

### **Exodus 13:17-18**

When Pharaoh let the people go, God did **not** lead them along the road to the land of the Philistines, **even though it was nearby**; for God said, “The people will **change their minds** and return to Egypt if they face war.” <sup>18</sup> So He led the people **around** toward the Red Sea along the road of the wilderness. And the Israelites left the land of Egypt **in battle formation**.

**Apparently, quicker/shorter does not mean better.**

**God’s ways are not our ways.**

- **Point of confusion & frustration**
- **Point of departure or deepening**

**Our mindsets are often centered on **self** and making **self-assessments**.**

- **The weight of **self-sufficiency****
- **The role of “**image**”**

### **Exodus 14:1-2**

Then the Lord spoke to Moses: <sup>2</sup> “Tell the Israelites to turn back and camp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea; you must camp in front of Baal-zephon, facing it by the sea.

### **Exodus 14:9**

The Egyptians—all Pharaoh’s horses and chariots, his horsemen, and his army—chased after them and caught up with them as they camped by the sea beside Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

**God has **put** Israel where they are.**

→ **But does He have a **plan** for where He put them?**

### **Exodus 14:10-12**

As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up and there were the Egyptians coming after them! The Israelites were **terrified** and cried out to the Lord for help. <sup>11</sup> 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 by bringing us out of Egypt? <sup>12</sup> Isn’t this what we told you in Egypt: Leave us alone so that we may serve the Egyptians? **It would have been better for us** to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.”

**The Tool: **DESPAIR****

**Despair Defined:**

*The feeling that there is no hope and that you can do nothing to improve a difficult or worrying situation.*

*The sense that there is no way to improve*

The Israelites despair was **designed** by God.

→ But isn't God supposed to keep us from despair ...???

My "self" hates despair.

- Weight of self-sufficiency
- The importance of image

Despair puts us on the doorsteps of **faith**

→ Do we want what we can do or what God can do?

We would rather live in the **comfort of the familiar** than live by the **promises of faith**.

We would rather live by the **limits of our own resources** than by the **provisions** God gives by **faith**.

What if despair opens us up to receive God's best?

What if despair gets me to look past me?

What if despair makes us bless-able?

#### **Exodus 14:13-14**

But Moses said to the people, "Don't be afraid. **Stand firm** and **see** the Lord's salvation that He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians you see today, you will never see again. <sup>14</sup>The Lord will fight **for** you, and you must **be quiet**."

God's best for us comes through the **gate of despair**.

- Invitation, not a condition!

→ **Gate**, not state of despair.

\*Go through but do not stay in!

State (v. Gate) of Despair:

- My focus
- My self-talk

=Controlling preoccupations ...

The invitation of despair:

- 1) Let go of the goal (and illusion) of **self-sufficiency**

→ Honesty & vulnerability → deeper connection & trust

#### **2 Corinthians 12:8-9**

Concerning this, I pleaded with the Lord three times that it would leave me. <sup>9</sup> But He said to me, “My grace is **sufficient** for you, for My power is perfected **in weakness**.” Therefore, I will most gladly **boast all the more about my weaknesses**, so that Christ’s power may reside in me.

**The invitation of despair:**

- 2) The embrace of **true & real** Christianity:
  - a. Christianity is not **ASSISTANCE**
  - b. Christianity is **DELIVERANCE & DEPENDENCE**

**The invitation of despair:**

- 3) The path of **progress** and the point of **breakthrough**
  - a. Resist the urge to return/stay **in Egypt**
  - b. The best is yet to come ... comes when we shift our **focus**

**Psalms 16:8 (ESV)**

I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.