



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Exodus 14: 1 - 15: 27

“Through The Red Sea, or Redemption by Power”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we turn again to Thee with thanksgiving and gratitude for the privilege of studying the Scriptures. We, Lord, are constantly encouraged and also astonished at how marvelously the things of the Old Testament fit with the truths that are revealed in the New Testament and tonight as well look into one of Old Testament Events of great significance, reflect upon it in the light of New Testament truth.

We are encouraged again to recognize the hand of God in the writing of holy Scripture. We know, Lord, it is like no other book and it has a story that no other book has and its significance is not simply for the days of Moses or Isaiah or Paul but its significance is for us today as well upon whom the ends of the age have come. We ask that Thou wilt enable us to understand tonight and to profit from the things in Holy Scripture.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] We are looking at our general theme of “From Egypt and Canaan,” and we are turning to Exodus, chapters 14 and 15 and our subject is “Through the Red Sea,” or “Deliverance by Power.” The leading theme of these chapters that we are looking at tonight is the theme of salvation. One can see that, for example, in chapter 15 and verse 2 when Moses and the children of Israel sing this song. “The Lord is my strength and

song and He has become my salvation. He is my God and I will prepare Him in habitation, my father’s God, and I will exalt Him” and great stress rests upon Him as the one who is able, in His mighty strength, to deliver the people of God. Notice the 13th verse. “Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.”

We know, when we studied the New Testament, that salvation is by blood, that is the basis of our salvation, the blood that was shed on Calvary’s cross, but salvation is also by power in the sense that through the power of blood that was shed and the righteousness that becomes ours through the merits of Christ, we are actually delivered. And so, we, who were under the dominion of sin, are no longer under the dominion of sin. We are not saying, of course, we cannot sin but there is a definitive change in the life of a believer, a true believer, and he is no longer under the dominion of sin. He no longer serves sin. In fact, that’s the thing that marks out, one of the things that marks out, a Christian from a non-Christian and marks out a genuine Christian from one who is only a professing Christian; it is that true believers are delivered from the dominion of sin. They no longer serve sin. They may fall into sin and all believers do that.

Scripture, unfortunately, reveals it and we must, and I am sure we all will confess to this, experience that in our Christian life. But when it comes to a different kind of life, the Scriptures insist that true salvation leads to a different kind of life. And if we see an individual who makes profession of the fact that he is saved but he does not have any different kind of life and even at times, you may run into someone who would say, “I don’t have any different kind of life” -- then, of course, we are not able to say whether they are Christians or not -- but we can say, we can surely take the position that we should not give them encouragement that they are saved in such a state.

I think a lot of parents make a mistake, right at this point, because their children say to them they have believed in Christ though there is no evidence, whatsoever, year after year after year because they are so anxious for their children’s salvation, they tend to

want to believe what the kind of life says is not really true. So, as parents, as fathers and mothers, it is important for us to recognize, not simply that salvation is through faith, but also that is thorough power, and that is, that the individuals who truly believe will live a different life. He will not be in bondage to sin. When he does sin, he’ll be grieving over the fact that he has sinned.

So, in the deliverance of the children on Israel, we see all of these things spelled out in these Old Testament pageants. It is the blood of the Passover Lamb that makes it possible for them escape the destroying angel but it is the mighty power of God that takes the children of Israel through the Red Sea and overcomes Pharaoh and his hosts when they are tempted as well. Many people think and I think there is justification for this that what we have here is something that is very similar to the deliverance of the believers from the power of Satan.

Now, we know in the New Testament there are a number of places in which the death of Christ is related to the overthrow of Satan. One of those places is found in the second chapter of the Epistle of the Hebrews and I think this particular text suits this situation as the reality of which the experience of the children of Israel as the illustration. Verse 14 of Hebrews, chapter 2 reads, “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” So, by the power of the blood, we are delivered.

