

# A SONG OF VICTORY

**SERIES: EXODUS - JOURNEY TO  
FREEDOM**



Catalog No. 20221120  
Exodus 15:1-21  
Final Message  
Dan Westman  
November 20, 2022

*Exodus 15:1-21*

Over the past few months, my wife Linzy and I have started making our way back to a few live events. The first show that we went to post-Covid-19 was of one of Linzy's favorite bands who was playing in Oakland. We got a sitter and were excited to go see them. This show absolutely blew us away! Their recorded music is excellent. But their live performance was out of this world! So good! For days afterwards, we frequently said to one another, "Wasn't that show amazing?!"

When we experience something amazing, there is something in us that wants to—needs to—respond to that. We want to tell people about it. We want to recount the event or relive the experience. Maybe we even want to sing about it!

This morning, we will look at a song that Moses and the people of Israel sing after they have experienced God do something amazing.

We are in a series in the book of Exodus, the second book of the Bible. Today will be our last time in Exodus until January as we take a break for Advent. That timing is perfect because our chapter today is reaching a seam in the book of Exodus. Up to this point, the people of Israel have been slaves in Egypt, but last week we saw God deliver them miraculously by parting the Red Sea so the people could walk through on dry ground. After the people crossed the sea, the armies of Egypt went after them, but God closed the sea in on the Egyptians and destroyed their entire army.

Now, the people of Israel are still standing on the shores of the sea, full of shock and amazement. The bodies of the Egyptian soldiers are floating in the water. Chariot parts are washing up on the shore. And the people of God are dry, safe, and free.

In response to this amazing victory over the Egyptians, Moses and the people sing a song of praise to God. We will look at that song together this morning in Exodus 15.

## **The battle for our souls**

**Exodus 15:1-3:**

**Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord, saying, "I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. 2 The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him. 3 The Lord is a man of war; the Lord is his name."**

In these first few verses of the song, we see what the song is all about. It is a song of praise to God, not so much for the fact that he has freed the people from slavery, but specifically because God has destroyed their enemies, the Egyptians.

The Lord is a man of war, they sing. God is a warrior. He has fought on behalf of the Israelites. He has totally wiped out the Egyptian army on what they did not even realize was a battlefield. God is a man of war.

This image of God as a warrior is less tangible for us than it was for the Israelites. In their day, war was a part of life. Life in the ancient world was full of military conflict—one small ethnic group fighting against another small ethnic group as they tried to secure stable food supplies, access to trade routes, or greater economic prosperity. Israel needed God to be a warrior.

We need God to be a warrior for us just as much as they did. Just as the Israelites needed God to fight for them, we also need God to fight for us. Our battle, however, is not against the Egyptians. It's not against any human enemy, foreign or domestic. Rather, our battle is a spiritual battle against the forces of evil itself.

Listen to what the apostle Paul says in Ephesians 6.

**Ephesians 6:12:**

**For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the**

**authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.**

Our battle is a spiritual battle. Every day, every moment of every day, we are engaged in a spiritual battle against our enemy, the devil. He is the same enemy that animated the Egyptian magicians and enslaved the heart of Pharaoh. His mission is to bring about death and destruction—to steal, kill, and destroy, as Jesus says (John 10:10). He wants to steal our peace. He wants to kill our joy. He wants to destroy our confidence in God.

How does he do this?

In John 8, Jesus confronts the Pharisees. The Pharisees are boasting of their identity as children of Abraham. Jesus says You are not children of Abraham. You are children of the devil. Then he says this in John 8:44:

**You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.**

The primary way that the devil seeks to steal, kill, and destroy is by spreading lies.

In his book *Live No Lies*, pastor and author John Mark Comer says it this way:

*All the other stuff—demonization, illness, wreaking havoc in the natural order, scaring little kids with bad dreams—is biblical, and we need to take it seriously. It's all real. I could tell countless stories... But it's secondary. Jesus sees our primary war against the devil as a fight to believe truth over lies.”<sup>1</sup>*

Comer then goes on to say: “Specifically, [the devil] lies about who God is, who we are, and what the good life is.”<sup>2</sup>

In our battle against evil, we are not confronted with the Egyptian armies—their horses, their chariots, and their elite soldiers. We are not being shot at or bombed, or hacked. No. Our enemy is much more subtle. A little whisper here. A sense of doubt there. A bit of truth mixed with a lethal amount of lie.

*Did God really say...? Did God really say you may not eat of any fruit in the garden (Genesis 3:1)? That doesn't sound very loving now, does it?*

*Did God really say that he is going to provide for you? You just got laid off. Why didn't God protect your job?*

*Did God really say that he is a healer? Then why hasn't the cancer gone away? Why hasn't the depression stopped?*

*Those are lies about who God is. Or what about these—lies about who you are:*

*Did God really say that he would forgive you? After all that you've done? Really?*

*Did God really say that you would have a place in his family, among his people? Someone with your gender identity? Just look around. You know you don't belong here.*

*Did God really say that you need to love one another? Look at that person. You know how they vote. You know what they think about you.*

Lies. Lies about who God is. Lies about who we are. Lies about what makes for the good life. Our battle is not against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces of evil, which would have you and me believe that these lies—straight from the pit of hell—came from the very mouth of God. Blasphemy.

