

The Gospel Project® for Adults

Daily Discipleship Guide CSB, Unit 4, Session 6

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God Delivers His People

Session in a Sentence: God proves He is worthy of praise through who He is and what He has done to deliver His people.

Main Passages: Exodus 13:17-22; 14:1-4,13-14,21-22,26-28

In the spring of 1940, during World War II, a large force of British and French soldiers became trapped in the coastal town of Dunkirk, France. The advancing German army had them surrounded on land while the English Channel halted their retreat. But then, between May 26 and June 4, the unthinkable happened. More than eight hundred military and civilian vessels of all kinds made the dangerous run to Dunkirk to evacuate as many troops as possible. In the end, around 338,000 men were rescued—the original estimate was 45,000 men at most. The Allies still suffered a great loss in soldiers and resources, but the army survived to fight another day—a turning point for the war. ¹

Why are we captivated by stories of escape or of people overcoming great odds?

Group Time

Point 1: God delivers His people through His guidance (Ex. 13:17-22).

17 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.” **18** 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.

19 Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, because Joseph had made the Israelites swear a solemn oath, saying, “God will certainly come to your aid; then you must take my bones with you from this place.”

20 They set out from Succoth and camped at Etham on the edge of the wilderness. **21** The LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to lead them on their way during the day and in a pillar of fire to give them light at night, so that they could travel day or night. **22** The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night never left its place in front of the people.

What can we learn of God’s heart for His people in how and where He guided them?

It would be fascinating to see what the pillars of cloud and fire looked like and be guided by them, but God is ever-present with His people and continues to guide us today—He just does so in a better way. We can’t forget that the same God who led His people out of slavery in Egypt is the same God we follow today. Through Jesus and by His Spirit, God leads us out of slavery to sin, crushing the enemy of Satan, and then He dwells *within* us, in our hearts, leading us and guiding us every step of the way.

What are some ways we can be more in tune with God’s guidance through the Spirit and Scripture?

Point 2: God delivers His people for His glory (Ex. 14:1-4).

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses: **2** “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. **3** Pharaoh will say of the Israelites: They are wandering around the land in confusion; the wilderness has boxed them in. **4** I will harden Pharaoh’s heart so that he will pursue them. Then I will receive glory by means of Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD.” So the Israelites did this.

God was not just guiding His people as they left Egypt, He was also guiding Pharaoh and the Egyptians. God’s sovereign hand was at work to bring what He willed to pass, as He always does. Pharaoh would indeed march his forces out to a victory, but it

would not be his victory. Neither would it be Israel's victory. It would be the Lord's.

God acts for His own _____ and for the _____ of His people.

God overflows with love and care for His people and the nations, so He works all things together for their good (Rom. 8:28). For this reason, God orchestrated this clash with Egypt's army, that the Israelites would see His power and goodness on their behalf. But that was not the only reason, nor the primary reason. God told Moses, and us, that He worked in this way so that He would be glorified. These two truths are not opposed to one another. God seeks His glory, so He loves His image bearers and works for our good. May God's love for us, and our love given Him in response, drive us and those around us to experience the glory of our good God.

How has God shown His love for us that we should seek His glory?

Voices from Church History

"This is the one purpose of God, the great worker in heaven, the source and master of all work, that the glory of His love and power and blessing may be shown. This is the one purpose of Christ, the great worker on earth in human nature, the example and leader of all our work. This is the great purpose of the Holy Spirit, the power that worketh in us ... As this becomes our deliberate, intelligent purpose, our work will rise to its true level, and lift us into living fellowship with God." 2

—Andrew Murray (1828-1917)

Point 3: God delivers His people through His power (Ex. 14:13-14,21-22,26-28).

13 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. 14 The LORD will fight for you, and you must be quiet."

.....
21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back with a powerful east wind all that night and turned the sea into dry land. So the waters were divided, 22 and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with the waters like a wall to them on their right and their left.

.....
26 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the water may come back on the Egyptians, on their chariots and horsemen." 27 So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea returned to its normal depth. While the Egyptians were trying to escape from it, the LORD threw them into the sea. 28 The water came back and covered the chariots and horsemen, plus the entire army of Pharaoh that had gone after them into the sea. Not even one of them survived.