So, we have redemption through the blood, the death, that’s the basis of our salvation, but through power in the mighty hand of God to give us a new kind of life. In John 5: 24, the Lord Jesus says something that I think is suitable for this emphasis because there He says, “He that heareth my word and believeth on Him that certainly hath everlasting life and shall not come unto condemnation, but is past from death unto life.” Now we don’t have to have too much, for students of the Bible at least justification for

taking this Old Testament events illustratively. We like to use the expression ‘typically’ but remember we have pointed out several times that there isn’t any difference between a ‘type’ and an ‘illustration’. Bible teachers have sometimes sought to make a difference but there is no difference. The word *typos* in Greek that is used for ‘type’ is a word that means simply an illustration. So, we don’t have to make a human decision about what is a ‘type’ and what is simply an illustration.

Let us call off all illustrations, or if you understand that you could call of all types, but that upsets so many people who think that there is a difference, but its best to just say, “These are illustrations of divine truth.” In 1 Corinthians, chapter 10, the writer of that epistle, Apostle Paul says in verse 1, “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea” and then in the same context just look down a few verses, verse 11 says, “Now all these things happened unto them for insamples. The word is ‘type’; ‘for insamples,’ ‘for types’, “and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come.” So, when we look these Old Testament events and we find in them examples of spiritual truth, I can almost hear Paul saying, “Amen.” That’s what they are. That’s the way they should be taught; they are examples, and we are looking at them that way.

Now, this particular section I have chosen for tonight, chapters 14 and 15 has really three themes. First, the passage through the Red Sea in chapter 14, and then the song of Moses and Miriam in verse 1 through verse 21 of chapter 15, and then the incident concerning the waters of Marah, which means ‘bitterness’, in the concluding verses of chapter 15, verse 22 through 26. So, let’s look first at the passage of the Red Sea. Now the Old Testament illustration is set out for us here and I am just going to read down through it and lay a bit of stress on a few of the things that stand out. We look at the Old Testament illustration and then, I’ll say something about the New Testament truth that is found there by way of example, in explanation. Beginning with verse 1,

“And the Lord spake unto Moses saying” and this of course is instruction that the Lord gave to Moses, “speak unto the children of Israel that they turn in and camp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea.”

Now, that was a very unstrategic loop. They should have, it seems, gone right all through that sea, while the Egyptians were still wondering what did happen, but there they are in a helpless path. They are right before the sea and the Egyptians are coming from behind. So, what can they do? “The pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, they are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in, and I will harden Pharaoh’s heart that he shall follow after them, and I will be honored upon Pharaoh.”

Isn’t that interesting? I doubt that you would find any humanist who would think that there was anything funny about this at all, drowning all of those Egyptians in the Red sea and then God saying, “I’m going to be honored in this slaughter.” You think that would be go over big with the world about us; that wouldn’t go over big at all, but that’s in the Bible. “I will be honored upon Pharaoh and upon all his hosts that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord” and they did so.

Now I say this was apparently a foolish strategic move and we can only say, “it was foolish according to human reason, but it was for their good.” Now, it was for their good in the sense that God was going to teach them some very important things as a result of this. And further, God says it’s going to be for His glory. Now, if you turn over to the book of James in chapter 1, and verse 3 and 4, we read this, “Knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” So, the trying of our faith works patience. That’s the way we become patient people. Most of us of course pray, “O Lord give me patience, and give it to me right now” but that’s not the way that we obtain patience. We obtain

patience through the experiences of life. “Tribulation worketh patience” the Apostle Paul says. Now, of course, they were going to be taught some important truths, and one of them is found in 2 Peter 2:9, “The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished,” and so that will be illustrated by what happens to them.

Now, Moses continues in the 5th verse, and here he describes the pursuit of pharaoh. “And it was told the king of Egypt; that the people fled, and the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned against the Lord.” Think of that, think how hard his heart really is after having already lost the firstborn and now he is going to chase after them again. “And they said, why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us? And he made ready his chariot and took his people with him and he took six hundred chosen chariots and all the chariots of Egypt and captains over every one of them. And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel, and the children of Israel went out with a high hand. But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon.”

