

Aug. 15, 2010 Ex. 14; Joshua 3; Acts 12:1-18

## GOD CAN MAKE A WAY

I sometimes marvel when I've watched some war movies as people chop down brush making a way to get from point A to point B. But then it's a movie and in a movie you can do anything. I marvel when Charlton Heston portrayed Moses in the 10 Commandment and he parted the Red Sea, changed the Nile River into blood, threw his staff down and it became a snake and ate the snakes of the Pharaoh's magicians, then picked it up by its tail, (who would ever do that except someone in the movies or some adventurous person who searches for snakes.). I marveled at all they did in that movie. Imagine if Cecil B. DeMille was alive today what he could do with his imagination and the new technology of our time. As the lady sings in Joseph, "He was ahead of his time."

I'm sure you've seen movies like that and you become fascinated how they make a way for things to be done where there seems to be no way open. But of course, that's the movies.

In light of that statement once again I was answering a recent email concerning someone going through some tough times and I reminded them that though we can't always see it, nor do we often recognize it at the time, God can make a way when we cannot see it. In fact, God can make a way where there seems

no way is possible. We read about that often. Paul tells us that we will not face any temptation without God showing us a way out. And sometimes we think we are in a black, deep, hole without any way to get out. We might feel like Joseph did when his big brothers threw him in the pit because they couldn't stand him being their father's favorite. They were mean to him and they were going to get rid of him, leaving him in that deep, dark, and pit till he rotted and tell dad that some critter ate him up. But God showed Joseph something that day. When all seems lost, God can make a way. Just keep on looking up. The day that Joseph's brothers were ready to say goodbye to their dear brother and button down the hatches on the pit, out of nowhere...yes out of nowhere a caravan comes heading for Egypt. So they make a deal...Joseph for a few bucks. By selling Joseph two things were accomplished. One, they got brother Joe out of their hair...two; they each made a few extra bucks to spend on who knows what. Maybe a party celebrating the fact that the dreamer was now going to have nightmares....in Egypt. What they didn't know was God was going to turn this tragedy into part of his plan of salvation one day. For Joseph and his family, and the twelve tribes of Israel God was planning the way where they didn't think one would be possible.

I want to remind us all this morning that God does make a way for all of us. When we seem down and out, hey, look up. When you think you are at the bottom

of the pit and nowhere to go, look up. When your problems seem so overwhelming that you don't know where to turn, turn to God. When you find yourself in the forest surrounded by trees, look straight ahead and start walking toward the light and follow the path to freedom. You see, God can make a way where we see no way. He is the guide that chops down the brush in the jungle to provide the path to safety. He's the captain of the ship that has lost its navigation system due to a storm and he guides you to safety through the heavy, dense fog. He sends the very best to be our guide...he sends his angels to open the doors, and he sends his Son who leads us on.

So this morning I have selected Exodus 14...**the story of the parting of the Red Sea** for us to see how God can make a way when we think no way is there. **(READ).**

You talk about being between a rock and a hard place, this is it? The entire Hebrew nation excited as their time of bondage in Egypt is over and they are headed for the Promised Land. Moses came to tell them God had appointed him to lead them from their bad situation. They saw their people suffer because of being slaves and working like dogs to satisfy the Pharaoh who did not know their famous leader Joseph who led Egypt out of their famine, and saved them and his own family to boot. This Pharaoh didn't know or forgot how Joseph became number two

in the land behind one of the great Pharaohs. But folks sometimes we have a short memory. Maybe this Pharaoh dude flunked Egyptian history. Maybe the day they studied about Joseph and the famine he skipped school and went fishing in the Nile, or went canoeing with a bunch of his friends. That's why you should never miss school or even church; for you might miss something you need to know that will help you down the road. Any way this was almost 400 years later and maybe the writing on the walls in the palace had grown dim. For whatever reason, maybe to please his own countrymen who were working hard building the roads, cutting the granite, building this place and that, digging the holes for the pyramids and all that, he said, "Hey, those Israelites are in Goshen and they are getting fat and lazy. Let's get them to do our work." This seemed a popular thing to do, so he enslaved them.

Then one day when they couldn't see a way out they wondered how they would survive. They asked themselves and their leaders, "Where is our God?" So leaders cried out to God....often....they cried loud....they cried, and cried, and cried, "God, why have you abandoned us all these years? Why, God, are you going to let us die here in this foreign land? You promised our fathers, and their fathers, and their fathers before them that one day we would return to our own land that you have given us? When will that happen? Will it happen? God where are you? We can't find the way?" I bet every Sabbath meeting it was the same thing... never

mind asking just on the Sabbath, but perhaps every day they asked God “where are you? God show us how to cope with our pain.”