We need to combat the lies of the evil one with a passion and commitment to the truth. Our weapon against Satan and his demons and his systematic campaign of lies is the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

What does the Word say? What is the truth?

Romans 8:1: “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” That voice of condemnation that is in your head telling you that you are not enough? Lies. That is not the voice of God.

2 Corinthians 5:21: “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” That voice in your head that tells you that you need to clean yourself up before coming to God? Lies. When God looks at you, he sees the righteousness of his beautiful son, Jesus.

Galatians 5:24-25: “And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and

desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.” That voice that tells you that you can never change, that you will always be an angry father, a hopeless addict, a faithless friend? Lies. If you have trusted in Jesus, you have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires, and then you are no longer a slave to sin. You have the Spirit of God in you, reconnecting you to God and working to bring about the character of Christ in you.

That is who you are. That is who God is. That is what a life of abundance looks like.

We need to take the truth in God's Word and get it in our heads so that it can sink deep into our hearts and begin to transform our souls. We have an enemy marching against us with a campaign of lies. We need to fight back with God's Word. Amen?

## The victory of God, part 1

In Exodus 15, Moses and the people of Israel are rejoicing that God is a warrior who fights for them. As we saw before, they are specifically praising him for his triumph over the Egyptians. We see this as we continue our way through the song.

### Exodus 15:4-7:

**Pharaoh's chariots and his host he cast into the sea, and his chosen officers were sunk in the Red Sea. 5 The floods covered them; they went down into the depths like a stone. 6 Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power, your right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy. 7 In the greatness of your majesty you overthrow your adversaries; you send out your fury; it consumes them like stubble.**

As a warrior, God destroys his enemies. He shatters them. He overthrows them. He consumes them. This is not difficult for God!

### Exodus 15:8-10:

**At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up; the floods stood up in a heap; the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea. 9 The enemy said, 'I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my desire shall have its fill of them. I will draw my sword; my hand shall destroy them.' 10 You blew with your wind; the sea covered them; they sank like lead in the mighty waters.**

It's not even fair to call this a battle. In a battle, two sides are fighting against each other. There is tension and conflict. Here, God blows—not even from his mouth, but from his nose—and the sea splits in two. Then he blew again, and the waters rushed over the armies of Egypt. This victory is quick, decisive, and complete.

This victory over evil leads Moses and the people to declare the greatness of God over anything and everything that could come in his way! They say this in the following two verses:

### Exodus 15:11-12:

**Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders? 12 You stretched out your right hand; the earth swallowed them.**

Who is like you, O Lord? Not the Egyptian magicians. They couldn't replicate the signs that you did. Not the Egyptian armies. They're dead in the water. Not the Egyptian gods. They could not protect their people. Who is like you, O Lord? No one! No one is like you. No one is as great as you. No one is as powerful as you. No one can even hold a candle to your glory!

Yes, we are engaged in a spiritual battle. But do not lose heart because this is not an even battlefield. The forces of good and evil are not evenly matched. Nothing can stand in the way of our God! No army, no dictator, no evil regime, no culture, no ideology, no politician, no sickness, no broken relationship, no sins from our past—nothing can stand in the way of our God! His victory over evil is complete. It is decisive. And it has already been won. On the cross, Jesus won the war against evil.

Paul says this in Colossians 2:15: "He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him."

On the cross, Jesus disarmed the rulers and authorities. He stripped the forces of evil of their power. He triumphed over them through his death and resurrection.

As Jesus' body was broken, as his blood was shed, Jesus cried out as he took his last breath: it is finished. The power of sin has been broken. The authority of the devil has been overthrown. The war against evil has been won.

Your sins are no longer held against you because of the death of Jesus on your behalf.

Where your account once showed a balance of guilt, it now shows a balance of righteousness.

Where you were once controlled by the desires of the flesh, you have crucified the flesh.

Where you were once dead, you are now alive!

Where you were once alone, you are now filled with the very presence of God.

Do you feel that victory in your life? That is the truth. That is what God has done for us in Christ.

## The victory of God, part 2

The difficult thing is that even though the war has been won, the battle continues. Even though the victory of God has been secured, that victory is still being worked out here in this life.

That was also the case for the people of Israel after the Exodus. Even though they were out of Egypt, they were not yet in the Promised Land. We see this in the last part of their song.