Now, what do you think Israel would do in the light of that? Well, they do exactly what you and I do when we follow into temptation and trial. They wonder, ‘Can the Lord really take care of us? Haven’t we made a foolish move? Here we are absolutely helpless. We don’t have the forces that Pharaoh has, we don’t have the armaments, and we are in a terrible situation.’ So, they began to tremble. And, that’s what we read in verse 10, “And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord. And they said unto Moses, “Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?” Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt,

saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.” How true to human life that is!

Now, the chariots of Egypt were fearful things. They were like the Greek and the Assyrian chariots, they were open behind. They consisted of a semicircular standing board of wood from which rose, in a graceful curves, the antiques or rim to the height of about two and a half feet above the standing board, and the chariot had two wheels and pole, if you saw Ben-Hur you know all about this, that’s the kind of chariot that they had. It was drawn by two horses and ordinarily it contained only two men, the person who was driving them and the warrior, by the side.

Now, that would have been a fearful sight to the children of Israel because they didn’t have anything that, and some have estimated that they were a probably a hundred thousand Egyptians that were coming after them, and when Moses is told by these individuals, “Were there no graves in Egypt that God has taken away to die in the wilderness,” you remember that Egypt was famous for tombs. In fact almost all of those cities in Egypt had their necropolis outside every one of them and in fact someone has described Egypt in those days as ‘a land of tombs.’ So, when they were saying “weren’t there enough tombs down there,” they were speaking right out of the situation in which they found themselves. They were saying, “Surely, Moses there was plenty of room for us to be buried down there, but now we are going to have to be buried out by the sea.”

Now, mind you, this is after Moses has performed all his mighty miracles, and after the destroying angel has come down and destroyed the firstborn all over Egypt, and after they have been free to go, they still are fearful. Well I can understand that because when you exercise by god’s grace an act of faith and God delivers you, then what do you do when you face the next problem? Ordinarily you go through the same trying experience wondering really if the Lord can deliver me two times. One time, yes, but two times,

that’s something else. Live by faith for a day, yes, but for two days, no that’s difficult.

That’s an illustration of the old sin principle. It’s never happy trusting in the Lord.

Now, the faith of Moses is described in verse 13 and 14, “And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.” That’s such a beautiful illustration of that great text, “Salvation is of the Lord.” “Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.” That’s one of the most practical verses for everyday life that you’ll ever find. “Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.” He does work for His saints when they stand still and look to Him to work for them.

Now, the final directions to Moses are given in verse 15 through verse 18, “And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward” Think of this as advice. They are right by the Red Sea now, the Egyptians are pressing down upon them and God says, “Tell them to go forward.” That’s the one place you cannot go, to the right, to the left, back to meet the Egyptians. Go forward. Step out into the water and drown. This is funny. It’s really funny when you think about it that this is the kind of advice that they are given. “Go forward, but” God adds, “Lift up your rod and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it.” That, that’ll be even funnier. “Go and, when you reach the water and your feet are wet, Moses, lift up your rod and just part those waves like that.”

I would like to see the look on Moses’ face. When we get to heaven, maybe we will see this. You know, we will have some instant replays of all of this. Lord will be able to do that. We can see. That’s going to be one of the great things of heaven. I am sure to understand lot of these things. “And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.” Everything is a miracle. In a hopeless place, “go forward, lift up your rod, part the waters, go through,” and on dry ground, not, wet ground, dry ground. “And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow

them: and I will get me honor upon Pharaoh.” There He is, saying it again. He is going to be glorified in drowning all those Egyptians. That’s the God of the Bible. That’s the God of the Bible, mind you.