Since we have read this story before or seen the movie we know God had a plan like he always does. He had a plan and he picked a guy who spent 40 years in the desert being a shepherd, had a ‘burning bush’ experience at age 80 and God told him to go back to a place and people who wanted him arrested for killing one of them. Though he didn’t want to go, he finally surrendered to God’s calling with the stipulation that God would lead the way. And he did. Then when the Lord’s timing was right, and he showed who was boss in Egypt, the hardened heart of Pharaoh was softened and he let God’s people go. Moses gathers the people and he says, “My friends, Pharaoh has heard our God speak and is letting us go. Our God has made a way where we thought none was available. We are bound for the promised land, who will follow me?” The horns begin to play, the people begin to rejoice, some dance and shout, and the next thing you know they begin to push their carts, take their kids hands and they move out singing, “I am bound for the Promised Land, I am bound for the Promised Land. Oh, who will go with me? I am bound for the Promised Land.” Praise the Lord, God has provided a way after all these years so that they could go home to Egypt taking with them their patriarch Joseph so he could be buried in the Promised Land God gave to them.

But now, Mr. Satan, if I may give him that title, kind of wakes Pharaoh up from his nap, his, let's call it his daze, and he decides, "What was I thinking? How can I let these people go? What will my people think? We must get those people back. General, sound the alarm we are going after those slaves and bring them back and they will work double shifts, no triple shifts, no they will work around the clock to make those bricks to catch up for these days they have missed. I'll show them whose boss. I'll show them whose god." And in a cloud of dust, off they go all Pharaoh's army to capture all 500,000 Hebrew people.

Meanwhile, Moses and his people are happy campers as they walk to freedom. God is leading them, they are sure. Moses understands this as they take one step at a time. Moses doesn't need a GPS system to find the best route. He is guided by a cloud by day and a fire by night. When they stop...they stop. But something weird seems to happen on this journey. Instead of taking them one way, Moses notices, because he is in the lead, that he could see blue, and it wasn't the sky. It was the blue waters of the Red Sea. Moses sends out scouts to find a place for them to cross. He tells the others it's time to rest. He waits in his tent for the scouts reports. The people are still happy, resting now, knowing it won't be long till they are totally free. They take a coffee break; break out the beef jerky, praising God for this day they have dreamt of for years. Why, some took naps. On the other side of the Red

Sea they will inhale the wonderful clean air of freedom, smell the flowers, knowing God is good all the time and all the time God is good.

Meanwhile the Egyptian soldiers in full battle gear, with spears, horses, chariots, being led by Pharaoh himself approach the encamped Hebrew people. They could see the clouds of dust as their enemy approaches at a rapid pace. Someone says they needed to let Moses know what was behind them, so they send a message to him of the approaching enemy. About that time the scouts seeking a low place to cross the Red Sea come back to report sadly they had been up and down the Red Sea for miles and they could not find a low spot. They might need to find an alternative route. Moses was not looking for that answer. He looked at the sea before him...he looked at the cloud of dust behind him and looks up thinking, “Yikes! God where are you? We are between a rock and a hard place. What are we to do? If we can’t get across soon we will be taken back to Egypt and some will be beaten and imprisoned for life. Me? I believe Pharaoh might have a special plan for me, and I bet it doesn’t include sitting down with him having a fish dinner. God I trust you because you have made a way before where I did not see one. You gave me insight and wisdom and courage to lead these people to this point. Now they are afraid and are complaining they will die out here if you don’t do something. They have short memories. God, show us the way. God show **me** the way.”

Following that prayer, clouds arose that put a wall between the Egyptians and God's people. God spoke to Moses and said, "What have you got in your hand? Didn't I give that staff special powers for you to know my presence so you could do mighty things in my name? Stretch it out Moses...stretch it out as far as you can toward the sea and watch what happens." So Moses takes the staff, points it toward the sea as he was commanded and in a blinking of an eye, the waters begin to part. It begins to part right at the feet of Moses as he stands ankle deep on the edge of the sea, and it stretches farther and farther across the sea for miles until it reaches the shore on other side. He looks one way, then the other, and for miles Moses and the awestruck people see where there was water, there is now dry ground. The scouts take a step into the water thinking it would be mud and they would have to stay camped for days before it would dry out, if in fact it ever would. But miracle upon miracle, it was dry and solid and it held them up. They took a few steps toward their freedom. No! they ran a hundred yards or so, back and forth, from side to side and came back rejoicing because it was dry and solid and they could see the sea high in the air being held back as if a wall just magically appeared to keep the sea in check. It was wide enough, and dries enough for the people to cross to the other side with all their family, livestock, and kids. Moses, praises God for providing a way where there seemed no way. And the people began to walk toward freedom noticing the water being held back high above them knowing if those walls came tumbling down

