

The Worship of the Redeemed

Exodus 15:1-21

Our text this morning in Exodus 15:1-21 has brought to the forefront of my mind how often I take the grace of God for granted.

As I look back on my life I can say with absolute certainty that I am here this morning completely by the grace of God.

I could tell you about being in a car that rolled over into a ditch.

I could tell you about falling through ice but only up to my ankles.

I could tell you about the time a small piece of 2x10 kicked back in a table saw and hit me in right in the ribs and knocked the wind right out of me.

When I sit down and think about it I can remember time after time where things could have gone much worse, but I walked away basically injury free.

And those are just the times I am aware of.

How many times throughout life have I missed out on disaster without even knowing it?

Take driving for example.

How many people have run a stop sign a minute before or a minute after you or I have driven by?

If they had gone back in the house to get something they forgot and changed their departure time by the smallest amount everything would have been drastically different.

Of course we wonder about the timing of things when tragedy does happen and that is completely understandable.

Grief understandably drives people to ask the LORD why He would allow such things to take place.

I have no desire to minimize those difficult questions, but this week's text has made me realize that while most people are quick to question God in tragedy, most people rarely, if ever, take time to consider God's grace.

Most of us hardly appreciate how many times God has rescued us from death.

Rarely, if ever, have I heard someone on the news who has survived illness or some great danger thank the LORD.

Sadly most people don't see the providential hand of God in everyday life.

There are times, however, when God saves people in such a way that they know it is God alone Who has rescued them.

[That is the situation of Exodus 13-14 God miraculously saves the people of Israel by dividing a massive body of water and allowing His people to move through it on dry ground and then He

collapses the walls of water upon the Egyptians who were seeking to harm His people. He saves them through an undeniable miracle. Not a single Israelite could stand on the beach that day and say, “Wow wasn’t that a fortunate random act of nature?” They knew they stood on the opposite shore because the LORD. Looking back upon the sea that had returned to its original place Moses leads the people in worshipping God. That is what being saved by God does in the hearts of the redeemed, it moves us to worship! Salvation shows those who are saved why God is worthy of our worship. Turn with me to **Exodus 15:1-21** so that we can see the greatness of God that is celebrated here. As Moses leads the people in worship he highlights at least four ways in which the redeemed worship the LORD. Number one...]

Point #1 – The redeemed praise God’s power.

When the LORD acts to rescue His people no force in all creation can stop Him.

Moses and all the Israelites have just witnessed a great display of God’s power having walked through the parted sea upon dry ground and it prompts Moses to lead the people in a song of praise the LORD. (Verse 1-2)

One of the themes that runs throughout this song is God’s strength.

Do you see it there at the beginning of **verse 2**?

The only thing the Israelites did was walk through the sea away from the Egyptians.

They are standing on the opposite shore saved completely because of the power of God.

We see that again in **verses 6-7**.

The ‘right hand’ represents strength/power in the bible.

This is saying that it is the power of the LORD that “shattered the enemy”.

In verse 8 the people sing to God, “By the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up.” The sea became walls of water, they ‘congealed’ (Walter Kaiser – like ice) in the ‘heart of the sea’.

There is more at work than wind driving back the water. The LORD is exercising His sovereign power over creation altering in an instant the very makeup of the water itself.

Verse nine tells us that the Egyptians were filled with pride thinking they would conquer the Israelites, but then we read this in **verse 10**.

Having witnessed the awesome power of the LORD, Moses looks to the future thinking of the nations they will face as they journey to the Promised Land and He sings this in **verses 14-16**.

If we ask the question, “How are the people of God here saved?” The very clear answer is by the power of God, which is one of the things that makes Him worthy of our praise and worship.

[We do this all the time with people. Just look at the current situation we are in with the coronavirus. How many of you have seen on the news or on signs in your neighborhood praises fore the ‘front line’ workers in this pandemic? Healthcare providers working long hours,

getting bruised faces from masks, and risking getting infected themselves. They are being praised as heroes and their strength is being celebrated. Why do we do that? Because we know they are doing something important for the good of people.]