“And upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten me honor upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.” I don’t know, I didn’t bother to look up how the New International Version or the New English Bible or any of the modern versions render that, “gotten me honor,” but I like that. “I am going to get me some honor from those Egyptians when they are drowning in the water.” These fellows who translated the Kings James Version, they were intelligent men, and some of their renderings are very, very marvelous renderings, very pictorial. They really speak to the point.

Now Moses is describing something that God does now. It’s another miracle and we read verse 19 and verse 20 of God’s protection, “And the Angel of the Lord which went before the camp of Israel removed and went behind them. And the Pillar of the cloud went from before their face and stood behind them, and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these so that the one came not near the other all the night.” So, finally the Egyptians, as they were drawing near to the children of Israel, suddenly the sun went down, it was black, it was dark, and somebody said, “We better stop, we don’t even see where we’re going,” and so they stopped and the children of Israel had light on the other side. The Egyptians are dwelling in darkness.

And now in verse 21 through verse 31, we read of the salvation of Israel. I’ll just read through it, make a comment or so,

“And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground:

and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians.”

We could say they are having trouble with their axles, and their wheels, and the sand is very difficult to go through. They are not making any progress at all, and they are beginning to recognize that there’s something supernatural about this; “And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.” Incidentally it is not stated specifically here that Pharaoh is overthrown, but in the Psalms, reference is made to that fact that Pharaoh lost his life here too.

There is an indication from the text later on that that’s likely to be so what’s really stated specifically in the Psalms. “And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them. But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses.”

So by God’s grace, He brought them through in a magnificent work of deliverance. And when God said to them, “go forward,” they evidently went forward and God opened the waters before them. There is a story of an old Gullah. You must be Gullah because this kind of language is exactly what you hear around Charleston where they speak Gullah. Not only do the blacks speak Gullah but the old Charlestonians also have a lot of Gullah in their language. When Martha and I were there last week, one of my very close friends, who is a State Senator in South Carolina, when Martha first heard him speak, she came out, said, “What kind of language is he speaking?” Now she knows but, they like to say instead of through, they like to say ‘tru,’ and when they speak of something on the floor like a rug, they call that a ‘she; So, ‘tru she over here,” means, “throw it over here, throw it over there.” Well, there was a Gullah preacher who explained to his audience, “Brethren, if Lord then told me to jump tru that stone wall, my business is to jump at it. It’s the Lord’s business to get me tru.” So, it was very much like that with Israel. It was their business to go forward. It was God’s business to part the waters and bring them safely through.

Now, if you ask me how his happened, “I don’t know,” except through the power of God. I don’t know how Israel got through with the waters on one side and the waters on the other. That was the mighty power of God. How He did that? I don’t know. That’s a miracle. And furthermore I don’t really know all of the details of how he can save a wretched sinner like you and me, or how He can change our lives, and make us individuals who no longer serve sin. That’s His mighty power. How He does it specifically I don’t know. If you would ask me to define it, I cannot define it.

Some years ago, Lord Kelvin when he was William Thompson, and some years ago, we had a Bible conference in Lord Kelvin’s old home. He was a famous astronomer as most of you know it. What Kelvin was giving? He was a Christian man incidentally. He delivered a lecture at the Royal Institution on the question of how the heat of the sun was maintained, and the individual speaking about it said, it was to some of us with

startling effect that he concluded his learned lecture by some words as these. “Before closing my lecture,” Lord Kelvin said, “I feel I must relieve my conscience by making one statement. I know nothing about the subject and neither does anyone else.” So, it was just pure speculation that he was giving, very learned speculation from one of the great scientists of his day, the speculation.

Now New Testament illustration that one finds in this Old Testament event is John chapter 5 and verse 24; how the Lord Jesus for those who believe His word brings them from death to life. Now if you look at this event, you would conclude that deliverance is the work of the Lord. Moses said, “Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord;” verse 30, “Thus the Lord saved Israel that they,’ and verse 31, “And Israel saw the great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians.” Could anything be emphasized more? Salvation, deliverance is the work of the Lord. It is He who saves us, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace given us in Christ Jesus before the ages have begun.

