

When God Leads to a Dead End

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[0 : 01] Well, a very good evening to you. I hope you had a good afternoon. I hope you did all your napping this afternoon and that nobody feels like they need to catch a quick nap this evening, all right?

If you have a Bible, we're in Exodus 14. I don't know if anybody reads through the Bible every year. Anybody do that as a habit, practice? Read through the Bible every year? A couple? Yeah? All right. It's a great, that is a great habit to have.

If you're going to have habits, all right, a good one to have is to try and get through the Bible once a year at least. I knew one guy that tried to get through the Bible four times a year.

That was a big task. But you can do it about 20 minutes a day, try and get through the Bible in a year. We try to encourage the folks at Corrobras to do that every year.

[1 : 09] It's probably better to think of it as getting the Bible through you every year, okay? So it's not just like this, you know, I'm a bit obsessive-compulsive about things.

So set me a task and I'll just kind of do it. I don't know that I always do it for the right reasons, but, you know, I've got to do it. Give me a problem to solve and, you know, I'll solve it.

So I don't like, I can get hooked into just, I got to get through the Bible every year. But it's better if you think about trying to get the Word of God through you every year. One of the good things about trying to read through the Bible every year is that the big picture begins to take a bit more shape in your mind and in your hearts.

I think that's fair to say. The more that you read through the entire content of the Word of God, the more all of the little pieces of the puzzle begin to fit in.

I don't know that any of us really have all the pieces where they belong. Some of the pieces are really hard to fit in the right places. But one thing's for sure. The more that you go through and go over God's Word, the more you'll begin to just look at things, particularly in the Old Testament, I think, that are sometimes a little bit more difficult to put in the right places.

[2 : 27] Exodus, prophecies, those kind of things. You begin to see connections developing between many of the books of the Bible. And you begin to see the theme that is woven through the Bible begin to come together a bit more.

So I just encourage you to do that. The reason I mention that tonight is because if you're reading chronologically through the Bible, which I try to do every year, you're probably not far off Exodus 14. I think you'll probably be around Exodus 22, 24, somewhere in there if you're reading through chronologically. So if you have been doing that, then some of what we're looking at tonight may be still fresh in your minds.

I can tell by your faces that many of you haven't a clue what I'm talking about here. But okay, it's a good practice to have. If I can encourage you to do that. I started doing that, I don't know how many years ago.

But I remember we had a guy named Peter Jackson come to Corubbers. I don't know if you've ever met Peter Jackson. He's a blind pianist. I think he just recently passed away, Peter.

[3 : 37] And while he was with us one year, he's blind, okay? He's been blind since he was about two years old from an illness. And I think in Braille, he was reading through the Bible.

I don't know how many times a year he was reading through the Bible, but it really just caught me. If this guy can read through the Bible more than once in a year, I could probably do it myself. Okay, I've harped on about that enough.

Just an encouragement for you. Exodus 14, you'll probably be aware of the fact that when you think about the book of Exodus, Exodus begins, Israel's in a good place, right?

Come out of the end of book of Genesis. Jacob and the rest of the family have gone down to join Joseph in Egypt. Okay, they're given favor by Pharaoh because Joseph had been placed into such an exalted position in Egypt.

And they're given this great land of Goshen and they're given the greatest of the land and the flocks are prospering there and the people are prospering there.

[4 : 43] And so Genesis ends and Exodus begins and Israel's in a good place. But of course, a Pharaoh arises who doesn't know Joseph, that generation and the generation of Joseph's brothers die out.

And very, very quickly, Egypt, the leaders and the rulers in Egypt begin to get really nervous about the prosperity of the nation of Israel. They've grown, they're strong, they're prosperous.

And then they begin to subject them to just a great oppression. And it's not long before Israel are in a really bad place.

By the time you get to chapter 14 now, okay, they've done their time. The Lord prophesied that they would be in Egypt for many years.

They were in Egypt for over 400 years. But now by the time you get to chapter 14, Moses has come. The mighty hand of God has been revealed against Egypt.