How much more should LORD receive our praise?

As Christians we have an even greater reason to praise the LORD for His power than the people who crossed the Red Sea.

Their physical lives are saved from the Egyptians, but there is a greater miracle that saves God's people body and soul forever.

That miracle is the resurrection of Jesus Christ

(Ephesians 1:18-21)

Jesus' resurrection is a demonstration of God's
"incomparably great power."

Why do we have certain hope in Christ?

Why are we saved?

The power of God!

[Do you know Jesus as your saviour this morning? If you do then you must join the people of God in singing His praises and in standing amazed at His power to save us! In addition to praising God's power in salvation we also see in this song of praise that...]

Point #2 – The redeemed celebrate God's transcendence.

The LORD is greater by far than everyone and everything (Isaiah 55:9) and those that are saved know that He has no equal.

This song of praise highlights this in verse 11.

Twice the question is asked "Who is like you, O LORD?"

The first time that it is asked it is in regards to religion.

"Who among the gods is like you, O LORD?"

Notice that there is no answer written here and that is because the answer is obvious.

You may remember that when we looked at the nine plagues of Egypt we saw that they related to the gods that the Egyptians worshipped and that they stood helpless before the LORD.

That thought applies beyond the false gods of Egypt to every false religion in the world.

"Who among the gods is like you, O LORD?"

The obvious answer is NO ONE!

No one can save in any true sense except the LORD.

The great apologist and theologian Cornelius Van Til puts it like this, "The Christian is bound to believe and hold that his system of doctrine is certainly true and that other systems are certainly false. And he must say this about a system of doctrine which

involves the existence and sovereign action of a self-contained God whose ways are past finding out.”

The supremacy of the God of the bible demands that we stand opposed to any action or thought that makes Him One among many, or that says another god/religion is just as good as true religion.

God is NOT One among many He is the ONLY ONE of supreme worth.

That is why the question is asked again here for the sake of clarity.

“Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?”

No one is the answer.

[I imagine even if you are not a huge fan of golf you have probably heard the names Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods. If you ask the question who is the greatest golfer ever their names are likely at the top of the list. You will have some people argue one way and some another, which means it’s debateable.]

Standing on the shore of the Red Sea having just witnessed a small miracle of the LORD Moses knows beyond question there is no debate as to Who is the greatest Being in the universe by far.

It should even be clearer in our minds as Christians.

Salvation in Christ reveals the Trinitarian nature of God.

God is One God Who exists eternally in three distinct Persons.

It is the Father that puts the fullness of His wrath upon Christ to satisfy His justice, and Son must apply the infinite worth of His nature to the atoning work of the cross in order for us to be saved.

We need the Spirit to be omnipresent in order to dwell within each believer, making our hearts alive, showing us our sin, God’s grace, and teaching us the truth of the Scriptures that He inspired.

In addition to the Trinity, the doctrine of the incarnation is also essential to our being saved.

Jesus must be genuinely human and yet retain the completeness of His divine nature to accomplish all that He does on the cross.

No one else is anything like our God brothers and sisters.

[False religion always tries to reduce their gods into something the finite human mind can comprehend. God is not like that. He is incomprehensibly great and that is why He is able to save His people! The redeemed praise God’s power, they celebrate His transcendence, and thirdly we learn in this song of praise that...]

Point #3 – The redeemed recognize God’s holiness.

Both in saving His people and destroying His enemies the LORD maintains His absolute moral perfection.

When we think of ‘holiness’ we should have the idea of being separate or set apart in our minds.

Like the idea of transcendence, when the bible talks about God being holy it is a way of saying God is totally different and unique from everything else in creation.

It is the great otherness of God (As RC Sproul puts it) that makes it impossible for sinful human beings to come into His presence.

One of the things, not the only thing, but one of things that makes God Holy is His moral perfection and to defy His commands or His moral standards shows contempt for His holiness which He cannot tolerate.

That is what the Israelites witness when God saves them from the Egyptians and they sing about it here in **verse 7**.

The act of destroying the Egyptians is tied to the ‘greatness’ of God’s ‘majesty’.

