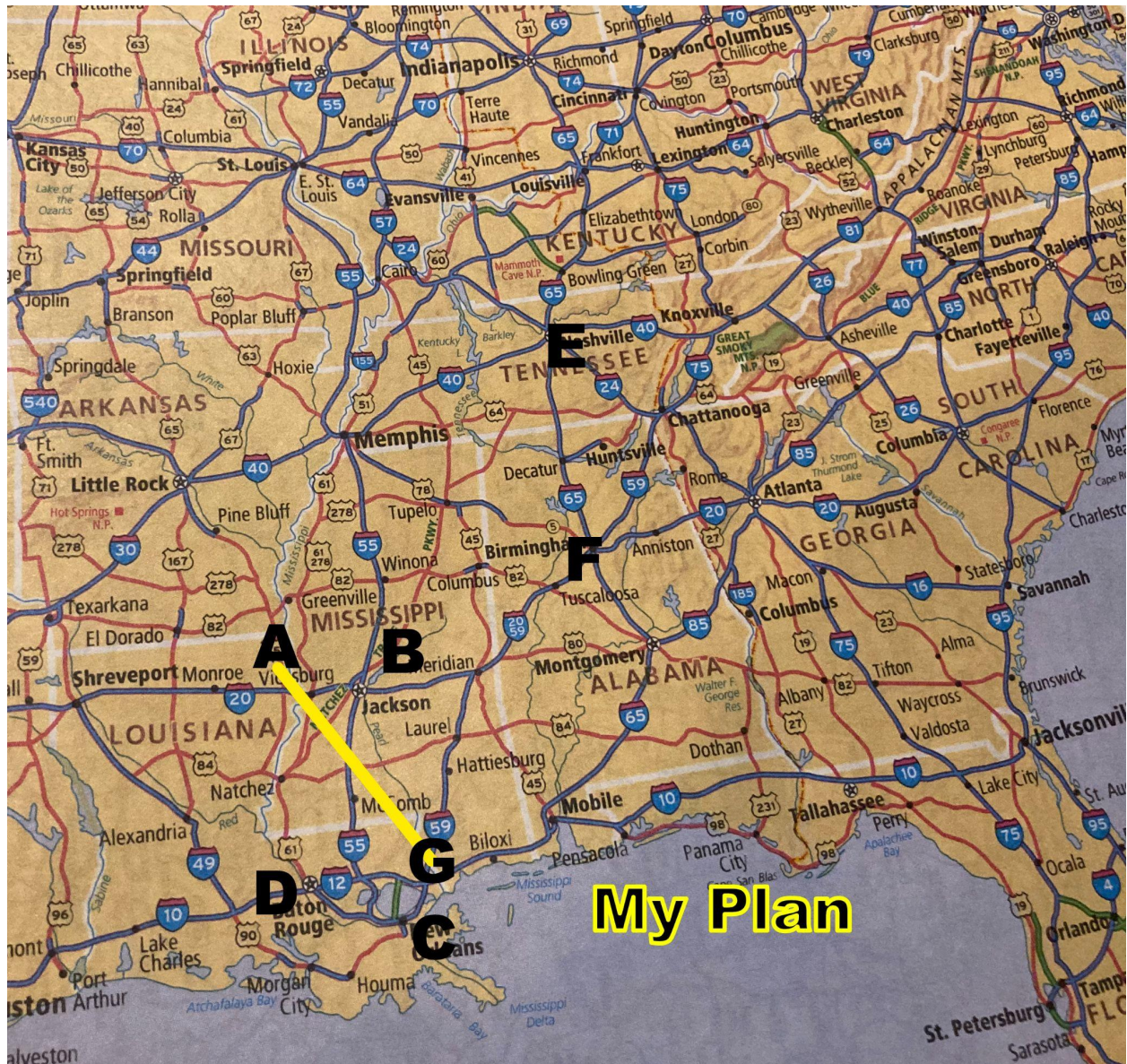
Roy L. Jr. Honeycutt, "Exodus," in Genesis–Exodus, ed. Clifton J. Allen, Broadman Bible Commentary (Broadman Press, 1969), 380.

