

“Walking with God in His greatness” (Exodus 14:22)

We have been studying the four-week series of “Freedom from slavery.” We are studying from the book of Exodus. Today is the third week of the series. And the title is “Walking with God in His greatness”.

1. Salvation at the sacrifice of life

Cp.12 shows the scene of the Passover. We will just look at the outline.

God gave Moses His promise.

Exodus 12:21-23

Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. ²² Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning. ²³ When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.

And the people obeyed the instructions. Then what happened? At midnight the Lord killed all the firstborn sons in the land of Egypt, even the firstborn of their livestock were killed. However, those who slaughtered the Passover lamb and remained in the house where they put the blood were not struck down by the Lord.

The Egyptians urged the people to hurry and leave the country. "For otherwise," they said, "we will all die!" (12:33). Many people who were not Israelites went with them, along with the many flocks and herds (12:38 NLT). In other words, it was not just the Israelites who were saved. There were some foreigners as well. And in v.44, we can see that slaves were included as well.

These facts show us some important truth about salvation.

(1) Salvation based on God's promise

What was the God's promise? If they slaughter the sacrifice, put the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe, and remain in the house, they will not be destroyed.

Come to think of it, it sounds quite foolish! "Okay... I understand I have to slaughter the sacrifice, but should I put the blood on the top and on both sides of the door-frame as well? Isn't it enough just to slaughter the sacrifice?"

Some people might think it would be more effective to put the blood on the door instead of on the doorframe. Some people think, "I feel uncomfortable to stay in the house with the blood on it. After I put the blood on it, I will go and stay in another house."

But God's promise is that if they slaughter the sacrifice, put the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe, and remain in the house, they will not be destroyed. It doesn't matter how we think or feel about it.

Romans 3:23-25

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice,

This is God's promise. It doesn't matter how we think or feel about it.

(2) Salvation at the sacrifice of life

They had to slaughter the sacrifice, to be saved through the Passover. There is no salvation without a sacrifice of life. Christ offered himself as a sacrifice, and accomplished eternal redemption (Heb 9:12, 26). For our salvation, the life of Jesus was sacrificed. His life was the price that was paid to redeem us.

It is a completely wrong idea that you have to sacrifice something to be accepted by God, or work hard to receive more blessings from God, or give something back to God. No matter what we do, we cannot offer anything that is worth the life of Jesus. The life of Jesus is not that cheap. And if we can return, that is not grace.

We obey the Lord, serve the Lord and offer to the Lord, because we love Him as He loved us, and redeemed us at the cost of his life, though we don't

deserve it, and He restored us to a relationship with Him. We don't do something to receive God's love. But our motive is our gratitude for God's love.

(3) Salvation for everyone

12:29

At midnight the Lord struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well.

There is no discrimination in God's judgment. Whether they are kings who sit on the throne or prisoners who are in the dungeon, they are equally sinners before God, objects of wrath who deserve eternal destruction. In the same way, there is also no discrimination in salvation.

Romans 3:22

This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference.

No matter how many evil deeds a person has done, or no matter what a dirty sinner he may be, this verse is the truth for him also. And this is the only truth even for mature saints who shine in His goodness. We are saved by grace (Eph 2:8).

Grace is expressed through the action of God's love. It is expressed by God's forgiveness, God's acceptance, and God's favour freely given to us. It simply means God loves us.

Grace has nothing to do with our achievements, or our merits. Neither our sinfulness nor our good deeds will affect God's grace at all. Though we are unworthy to receive it, God will give us his grace all the more freely. That is God's grace. Grace is given to those who are unworthy to receive it, to those who have no merits. No matter how unworthy we may feel, that will not change God's grace at all.

2. Faith: Walking through the sea on dry ground

In cp.14 we see the Israelites cross the Red Sea. This time please pay attention to v.22.

14:22

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

This verse shows us what faith is. Let me tell you the conclusion first. Faith is to “walk with God in His greatness.”

Let’s imagine you are in this situation: The water of the Red Sea was divided and there became a way. Both sides of the way are walls of water. We can only imagine how wide the way was and how tall the walls of water were. Just imagine the width of three-lane road of both directions, and walls of water which are as high as five-story building. Imagine that it suddenly appeared in the middle of the sea, before your eyes! Man cannot understand this. We can only know that this is the way made by God’s power.