Paul says in 2 Timothy, Chapter 1 and verse 9, “Salvation is of the Lord.” Notice also that this deliverance is based ultimately upon the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb. It was the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb that enabled Israel to leave Egypt and through the Red Sea to enter into the wilderness, and ultimately into the land. In Chapter 15 and verse 13, we will read, “Thou in Thy mercy has led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed. Thou hast guided them and Thy strength unto Thy Holy habitation.” Verse 16, it is said that they were purchased. “Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased.” So, they are purchased and they are redeemed and it is based ultimately upon the blood that was shed in and placed over the door post and on the two-side posts from the slain lamb, which as we have seen, represents ultimately the Lord Jesus Christ.

Deliverance is a deliverance that comes through the instrumentality of faith. We read in verse 13, “And Moses said unto the people,” this is chapter 14. “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord”. They stood passively. If you have any question about that, being in active faith, if you turn to the New Testament, and I’m not going to do it for lack of time, in chapter 11 and verse 29 of the Epistle of the Hebrews, it says, “By faith they passed through the Red sea.” So it was their faith, salvation.

Fourthly, this deliverance is a final deliverance. Notice verse 13 again of chapter 14, “You shall see them again no more forever” and that returned sea that came over their path through the Red Sea, separated them from the old life of bondage in Egypt and they were separated forever. So, Calvary and the experience of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ separates us from the old life of bondage to sin under Satan forever. That’s why we are taught in the New Testament, “I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish. Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” “My father who is greater than me, He holds me too. No one is able to pluck them out of His hand or my hand. We are safe forever.”

And so we have security because of the perseverance of an eternal Savior. Many young believers have fears and doubts about eternal salvation, but if you just reflect on those words of John 10, or may be John 6:37, “All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me, and Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” Everyone who comes, our Lord receives for they are given by the Father, and He will in no wise cast them out. And then deliverance has united them with a new leader. Isn’t it striking? It says in verse 31 of chapter 14, “And the people feared the Lord and believed the Lord and his servant Moses.” Isn’t it strange? They believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses.

It is almost as if the Lord wanted to give us an illustration of the fact that when we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are united through death, burial and resurrection with the Messiah, our new leader, and from henceforth and forever we are in Christ. Now, that’s something to sing about. Isn’t it? Some of you look like it’s something to cry over.

Now we read in chapter 15, verse 1, “Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song”. The theme of chapter 15 here is satisfaction and redemption.

Do you now what the psalmist says with reference to this as he is describing in Psalm 106? He says, “They sang His praise;” that’s what this is; that’s what his comment upon this. They sang His praise. So, they sang this song unto the Lord, “and they spake saying, I will sing unto the Lord for He hath triumphed gloriously, the horse and its rider hath he flown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song and He has become my salvation. He is my God and I will prepare him a habitation, my father’s God and I will exalt him. The Lord is a man of war, the Lord Yahweh is His name. Pharaoh’s chariots and his host hath He cast unto the sea. His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. The depths have covered them. They sank into the bottom as a stone.”

This is a song of redeemed people and their singing about god getting honor from those Egyptians. “Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as a heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters. Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?”

Now, everything is of Jehovah and His mighty work. No prayers of Moses and the children of Israel for faith, no prayers for their decision to go into the Red Sea, nothing about them, all about the Lord for they recognized that their deliverance is from the Lord God and so is our salvation. Our salvation is from the Lord God. When you

find a man boasting in his faith, when you find a man who boasts in the decision of his will, you find a man who is off of step with the spirit of biblical salvation. In biblical salvation, stress rests upon the saving power of the Lord God.