[5 : 55] And Israel comes out, the Passover in chapter 12. And really interesting, they're coming out of slavery now.

And just an amazing experience of incredible hardship and oppression for generations.

Okay, so you got to remember that the generation that came out of Egypt, that generation had never experienced freedom. Right?

Because nobody was over 400 years old. So that generation had never experienced freedom. All they had ever known was slavery and oppression.

That was their life. They were born into that. They grew up in that. They married in that. They had children in that. They died in that. Okay, so that's kind of something of the backdrop here.

[6 : 54] The nation that is now being delivered out of Egypt, they have never known what it feels like to be free. We just take that so for granted, don't we?

It's great to hear people praying tonight for the world and for countries where people wish they had what we had. They would give anything to live in a nation that we live in.

As much as we bellyache about it and moan and groan about it, they'd give anything to live where we do. And as you know, we're in the midst of this mass migration now that we've never seen.

Certainly, I've never seen anything like it. And people want to live in a better place. Well, 430 years of bondage, 430 years in Egypt, most of those years in bondage.

And now Israel are being delivered. And as they come out, the generation that is coming out have never experienced freedom. And now they're out.

[7 : 57] Now they're out. I've read this so many times, but the more I read it, the more I just try to get my head around what it must have felt like.

What it must have felt like to never have known. I mean, your parents didn't know freedom. Your grandparents didn't know freedom. Your great-grandparents didn't know freedom. Just generations of your nation have never known freedom.

And now they are out. 430 years. And they're out. They're free. I can almost imagine. I can hear them saying, I am never going to complain about anything again.

Right? Can you see them? You've had a headache before. Right? You've had a bad headache.

And it's lasted for hours. And you pray to God. And you take your aspirin or whatever.

And then your headache goes away. And you just think, oh, Lord, thank you. I'm never going to complain about anything again. Until tomorrow. Right? I mean, 430 years and they are out.

[9 : 00] You can almost hear them being released from this incredible burden. And you just know that nothing is ever going to bother you again. Well, let's see if that's true.

Exodus 14. Let's pick it up in verse 1. Now the Lord spoke to Moses saying, speak to the children of Israel that they turn and camp before Pi-Hahirath between Migdal and the sea opposite Baal-Zipon.

You shall camp before it by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, they're bewildered by the land.

Mark that phrase because it is repeated again and again and again and again in the Old Testament.

The reason why God does so much of what he does in the Old Testament that, if we're honest, really does boggle our minds is simply that the world might see and have a clearer picture of who he is.

[10:30] The greatest thing this universe could ever see is the greatness of God. Is that not fair? The theme of the Bible, I think the theme of everything, is the glory of God. What does that mean?

It just means the expression of the greatness of who God is. I think that is the theme of everything. I think that is the purpose of everything. Do you think there's a reason? The reason why there's a universe is because God determined that he would express the greatness of who he is.

Fair? Is that fair? Is that not why everything is here? Psalm 19, verse 1, the heavens declare the glory of the Lord. Well, what do you mean they declare the glory of the Lord?

Can you put your hand to your ear and you hear them saying something? No. Just by their very existence, they express the greatness of who God is. That's why God made man in his image, didn't he? Isaiah 43, verse 7, God made us for his glory.

God made us to express the greatness of who he is. How did he make us? Genesis 1, 26, how did he make us? God made man in his image, like him.

[11:31] We're not God, but God made us like him. The reason God made us was that he wanted to express the greatness of who he is in a being that was like him.

So God made us like him. And we're different than anything else in creation. We are like God. In so many ways, God made us for his glory.

And so even here, God is going to act. And what he's going to do is he acts. All this deliverance, all that God is doing in this nation, all that God does through Christ at the cross, all that he does in the creation and the summation of the world and everything, expresses the greatest thing in the world, is that the greatness of who God is would be expressed, that it would be seen, and that people would see that.

