

## QUESTIONS GOD ASKS:

### 3. "WHY ARE YOU CRYING OUT TO ME?"

#### **READING: Exodus 14 verses 5 – 25**

*There once was a man who lived in a two storey house. The house was near a river and unfortunately the river began to flood. As the river rose, warnings were given via radio and TV. Large jeeps drove through the area to evacuate people. As a jeep drove by the man's house, he was told: "You are in danger. You must evacuate. Get in the Jeep. Let us help you evacuate."*

*"No," the man replied from his doorstep. "I have faith. I will be ok. The flood won't get me. God will take care of me."*

*The water continued to rise. Soon the man was on the second floor. A boat was going through the area and arrived at the man's house. Rescuers made every effort to convince the man to take action so that his life would be saved. "You are in danger. You will drown in the flood."*

*"No worries," says the man. "I have faith. Everything is ok. Even though the flood is rising, I will be fine. God will take care of me."*

*The flood continued to rise. The man went to the roof to avoid the rising water. A helicopter pilot sees him on top of the roof and hovers above the man. Using a megaphone, the pilot tries to convince the man to grab the rope ladder which was dangling above his head. "You are in danger. The flood is still rising. You will drown if you do not grab the rope ladder. Let us help you."*

*"No worries." says the man. "I will be fine. Yes, the flood is higher but I have faith. God will take care of me."*

*The flood rises. The man drowns. At the pearly gates, the man says to God: "I had faith. You let me die." To which God replies: "I sent you a jeep, a boat and a helicopter. What more could I have done for you?"*

Unlike the chap in the story above, the big problem we face today is that people do not trust in God enough, except when something tragic happens. It was often said that "there were no atheists in the trenches." This is not just a problem outside of the church building, it can also be a problem inside. OK, we say prayers, but do we really pray. Do the words we utter, or the thoughts we think truly reflect what is in our hearts all the time. Perhaps this stems from not relying on God 100% of the time, but instead only when we think that we can't handle things on our own, it seems we pray. We pray, "God I need this, God I need that, God, please... God, do something about my situation by tomorrow, God I need you now, God can you hear me!" Or perhaps more familiar, "God if you get me out of this jam I'll promise to.....?"

In **Isaiah 58 verse 9** we read "**Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and He will say, 'Here am I.'**" No doubt, we have all been there and probably prayed more than one time like that before ourselves. God hears us loud and clear the first time when we call on Him, in fact He loves it when we call on Him. He's ready, willing and able to help us, the moment we do. The thing is though, we don't have to pray pleading, desperate prayers all the time to get His attention. He wants us to use the authority He has given us to pray powerful, expectant prayers.

Last week, and in our Zoom Bible Study on Thursday evening, we considered when God asked Moses in the desert "What is in your hand?" We have moved on from there. God had been true to His word, and Moses and his staff had been used in a powerful way – miracles happened, plagues descended, Pharaoh's hard heart had been broken and the people were on their way to freedom. They had seen the mighty hand of God at work, as had Moses, and the journey to freedom had begun. They hadn't travelled too far before the first problem arose – the Red Sea was dead ahead, and the dust of the Egyptian chariots was in the distance behind and the people, you could understandably so, were worried and they complained to Moses. The internet tells me that a rough estimate of 2.4 million Israelites left on the Exodus from Egypt – 600,000 of them men on foot. Imagine the headache Moses now had. Some were longing to go back again to Egypt and least have something. What was going to happen to them, were they just going to die in the desert in unmarked graves, or thrown into the Red Sea? At first Moses was strong in faith. The God who had brought them thus far, would not leave them now. In **Exodus 14 verses 13 and 14** we read that Moses told the people not to be afraid, to stand their ground and see what God would do. He had experienced the power of God personally. They had seen it through the plagues in Egypt which they had survived. Moses went on to tell the people that the Egyptians would be dealt with by the LORD, that He would fight for His people. Then the LORD turned to Moses and asked "**why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on.**" (verse 15)

Initially this might sound a bit harsh, and almost like "passing the buck". But the LORD went on to say to Moses **"Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through on dry land."** (verse 16). There is a time to cry out to God and there is a time to step out in faith and use your God given authority. I wonder if God was thinking, "seems like I have to do everything around here." In essence what He was saying was, you know what to do, just do it! Moses had seen God's power at work through his ordinary staff before. Now the LORD was basically telling Moses, stop whinging, you know what to do, you have the power and the authority I have given you. Moses obeyed God, the waters opened, the Israelites got through on dry land and the Egyptians who dared to follow, met their fate.

Whilst we don't possess a staff like Moses had, although I am very grateful to Martin Nash for the one he made and gave to me, we possess and have access to something far greater than he ever had. The "staff" we have today is the name of Jesus. As we take authority and command in Jesus' name, "seas" will open and mountains will bow down (maybe not literally), problems have no choice but to flee from us.

In scripture Jesus didn't say, "Go and pray for the sick"? It is recorded that He said, "Go and heal the sick." He wants us to be able to walk in confidence, He wants us to focus on what we do possess through our relationship that we have with Him. That's why He spoke the words, **"anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father"** (John 14 verse 12). He wanted us to know and realize, "see all I've done, pretty amazing? But the greatest thing is, you are capable of this and a whole lot more!" Jesus is our power source and if we abide in Him and abides in us, then we can walk in confidence, knowing we have access to what He has access to!