You see, God knows what Satan's up to and He knows where Satan's troops are, his traps, temptations, tangles, snares, and his cache of destructive weapons. We need to trust God even if He takes us the long way! It's a better way, it's the best way! The second reason God took them the route He did was to fulfill a promise He had made to Moses. You might remember this...

Exodus 3:11 But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

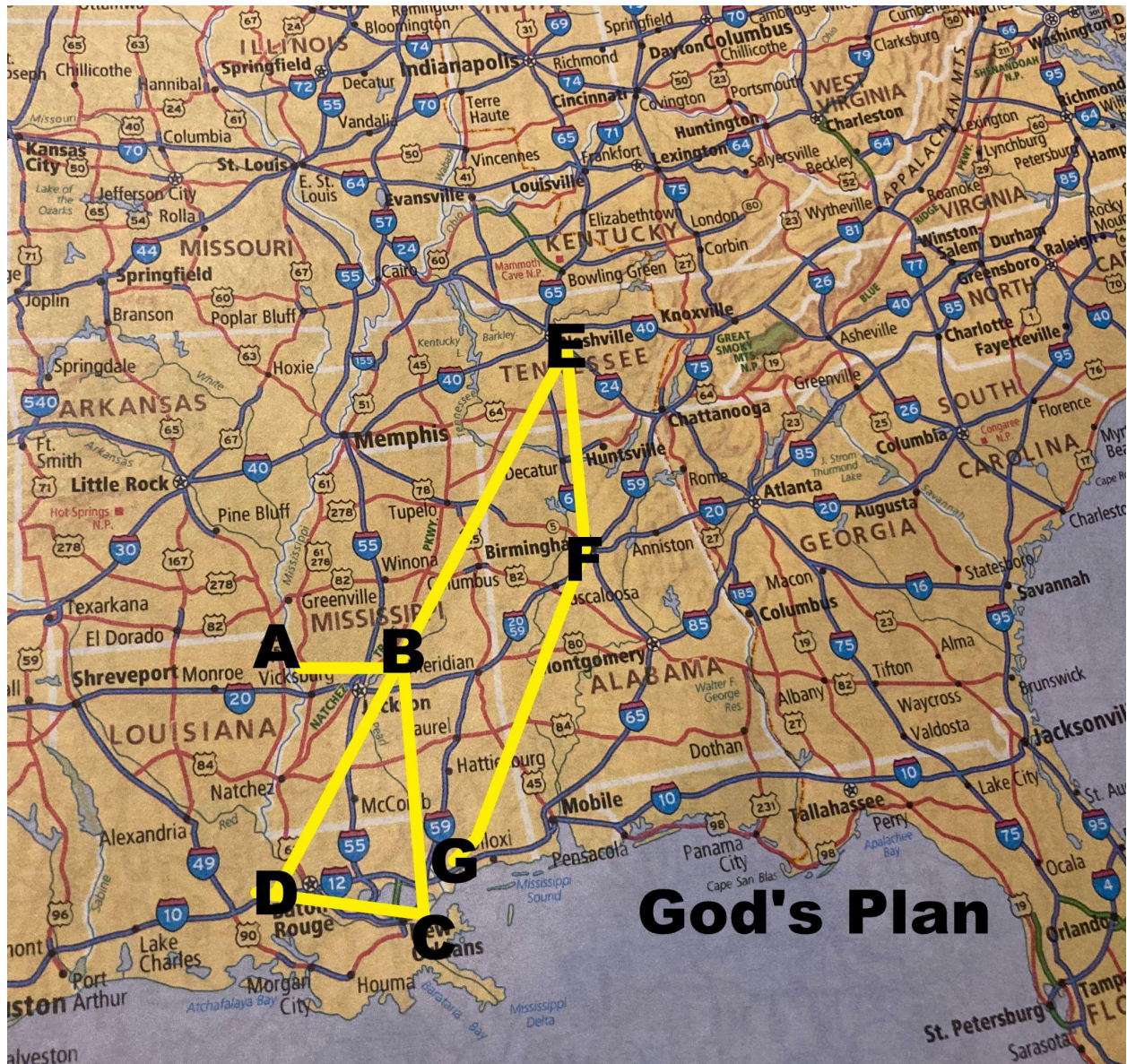
Exodus 3:12 And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain."

