

SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE: Detours, Dead Ends and Dry Holes

SERMON REFERENCE: Exodus 13:17-18

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #0625

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Exodus 13:17
 - i) God does lead us.
 - (1) Romans 8:14
- b) God leads us; and, yet, we sometimes find ourselves in the biggest messes.
 - i) If God is leading us, then how do we end up on detours, dead ends and in desert places?
 - (1) Today's message will tackle this question from the Word of God.
- c) We are on a journey to joy with Christ as our companion, the Holy Spirit as our guide and the Bible as our map.
 - i) Yet, many times, it doesn't turn out exactly like we expect.
 - ii) We find many unexpected things along the road of life, but it's not necessarily because we misread the map.

2) THE DISCIPLINE OF DETOURS (EXODUS 13:17-18)

- a) Exodus 13:17-18
 - i) "God led the people about" means that God led them in circles.
 - ii) When God led the children of Israel out of Egypt, He did not lead them the short way.
 - (1) God did not lead them on a direct route, but He led them on a detour.
 - iii) This was not a mistake; it was a divine detour.
- b) God has a purpose in His detours.
 - i) Exodus 13:17
 - (1) God knew that if He had taken them on the straightest route, or the shortest route, that they would have gone through Philistia.
 - (a) If they had gone through Philistia, then they would have met the war-like Philistines and would have been frightened.
 - (2) With their hearts filled with fear, they would have become dismayed, discouraged and defeated, and would have gone back to Egypt.
 - ii) God knew that they were not ready for war.
 - (1) God has called us to a holy war.
 - (a) Ephesians 6:12
 - (2) God knows what we are ready for.
 - (a) God has a land of blessing for us, a place of fulfillment for us and a job for us to do.
 - (b) And, yet, He may have us in the wilderness going in circles.
 - (i) This does not mean that we are out of the will of God.
 - (ii) God is leading us round about because He knows we're not quite ready for some of the things that He has in store for us.
- c) There are times when we can get some place too quickly.
- d) The wilderness was God's boot camp.
 - i) Exodus 13:18
 - (1) This wilderness of the Red Sea was a place of hardness, of drought and a place of discipline.

- (2) God was toughening them up.
- (3) God was getting them ready.
- e) Doubtless, the children of Israel did not understand what was going on at the time.
 - i) They did not know all that God had in store for them.
 - (1) But they didn't have to know.
 - (2) It was enough that God knew.
 - ii) The children of Israel had never seen the Philistines and didn't know what was out there.
 - (1) But God knew that they weren't ready.
- f) Many times, we pray for a certain job or ask God to give us a home, or we pray for a future spouse.
 - i) We wonder why we seem to be going around in circles.
 - ii) But we're just not ready.
- g) God is never in a hurry.
 - i) God called Moses.
 - (1) To get Moses ready, Moses spent forty years on the back side of the desert.
 - ii) God called Paul.
 - (1) Paul wasn't ready, and he went down to Arabia.
- h) The important thing is not that we know, but that God knows and that we follow Him.
- i) Exodus 13:21-22
 - i) As they came out of Egypt, the Passover lamb represents the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - ii) The pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud represent the Holy Spirit to lead them.
 - (1) After God redeems us, He sends the Holy Spirit to lead us.
 - (a) John 16:13
 - (2) Just as the pillar of fire and cloud guided the children of Israel in the wilderness, the Holy Spirit of God is our guidance in today's wilderness.
 - (a) The important thing is not that we see where we're going, but that day by day we have our eyes on that pillar of cloud and fire.
 - (i) Moment by moment, we need to walk in the Spirit.
 - (ii) God sees some Philistines that we don't see and some weaknesses that we don't see; He know things that we don't know.
 - 1. We need to keep our eyes on Him.

3) THE DILEMMA OF DEAD ENDS (EXODUS 14:8-12)

- a) God is still leading the children of Israel, but now they come to a dead end.

- i) Mountains are on one side of them, more mountains are on the other side, the Red Sea is in front of them, and Pharaoh and his armies are coming behind them.
 - (1) They were boxed in with no way out that they could see.
 - (2) Their aggravation with the detour turns from aggravation to desperation as they blame Moses.
- b) Exodus 14:1-2
 - i) God put them exactly where He wanted them.
 - ii) God did it for a purpose.
- c) Exodus 14:3-4
 - i) God put them in that dead end because He was going to bring judgment to Pharaoh.
- d) In life, we will come against difficult situations, and we will see no way out.
 - i) When we come to this place, we need to remember that there is no panic in Heaven, only plans.
- e) God knows exactly what He's doing.
 - i) The Jews didn't know what God was doing, but they were in the will of God when they came to this dead end.
 - (1) It was God who led them there.
 - ii) God led them there so that the place of desperation would become the place of dependence.
- f) When we come to the place where there is absolutely no way out, then we have to cast ourselves completely upon the Lord.
 - i) Exodus 14:13-16
- g) When God led the Israelites to this dead end, He wanted them to do four things that He wants us to do today:
 - i) Fear not.
 - (1) Exodus 14:13
 - (2) God will allow us to come to a place where there seems to be all kinds of things to fear, but He says, "Fear not."
 - (3) Jesus Christ is sufficient.
 - (4) "Fear not" or its equivalent is in the Bible 365 times, one for every day of the year.
 - (5) Hebrews 13:6
 - ii) Stand still.
 - (1) Exodus 14:13
 - (2) This means that it is out of our hands; there is nothing we can do.
 - (3) Psalm 46:10
 - (4) We always think that we have to do something, but sometimes God puts us in a place where there is nothing we can do.
 - iii) See the salvation of the Lord.
 - (1) Exodus 14:13
 - (2) This doesn't mean to see the salvation of the Lord after the event or dead end is over.