That's the reason for the gospel, is that people would come to understand, not just how great it is to be a part of a Brunson Evangelical Church, although I'm sure that's great, but that they would come to know Christ and recognize what it means to understand and know the God who made everything and the greatness of who he is.

God made everything for his glory. But we have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And so all the pictures of the Old Testament, we thought about this this morning, all the shadowy insufficiencies are fulfilled in Christ.

[13:03] And when Christ comes and he makes atonement for sin, all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, that is a problem. The wages of sin is death, so Jesus dies.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Jesus comes and makes atonement for sin, that as we respond to Christ's offering and sacrifice for us, we might be forgiven.

And then as Paul writes to the Corinthians, don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, transforming power of God in our lives as we respond to the gospel? Don't you know that the Spirit of God is in you and that you are not your own?

You have been bought with a price. Therefore, anybody know? Glorify God in your bodies. See the big picture?

Made for God's glory, fallen from glory, restored to glory in Christ. Okay, that's not really my message tonight. It's a freebie, but I'll let you think about that. Okay, so here it is again. All that he does, that is the purpose that lies behind, I would suggest to you, the purpose that lies behind everything.

[14:10] So what he's going to do here with Egypt and with Pharaoh, it just continues to fall along those lines of God expressing the greatness of who he is. That is what he does.

So then I will harden Pharaoh's heart that he will pursue them and I will gain honor or be glorified that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord. And they did so. Now it was told the king of Egypt, so Israel went out and they camped by the sea.

They did so. Now it was told the king of Egypt that the people had fled and the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned against the people. Remember he had sent them out finally, go, go, just leave.

You've ruined, you've destroyed our nation. Go, leave. Go and make your sacrifices. Take your animals, take your children, take everybody and just get out.

Right? Exodus 11, 12, get out. And they did. But now he's having second thoughts. Right? That's quite a big workforce to lose overnight.

[15:10] He's having second thoughts. The heart of Pharaoh and his servants were turned against the people. And they said, why have we done this? That we have let Israel go from serving us.

We've lost them all. Right? They were a huge nation by this time. They were a huge nation. 600,000 adult men come out. So many would speculate perhaps up to 2 million of them at this point in time. It's a huge workforce that we're doing, by and large, most of the manual labor for the nation of Egypt. And they're gone. What have we done?

What have we done? We've let them go. So verse 6, He made ready his chariot and took his people with him. Also, he took 600 choice chariots and all the chariots of Egypt with captains over every one of them.

And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he pursued the children of Israel. And the children of Israel went out with boldness. So the Egyptians pursued them.

[16:17] So, okay, at this point in time, they're feeling pretty good. They've gone out with boldness, right? They're delivered. They're out after 400. They're feeling good. You with me? They're feeling good.

They're going out with boldness. The Egyptians have sent them over. They plundered the Egyptians, silver and gold. Remember, right? They took all their stuff and they're going out. They're heading out. The promised land is...

This is a happy days. Happy days. They're in a good place at this point. They're going out. They're delivered. Wow, what must that have felt like? Gone out with boldness, we're told.

So the Egyptians pursued them, verse 9, and all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh. That's a big company. His horsemen and his army. And overtook them, camping by the sea beside Pihirith before Baal-Zipphon.

Now, what's this? They'd be thinking, right? What is... They get out of here. Go. Leave us. We're finished with you. What's happening now?

[17:23] Who are these guys? What? Right? We thought we were out. We thought we were home free. We... All right. So, doesn't quite look as good. Verse 10, When Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes and behold, the Egyptians marched after them.

And so they were very afraid. Going out with boldness, now they're afraid. And the children of Israel cried out to the Lord. And they said to Moses, because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness?

Didn't take too long before they started complaining again, didn't it? Never complain about anything again. Why have you so dealt with us to bring us up out of Egypt?

Now, I didn't hear anyone complaining when they were in Egypt. Did you? Right? I mean, I'm sure just, you know, they were crying out to the Lord. The Lord heard their cries, their oppression. They were miserable and they were asking God to deliver them.

