

Getting out of Egypt

1. Intro

- The 1956 film – 10 Commandments, starring Charlton Heston and Yul Brenner ... has the very famous scene of God's ppl crossing the Red Sea
- It a familiar scene we see played on TV every Easter
- But apart from highlighting how bad the special effects were 50yrs ago ... what does it have to do with us today?
 - What is the meaning?
 - What its significance for us?
- 1 Cor 10 > Apostle Paul recalls the Red Sea crossing and says
 - *"our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea ... and then goes on to say - (v11) - these things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfilment of the ages has come"*
- And so, the story of Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt and through the Red Sea, like all episodes in the Old Testament is written for us
- Now our task is to understand what's going on and how this very famous event in Israel's history relates to us
- What it does is ... it shows us what salvation looks like and why it's necessary
- It's a message not just for believers ... it's a message for everyone, because everyone is faced with the same issue that the Israelites faced
- And therefore everyone needs the same solution that the Israelites received

2. What are we getting out of?

- As we have seen so far in Ex 1-12 ... the Israelites have been in slavery during their time in Egypt
- God has brought a series of 10 brutal plagues on Egypt that has forced Pharaoh to finally relent and let the Israelites go
- Then we read this in 14:5
 - *When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds about them and said, "What have we done? We have let the Israelites go and have lost their services!"*
- Now that's a nice way of putting it, isn't it?
 - We've lost their services

- Pharaoh makes it sound like he's just lost his butler
- But the reality was far, far worse - wasn't it?
- Pharaoh has lost his entire slave labour force
 - The Israelites were his slaves
 - Making them make bricks from straw and mud
 - Huge quotas
 - Slave masters over them beating them and controlling them
 - And they weren't getting paid!
 - They were in complete bondage to him
- This is what they are getting out of as they get out of Egypt
- And throughout the Bible, Egypt is often used as a metaphor for bondage, slavery and idolatry
- And it this rescue from Egypt that helps us see what salvation through Jesus Christ achieves
 - When you put your trust in Jesus as Lord and Saviour
 - You're getting out of bondage and slavery
 - You're being freed from all that
 - This is what Christ's salvation means
- Salvation is release from bondage
- However ... notice, that even though in reality they were free ... in their hearts ... the Israelites were still slaves
 - They still wanted to be back in Egypt
 - *Exodus 14:11-12* ¹¹ *They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? ¹² Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!"*
 - But that's not what they said back in 4:29-31
 - ²⁹ *Moses and Aaron brought together all the elders of the Israelites, ³⁰ and Aaron told them everything the LORD had said to Moses ...and they believed. And when they heard that the LORD was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped.*
 - A little later in Exodus 16:3

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- *"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 to death."*
 - They wanted to get out ... but when they finally got out, they wanted to go back!
 - You see ... you can take people out of slavery, but you can't easily take slavery out of people
 - Salvation by God is a salvation from bondage and slavery
 - Now let's look at what that looks like for us
 - **Application**
 - There are a number of ways that in Christ we're freed in bondage and slavery
 - First we are freed from the Law
 - The 10 commandments and all the OT law actually enslave us
 - Why? Because they're impossible to keep
 - No matter how good a person you are ... no one is able to perfectly keep the law
 - And if you're unable to keep the Law you're condemned
 - So religion ... being a religious person ... trying to keep the law ... actually enslaves you > puts you in bondage ... because you can't keep it and therefore you're condemned
 - But Apostle Paul says in Romans 8:1-2
 - *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death*
 - So you see salvation in Jesus means you are freed from the bondage and slavery of the Law and the condemnation that comes with it ...
 - because in Christ ... you're not under law, you're under grace
 - you're not saved by obeying the law, you're saved by grace
 - Secondly, we're in bondage to the law subjectively
 - That is ... even though in reality, through Jesus, there is no condemnation and we've been set from the law ... like the Israelites, we remain in bondage in our **hearts**
 - Paul's letter to the Galatians highlights this truth
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- The Galatians were people who had been converted ... they'd become Christians ... and so they knew they had been set free from the Law
- But there were some, including the Apostle Peter, who were drifting back into religion / being religious ... in order to be right with God
- They'd be set free from the Law in reality ... but there were still under the law in their hearts

