

Go Where God Leads

Exodus 13:17-22

Hello and welcome; thanks for joining us as we continue our study in Exodus. It is encouraging to hear from God and learn more about Him in the Bible. This happens no matter which book of the Bible we are focusing on. This is an amazing aspect of the Bible, and it is one of the things that sets the Bible above all other books. This is not just a book. It is alive, and in every section of the Bible, there is more for us to learn.

Looking at the children of Israel, we can see how God directed and led them from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. And really, that is what God longs to do for each of us. He has provided the way for us to go from slavery to freedom. We can be free from the slavery of sin and experience true freedom by following Jesus and living according to the commands Christ gave.

And think about Pharaoh. He is an example of someone who, despite all the evidence and proof for God, rejects God and continues in his own way. Time after time, God reveals His power, and each time Pharaoh's heart becomes harder and harder. This pattern has been repeated by many men down through the ages. God, in His mercy, shows Himself alive and real in many incredible ways. This turns some hard hearts even harder, which is exactly what Pharaoh was doing.

We look forward to what J Mark Horst will teach us from Exodus and how these truths will teach us more about God and how we can live for Him. Let's give him our attention now.

There are many voices in the world today, so many that we are sometimes confused. Maybe you feel that way. So many voices, and they all claim to be true. Let me assure you that there is only one source for truth. True truth is found in the Book of God. It is important that we pay attention to God. In order to get to our eternal home, the promised land of the soul, we must GO WHERE GOD LEADS.

Many years ago, the founder of Heralds of Hope, Dr. J. Otis Yoder, told me a story about when he was traveling through Turkey with his wife. They came to a place on their way to Isparta when they weren't sure which way to go. They had been traveling through mountainous country when they came out to an intersection, and they did not know which way to turn. So, he said to his wife, Isabelle, "Let's stop and pray." So, they prayed and asked the LORD to give them some kind of direction. After they prayed, he said, "I believe we ought to go left." They turned left and soon came to their Isparta. Then they praised the LORD for His guidance. They went the way He led them.

If you've ever been lost, you know it's not a very pleasant experience. It is much nicer if you have directions that show you where you're going. Directions are so helpful, and especially those mileposts and signposts along the road to guide you.

God knew His people would need someone to lead them. Several generations had never been out of Egypt. In Exodus 13:17-22 God begins to lead His people on an untried way.

17. And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt:

18. But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt.

19. And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.

20. And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness.

21. And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:

22. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

In this text, I find certain DIRECTIVES to help them, and us, go where God leads.

The first directive, which is very important, is to

Follow in His Path

God knew His people needed to be led, and He knew the best way for them to go. He did not take them the closest way, the nearer way to the land He had promised them. The shortest route would've only been about 200 kilometers or 125 miles. Even with children and animals, that would've taken less than a month. But God had a different path.

He did not lead them through the land of the Philistines because He was sure that they would give up and go back to Egypt. He knew the Philistines were fierce warriors and the people of Israel had no experience in warfare. The sight of such an army would fill them with fear. So, He chose a different path, a different route.

It made a difference which way they went because only one way was God's best way, and the other way would have been less than the best. It was very important for them to follow in His path because needed His help. They needed His directive. God determined the way. It was much farther to go by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea, but God knew that was the best way.

Sometimes, you and I think we know better than God knows. We want to choose our own way. I can tell you from experience, I've tried that. Perhaps you have too. But then we find out that our way isn't as good as God's way. That's because we can't see everything like He does. So, if we really want to arrive at the place God has promised to us, then we'll need to follow in His path and let Him choose because He knows best.

Another important directive is to

Carry Out His Prophecy

This is reflected in Joseph's faith because we are told here that Moses took the bones of Joseph with him. In Genesis 50:24 and 25, we see what kind of faith Joseph had when he was about to die. "And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am dying, and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence."

What faith Joseph had to be rewarded so many, many years later. Joseph's faith had prophesied about the time when the people of Israel would be leaving Egypt, so they were charged under oath to take his bones with them to bury in this new land. Actually, it was the land of his forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

God's faithfulness is shown here, too, because Joseph had said, "God will surely visit you," and He did. He had finally released them, emancipated them from the bondage of Egypt. He had brought them out, and so it was important that the faith of Joseph be honored by the faithfulness of God. Moses carried out the prophecy and took the bones of Joseph along. Today you can visit the tomb of Joseph in Israel near Shechem. Moses carried out the prophecy.

If you want to go where God leads, then you will need to carry out this directive. In other words, when you do what God wants you to do, you honor His promises.

The third directive brings joy and security,

Delight in His Presence

These are beautiful words. They set forth a beautiful symbol. “And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.”

Those beautiful symbols assured them of the presence of God. His presence was their delight. He went before them. He did not thrust them out like Pharaoh did. Instead, He led them out, and He always does that. The Psalmist David said, “He leads me beside the still waters.”

Further, David wrote these words in Psalm 1. “Blessed *is* the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; **but his delight is in the law of the LORD**, And in His law, he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.”

A pillar of cloud and pillar of fire, so by day and night they could be assured of and delight in the presence of God. It was a constant presence because He never took away the pillar of cloud or the pillar of fire. They were always there, always reminding the people that the presence of God was right there with them. They could be confident in His presence because He was there by day and by night.

You, too, can delight in His presence. He will be with you. He will be by your side. He will go before you. Praise the LORD!

If you sincerely want to go where God leads, then here are the directives: follow in His path, He has a way for you to go; carry out His prophecy, what you know to be His Word and will; delight in His presence and make Him your chief joy.

If you really want to go where He leads, you will find His presence your delight.

Thank you, J. Mark, for this teaching from Exodus, and we thank you for joining us. As Christians, it is a privilege to serve and trust our God. Our God, Who is above every nation. As His people, it is good for us to remember the important principle in Daniel 4:17. It says, “that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdoms of men, and gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men.” This verse teaches our sovereign God is over the kingdoms on earth. What happens here among our leaders is known and directed by Him.

Our leaders may be powerful and important or minor and less known, but it is our God who has placed them there, and our God is using them to accomplish His will. I admit we don’t always know how this can be, and when I don’t, I usually tell God I don’t know why this is happening or why You are allowing

this, but I trust You and pray that Your people stay faithful. Be encouraged from this story from Exodus, that our God was in control, and the same God who was in control back then is still in control now.

Do you have any thoughts from today's teaching? If you want to share them with us, here are a few ways you can contact us. One of the best ways is via email. Our email is hope@heraldsofhope.org. If you don't have email, no problem, our address is Hope for Today, Box 3, Breezewood, PA 15533. Or you can connect with us on our website. Our website is Heraldsofhope.org. While you are there, please check out the listen tab and listen to other teaching. Again, the website is www.heraldsofhope.org.

This brings us to the end of today's program; thanks again for being there. Please join us next week for another lesson from Exodus. Go with God this week and know that He is big enough for your circumstance. Trust Him because "the Most High rules in the kingdoms of men."