God delivers them. And now they're saying, why do you take us out of here? This is crazy. This is crazy. Saying, let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians.

[18:34] Hang on a minute. Four to thirty years, you're crying out to get us out of here. So I got them out of here. Let us serve the Egyptians. This is crazy. It's crazy.

For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness. So you have some sense of their despair. This is great despair.

They obviously feel as though there is no hope. Why else, after crying out for four hundred and thirty years and then being delivered, would they say, hey, we'd rather not have been delivered? Their despair must be huge. Isn't it? Can you imagine being delivered from some illness or something? I don't know. Some terrifying experience of your life and you're crying out to God to be delivered.

God delivers you and in just a couple of days you're saying, I'd rather have that. Something massively bad must be coming to your life to say, I'd rather go back to that. That's kind of where they're at.

[19:29] Verse 13. Well, let's stop in verse 12. Let's stop in verse 12. We'll pick up in verse 13 in a minute. Okay? God is leading them out of Egypt.

Right? God is leading them out of Egypt. Nobody's going to argue with that. Okay? Who's in control here? God is in control. Who's leading them out? God is leading them out. Moses is there, but

Moses is God's spokesman and through Moses, God is leading them out of Egypt. chapters 13, 14, and 15 of Exodus form for me just an incredible story about how sometimes God leads us. And there are three really bizarre different ways here. One in chapter 13, one in chapter 14, one in chapter 15. We're just going to look at chapter 14. But there are three very unlikely, seemingly unlikely ways that God leads these people. God is leading. They're not making a mistake. God's at the head of the whole deal here. And yet it's a bizarre, three bizarre different ways that God leads.

[20 : 34] The first way he seems to lead them is by a different route than they had planned to go. Remember, they had planned to go straight to the promised land and he leads them instead away from where they would have experienced the conflict with the Philistines.

And now here in chapter 14, he leads them seemingly to a dead end. They've got nowhere to go. In fact, it seems to be such a dead end that they would prefer to go back to Egypt. And then once you get into chapter 15, he leads them to a very dry place. So here God is leading them, but in a strange way he's leading them. So since when does God lead down a dead end street?

You don't perceive that God does that. Not the God of the Bible, not the God who loves us, not the God who makes provision for us. Since when does God lead down a dead end street? What's going on here? I wonder if any of you have ever hit one of these in your life. I wonder if any of you have ever hit, as a follower of Christ, hit a time in your life when you just don't get it.

[21 : 44] You're praying to God, you're seeking to honor God with your life, doing everything you can to, as far as you know, to obey God. And yet the circumstances, as far as you're concerned, don't seem to be following the script that you've written.

Right? Wait a minute, Lord, that's not the script that I've written. And you just wonder, Lord, what on earth are you doing? You're leading me down a dead end street. I think that's how Israel are feeling just now. You're trusting, you're seeking, you're asking, but all you seem to get is a dead end. The Israelites are right here. The Egyptians are on one side, the sea is on the other side, their backs are up against the wall. It's the picture I've got. Their backs are up against the wall. And verse 10 says they are terrified. The AV says they're sore afraid. Right? That's big. They're sore.

[22 : 48] I like to, sometimes you go back to the old English, that's good. They're sore afraid. It hurts. They're so afraid. They're sore afraid. That's fear. And so they cry out in verse 11, was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us here to die?

Or if you like, did you have to take us all the way out here to show us a dead end? We had a dead end enough in Egypt. Did you have to bring us all the way out here to show us a dead end? Didn't take long for these guys to give up. Well, here's the question I'll pose for us tonight with this in view. What happens when God is leading us, but where he leads us seems to be to a dead end? What happens? What do we do then? What do we do when our life hits a place where we just don't get it? We know God is for us. We know God is for us. That's pretty clear. His word is very clear on that in Christ. We belong to him. We're beloved to him in Christ. We're accepted in the beloved. We belong to his family. What happens? What do you do when it seems like you've reached some kind of a dead end in your life?