- Same happens to us
- Even if you know of Christ's salvation, we have this tendency to we go back to religion / being religious ... in order to be right with God
- In **reality** we know Christ sets us free ... but in **our hearts** we remain in bondage and slavery to the Law

- **Example**
- So for example, if you know you're saved through Jesus but then you fall into sin
 - Lying, addiction, adultery, anger, pornography,
 - And as a result you feel guilty, you feel unworthy
 - to be a Christian
 - to go to church
 - to pray
 - Why?
 - Because you're basing your salvation on your performance
 - In reality you've been freed from slavery, but in your heart you're still in bondage

- Thirdly ... we're in bondage to idols
- If you love anything in life more than God, even if you believe in God ...
- If anything in your life that is more important to you than God like
 - your own significance or
 - your security
 - the approval of others
- If you love something like that more than God ... then that's a pseudo god > a false god > it's a power in your life > it's an idol
 - It will continually say "serve me or die" just like Pharaoh did to the Israelites

- At this point in Exodus, Pharaoh is no longer their master
- He said to the Israelites - "Go" > and they went
- Now Pharaoh comes and says - "I want you back"

- This happens in all your life
- It happens with family, career and money
- For example, most of us love our families and want them to be happy – that’s a good thing
 - When things go wrong in our families > sickness, hurt, death > we get sad
 - When something gets in the way of our families happiness > cancelled holiday, arguments, selfishness > we get mad
 - When there is a threat to the future of our family and its happiness > threat of redundancy, undiagnosed illness etc > we get afraid
- But when your family and their happiness is your idol ...
 - When things go wrong > you melt down and lose it
 - When something gets in the way > you get incredibly angry
 - When there’s a threat to the future of our family > ... you petrified and paralysed with fear
- Why?
 - Those are your old masters coming back to you and saying
 - “serve me or you will die”
 - “you need me”
 - “you can’t live without me”
- Like the Israelites, in Christ ... you know you're free, but
 - You struggle to live it
 - You struggle to believe it
- And so if you let - family, career, money, success, the opinion of others, security etc matters more to you than God
 - Then ... objectively God's freed you ... but in your heart you don't believe it
 - God’s freed you from old masters, but in your heart your still slaves to them
- Salvation is about getting out of bondage / out of slavery
- That slavery includes
 - Being slave to the Law
 - Being a slave religiosity
 - Being slave to idols

3. How are we getting out?

- How do you get out this bondage? How do you get out of this slavery?
 - You cross over by grace
 - It has nothing to do with you ... God does it for you

- In v5-12 ... we see Pharaoh changes his mind (yet again) and chases after the Israelites with his entire military force
 - 600 of best chariots +
 - ALL the other chariots of Egypt
 - ALL horsemen
 - ALL troops

- When the Israelites see the might of the entire Egyptian army bearing down on them ... they're understandably terrified
 - Israel have no weapons of war, not training, no leadership, no military strategies ... been farming and making bricks all their life
 - They'd be like sitting ducks for this powerful force just waiting to come through like sharks through a school of mullet

- And in v13-14 Moses urges them
 - Fear not, stand firm, see the salvation of the Lord
 - Be still ... the Lord will fight for you

- And in v15-31 this is exactly what happens ... the Lord fights for Israel¹
 - Their salvation is entirely his work > he alone saves them
- So we see
 - it's the Lord who brings a pillar of cloud between them and the Egyptians to prevent them coming near to the Israelites (v19-20)
 - it's the Lord who caused the waters to push back (21-22)
 - it's the Lord who threw Egyptians into confusion and cause their chariots to break down (v23-25)
 - Finally we see it's the Lord who caused water to sweep back over the Egyptians and drown entire army (v26-28)

- And then in v29-30 we read
 - BUT the Israelites went through on dry ground
 - That day the **Lord** saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians

- **Application**

¹ The Egyptians see this and say so-"Let's get away from the Israelites,! The Lord is fighting for them against Egypt"

- You see
 - here's how you get out of the bondage of 'Egypt'
 - here's how you get out of slavery
- You cross over by grace

- You can't do it > you can't contribute to it > you can't do a thing
- God does the whole thing

- Without Jesus we're like Israel stuck on that river bank
- One side there's darkness and their old masters who want to kill them
 - Israel is still under the sentence of death
 - Pharaoh is gunning for them
 - He wants to bring them down
- They couldn't do in on their own ... they needed God to provide a way
- And when God did ... they crossed over and as they did ... they crossed from death to life
- They crossed
 - from under condemnation to no longer under condemnation
 - from being slaves to being free
 - from under the sentence death to no longer being under that sentence

- This is how Christianity works
 - It's not like other religions
- All other religions are like building a bridge across a river
 - First you put a pylon down and then you put another pylon down
 - And then you build bridges across those pylons
 - It's a process trying to get to the other side
 - But the tragedy is ... you never get there
 - You can build and build and build ... but in the end ... you are never able to reach the other side

- **Illustration – Pont d'Avignon**
- Pont d'Avignon > bridge across the Rhone river in Avignon in France
 - The bridge was built in the C12th but it was very costly to maintain because the arches tended to collapse when the Rhône flooded
 - Eventually in the middle of the 17th century the bridge was abandoned
- It's a bridge to nowhere

- That's what it's like trying to cross over from death to life on your own
 - You can't do it on your own

- You can only do it if God does it for you
- Like the Israelites ... you need God to make a way for you to cross from death to life

- Because of what God does for you in Christ ... the moment you trust in him you cross over from death to life
 - The moment you believe in him, you go from freedom to slavery
 - The moment you put your faith in him you go from being under condemnation to no longer condemned
- Jesus says in John 5:24
 - *whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.*

- **Illustration – Martin Lloyd Jones**
- Martin Lloyd-Jones was a Welsh preacher in 1900's
- When he was meeting people and trying to get an understanding of where they were at in their faith ... he would say
 - "Let me ask you question – are you a Christian?" [no beating around the bush!]
- He said very often ... the response would be "I'm trying"
- And Lloyd-Jones would say that
 - people who respond like that
 - people who think like ...
 - have no idea what Christianity is about ... none in the slightest
- He said
 - 'because what makes you Christian ... is not the process you go through as you try to build a bridge to get to God
 - What makes you a Christian is your change of status that God makes possible by providing a way for you to cross over from death to life
 - You were enemies of God, now your sons of God
 - You were out of the family of God, now you're in the family of God
 - You weren't born again, now you are born again
 - You were not justified, now you are justified
 - And it happens ... just like that ... because God has graciously provided a way for you to cross over from slavery and death to freedom and life

- So what is salvation?
 - Firstly its getting out of slavery
 - How do you get out? You get out by cross over from death to life by grace

4. Why can we get out?

- Thirdly why is it possible to get out?
 - It's possible because we have a mediator

- The Israelites went through the water and were fine
 - The Egyptians tried to get through that they were destroyed
 - Now why did they get off?
 - If the water of judgment is standing either side of the Israelites ... why did they not come down and then?
 - Answer is because the Israelites had a mediator

- In v10 we read
 - *"As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the LORD."*
- Then Moses directs the Israelites to be still and let the Lord do the fighting for you
- Then you have this strange response from God in v15
 - *Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me?"*
 - It's strange because it's the **Israelites** are crying out to the Lord not Moses ... yet Moses is the one rebuked by God
- Why? What's going on?
- Andrew Reid in his commentary says
 - Perhaps Moses did cry out to the Lord and it's not recorded for us
 - However this would be a big assumption
 - Or more likely is ... the rebuke is directed at Moses because he is a **mediator** between God and the people and therefore is identified with them
 - And I say it's more likely because there are other times throughout Exodus, that Moses acts as a mediator such as
 - Ex 20 after they receive 10 Commandments and there's thunder and lightning and the people are so afraid they say to Moses
 - v19 *"Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die."*
 - Moses tells them not to be afraid then goes into the darkness to speak with God on their behalf
 - He mediates for them