Moses knew God wanted him to get the people to the mountain of God and he knew God would take them on the best route to get there, not necessarily the shortest! But oh how we like to take short cuts. Here's the way this usually works. If point G is the destination, and God tells you that's the where He wants you to end up, you'll start to chart your course, so you get out your map! Oh, you might not know what a map is! It's this really big piece of folded paper! Like this! Okay, so I know in today's world you would type in the destination point in Google Maps on your phone, and it will give you the shortest route given current traffic conditions. But if you were to look at the map and God had told you where He wants you to eventually be in life, you would probably do like I would and your map would look something like this...



We would draw a straight line from point A to point G. But God says nope! That's not the way! Then He begins to reveal His plan to you, but not all at once, and for good reason! He hands you His map with highlights and it looks messy! It looks complicated! It looks really long! It looks something like this...





But He has His reasons for taking you the route He does. Instead of taking you straight to point G, He takes you from point A to point B and then to point C and then to point D, then to point E, then to point F and then to point G. Why this seemingly convoluted, complicated route? Well, God may take you from point A to point B to meet someone who will travel with you on the journey and to find others who will be an encouragement and support. He'll then get you to point C because you need to learn some life lessons there! At point D you'll need to pick up some supplies. At point E you will be trained by practicing the lessons you learned at point C. At point F God will use you to share the gospel with some people by ministering to them during a time of great need and that ministry will be every bit as important as the big, future, career things you will accomplish! And then at just the right time, and when God knows you're ready He will get you to point G! You see there is a reason God takes us on the route He takes us! The big

question is this: Will we trust Him with the map of our life? Will we let Him be the navigator? The writer of Proverbs gave some amazing travel advice to his son...

Proverbs 3:1 My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart,  
Proverbs 3:2 for they will prolong your life many years and bring you peace and prosperity.  
Proverbs 3:3 Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.  
Proverbs 3:4 Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.  
Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;  
Proverbs 3:6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Notice he said straight, not short or easy! He continues...

Proverbs 3:7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.  
Proverbs 3:8 This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.

And speaking of health and nourishment and bones, let's look at the next detail concerning God's route for the Israelites...

## **Detail #2 - God will be with you and has provisions when you're on His route!**

Exodus 13:19 Moses took the bones of Joseph with him because Joseph had made the Israelites swear an oath. He had said, "God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up with you from this place."  
Exodus 13:20 After leaving Sukkoth they camped at Etham on the edge of the desert.  
Exodus 13:21 By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night.  
Exodus 13:22 Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.

And we know that the pillar of cloud stayed in front of them until the critical moment just before the crossing when it went behind them to protect them from Pharaoh! And this passage is all about the fact that God had promised through Joseph to come to their aid, and to provide for them on their journey! Of course they had to be willing to take the journey! They did and God was faithful every step of the way! I can only imagine the miracle of being led by a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Those were very tangible and visible ways God worked in their lives. How does this jive with the walk by faith and not by sight theology? Well, you have to step out on faith and begin the journey with God. Here's something I've learned down through the years: When I step out on faith, even when I can't see, God eventually shows me things and helps me to see what I couldn't see before!

The point for us in this story is that God will provide for us if we are on His path! God is gracious and will continue to love us and work to reach out to us even when we go astray. However, He cannot provide or protect us like He wants to if we are living outside of His will and His plan for

us because that puts us outside His umbrella of protection! God wants to bless you but if you are not on His route and are living in disobedience he can't bless you even though He wants to.