Now the New Testament counterpart of this are those great statements in books like Philippians where the Apostle Paul in the third chapter and the 1st verse, speaks about the responsibility of believers to rejoice in the salvation that God has given them. “Finally, my brethren”, he is halfway through his sermon, he is talking about finally. “Finally my brethren rejoice in the Lord, and if you want a very rejoicing in the Lord,” verse 3, “for we are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus.” So rejoice in the Father, rejoice in Christ, Rejoice in the Holy Spirit, rejoice in the things that God has done and if that’s not enough for you, chapter 4, verse 4 says, “Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice.” They sang His praise. That’s the attitude of a Christian. Singing His praise.

Have you been singing His praise to the people with whom you come in contact? You might be surprised the kinds of conversations you might get into. You might find yourself, perish the thought, witnessing to the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ if you just sing His praise. Sing His praise. It’s a great thing for witnessing. Well, I don’t know, you know, if you look around the New Testament you will see that, for example, Philip when he went down into Samaria and he preached and they responded and Luke says, “there was great joy in that city,” and then Philip, after he had his contact with the Ethiopian eunuch, chapter ends with, “He went on his way;” what? “Rejoicing!” That’s characteristic of believing Christians. “Rejoice.”

Did you notice this? Israel never sang in Egypt. They start singing when they have experienced redemption in the land of the wilderness, on the way to the Promised Land. Well, the last few verses of the chapter deal with the experience at the Waters of Marah and the thought of this is simply that the sweetness of the cross is that which sustains us amid the experiences of life that are not so good. Listen to the last few verses

of chapter 15, verse 22, “So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.” Can you see not see now what they’re going to do? These people are so like you and me. Well, like me. I don’t know about you.

“And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. (That’s a term that’s derived from the Hebrew word for bitter) And the people murmured against Moses, saying, what shall we drink?” No water! Israel found it difficult to trust God the next time. Every time it’s difficult. You would think that all of these experiences that they have had -- listen to psalmist as he records them altogether, verse 9, “He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left. Then believed they his words; they sang his praise.” You think that was after all they really have got it now, but you know the next cause? They soon forget his works. How characteristic! They soon forget his works.

Well, the New Testament illustration of this is found in passages like 1 Peter 1, verses 6 and 7 where Peter tells us this is this kind of experience we are going have. “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

Now, if you go back and read the book of Deuteronomy, well, I may just read it for you because you might not do it. You might go home, forget all about this lesson. That has been done before. So, I’m going to read it for you. Deuteronomy chapter 8, verse 2 through verse 4. This will tell you why the Lord gave them these experiences.

Listen to what Moses is saying as from the Lord. “And thou shalt remember,” this is Deuteronomy 8:2, “And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.” That’s a passage our Lord studied, of course. “Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years.” That’s what he did. That’s why you have those experiences in your life that are trials and difficulties, give you trouble, make you fearful. These are things that the Lord sends into our lives to humble us, to try us, to see what’s in our heart, what he is going to see is what he has put there, but to see what’s in our heart in order that we might grow and be sanctified and prepared for eternal life.

I have heard the story of a shepherd once who had a friend with him and he noticed that in the house the shepherd would leave in the morning with some food. So, he asked the shepherd if he might go out and be with him for a while with the sheep and so he said, sure, come on.

And he went out and he discovered that the shepherd was taking some food out for one sheep and he said, “Why you are doing that?” He said, “The sheep has a broken leg.” He said, “Well, how was the leg broken?” He said, “I broke it.” “You broke it!” “Yes I broke it because this sheep was a wayward sheep, and it tended also to lead other sheep off after it, so I broke its leg and now it cannot lead the sheep off, and I’m feeding it in order that that sheep might get acquainted with me and learn to follow me.” Well, sometimes, I think the Lord does that with us too.

Time is up and I have to stop.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for these lessons that come to us from the Word of God, which are so true to our experiences as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. We have

“Through the Red Sea, or Redemption by Power” by S. Lewis Johnson
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so many reasons, Lord, it seems, to turn away from Thee and there really is none. Enable us, O’ Lord, not only to trust Thee for our salvation once. Enable us to learn to trust Thee, day by day, to stand still and to see the salvation of the Lord in our lives.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.