they would be caught in the middle. As they walked they praised God, giving him thanks for making a way when there seemed to be no way. And that cloud behind them? When the last person stepped out of the water onto the land of freedom, as the people watched, the Egyptian army comes after them crossing also on the solid, dry ground. As the first of the chariots get close to the other side, the people begin to cry for Moses to do something. Moses just looks toward heaven, maybe saying, "Now what?" and with his hands open and lifted to heaven, his staff once more pointing toward the sea, the walls holding back the water collapse and fall upon all the soldiers caught in between the divided Red Sea killing most of them while the Hebrew nation stands in awe. Moses looks across and sees Pharaoh and yells across the best he could, "Our God will always provide a way where there seems to be no way." Pharaoh shouts back, "No way!" Moses chimes back at him, "Yes he will always provide a way for his children." Mr. Satan pops his little two cents worth into the conversation standing alongside of Pharaoh, "No way, and no time." Moses laughs as God whispers in his ear the last word to say to Mr. Satan. "God says, Jesus is the way....to eternal life and to peace within." And Pharaoh and Mr. Satan take their wounded warriors and head home with their hearts broken for God has made a way and always will.

And Moses and the Hebrew people turn toward the direction Moses is leading them singing, “Our God is an awesome God he reigns from heaven above. With wisdom, power and love; Our God is an awesome God” as they follow the pathfinder, who follows THE pathfinder to the Promised Land.

That’s the mighty story of Moses and the Hebrew people when they found themselves between the rock and the hard place. And how many of us from time to time have felt like that? We think, how are we, how and I going to get through this? You don’t know how big my hole is. You don’t know what I have faced in the past and even today. You don’t know how deep my river is or wide it is. I can never swim that far to safety. You don’t know how much I’m hurting. And I honestly would have to say, I don’t. But learn from our story this morning. I may not know, **BUT GOD DOES!**

Last Sunday night around 27 of us went to see Carousel at New Salem and during that musical there is a popular song sung by the father, Billy Bigelow, to his daughter who just graduated from high school facing the tough future without knowing what to do, where to go, what to be in life. She’s not as bright as some, comes from a poor family and all that. Her plans are to be like her dad she never knew, maybe working as barker at the carousel. Though she can’t hear him, nor could his wife, because he is no longer with them, he sings that touching song

touching her inner soul and heart. She believes she can hear the voice of her father encouraging her with these words, words that she could lock in her heart and her mind:

*When you walk through the storm  
Hold your head up high  
And don't be afraid of the dark  
At the end of the storm  
There's a golden sky  
And the sweet silver song of the lark*

*Walk on, through the wind  
Walk on, through the rain  
Though your dreams be tossed and blown  
Walk on, walk on, with hope in your heart  
And you'll never walk alone  
You'll never walk alone*

At the end of that song, the young girl, her mother, who have struggled so much, hold their chins up high and March into the future knowing that no matter where they were going, they weren't going it alone. They realized God could make a way where there was no way. He would open doors, open windows so that they could "walk on with hope in their hearts." And so the musical ends letting us know as well that as we walk on with our hope in God, we don't walk alone, and that he will make a way for all of us through the good time, through the tough times. He will lead us on the less traveled road that his Son paved with his blood. When we go through our journey in life, when we hit those snags that come once in awhile, don't

be afraid of the dark, but hold your head up high and believe that the God who divided the sea for Moses is the same God who can divide your sea that seems so impossible to pass in your life. When struggles happen in your life, hold your head up high and don't be afraid but look up, look up and praise the God who can make a way where there doesn't seem a way. Look up, and keep looking up, walking forward, not looking down, not looking behind, but looking up taking each step looking to Jesus who is our path finder, our GPS system as he forges ahead and removes all the stuff that gets in our path and tells us to follow in his footsteps.

Listen to the words of encouragement from an old hymn:

*“God will make a way Where there seems to be no way. He works in ways we cannot see, He will make a way for me. He will be my guide, Hold me closely to His side; with love and strength for each new day He will make a way, He will make a way.*

*By a roadway in the wilderness, He'll lead me And rivers in the desert will I see. Heaven and earth will fade but His Word will still remain. He will do something new today.*

*God will make a way, Where there seems to be no way He works in ways we cannot see He will make a way for me He will be my guide Hold me closely to His side*

*With love and strength for each new day*

*He will make a way, He will make a way.”*

Yes, he can make a way where there seems not to be one. After all, his Son IS THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE. AND ALL WHO BELIEVE IN HIM WILL FIND THE WAY. After all, OUR GOD IS AN AWESOME GOD!