

We aim to reconcile people unto God through Christ

SERMON TITLE:	YOU HAVE STAYED LONG ENOUGH AT THIS MOUNTAIN – GO AND POSSESS THE LAND
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Reading: Deuteronomy 1:6-8

Moses is giving an overview of events to the people. The people of Israel were in bondage and slavery for 400 years. Under duress they were the work force of Egypt, but grew into a strong nation. God wanted them free and wanted to use Israel to demonstrate who He was and what He would do with people whom He loved and who loved and obeyed Him. Gods raised up a leader called Moses, commanded Moses to trust Him and to go to the Pharaoh, the oppressor to tell him that God wanted Israel free from the bondage of slavery and had promised them the land of Canaan which was a land flowing with milk and honey. In other words it was a land of freedom and resources.

Moses arrives at Pharaoh and says “Good morning sir . . .” Pharaoh replied “Who let this boy in, (Moses was now 80 years old)? There is a smell of sheep here”. (Moses had just returned from looking after sheep for 40 years).....

Exodus 7-10

Moses demonstrated the power of God and threw his staff down, it turned into a snake. Pharaoh called his magicians and they imitated God’s power and did the same.

10 plagues – none of these plagues touched the people of Israel:

- Water turned into blood – magicians copied it - Pharaoh was not impressed
- Plague of Frogs - magicians copied it but could not reverse the plague - Pharaoh pleaded and agreed to let the Israelites go - Moses prayed and the plague stopped – Pharaoh hardened his heart
- Plague of gnats of flees magicians could not copy it, they said to Pharaoh this is the finger of God - Pharaoh hardened his heart
- Plague of flies - Pharaoh pleaded and agreed to let the Israelites go - Moses prayed and the plague stopped – Pharaoh hardened his heart
- Plague on the livestock - Pharaoh hardened his heart
- Plague of Boils – the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh
- Plague of Hail – Pharaoh says “this time I have sinned, the Lord is right and I and my people are wrong” - Pharaoh pleads and agrees - Moses prayed and the plague stops – Pharaoh hardened his heart
- Plague of the Locusts - the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh
- Plague of Darkness - the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh
- Moses went to Pharaoh and said I will never appear before you again

- Death of the first born - Pharaoh pleaded and agreed to let the Israelites go

What would you have done and how would you have behaved if you had seen the hand of God like this, all these plagues on your enemies and none touched you and your family? Would you not have made a serious commitment to love God and obey Him forever?

Lesson 1: The Power of God. Miracles draw us to God but do not keep us close to Him.

Read the next passage - Exodus 13:17-22

It was only a short journey from Egypt to Canaan but the most direct route was through the Philistine country along a highway about a distance of only 386km, it would have taken them a month by foot. God decided to not take them the shortest route and instructed them to go around the desert towards the Red Sea. It would have been unwise to go the shortest route, at this stage they had no real faith in God and because of their lack of faith the children of Israel were not prepared to make the journey by the shortest route. If they had attempted to pass through the Philistine country, they would have been opposed; the Philistines regarded them as slaves escaping from their masters, and they would not have hesitated to make war on them. The Israelites were poorly prepared for an encounter with that powerful and warlike people. They had little knowledge of God and little faith in Him, and they would have become terrified and disheartened. So God took them to the Red sea, He knew that Pharaoh would come after them, He wanted them to see His power as He parted the sea. This would have given them the faith to believe in their God.

Lesson 2: The shortest route is not always the best. Training takes place on the journey. The journey is also the plan of God

Exodus 14:5-31

The first lesson in faith was learned at the Red Sea. The deliverance from the Egyptian army and the passage through the Red Sea was possible only by faith.

Hebrews 11:29

²⁹ By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

Hebrews 11:1

Faith in Action

¹ Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

What is faith? There was no evidence of deliverance in sight; in fact the outlook seemed hopeless. But the Lord said, "Go forward", and they took Him at His word regardless of the seemingly impossible barrier before them. When He says "Go" it is our duty to obey and His to open the way so we can go.

Hebrews 11:7, 8

⁷ By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.

⁸ By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.

Lesson 3: Sometimes what seems to be an obstacle for man is an opportunity for God

Look at the pathetic journey from victory to absolute pitiable, weak existence within days.