I had a conversation with a man years ago when I was only in my early thirties and he was very much my senior and the owner of a company. He was not a believer. I can share this with you because he shared it with the whole church. I went by his office one day and he explained to me some of the troubles he was having and basically asked me why God would allow anyone to face so many troubles. I told him that we all face troubles in this world, but sometimes our troubles are heightened because we have not been willing to trust God and receive His help! I asked him if I could be honest with him. He said absolutely. I said God wants to help you but He won't force His love or His help on you. You have to be willing to receive it. The Lord wants to come into your heart and life and walk with you through life's difficulties. That doesn't mean the difficulties will disappear, but you will have someone helping you who can really make a difference! He looked at me and said "what do I need to do?" I said admit you're a sinner in need of a Savior, believe that Jesus died on the cross to be that Savior, commit your life to Jesus by calling on His Name! He said, "Let's do it!" When he shared his testimony about a year later in church, he said he only had one regret, he said "I regret I didn't make that decision many years ago!" He then looked at me and said, "Preacher, God sent you my way that day, because I had decided to give up on life! I'm glad you stopped by!" I was glad God's agenda prevailed in my life that day and I stopped by to see him. And while all of his troubles didn't disappear overnight, God began to work in his life so powerfully and he loved telling people how God had changed his life and was walking with him daily! So exciting.

Get on God's path and let Him begin providing for you. And while you may not see a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night, God's presence will be with you and let me just say that His presence is more important to me than all that He provides. He blesses us with what we need to live, but the biggest blessing is God's presence and His friendship along the way! When you know He's with you, you can be confident that He'll provide for you! There's another route detail that you may not have expected and neither did the Israelites.

### **Detail #3 - God's way may not make sense!**

Exodus 14:1 Then the LORD said to Moses,

Exodus 14:2 "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.

Exodus 14:3 Pharaoh will think, 'The Israelites are wandering around the land in confusion, hemmed in by the desert.'

Strategic on God's part

Exodus 14:4 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.

God knew the enemy well and He knew exactly what needed to be done for his defeat! It's hard to imagine how hard it would be for Moses, as a leader, to lead the people to go backwards and then to set up camp when he knew what Pharaoh was capable of! However, Moses trusted God and the people trusted Moses, at least at this point they did, and they turned back. It would not have made sense to anyone else but God so trust in God was a must. Trusting God when it doesn't make sense is not easy, but it's so vital! We have to trust that when we don't have a clue and can't figure things out and when following the principles and morals of God just don't seem to make logical or practical sense, we have to decide whether or not we will trust His wisdom and trust His heart. There was a song years ago that said...

"When you can't trace His hand, trust His heart!"

God reminds us of this truth...

Isaiah 55:8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD.

Isaiah 55:9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

I want to give you a Northshore example! After Katrina we were homeless as a church. You know the story, and some of you lived the story! We weren't allowed back in our old building at the old factory outlet mall so we met in gyms, athletic clubs, Crazy Carls Fireworks stand, a big tent with big fans and lots of water for folks, and an old movie theater once. I talked with the owners of this building, but it was just out of our price range and they were about to turn this building into storage units. So we bought a piece of property out on Allen Road, which we still have, and we were going to build a church. We cleared the land. We had plans drawn up and had a ribbon cutting ceremony to begin site preparation. But when the price tag came back it was ridiculous. We didn't know what to do. I went for a walk in the woods and just prayed and cried. But while I was doing that, God put it on my heart to go back and talk with the owners of this building again, but I said, "But Lord, it's been a long time since I talked with them and they were going to begin work on the storage units within a few weeks after I talked to them a year or so ago." The Lord said, "Just go talk to them!" Well, I drove to the building and to my surprise there were no storage units and the building was just as it was when I had talked with them, pretty much empty. And God worked a miracle and here we are! And someday He'll let us know why we own about 14 acres of land on Allen Road. There's a reason, we just don't know it yet!

When Jesus was washing the disciples feet, they were shocked and dumbfounded. It didn't make sense to them that Jesus, the One they saw as their leader and they were beginning to understand a little bit about who He really was, God in the flesh, would take on a servant's task. Why? When Jesus came to Peter, this happened...

John 13:5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

John 13:6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"



John 13:7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

John 13:8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

John 13:9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

Sometimes we just have to accept that we do not realize now what God is doing, but later we will understand! That's called trust and it is a must if we are going to follow Jesus and His route for our lives and it is a must if we are going to become transformed leaders. There's just two more route details you need to understand.