[23 : 57] It's not what you would ever have expected God to do in your life. It's not a great place to be. What happens then? Let me just give you a few suggestions and we'll finish up tonight.

Number one, I think if you reach a place like this in your life, if you have an experience like this, if you're in an experience like this just now, I think you need to remember that what you see is not all that you get. Is that not fair? What you see is not all that you get. We so often find ourselves being driven more by what we can see than by what we can't see. Fair enough? Right? Our emotions, our experiences. What you see is not all you get. Remember Paul in 1 Corinthians 13 verse 12. We see now in a mirror what? Dimly. Dimly. Dimly. I don't have all the answers. I don't have all the answers. In fact, now I'm hitting 55.

[24 : 58] My eyesight's getting so bad I can't even read all the questions. But I don't have all the answers. But I love the perspective that David gives in Psalm 14. He says that God looks down.

We just look out. We just look out and all we can see is what has just been behind us and where we are now. Don't know what the next day is going to bring.

All we can see is just on this very limited plane. But God looks down we're told from heaven on the sons of men. I love that perspective. We have to remember that perspective.

What's going on when it looks like a dead end? Well, for one thing you're certainly not seeing all that there is. I've shared I'm sure before I won't go into belabor this.

We've been preaching through Job I said this morning at Corubbers so I've spoken a few times already about just a very, very bad patch that I had a number of years ago. A burnout, breakdown, whatever, anxiety and depression and it bumbled on for me for years.

[26 : 01] For years. It was just a horrible dark place for me. Probably when I started that place I didn't have many books on my shelf about depression or mental illness or anxiety or anything.

If any of you want to borrow a book now I probably have them all. I've just got shelves full of these things. One of the best books I ever read was by a guy named David Jeremiah and he was a pastor in the States and he'd gone through lymphoma and he just had written this book with a number of other people sharing difficult experiences from a Christian point of view and he ties each one of the chapters in with a different psalm and it's just a great book.

But the title of the book is A Bend in the Road and let me just read you just a wee poem that's right at the very beginning of the book A Bend in the Road and here's what he says.

He says sometimes we come to life's crossroads and we view what we think is the end. But God has a much wider vision and he knows that it's only a bend.

The road will go on and get smoother and after we've stopped for a rest the path that lies hidden beyond us is often the path that is best.

[27 : 22] So rest and relax and grow stronger. Let go and let God share your load and have faith in a brighter tomorrow.

You've just come to a bend in the road. So not good. We view what we think and say Lord what have you done? I'd rather be in Egypt. I'd rather be in Egypt.

Man that must be pretty bad to wish that you were back there. I'd rather be in Egypt. What are you doing now? Don't forget that all that you see is not all that there is. The Israelites it looks like the end.

But remember that God initiated this in the first place. It wasn't Pharaoh that initiated this it was God that brought them here. God told them where to go. God sent them to the sea. God sent them to the place where their backs are now against the wall.

God sent them there. there. I'd reckon that in the number of people that are here tonight somebody is probably feeling something like this or you know somebody who is.

[28 : 32] And yet God's the one who's sent them here. The Lord said to Moses verse 1 tell the Israelites to turn back and to encamp between Migdal and the sea.

God sent them there. And then Pharaoh's going to think the Israelites are wandering around in the land in confusion hemmed in by the desert. So it's kind of like the old wandering around in confusion trick.

Isn't it? You know God's going to see them wandering around and Pharaoh's going to go and get them. Nothing has God has lost nothing of his control of the situation.

It only looks like they're wandering around in the desert. It only looks like a dead end. Of course it does see. But that's not all there is. They see Pharaoh, they see 600 of his best chariots, Egyptian officers, ranks of soldiers, but unfortunately the one person they don't seem to see in this place is God.

The one person they don't seem to see is God. Reminds me, remember Gehazi? Remember that story in 2 Kings 6? It's a great story, I'm sure you know it.