You step into the way and hurry along. As you look aside, you see walls of water on your both sides. As you look ahead, you also see walls of water as far as the eye can see. Water was dammed up by unseen power and turned into walls. It can never happen naturally. We cannot explain how this is happening. We can only know that this is the way made by God’s power.

Come to think of it, it is a terrifying situation, even though you are not alone, all others are advancing together. You never know when the water will come back to the original state. If that happens, all of you will be definitely under water. Immediately you will be swallowed up by waves and be drowned.

We have no idea what happens in the future. We can only know that this is the way made by God’s power. And He is with us.

This is what it means to “walk with God in His greatness.” If you think about the situation, you cannot understand why there is a way here. You cannot explain why it is a safe way. On the contrary, you may feel fear about stepping into the way. You can only know that this is the way made by God’s power. And He is with you. Only by trusting in God, you can step into the way and keep going on the way.

Faith is to “walk with God in His greatness.”

3. Faith or a formality

From cp.15 to 18, we can see that after they crossed the Red sea Israel was supposed to walk by faith but actually they relied on their work, their performance. God was patiently walking with them and leading them so that they could live by faith in him.

(1) Grumbling instead of praising

The first half of cp.15 is full of praise to the Lord. They praise the Lord for He has protected and supported them. He fought for them and gave them victory. People who live by faith praise the Lord. They give glory to the Lord for His mighty work.

Soon after that they started to grumble instead of praising God.

15:24

So the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What are we to drink?"

When we grumble instead of praising God, our faith becomes a mere formality.

Man has a tendency to take good things from God for granted. He wants to feel he deserves it. He likes to feel that he is special. And when that desire is not satisfied, he grumbles. He explodes with dissatisfaction because he didn't receive what he had taken for granted.

When we grumble instead of praising God, our faith becomes a mere formality.

(2) Criticizing instead of resting in God

16:3

The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death."

When we criticize instead of having a rest in God, our faith becomes a mere formality.

Unless a man remains in grace by faith, he is a slave bound by performance trap. He doesn't want to accept the fact that he is in a bad situation. Because if he does, he must admit that he is not doing well.

If you want to think you are doing well while actually you are in a bad situation, there is only one solution for that. That is to shift the whole responsibility to other people or something else.

“That is because he was like that. If only he was not like that...” Or “That is because that incident happened. If only this hadn’t happened...” That way, you shift the whole responsibility to other people or other incidents, and think you are doing well while actually you are not doing well. It’s a sign of slavery of performance trap.

16:29

Bear in mind that the Lord has given you the Sabbath; that is why on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days. Everyone is to stay where he is on the seventh day; no one is to go out."

The Lord gave them rest. The “rest” means that we can live by God’s grace instead of our own work, our performance. We receive rest by faith. We do not gain it by our work or achievements. And that rest is not affected by our situation.

When we criticize instead of having a rest in God, our faith becomes a mere formality.

(3) Negative thinking instead of praying

17:3

But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?"

When we speak negative words instead of praying to God and relying on Him, our faith becomes a mere formality.

When a man does not live in grace, he feels he is not accepted by God, but judged by God. Then he cannot wait trusting in God. And he thinks he is worthless, and in some cases, he despises himself repeatedly. Even when a good thing happens, he cannot see God is working in his life. He only sees the current bad situation he is in. He doesn’t care what God has done for him before. Simply he cannot believe God holds his future. He cannot think God has plans to give him hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11).

17:16

He said, "For hands were lifted up to the throne of the Lord. The Lord will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation."

Moses prayed God's will be done, based on who God is.

Faith is to walk with God in His greatness. Man comes into grace by faith. Then he has peace with God, and he can rejoice in his wonderful new relationship with God (Romans 5:1-2, 11). As he spends time with God, he will come to know Him more and more. The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing (Psalm 23:1). His prayer is not a list of his wishes. Nor will he end his prayer by just grieving over his misfortune. He stands on God's word and fights for it, then he experiences God's victory. And he comes to understand specifically how God takes care of him. He understands how much God loves him. Moses prayed God's will be done, based on who God is.

When we speak negative words instead of praying to God and relying on Him, our faith becomes a mere formality.

(4) Complaining instead of serving**18:16, 25-26**

Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God's decrees and laws."

²⁵ He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. ²⁶ They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves.

Did you notice that there are two kinds of people? Some people had problems between each other and they asked Moses to solve their problems. Other people carried the burden with Moses.

When we complain instead of serving, our faith becomes a mere formality.

If a man does not live in grace, he has to bear his burden by himself. As he bears his burden by himself, he naturally gets tired and starts complaining. He struggles with his own burden, much less bearing other people's burden.

