

Spirituals and the Exodus: Wade in the Water

A 5-Day Devotional

Day 1: When God Calls You Forward

Reading

Exodus 3:1-12 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up." When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. The Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt." "But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" "And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain."

Devotional

Moses had every excuse not to return to Egypt—he was settled, comfortable, and past his prime. Yet God called him anyway. Like Moses, we often feel unqualified when God disrupts our comfort zones. The sermon reminds us that "when God calls, you go." Today, consider what God might be calling you toward that feels impossible or uncomfortable. Remember, God doesn't call the equipped; He equips the called. Moses' hesitation didn't disqualify him—it positioned him to witness God's power more clearly. What "Egypt" is God asking you to face? Trust that the same God who appeared in the burning bush will be with you in your obedience. Your inadequacy is the perfect canvas for God's sufficiency.

Day 2: Hard Hearts, Hard Heads

Reading

Exodus 7:1-5 These are the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt with Jacob, each with his family: Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin; Dan and Naphtali; Gad and Asher. The descendants of Jacob numbered seventy^(a) in all; Joseph was already in Egypt. Exodus 14:1-4 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites to turn back and encamp near Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. They are to encamp by the sea, directly opposite Baal Zephon. Pharaoh will think, 'The Israelites are wandering around the land in confusion, hemmed in by the desert.' And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue

them. But I will gain glory for myself through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord.” So the Israelites did this.

Devotional

Pharaoh's stubbornness cost his nation dearly. The sermon warns us: "People with hardened hearts often have hard heads too." How often do we dig in our heels, insisting on our own way, only to discover we've been fighting against God's better plan? Pride blinds us to truth, and ego convinces us we're in control when we're not. Today, examine areas where you might be like Pharaoh—refusing to listen, believing your own press, or holding too tightly to what you should release. Don't learn every lesson the hard way. Humility isn't weakness; it's wisdom. Ask God to soften any hardened places in your heart and give you the courage to surrender control before the cost becomes too high.

Day 3: Between a Rock and a Hard Place

Reading

Exodus 14:10-14 As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the Lord. 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? 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!” 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. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.”

Devotional

Trapped between the Red Sea and Pharaoh's army, the Israelites panicked and complained. Sound familiar? When circumstances squeeze us, our first instinct is often to grumble rather than trust. The sermon reminds us that "when things don't go our way, we start to complain." But notice God's response: He didn't abandon them or take offense. Instead, He made a way. Today, identify your "Red Sea moment"—that impossible situation where you see no way forward. Remember, God doesn't always remove obstacles; He makes a way through them. Your complaint might be valid, but it's not the end of the story. God is positioning you for a miracle. Stop looking back at what was comfortable and start moving toward what God is about to do.

Day 4: Wade in the Water

Reading

John 5:1-9 Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda[Ⓜ] and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. ³ Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?” “Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me. ”Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath,

Devotional

The man at the Pool of Bethesda waited for the water to be troubled, believing healing would come. He didn't realize that Living Water stood before him. The sermon powerfully connects this to our baptism: "We wade in the water to be washed clean and made new and find freedom." Sometimes we wait for the perfect moment, the right circumstances, or better timing when Jesus is already offering us what we need right now. Today, don't wait for conditions to improve before you step into faith. The Holy Spirit—God's living water—is already stirring in your life. What burdens, guilt, or regrets do you need washed away? Jesus asks you the same question: "Do you want to be made well?" Then get up. Wade into the waters of grace available to you today.

Day 5: God Troubles the Water

Reading

Isaiah 43:1-7 But now, this is what the Lord says— he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead. Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth— everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

Isaiah 16-19 This is what the Lord says—he who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters, who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there, never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick: "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

Devotional

"God's going to trouble the water" echoes through history—from the Red Sea to the Ohio River to the pool of Bethesda to your baptism. This isn't about calm, peaceful waters; it's about God actively intervening, disrupting the status quo, making the impossible possible. The sermon declares: "God has the power and the will to deliver us." Today, claim this promise. Whether you're escaping the hounds of past mistakes, facing an impossible obstacle, or feeling trapped by circumstances, God is already at work. Your freedom may require you to step forward before you see the path. Trust that the same God who parted seas, led slaves to freedom, and raised Jesus from death is making a way for you right now. Wade in. God's already troubling the water on your behalf.