

Escape to the Wilderness

June 22, 2014

Exodus 15:1-18

1 Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the LORD, saying, "I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. 2 The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him. 3 The LORD is a man of war; the LORD is his name. 4 "Pharaoh's chariots and his host he cast into the sea; and his picked officers are sunk in the Red Sea. 5 The floods cover them; they went down into the depths like a stone. 6 Thy right hand, O LORD, glorious in power, thy right hand, O LORD, shatters the enemy. 7 In the greatness of thy majesty thou overthrowest thy adversaries; thou sendest forth thy fury, it consumes them like stubble. 8 At the blast of thy nostrils the waters piled up, the floods stood up in a heap; the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea. 9 The enemy said, 'I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my desire shall have its fill of them. I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.' 10 Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters. 11 "Who is like thee, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like thee, majestic in holiness, terrible in glorious deeds, doing wonders? 12 Thou didst stretch out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them. 13 "Thou hast led in thy steadfast love the people whom thou hast redeemed, thou hast guided them by thy strength to thy holy abode. 14 The peoples have heard, they tremble; pangs have seized on the inhabitants of Philistia. 15 Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed; the leaders of Moab, trembling seizes them; all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away. 16 Terror and dread fall upon them; because of the greatness of thy arm, they are as still as a stone, till thy people, O LORD, pass by, till the people pass by whom thou hast purchased. 17 Thou wilt bring them in, and plant them on thy own mountain, the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thy abode, the sanctuary, LORD, which thy hands have established. 18 The LORD will reign for ever and ever."

If you have not noticed or were unable to be here Vacation Bible School was awesome! This past week we had an amazing and wonderful time learning about Moses and the people of Israel as they prepared to and left from their time of bondage in Egypt. Each day we learned how we can TRUST GOD through different scripture passages and stories. The youth and adults explored the wilderness and came to know God in a different way. We met many wonderful people on our escape to the Wilderness. Each day our Celebration time was led by Aaron, Miriam, and Princess Elizabeth. They kicked off each night with fun and music and most importantly our scripture lessons.

The week did not take scripture in order it just led us through different parts of the Israelites Escape to the Wilderness. So on the first day our youth met Mo the Mouse and learned the Bible Point: God is with us, so...trust God! This is important my friends you get to experience a little bit of our adventures this week because at the end of each of our Bible Points is the phrase 'trust God!' which you do not only shout out but you also raise your hands in praise. So I will say it again 'God is with us, so...trust God!' Great! Our Key Verse of this day was "God answered, 'I will be with you'" from Exodus 3:12. Recall please that this is what God said to Moses from the burning bush as the great I Am. The main Bible Story was The Israelites cross the Red Sea. And to learn these points and verses better on day one the youth got to meet Moses in the Moses tent and cross the 'Red Sea' they met Malachi the wilderness whiner voice of the people. They played games and made special sandals for their adventure.

Day two we met Humphrey who helped us learn our Bible Point that was: God gives us what we need, so...trust God! And our Key Verse was: "For your Father [God] knows exactly what you need ever before you ask him. [God] from Matthew 6:8. The youth played games and met Moses and Malachi and saw how God provided quail and manna which tasted a lot like peeps and frosted flakes. They also got to see how you can make your own food as they made their own butter and enjoyed it on flatbread.

On the third day God created...wrong day three. On our third day Miriam and Aaron introduced us to Chase and he helped us learn our Bible Point: God gives us strength, so...trust God! And our Key Verse "For I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength" from Philippians 4:13. On this day the youth worked on their necklaces and learned how much strength they have when we work together. In fact that is something we can all do right. (Water Bottles...Moses & Malachi)

God saves us, so...trust God! was our day four Bible Point. Our key verse was "for I am with you and will save you, says the Lord." Jeremiah 30:11 and our Bible Story was Moses remembers Passover. This night was a night where the youth got to experience the Passover and paint their lintels with pretend lambs blood in the Moses Tent. It was probably the most subdued night in that room and still wonderfully fun and crazy everywhere else as they made their own musical instruments out of water bottles and ran around outside and continued to learn their VBS songs.

Our Key verse on day five was "I will bless the Lord who guides me" Psalm 16:7 and our Bible story was God gives the Ten Commandments and our Bible Point was God guides us, so...trust God! This last night of lessons was another fun filled one where Aaron struggles to bring in the tablets that Miriam so easily could carry out and Moses and Malachi led the youth through the traps of lives that can be avoided by following the ten commandments.

So that was our week concluding last night with a wonderful program and amazing fellowship and one fun slip and slide down our hill! So to review God is with us, so...trust God! God gives us what we need, so...trust God! God gives us strength, so...trust God! God saves us, so...trust God! God guides us, so...trust God!

At the end of each of our wonderful Bible points is the most important point of all...say it with me: TRUST GOD! Our scripture today takes place around this time. Here we have the "Song of Moses" the song he and the Israelites sang when they had crossed the Red Sea and their pursuers had been swept away when the waters came crashing back down. The people of Israel had gone through so much time of bondage, this hurried release but in this moment and in this time even though we know they doubted they ultimately lived it and trusted God to guide and provide for them.

Trust is a difficult thing. It takes a lot for us to trust people particularly once we have been let down by them. There is a reason for the once burned twice shy saying after all. But here is an important point we are not trusting people we are trusting God. Let me say that again we are not trusting people we are trusting God. You see in our faith that is the core of our faith, our very belief is based on our trust of God and God's presence in our very lives.

It is okay to doubt, we can turn to Exodus alone and see instance after instance of doubt. It is okay to be afraid or fearful for what tomorrow will bring. God however has given us reason to trust. Read this story, this history of our people. Remember we as Christians are a part of the Abrahamic faiths which includes ourselves as branched off from Judaism and Islam. This story of Moses who is one of the most talked about men in the Bible is filled with the very human emotions of doubt, fear, and anxiety. Yet, in spite of or perhaps because of these the people and Moses continue to trust God!

Where our scripture is significant though in trusting God is also in how it praises God. Remember our hand motion when we say 'trust God!' it is also a motion of praise. That is also what we do when we trust God! We praise God again and again when we trust in God!

Moses' song is a song of trust and praise for all that God has done right then and there. Although it is obvious in reading this portion of Exodus that it is a retelling of what happened it is clear that the people trusted God and praised God when they saw what God had done.

It begs the question then of us today. How do we trust God? How do we show our praise like the Israelites did? We do not have the red sea coming up so that we can cross away from our pursuers. Or do we when good things seem to happen and our path in life is made clearer and freed from something that obstructs us? God is with us, so... trust God! We do not have quail and manna lying on our doorsteps each morning. Or do we when most of us can open our refrigerators or go to the store and find countless things to eat? God gives us what we need, so...trust God! We do not have vicious tribes to battle every day where we need the help of others. Or do we when times are tough or when we are down not need others to lift us up? God gives us strength, so...trust God! We have not been oppressed to where the Spirit must pass through and take the firstborn of all who have not listened and marked their doors. Or are we not very aware that life is precious and limited? God saves us, so...trust God! We did not have Moses bring us down the Ten Commandments from the mountain. Or did we not have Jesus take those commandments and give us an even simpler version? God guides us, so...trust God!

Moses and the people respond by trusting God and singing and giving their praise. We my friends are called to do the same, we are called simply to believe and trust God!