Read Exodus 15:22-27

Read Exodus 16:1-

Exodus 17:1-

- Leaders were appointed
- The ten commandments were received
- All kinds of laws were given
- The tabernacle worship patterns were established
- Priest who served God and the people were appointed
- A covenant between God and the people was made
- Enemies were destroyed
- Etc. etc.

God started the formation of a nation to demonstrate His glory and His reign

Lesson 4: Training takes place on the journey. The journey is also part of the plan of God

By now they were ready and it was time to possess the land

Read Numbers 13:

12 men were sent out to spy out the land. A report was brought back.

Two men had faith and said "we can do it."

Numbers 13:30

³⁰ *Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it."*

Two of the 12 said let's do it, God has proven to us that He is powerful and on our side. He said it, thus we can do it.

Ten men lacked faith and said "we can't do it."

Numbers 13:31

We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are. ³² And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size.

Lesson 5: Fear and negative confession can dominate faith

All of these men saw the power of God. All of these men saw the Red Sea part and walked through it. All of these men drank of the sweet water. All of these men ate the manna and the quails and enjoyed God's daily provision. All of these men saw God giving their enemies into their hand.

Lesson 6: The walk of faith is a daily walk. Yesterday's faith easily fades away. Yesterday's favour is a lesson and stepping stone, a reminder, but today needs today's faith, today need fresh manna and quails.

Read Numbers 14 – the people went the route of the unbelieving leaders. It seems to be the less dramatic, less challenging route. “We know the desert is a dry and hot place but it seems more attractive than the milk and honey of Canaan Moses”. “We know what God has done in the past by parting the Red Sea and by destroying our enemy and their horses and their chariots, but we don't know if God is aware of the size of the giants Moses”. “We know the lessons of faith of the past but we don't know if we want to step out on the water again Moses”.

Read Numbers 14:5-10

⁵ Then Moses and Aaron fell face down in front of the whole Israelite assembly gathered there. ⁶ Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes ⁷ and said to the entire Israelite assembly, “The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. ⁸ If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. ⁹ Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them.”

¹⁰ But the whole assembly talked about stoning them. Then the glory of the LORD appeared at the tent of meeting to all the Israelites

See God's response:

Num 14:11-12

¹¹ The LORD said to Moses, “How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the signs I have performed among them? ¹² I will strike them down with a plague and destroy them, but I will make you into a nation greater and stronger than they.”

Moses tried to convince God by saying that the unbelieving nations are going to think God failed God. That God did all these miracles and now He could not bring them into the Promised Land. It is going to be a negative on your CV God. (Read Numbers 14:13-16)

He reminded God of His strength, that He is slow to anger and abounding in love and great on forgiveness.

God agreed to forgive but said no one who has seen His Glory and the miraculous signs He did in their deliverance would enter the Promised Land. They would wander in the desert for 40 years until each one of them was dead. The next generation would enter it.

The people were devastated but it was too late. The journey that was full of God's power, His provision and His presence, the journey which was going to be about a month's travel with a few detours and obstacles which turned into life lessons was to be a long journey of covering only 386 km but on average of about 9.7km per day for forty years.

The journey of deliverance from slavery to entering the Promised Land became a *death sentence* for those who had refused the opportunity to enter the Promised Land not long after they left Egypt.

Lesson 7: For those who rebelled against God and His faith challenges (not just faith for salvation), the Exodus became a journey without a destination, and for the others, it became a matter of taking the long way home.

If you were God, would you not at least have let Caleb, Joshua and their families enter the Promised Land? They had the faith, they did not grumble, in fact they pleaded with the Israelites to trust God and to enter the land.

Lesson 8: My lack of faith, my rebellion and disobedience can affect my family, my church, my community or my nation. And I may have to bear the pain of the desert with them because of that

Rise up oh faithless people, extend your faith away from being personal blessing hunters. Extend your faith from trusting God for you and yours, resign from the self-help and self-enrichments scheme Christianity. Extend your faith beyond trusting God for crystal palaces and stained windows, expensive watches and cars that have become the measurement of our faith. Extend your faith towards the well-being of His church, the poor, the widow and the orphans.

Don't rebel against God walk through 2012 on a journey without a destination.