Time and again Pharaoh shows contempt for God by disregarding His commands.

That leads to this moment at the sea where God unleashes His ‘burning anger’ and the army is ‘consumed like stubble’.

That is a terrifying image.

It is the image of sinful men being judged by a Holy God.

We need a word of caution here because we must not think about God’s anger as being the same as our anger.

When we get angry it is often the result of an uncontrolled emotion that is provoked by another person. [Someone cuts us off on the highway, someone throws a rock through our window, or someone makes fun of us, etc.]

God does not get angry on account of uncontrolled emotion.

His wrath is not the result of Him flying off the handle in a fit of rage.

The eternal unchanging nature of His Being means that He cannot be acted upon by an outside force to cause Him to act in a way that is outside His nature.

What happens here then is an action that is not only consistent with God’s holy nature, but is required by it.

God’s must preserve His holiness which means He must bring judgement against everyone who continually opposes Him.

[One of my favourite inventions is the dishwasher! It’s great to put your dirty dishes into that machine and have them come out clean. But you need to be careful that what you put in is dishwasher safe. If it’s not then the dish comes out deformed or with a ruined finish. That is what happens when you ignore what the dishwasher is made to do.]

Every single human being is accountable to God because He is our creator.

He has made us for the purpose of reflecting and enjoying His Glory.

When people show contempt for that, God cannot change His nature to accommodate people, rather He preserves Who He is through their destruction.

When Israel is saved they see firsthand that God is holy.

We see must see that in the salvation that we have in Christ.

There is no compromise at the cross.

That is why the cross of Christ is so terrible, because Jesus is taking upon Himself what our contempt for the holiness of God deserves.

[If we cannot see the holiness of God, then we cannot understand what it means to be saved by the LORD. If we cannot see the holiness of God, then we will not be able to rightly see the fourth lesson of our text this morning. This song teaches us that the redeemed praise God's power, celebrate His transcendence, recognize His holiness, and fourthly...]

Point #4 – The redeemed know God's love.

While the LORD has no need or moral obligation to save anyone, He chooses to save those that belong to Him on account of His eternal immeasurable affection.

The difference between the Israelites standing safely on land and the Egyptian army drowned in the sea could not be greater.

How could anyone stand there and not tremble before the LORD of all creation?

All of this leads to a question. Why does God save His people?

This song of praise gives us the answer in **verse 13**.

I like how the NIV translates this verse.

“In your *unfailing love* you will lead the people you have redeemed.”

The words translated “unfailing love” here has to do with God's covenant faithfulness.

God saves the people of Israel on account of His love which is rooted in the promise He made to Abraham, which is rooted in His previous promises all the way back to Genesis 3:15, which according to Ephesians 1:4-5 is rooted in His love for His people established before the ‘creation of the world’

[I love it when stories about old married couples make the news. People that have been married for 60, 70, 80, and a few I'm told have even made it to 90 years. Whenever I see a story like that it always seems to me that they still love each other after all that time. That takes

faithfulness, but it pales in comparison to the faithfulness of God. His love is not limited to a few decades it spans all of eternity.]

God's does not show love to those He saves because they deserve it or because He owes it to them.

Any true appreciation for God's holiness completely destroys any thought of earning the love of God.

He shows us love because He has chosen to display the greatness of His glory by redeeming a people for Himself and making them the object of His eternal affection.

He parts the sea here to save His people on account of His love for them.

Jesus Christ comes into the world for the very same reason.

I suspect most of you know John 3:16.

How about Romans 5:8?

Then there is John 15:13.

Does your heart 'sing to the LORD', does it see Him as 'highly exalted'?

That is what it means to be saved.

It seems quite impossible to truly experience the salvation of the LORD and remain indifferent about worshipping Him.

If you have been saved then you will praise Him for His power, you will celebrate His transcendence, recognize His holiness, and know His love.

Are you saved? Then worship Him! Don't simply go through motions and routines, but offer to the LORD your most heartfelt praise.

“Sing to the LORD for He is highly exalted.”