[29 : 40] And the king of the Arameans is desperate to get his hands on Elisha. Because as the king of the Arameans makes all his battle plans, God has given Elisha insight into what's going on in their board room.

He's revealing to Elisha the plans that they're making, that the Arameans are making in secret. And so the king of the Arameans is just desperate to get his hands on Elisha.

So listen, 2 Kings 6, verse 13, the king says, go, find where he is, the king ordered, so I can send men and capture him. The report came back, he's in Dothan. So they sent horses and chariots and a strong force there.

Sounds like the Egyptians coming out to get the Israelites. And they went by night and they surrounded the city. And the servant of the man of God, Gehazi, the servant of the man of God got up and he went out early in the morning. And an army of horses and chariots had surrounded the city.

Oh my Lord, he says, what are we going to do? Don't be afraid, the prophet answered, because those who were with us are more than those who are with them.

[30 : 46] And you can see, you can almost see Gehazi at that point. Gehazi comes out of the house, all he sees are the hillsides covered with Aramean soldiers.

And Elisha says, oh don't be afraid, those who are with us are more than those who are with them. And you can just see Gehazi, the eyes are popping out of his head with fear. And he's probably thinking, Elisha, what have you been drinking?

What do you mean? What do you mean? So Elisha prayed, Lord, open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the servant's eyes and he looked and saw the hills full of the horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

What you see is not all that there is. That is always the case, folks. That is always the case. When God leads us to a place that we're uncomfortable in, we don't like it, we're despairing, we wonder where he is, we're crying out.

One of the books I got on my shelf is When Heaven is Silent by Ron Dunn. And you're crying out and you're getting no answer and you just, you know, Lord, where are you?

[31 : 48] Read the Psalms. They're filled with this kind of an emotion. They're filled with it. Lord, where are you? All that you see is not all that there is.

You just need to give God some space to work. Second thing I'd suggest to you hear when you hit a dead end is that dead ends tend to be some of the greatest opportunities for us to express the greatness of who God is in our lives.

I think that's fair. I think that's fair. I think difficult circumstances would look like dead ends for us tend to be those times of our life when we have the greatest opportunity for the greatness of who God is to be seen in our lives.

Would you agree? It's a great opportunity at these points. For God to be glorified in our bodies. Look back at verse 2 again. Tell the Israelites to turn back, set up camp by the sea.

Pharaoh's going to think they're trapped and then I'm going to harden his heart. He's going to chase after them for all that he's worth. But I am going to gain glory for myself. Honor, glory for myself. God says through Israel's sticky situation.

[32 : 54] I'm going to gain glory for myself. God is going to be glorified. And is that not what we pray? I think we've sung some songs like that tonight. Lord, I could never thank you enough for the sacrifice that you've made on my behalf.

I never deserved it. You sent your son to die for my sin. I could never express to you in a million lifetimes the gratitude that I feel. My life is what?

Yours. Do with it as you will. Have any of you ever prayed that prayer? Any of you ever prayed that prayer? Anybody, anything like that? That's a dangerous prayer to pray, isn't it?

My life is your do with it as you will. Glorify yourself, Lord, in my life. Glorify yourself in my life. Paul faced this. Same experience.

Israel is stuck and God's getting the glory. All they saw was the stuck bit. They saw the stuck. They seem to have forgotten all about the cloud and the fire.

[34 : 00] Never seen the dawn on them. God might be doing something great for himself. Never seemed to dawn on them. God had led them out. God knew what he was doing and God was going to glorify himself in what seemed to them was a dead end.

Be patient. Be patient. The story's not over yet. Could have said to Israel, you're not in the water yet. They had themselves in the depths of the Red Sea, didn't they?

They already had themselves in the depths of the Red Sea. They're not in the sea yet. God's not finished yet. Be patient. I think this happens to us loads. We get into these difficult circumstances in our lives and we write the end of the story and that's not the same script that God has.

