This morning we’re going to take a look at an event that took place in the Old Testament with the children of Israel …

... I think this morning we’re going to perhaps take a look at an event thats taking place in the lives of many of God’s people...

Let’s open our bibles to Exodus 15

To really appreciate where Israel was at… we need to understand where Israel has been …

As we enter into the book of Exodus, the people of Israel were growing significantly in number and there arose a new King in Egypt who began to treat the people of Israel harshly … in fact the law of the land was that every son who was born to the Hebrews was to be placed in the Nile River to die...

God, hears the cry of the people and Moses is born, he is placed in a basket in the Nile River, Moses’s sister is watching the basket as it floats over to none other than the daughter of Pharaoh… who quickly falls in love with this child. His sister goes running over and informs the daughter of Pharaoh this is an infant from the Hebrews, shall I call one of the Hebrew women over to nurse the child …

... and with permission, she runs off and grabs Jochebed, Moses’s mother and she is reunited with her son, all unbeknownst to the king!!

And Moses, who grows up in the kings courts… is being raised up by God to deliver the people of Israel from slavery under the Egyptians!

As we move through the book of Exodus we see the people of God are crying out for deliverance and God taps Moses and says go talk
to the Pharaoh and tell him to let my people go so that they may serve me!

You know the story, Pharaoh refuses and God sends consequences for his refusal in the form of plagues… 10 in particular!

Water turned into blood
Frogs everywhere
Gnats everywhere
Flies everywhere
Egyptian livestock die
Boils break out on man and beast
Hail came down, the likes of which Egypt never saw…
Locust … so much so that it darkened the daytime and they ate whatever greenery was left from the hail!

Darkness covered all the land of Egypt for 3 days they couldn’t leave their homes because of the total darkness…everywhere except where Israel dwelt!

Finally, the death of every first born in the land…
Passover is instituted…

Finally… Pharaoh recognizes he can’t fight against God and he concedes in releasing the Hebrews to go and worship!

Imagine what that must’ve been like for them to see God come through for them!

Let’s pick up in our story…

Exodus 13:17 (ESV)

Pillars of Cloud and Fire
17 When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near. For God said, “Lest
the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt.”
God didn’t take them the easy way because they still had the mindset of slaves! God knew where they were at and because of his love and commitment to them, he wasn’t going to bring them through something that would result in them going back into slavery!

To the Hebrews, going by way of the land of the Philistines made sense, it was easy, it was quick, it was logical … but it would’ve destroyed them because God knew they weren’t ready for what they were going to face!

And God was committed to making them ready for what was ahead and the way he did that was by bringing them the long way through the wilderness…

It was this choice of direction that God made for them that would cause them to learn how to trust God in the most difficult of times!

… you see, God isn’t committed to the quick fix, he’s committed to the long haul because the longer things take, the deeper things go and the more settled you become in your faith.

If the Israelites went in to the land of the philistines before they were ready, it would’ve destroyed them!

And I want you to know that if God has to put a delay on your dream so that your dream doesn’t destroy you, he will do it because he loves too much to let you get destroyed.

And so they begin to journey by way of the long, hard wilderness … BUT they didn’t have to question God’s direction because God led them with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night … you see, when you’re following God’s plan he’ll make the direction clear!
I’m sure the people were encouraged and blessed that God was so clearly leading them and their leader was really hearing from God with such clarity … surely God has good things in store for us…

Look at what happens in 14

**Exodus 14:5 (ESV)**

5 When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, “What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?”

And so Pharaoh sets out to gather the Hebrews back into slavery and the chase begins!

**Exodus 14:9–13 (ESV)**

9 The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh’s horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

10 When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord.

11 They said to Moses, “Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? 12 Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.” 13 And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again.

You see the people were all caught up in what they could see at the moment, but God wanted them to see the Salvation of the Lord … and you don’t experience God “saving you from something” until you find yourself in a place that you need to be saved!
You can’t have a message without a mess!

And the Hebrews are about to experience that very thing because as the Egyptians are in hot pursuit behind them and the mountains are standing as tall barriers beside them … they realize The Red Sea is in front of them!

Have you ever felt that way?

You know what happens…

Exodus 14:21 (ESV)

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

… and God once again, not only protects the Hebrews… BUT SHOWS THEM THEY COULD TRUST GOD!

That’s the longest journey ever … from faith to trust!

Chapter 15 they respond in song of the goodness of God… I will sing to the Lord for he has triumphed gloriously, the horse and rider he has had thrown into the sea! …

What a tremendous moment! Imagine what a boost that must have been to their faith and awareness that they have a future… and slavery wasn’t supposed to be a part of it… but they wouldn’t have seen God open up the Red Sea unless they were forced into their having to cross it!

And there will be times that God brings you right to the edge and you’re left wondering “Is this going to kill me” …. God will never let you down!
Integrity Church  Pastor Tony Balsamo
October 22, 2017  Sunday Worship Service

…. And so here they are! They’ve got another “win” under their belt … surely it’s going to be smooth sailing from here on in …

Exodus 15:22–27 (ESV)

22 Then Moses made Israel set out from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur. They went three days in the wilderness and found no water. 23 When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter; therefore it was named Marah.

24 And the people grumbled against Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?” 25 And he cried to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a log, and he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet.

There the Lord made for them a statute and a rule, and there he tested them, 26 saying, “If you will diligently listen to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, your healer.”

27 Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they encamped there by the water.

Once again they suffer an unintended setback … but a very necessary one!

They go from singing about the greatness of God and their leader, Moses back to grumbling and questioning…

I love the irony here… perhaps that water being bitter was a picture of what was going on in the hearts of the people… the goal wasn’t to get them to bring from fresh springs, the goal was to get them to trust God…

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But the only way they were going to be able to get to Elim was to go through Marah!

Marah was a place of bitterness
Marah was a place of discouragement
Marah was a place of disappointment
Marah was a place of depression
Marah was a place of difficulty …

But Marah was the necessary pathway to get them from where they were, to where God wanted them to be … Marah was a tool in the hands of God to teach them how to trust!

Maybe you find your self sipping from the water of Marah … be encouraged, its not your destination… its your path to God’s blessing in your life!