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- The Israelites lacked faith, they were guilty of failing to believe ... and yet God rebukes Moses
 - Why? Because Moses is a mediator between God and the people

 - In addition we see in v21
 - *"Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land"*

 - In Moses you have someone who is so identified with the Israelites that their guilt falls on him
 - And you have someone who is so identified with God, that God's power flows through him
 - He's the man in the middle
 - He's so identified with the people he gets rebuked for their sin
 - He's so identified with God he becomes a vehicle for God's saving power
 - This why they are able to cross over from death to life
 - They have a mediator one who provides the way to cross over from death to life

 - But friends, we have a better mediator,
 - Hebrews 3:3 - *Jesus has been found worthy of greater honour than Moses*
 - Why? Because in Jesus Christ
 - We have one who is fully man **and** fully God ...
 - Not just one who is fully man and **close** to God
 - Unlike Moses .. Jesus wasn't rebuked for just one sin ... but he **died** for **all** sins
 - 1 Timothy 2:5-6
 - *there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all me*

 - This is the reason we can be bought out of bondage and slavery
 - The reason we can cross over from death to life
 - Is because at the cross Jesus went the other way ... he crossed over from life to death
 - He so identifies with us he gets dies for our sin
 - He so identifies with God he is the vehicle for God's saving power
 - All through the cross

 - Jesus Christ is the reason we can cross over from death to life
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- How?
 - Because when Jesus Christ was on that cross ... the flood waters of judgment came crashing down on **him!**
 - When he cried out "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me" ... he was being put under an ocean of God's wrath
- That's the reason you and I can be brought out of Egypt
- That's the reason you and I can cross over from death to life
- That's the reason we can be saved from our old slave masters who want to drag us down ...
- Jesus Christ is the ultimate mediator ...
 - and he's the reason you and I can be saved ...
 - because through the cross he paved a way us to cross over from death to life

- **Application**
- When you begin to understand the free grace of God that comes to you through the cross of Jesus Christ
 - Who has rescued you from death to life
 - Who has freed you from being a slave
 - And he's done this all by grace ... all on himself
 - That is has nothing to do with you and your fallible efforts
 - The more it's going to change your life
 - The more it's going to change your behaviour
- Why?
- Because you'll begin to see
 - all those idols that you chase after
 - your desire for security, significance, comfort, or power
 - all those things that you think make your life worthwhile
 - family, money, career, self-esteem, beauty,
 - all those things you think are going to bring you joy and peace and happiness
 - Are nothing compared to what you have in Jesus Christ

- And as you begin to see that and believe that ...
 - Then the chains of your bondage to your idols are broken
 - And Jesus Christ becomes the real affection of your heart
- And when the desire of your heart switches from your idols to Jesus
 - Then your behaviour switches from sin desires to satisfy your idol
 - To godliness as you seek to live for and love the Lord who freed and paved a way for you to cross over from death to life

- John Newton wrote the classic hymn ... Amazing grace
 - Newton has been a slave trader and rogue most of his life
 - When he heard the wonderful news of the gospel ... how Jesus Christ had made it possible for a sinner under condemnation and death to cross over to life and freedom
 - He was blown away ... it changed his life forever
 - The way he lived, the direction he took, his purpose in life
- Why ... because of God's amazing grace in Jesus Christ
- And so he wrote
 - *'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear*
 - *And grace my fears relieved.*
 - *How precious did that grace appear*
 - *The hour I first believed*
- Almost 250 years later Chris Tomlin added a chorus to Amazing Grace
 - *My chains are gone, I've been set free,*
 - *My God, my Saviour has ransomed me.*
 - *And like a flood His mercy reigns,*
 - *Unending love, amazing grace.*
- Friends, in Christ
 - You've been set free from slavery and bondage
 - He's provided a way for you to cross over from death to life
 - Why? Because the floodwaters of judgment fell on him

PRAY