Give him an opportunity to show you what he's written. Paul says in Romans 15 verse 4 whatever was written in the earlier times was written for our instruction that through perseverance and encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.

Do you hear that? By looking at their situation we need to learn something from it and we might have hope. These guys got hemmed in at the Red Sea so that my dead end experience might not sink me.

[35 : 11] They got hemmed in so that I could be reminded that he's going to do exactly the same thing when I hit a dead end.

It's the way Paul puts it in Philippians 1 verse 19 talking about being in prison for Christ. He says I know that my dead end prison experience is going to turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Completely different perspective on his circumstances. Completely different perspective. According to my earnest expectation and hope that I shall not be put to shame in anything but that with all boldness listen to this that with all boldness Christ shall even now as always be exalted in my body. I'm in prison. I don't like being in prison. But it's an opportunity for God to be exalted in my body whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ and to die gain.

You know what's going on when you hit a dead end? Great opportunity to express the greatness of who God is in your life because that's what glorifying God is all about. For God to express how great he is and you've read the books you've heard the stories your life is a story isn't it?

[36 : 33] Your life is a story that's being written. Your life is a story listening to what I'm saying some of you are nodding but most of you are listening then the story is not over.

The story is not over. Your life my life is a story that God is writing. It's not over. Don't write the end of the script for God please. He's writing his own story with your life that will satisfy you and glorify him.

Let him finish the end. The final point is simply that God doesn't do dead ends.

God doesn't do dead ends. Right? He causes all things to work together for good. He doesn't do dead ends.

There's nothing like that in scripture. Nothing like that in scripture. Causes all things to work together the good of those who love God and are called according to their own purpose.

[37 : 46] Right? No. His purpose. His purpose. His purpose. For your life. His purpose. There was a time, I'm sure, for all of you, where you gave, we often put salvation in these terms. We say that there was a point in my life where I gave my life to Christ.

Or I gave my heart to the Lord. It's not quite biblical terminology, but we know what we mean. It was a point in my life where I gave my life to Christ. Oh, really? So what do you do?

It's like the Israelites saying, you know, God is leading us out. We're trusting God to lead us out. First little blip that they hit, they want to go back to Egypt.

God doesn't do dead ends according to his purpose. His purpose doesn't include dead ends for us. It does not include dead ends. Isaiah 46, verse 10, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times, things which have not been done, saying, my purpose will be established and I will accomplish all of my good pleasure.

That is what God is doing in your life. That is what God has promised to do in your life. As a follower of Christ, it doesn't sound like a dead end to me. God doesn't do dead ends. He does justification. He does sanctification.

[38 : 59] He does new life, not dead ends. God does new life. That's his purpose for us. So shall we read how the story ends?

Let's read how the story ends. You guys know how the story ends, but it's always good to read these things, even though you know the end of the story, right? Every time I get to these stories in the Bible, I read it a hundred times, a thousand times.

I just love to read them again. It's like watching a movie where you just love that bit and you kind of know what's coming, but you enjoy watching it over and over again. Verse 13.

So Moses said to the people, don't be afraid, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will accomplish for you today.

Don't even have to wait till tomorrow. He's going to do it for you today. for the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The Lord will fight for you and you shall hold your peace.

[40 : 03] The Lord said to Moses, why do you cry to me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. Where? Go forward, lift up your rod, stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it.

The children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians and they shall follow them and so I will glorify myself or gain honor over Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots, his horsemen.

The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord and I have gained honor. I have glorified myself over Pharaoh and his chariots and his horsemen. The angel of God who went before the camp of Israel moved and went behind them and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them. So it came between the camp of Egyptians and the camp of Israel. Thus it was a cloud and darkness to come to the one and gave light by night to the other so that the one did not come near the other all that night.

The Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night and made the sea into dry land and the waters were divided.

[41 : 21] So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea. It's where they were afraid they were going to go. But they went into the midst of the sea on dry ground.