- (3) By the eye of faith, watch what God is going to do.
- (4) Stand still long enough to see what God is going to do before He does it.
 - (a) We see things that are not as though they are that they might be so.
 - (b) This is a time of faith where we just simply say that we refuse to fear, and we place ourselves in God's hands.
 - (c) By faith, we see our way out even when we don't see it.
- (5) And then, God shows us the way; the way that we've never seen before.
- iv) Go forward.
 - (1) Exodus 14:15
 - (2) We have come to that place of rest and confidence where by faith we see God in action, and we move in a way that we've never seen before.
 - (3) Exodus 14:16
 - (a) God turned the Red Sea into a super highway.
 - (4) God specializes in things that seem to be impossible.
 - (a) Jeremiah 32:27
 - (5) The so-called impossibilities in our lives are opportunities for God to display His glory and might, if we are living in the Spirit and have our eyes on that pillar of cloud and fire.
- 4) THE DISAPPOINTMENT OF DRY HOLES (EXODUS 15:22-25)
 - a) God's man, Moses, is still leading; they haven't gotten lost, and they haven't misread the map.
 - b) Exodus 15:22
 - i) God did not send them to the place of bitterness and barrenness because they had done wrong; this was not punishment.
 - ii) God brought them here for a purpose.
 - c) Exodus 15:23-15
 - i) God tested them, and they failed miserably.
 - ii) Deuteronomy 8:2
 - (1) When they came to this place in the wilderness where there was no water, it wasn't because God was angry with them, it wasn't because they had sinned, it wasn't because Moses was a bad leader, and the devil didn't do it to them.
 - d) As we follow the Lord, we will also come to detours, dead ends and dry holes.
 - i) Nothing went wrong, if we're walking in the Spirit.
 - ii) God is on the throne, and He is leading us.
 - iii) When we come to a dry hole, God is giving us a test.
 - e) When Israel came to their test, they failed it.
 - i) Exodus 15:24
 - ii) Exodus 15 is known as "the song of Moses."

- (1) They had come through the Red Sea and were dancing and praising the Lord; and just three days later, they were murmuring and complaining.
- (2) They had been singing the song of Moses, and now they're murmuring against Moses.
- iii) Exodus 16:8
 - (1) God gave them Moses, and they murmured against Moses.
 - (a) Therefore, they were really murmuring against God.
- f) When God leads us into a circumstance of dry holes and bitter water and we murmur and complain, we are really murmuring against God.
 - i) Murmuring is a great sin, which God lists with idolatry and fornication.
 - ii) 1 Corinthians 10:6-10
 - (1) God lists murmuring with tempting Christ.
 - iii) The children of Israel murmured because of a lack of faith, and it was also a lack of reason.
 - (1) God has just brought them through the Red Sea on dry ground.
 - (a) Had God so marvelously delivered them in order to destroy them?
 - (2) If Jesus Christ died for us on the cross and has saved us, do we really think that He saved us to abandon us?
 - (a) Did God invest so much in us and bring us so far to just abandon us?
 - iv) Their murmuring was rooted in unbelief.
 - g) There was no need for the people's murmuring.
 - i) They couldn't see it.
 - (1) There was no water.
 - (2) The water that was there was bitter, and they couldn't drink it.
 - ii) Exodus 15:24-25
 - (1) The whole time that they were complaining and murmuring, that tree was there.
 - (2) God had already made provision.
 - (3) God already knew what He was going to do.
 - (4) The tree speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ and of Calvary.
 - (a) Jeremiah 23:5
 - (b) 1 Peter 2:24
 - (5) God brought them to this place of dryness and desperation that He might also display to them by type, by picture and by symbol, the sufficiency of Calvary and of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (a) Even in the barren and bitter places, Jesus is enough.
 - h) Though they couldn't see it, right over the hill from where they were murmuring was a beautiful oasis.
 - i) Exodus 15:27

5) CONCLUSION

- a) There are times in life when we are camped by a dry hole, and the water we find is absolutely bitter.
 - i) We think that God has forsaken us.
 - (1) But He has not forsaken us; God is proving us.
 - ii) We are not out of the will of God.
 - iii) God brought us here; it's right on the map.
- b) Don't complain or murmur; Calvary is sufficient for you.
- c) Right over the hill, God has His oasis.
 - i) You can't see it, but God can see it.
- d) The important thing in life is not for us to know what God knows.
 - i) Isaiah 55:8-9
- e) The important thing for us in life is that we walk in the Spirit and keep our hearts right with God.
 - i) If you come to a detour, praise God.
 - ii) If you come to a dead end, praise God.
 - iii) If you come to a dry hole, praise God.
- f) Our Lord knows the way through the wilderness.
 - i) All we have to do is follow Him.
- g) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- h) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16