### Exodus 15:13-18:

**You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed; you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode. 14 The peoples have heard; they tremble; pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia. 15 Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed; trembling seizes the leaders of Moab; all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away. 16 Terror and dread fall upon them; because of the greatness of your arm, they are still as a stone, till your people, O Lord, pass by, till the people pass by whom you have purchased. 17 You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain, the place, O Lord, which you have made for your abode, the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established. 18 The Lord will reign forever and ever.”**

In these verses, we see the theme shifting from victory over the Egyptians in the Exodus to victory over the Philistines, the Edomites, the Moabites, and other Canaanite peoples who lived in the land that God had promised to give to his people.

There is something a bit odd about this because, in Exodus 15, the people are not yet in the Promised Land. They are still on the shores of the Red Sea. They have only defeated the Egyptians, yet they sing as though they have defeated the Canaanites as well. What is going on here?

There is a lot of scholarly debate about this. For our purposes here, I'll say this: The book of Exodus is written not for the sake of Moses' generation but for the sake of the generations that would walk with God after the people of Israel were already in the land. This song would have been sung by people from generation to generation. The version of the song that we read here, though originally written by Moses on the shores of the Red Sea, was probably updated by the generations that followed to show God's victory—not just in bringing them out of Egypt but also in bringing them into the Promised Land.

At the writing of Exodus 15, the people of Israel are at an interesting point. They have just seen the decisive victory of God over the Egyptians, but now they find themselves in the desert. They have been brought out of the land of Egypt, but they have yet to be brought into the Promised Land. Yet they know that God has promised to bring them there eventually.

This situation is exactly where we find ourselves as well. We have been brought out of slavery to sin. But we have not yet been brought into our eternal dwelling place with God. Jesus has secured our redemption through his death on the cross, but he has not yet ushered in the new heavens and the new earth. The war against evil has been won, but the battle still continues.

I would love to tell you today about how the victory of God over evil means that the problems you are facing today will be solved. I would love to tell you today about how the victory of God over evil means that your sickness will be healed, that your broken relationships will be restored, that your loved ones will come to know Jesus, or that those deeply engrained patterns of sin in your life will be overcome. I would love to stand up here today and promise you all of those things.

But I cannot do that. Because while the victory of God has been secured, the implications of that victory are still being worked out. While the kingdom of God is among us, that kingdom is not yet here in full. While we have been brought out of the land of bondage, we have not yet been brought into our eternal resting place in the new heavens and new earth.

So I cannot stand up here and promise that your problems and pain and struggles will go away because you are following Jesus. In fact, Jesus tells us to expect the opposite.

Here is what I can tell you. While God may not take away your pain in this life, he does promise to be with you in the midst of it. While you may not experience the absence of sin in your life on this side of heaven, you have been given the Spirit of God, who is working to develop the character of Christ in you. And while you and your loved ones may get sick and even die in this life, one day, that death will be turned into resurrection life.

Paul tells us this in 1 Corinthians 15. Speaking of the day when Jesus will return again, he says, “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? “...But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:54-57).

Jesus is coming back again. When he does, all that is wrong with this world will be righted. Sin will be eradicated. Death will be undone. Evil will be vanquished, fully and completely. Thanks be to God indeed.

So what do we do while we wait? What do we do in the in-between—in this place where the war has been won, but the battle continues? Where we have been brought out of slavery to sin but have not yet been brought into our eternal home with God?

We wait. We wait with hope. We wait with longing. As we wait, we worship. We worship God for what he has done and for what he has promised that he will do in the future.

This is the end of the song of Moses. But this is not the last time that this song has been sung. Look at the last few verses of our text, verses 19-21.

**Exodus 15:19-21:**

**For when the horses of Pharaoh with his chariots and his horsemen went into the sea, the Lord brought back the waters of the sea upon them, but the people of Israel walked on dry ground in the midst of the sea. 20 Then**

**Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and dancing. 21 And Miriam sang to them: “Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.”**

Those are the exact words that started the song of Moses. After Moses and the people sang this song of God’s victory over evil, Miriam, Moses’ older sister, took the song. She gathered together all the women. She told them to grab their tambourines and put on their dancing shoes. And she said, Let’s sing it again!

This song was passed from generation to generation through the ages. It was not passed on as a relic of the past but as a song for the present. We are meant to take this song and sing, like Moses and Miriam after him, of the greatness of our God and his victory in our lives and this world.

My encouragement to you is, first, find your song. What is the song of victory that you can sing in your life? How have you seen God show up? How have you seen his power at work in your life? How have you seen him pushing back the forces of evil in this world? How have you experienced the victory of God? Find your song and sing it to God. Praise him for all that he has done in your life.

Second, tell your story. Tell the story about how you have experienced the victory of God, about how Jesus saved you from your sins, and how you have experienced life and joy and freedom in him.

Take a moment to talk with the Lord about how you have experienced his victory in your life. How have you seen his power? His presence? What miracles have you seen God work? What obstacles have you seen him overcome? What seas has he parted in your life? As these things come to mind, give God the praise. Tell him how wonderful, how glorious, how beautiful he is.

## Endnotes

1 Mark Comer, *Live No Lies* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook), 21.

2 Comer, 99.