Wow. Wow. Into the midst of the sea on dry ground and the waters were a wall to them on the right hand and on the left.

the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea and Pharaoh's horses his chariots and his horsemen. Now it came to pass in the morning at the morning watch that the Lord looked down.

Here he is seeing everything. The Lord looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and the cloud and he troubled the army of the Egyptians and he took off their chariot wheels.

What an incredible sight that must have been. It would be like blowing out tires left right and center wouldn't it? You know they're cruising in there just thinking the Israelites are right within our grasp and it's like a cartoon isn't it?

[42 : 23] Just about ready to get there and they blow their tires out and the wheels are coming off their chariots. I'm sure you could probably make something of a cartoon out of this. So that they drove them with difficulty and the Egyptians said let us flee from the face of Israel for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians.

Now what was completely unseen to Egypt and to Israel God is beginning to expose. He's taking the cover off and they're beginning to see what's really going on.

Who's really in control? Who's really in charge? And the Lord said to Moses stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians on their chariots and on their horsemen.

And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and when the morning appeared the sea returned to its full depth while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.

Then the waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained.

[43 : 34] But the children of Israel had walked, on dry land, in the midst of the sea. I love that.

I love that picture. Absolutely love that picture. I think I'm going down for the third time, right? I'm in a situation about that. I think I'm going down for the third time in the midst of the sea when in actual fact God's got my feet on solid ground.

The waters are a wall on the right and the wall to the left. So the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Thus Israel saw the great work which the Lord had done in Egypt.

So the people feared the Lord. Somebody once said, right, fear the Lord and there's nothing else to fear. Just the day before they were so frightened.

They were begging to go back to Egypt. And now their eyes are in the right place. Do they stay in the right place henceforth forever more? No. Get to chapter 15 and they're right back to complaining again.

[44 : 49] So, you know, I mean, God is so patient with us, isn't he? He delivers us. We fear him. Okay, Lord, I get it. I get it. I get it. I'll never complain again.

God is so patient with us, isn't he? He knows our frame, Psalm 103 says. He knows our frame that we are but dust. Dust is pretty low, isn't it? Dust is pretty low and yet God loves dust.

God loves the dust that we are. God loves the dust that we are. So much so that he would do all that he's done for us in Christ. He loves the dust. He knows we're dust.

Listen, he knows we're weak. He knows that he's going to deliver us. He knows that when he delivers us, we're going to feel great and we're going to make all kinds of promises. 99% of which we're probably not going to keep. He knows that. And he's patient and we cry out to him.

He comes back and he delivers us again. So dead end or awesome God, right? Dead end or awesome God.

[45 : 48] Whatever comes our way in the week ahead or the month ahead or the year ahead or the life ahead, whatever it is, these things have been written for our instruction, guys. These things have been written for our instruction.

Okay, so God intends for us to learn. He intends for us to read his loving heart, his loving care, his delivering purposes. He intends for us to get it. He wants us to get it.

So that whatever comes our way, I don't know what's coming tomorrow. Do you? I don't know what's coming tomorrow. But I know whatever comes, God's promises are sure. He's the same God yesterday, today, forever.

He'll be there for me. He'll be there for you. He'll rescue those that he loves, and he'll bring glory to his great name. And we will have the delight of knowing that we have been able to participate in the world, seeing something of the greatness of God, as he displays that in our lives, through the circumstances of our lives, as we trust him and follow him faithfully.

Well, let's pray. Father, we thank you for the story that comes to us here in Exodus and all through your word, really.

[47 : 01] We thank you for the greatness of who you've revealed yourself to be. Lord, we are so weak, so fickle, so fallen, so prone to wander, so prone to lack confidence.

But we pray that something of what we've been able to participate in today as we've worshipped you together and spent time in your word would really, really make a difference in our lives tomorrow, that we might leave from this place, committed to put our faith and trust in you, and to give you all the glory and all the honor for all that you do in our lives.

In Jesus' name, Amen.