In the Message version of the Bible, **Matthew 10 verses 5-10** reads **"Jesus sent his twelve harvest hands out with this charge: "Don't begin by traveling to some far off place to convert unbelievers. And don't try to be dramatic by tackling some public enemy. Go to the lost, confused people right here in the neighbourhood. Tell them that the kingdom is here. Bring health to the sick. Raise the dead. Touch the untouchables. Kick out the demons. You have been treated generously, so live generously. Don't think you have to put on a fund-raising campaign before you start. You don't need a lot of equipment. You are the equipment...."**

Followers of Christ need to stop pleading when they're asking all the time when they pray, and start using the authority that we already have in Christ. Moses already had God's authority and God's power working through him. The people had seen it and still they cried out to God. I am NOT saying that we should not cry out to God at all, but we also need to realise that sometimes we are the answer to our prayers – for others, for ourselves because God has given us His power, His authority, His Holy Spirit. God had already asked Moses "what is in your hand?" Now He is asking this same man, through whom God had worked wonders, "why are you crying out, pleading, whinging...Tell the people to get moving." Strange, Moses says to "stand still" and God says "tell them to get moving". Maybe, God had to get their attention first, before they were ready to move on.

God wants each of us to go and use the authority that He has given you, and as we go in obedience, miracles will flow and follow! God is the God of possible. It doesn't matter how you feel or whether you feel like you are worthy of what you are asking Him for. It's not about you. It's not about what we can do on our own. It's about what He has already done, which makes it possible for us to accomplish the impossible, if we will only have faith to believe that it is possible.

God wants us to step into the abundant life He has promised us, embrace it and live in it completely, every single day. Hasn't the devil stolen enough from us and given us enough grief to last a lifetime? Be confident and know just as Jesus was given authority, so have you been, by your relationship you have with Him. You don't have to plead with the Lord when you pray and have a need. If it is His will He wants you to just speak confidently to it and consider as already being done.

So don't rely on yourself, rely on the One who can deliver every time, the One who has the strength and the means, the One who has already overcome every obstacle, and the One who looks to work His power through our lives. Stop crying, start believing. Have a read at the Message version of **Romans 8 verses 5 -**

## **PSALM 46**

<sup>1</sup> God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

<sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, <sup>3</sup> though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

<sup>4</sup> There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. <sup>5</sup> God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day.

<sup>6</sup> Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

<sup>8</sup> Come and see what the LORD has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth. <sup>9</sup> He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.

<sup>10</sup> He says, 'Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.'

<sup>11</sup> The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

## **EXODUS 14 verses 5 – 25**

<sup>5</sup> 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!' <sup>6</sup> So he had his chariot made ready and took his army with him. <sup>7</sup> He took six hundred of the best chariots, along with all the other chariots of Egypt, with officers over all of them. <sup>8</sup> The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, so that he pursued the Israelites, who were marching out boldly. <sup>9</sup> The Egyptians – all Pharaoh's horses and chariots, horsemen<sup>[a]</sup> and troops – pursued the Israelites and overtook them as they camped by the sea near Pi Hahiroth, opposite Baal Zephon.

<sup>10</sup> As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the LORD. <sup>11</sup> 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?' <sup>12</sup> 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!

<sup>13</sup> Moses answered the people, 'Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. <sup>14</sup> The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.'

<sup>15</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. <sup>16</sup> Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. <sup>17</sup> I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them. And I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. <sup>18</sup> The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen.'



<sup>19</sup> Then the angel of God, who had been travelling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, <sup>20</sup> coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other; so neither went near the other all night long.

<sup>21</sup> Then 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. The waters were divided, <sup>22</sup> and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.

<sup>23</sup> The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea. <sup>24</sup> During the last watch of the night the LORD looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. <sup>25</sup> He jammed the wheels of their chariots so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, 'Let's get away from the Israelites! The LORD is fighting for them against Egypt.'

### **ROMANS 8 verses 5 – 17 (The Message version)**

<sup>5-8</sup> Those who think they can do it on their own end up obsessed with measuring their own moral muscle but never get around to exercising it in real life. Those who trust God's action in them find that God's Spirit is in them—living and breathing God! Obsession with self in these matters is a dead end; attention to God leads us out into the open, into a spacious, free life. Focusing on the self is the opposite of focusing on God. Anyone completely absorbed in self ignores God, ends up thinking more about self than God. That person ignores who God is and what he is doing. And God isn't pleased at being ignored.

<sup>9-11</sup> But if God himself has taken up residence in your life, you can hardly be thinking more of yourself than of him. Anyone, of course, who has not welcomed this invisible but clearly present God, the Spirit of Christ, won't know what we're talking about. But for you who welcome him, in whom he dwells—even though you still experience all the limitations of sin—you yourself experience life on God's terms. It stands to reason, doesn't it, that if the alive-and-present God who raised Jesus from the dead moves into your life, he'll do the same thing in you that he did in Jesus, bringing you alive to himself? When God lives and breathes in you (and he does, as surely as he did in Jesus), you are delivered from that dead life. With his Spirit living in you, your body will be as alive as Christ's!

<sup>12-14</sup> So don't you see that we don't owe this old do-it-yourself life one red cent. There's nothing in it for us, nothing at all. The best thing to do is give it a decent burial and get on with your new life. God's Spirit beckons. There are things to do and places to go!

<sup>15-17</sup> This resurrection life you received from God is not a timid, grave-tending life. It's adventurously expectant, greeting God with a childlike "What's next, Papa?" God's Spirit touches our spirits and confirms who we really are. We know who he is, and we know who we are: Father and children. And we know we are going to get what's coming to us—an unbelievable inheritance! We go through exactly what Christ goes through. If we go through the hard times with him, then we're certainly going to go through the good times with him!