And he complains about the bad things around him, he complains about the people who don't take care of him.

And if a person serves, in order to be recognized, praised and draw attention of others, he is also a slave bound by performance trap. If a person tries to be important, recognized, or desires a sense of controlling so he can feel secure, he is also a slave bound by performance trap. If that desire is not satisfied, he will complain.

When we complain instead of serving, our faith becomes a mere formality.

4. Walking with God in His greatness

We saw that the four patterns of people who appeared to have faith but actually relayed on their work, their performance.

Please listen carefully. Here, I am not suggesting, "Let's stop grumbling, criticizing, speaking negative words. We should stop complaining." I am also not saying, "You should praise God. Why don't you have peace? You should pray, you should serve." That is legalism! If we do that, we will fall into performance trap even more deeply.

What I want to say is this: when we find ourselves grumbling, criticizing, speaking negative words, or complaining, let's pause and check if our faith has become a mere formality or not. Let's take time and stop justifying what you are doing, and check calmly if you are walking with God in his greatness or walking your own way by your own strength.

God wants to deliver us from grumbling, criticizing, speaking negative words, and complaining. He wants us to be His people freely praising, resting in Him, praying and serving.

God divided the Red Sea, and prepared dry ground, in order to deliver the Israelites completely from the rule of Egypt. This is the way made by God's power. The Israelites went into the way. Then after that, could they advance automatically as if they were on a conveyer belt? Unfortunately, the Bible doesn't say that. They advanced, walked step by step on their own foot.

This is what faith means. It's to "walk with God in His greatness." We have faith and we entrust everything to God, but it doesn't mean we can just

stay there doing nothing. No, we will advance, walk with God in His greatness step by step on our own foot.

Romans 5:2 NKJ

through whom [our Lord Jesus Christ] also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Where do we enter by faith? We enter into grace. Once we enter grace by faith, we don't have to do anything at all to gain grace. We are to live as ones who are in God's grace. We walk with God in his greatness step by step on our own foot.

As we are now in God's grace, we don't have to try and make ourselves look fine. We don't have to pretend that we have no problems. Because God loves our true self. Christ died for our true self. Our true self has sin, mistakes, weaknesses, flaws and wounds. And God knows them all and he still loves us. We are good because God loves us! You are good because God loves you!

We know in our head that we are forgiven through the cross of Jesus. But, because of our past experience, sometimes we may suffer from a guilty conscience. Though we may memorize the Bible verse which says, "You are precious in my sight," but in reality there are times we cannot free ourselves from low self-image and the feeling that we are worthless. Even though we thought we had already forgiven someone and forgot about it, there are times we find ourselves still holding grudges, anger, shame, wounds and pains of the past. And those things which lurk in our heart draw us back into legalism.

God opens the way and is waiting for you and me to come to him, bring those before Him instead of hiding, and ask Him to deliver us. God wants to go with you, walking through the sea on dry ground.

You may feel you are too afraid to do that. Don't worry. That is the way God has made for your deliverance. You may think, "If I do that, I'll collapse." Don't worry. That is the dry ground God has prepared to set you free. God will be with you and He will always support you so that you can go through that. You may think, "How can I be released from them? That's impossible!" Don't worry. That will be done by God's power.

When you step into this way by faith, and go through this way, God will surely untie the things that have been binding you one by one; like grudges,

anger, shame, wounds and pains of the past. And God will give you complete freedom.

God opened the way for us so that we will be completely set free. We can be His people totally in any circumstances freely rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. Let us walk with God in His greatness.

For Lifenet groups and personal reflection

- 1) "God's promise is that those who slaughter the sacrifice, put the blood on the top and on both sides of the door-frame, and remain in the house won't be destroyed." What thought might you have if you heard this from Moses?
- 2) Imagine you are in this situation: The water of the Red Sea is divided and there appears a way. And you are walking through the way. What thoughts and feelings might you have? How can you keep moving forward?
- 3) Have you ever experienced that God opened a way, but you were afraid of stepping into it, yet you could walk through it?
- 4) Can you remember the moment recently in which you grumbled, or criticized, or spoke negative words, or complained? What did you focus on at that time? Where did that moment lead you? How did that moment affect your faith?
- 5) What would you do in order to develop your life (1) praising instead of grumbling, (2) resting in God instead of criticizing, (3) praying instead of thinking negatively, (4) serving instead of complaining?