#### **Detail #4 - God's route is not without challenges!**

Exodus 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!"

Exodus 14:6 So he had his chariot made ready and took his army with him.

Exodus 14:7 He took six hundred of the best chariots, along with all the other chariots of Egypt, with officers over all of them.

Exodus 14:8 The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, so that he pursued the Israelites, who were marching out boldly.

Exodus 14:9 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.

I asked you earlier, how many of you ever feel like Satan is chasing you on a chariot? I know I've felt that way. And here's the deal, the chariots, the soldiers and the Pharaohs Satan uses to challenge us or to chase us are things like temptation, discouragement, depression, fear, anxiety, and worry. These can come through difficult circumstances, or through difficult people, or through our own weaknesses. And you certainly must understand this truth: When you get on God's path, Satan will not be happy. He knows he has lost your soul and he can't do anything about that, so he will try to steal your joy, your peace, your witness, your leadership effectiveness, and your fellowship with God! Remember, if you are a child of God, Satan can't steal your soul! Jesus said this...

John 10:27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

John 10:28 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.

John 10:29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.

John 10:30 I and the Father are one."

But let me tell you that Satan will go after everything else you've got! In fact Peter put it this way...

1 Peter 5:8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

1 Peter 5:9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

1 Peter 5:10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

1 Peter 5:11 To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

So remember: when God takes you on the long route, He will be with you and will provide for you along the way! Remember when God's way makes no sense at all to you and you can't figure out what He's up to, trust Him that He knows what He's doing and what's best for you, and remember, He never promised easy, but He did promise to be with You and strengthen you!

Satan's gonna come after you! But never forget Paul's words to the Corinthians who were struggling...

2 Corinthians 4:8 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair;

2 Corinthians 4:9 persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.

And Isaiah says...

Isaiah 12:2 Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD himself, is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation."

And what a perfect verse to lead us to our final route detail...

### **Detail # 5 - God will fight for you along the way!**

Exodus 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, Exodus 14:22 and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.

Exodus 14:23 The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea.

Exodus 14:24 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.

Exodus 14:25 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."

Exodus 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."

Exodus 14:27 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.

Exodus 14:28 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.

Exodus 14:29 But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.

Exodus 14:30 That day the LORD saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore.

Exodus 14:31 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.

Can you imagine? The Israelites saw those they once were enslaved to, and mistreated by, emptied of their power and their mighty chariots and weapons in pieces washing upon the shore. When they saw that their respect and fear for God was palatable and they put their trust in God and in Moses His servant.

We can be transformed leaders in our homes, our schools, our workplaces, at the gym or any other place we live when we trust God with the route details of our lives. God's route may not be short or easy, and it may not even make sense, and it will be challenging, but He will be with us, provide for us and fight for us! And when we witness His work in our lives and on our behalf, the confidence it brings transforms our leadership! I want to close with a Psalm by King David, who had a first hand understanding of what it's like to be pursued by enemies. In this Psalm he prayed a prayer that would be good for any of us to pray when we are being pursued by the Pharaohs and chariots of this world...

Psalm 143:1 LORD, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your faithfulness and righteousness come to my relief.

Psalm 143:2 Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you.

Psalm 143:3 The enemy pursues me, he crushes me to the ground; he makes me dwell in the darkness like those long dead.

Psalm 143:4 So my spirit grows faint within me; my heart within me is dismayed.

Psalm 143:5 I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done.

Psalm 143:6 I spread out my hands to you; I thirst for you like a parched land.

Psalm 143:7 Answer me quickly, LORD; my spirit fails. Do not hide your face from me or I will be like those who go down to the pit.

Psalm 143:8 Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life.

Psalm 143:9 Rescue me from my enemies, LORD, for I hide myself in you.

Psalm 143:10 Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground.

Psalm 143:11 For your name's sake, LORD, preserve my life; in your righteousness, bring me out of trouble.

Psalm 143:12 In your unfailing love, silence my enemies; destroy all my foes, for I am your servant.

Let's pray!