When we are honest, we have to admit that we are no different from the Israelites camped by the Red Sea. We have looked around in fear of our situation, accused God of forsaking us, and given up hope. And yet, what was God's response? He always fights for His people. He never abandons them, and He is not powerless.

God Is Omnipotent: God has power and authority over the universe He created. As Christians, we rest in the belief that the God who has all power is _____, and we gain great _____ by knowing that an all-powerful God is _____ for our good and joy.

How have you seen God work in your life to lead you through a trial instead of protect you from it?

If we miss the story of the unfolding of God's plan throughout history to establish His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven, we can actually miss the gospel, at least parts of it. What God *has* done helps us see what He *is* doing and what He *will* do. The Old Testament helps us understand the New Testament better. God's salvation of the Israelites in the exodus is a shadow of the greater salvation that would come in Christ.

My Mission

Because we have been delivered from sin through salvation in Jesus, we praise Him at all times, showing others that God is of utmost worth so that they too might be compelled to trust in Him and be saved from their sin.

- **How will you respond in faith to the one true, all-powerful God of the exodus and the Son given to save**

us from our sin?

- In what ways can we demonstrate God's power to the unbelieving community around us?
- How will you share the way of escape God has provided in Christ with someone you know to be enslaved by sin and the fear of death?

Daily Study

Day 1: Read Exodus 13:1-16

We tend to be a forgetful people, which, of course, God knows. This is why He uses signs of His promises and instructs His people to make memorials so often throughout Scripture. He wants to help His people do what is needed to remember who He is and what He has done. Or else, left to ourselves, we will forget. We know this to be true, because even with memorials and signs, we still forget. We are a people who have the completed Word of God at our fingertips—perhaps multiple copies in our homes and digitally on our devices—and yet, we still forget.

Here in Exodus, we see God command His people to consecrate—set apart as the Lord's—every firstborn male, both humans and animals. Now, we know that all the earth and all its inhabitants belong to the Lord, not just the firstborn (Ps. 24:1). Why, then, consecrate the firstborn males? Because God wanted His people to remember what He had done in Egypt, how He had spared the firstborn from the plague of death by the blood of a lamb.

In this command, God was calling His people to look back, but also ahead. God's rescue of His people out of Egypt did not start or end with providing life for the firstborn males during Passover. He also provided life to all the people by rescuing them through the Red Sea, by providing food and water, and by guiding them through the wilderness. But all of these acts of God's deliverance have pointed toward a greater rescue—the one from sin and death that was to come through Christ. This is what He wanted them to understand. Their rescue, as amazing as it was, pointed to this greater rescue to come.

How does looking back at God's work in your life help you look ahead with hope and assurance?

Voices from the Church

"We are called to remember Christ's work on our behalf through the Lord's Supper. This meal signifies our great deliverance. In it, we taste and see Jesus' work on our behalf. Just as Israel looked back to the Passover, we look back to God's work on the cross for us and ahead to our glorious future with our King." 3

—Tony Merida

Day 2: Read Exodus 13:17-22

This passage is short, yet it is packed full of details, and not just trivial details but important ones. These details are not only important for us to understand the exodus narrative, they also help us understand something about God and His Word.

There is a type of laziness and fear around the Word of God that keeps many people from living as the people of God. Somewhere along the way, we began associating going deep into the Word of God—taking the time to consider every verse, every word, such as we see here in this text—with cold, dead orthodoxy. Somewhere the idea of study became a negative. It's like the more you know the God of the Bible, the less you love Him.

We've got it flipped and need to turn our view of the Bible right-side-up. The more we know and learn about God, who He is and what He has done in and through Jesus Christ, the more we'll be in awe of Him and the more we'll be driven toward mission, wanting to make His name great across all the earth!

How have your studies of God in Scripture increased your understanding of Him and helped you live on mission?

Day 3: Read Exodus 14:1-12

God's ways are amazing. Here we see that He planned to receive glory through Pharaoh's hardened heart that refused to give Him glory. And in the end, that is what happened (see 14:31; 15:1-21). Pharaoh's pursuit of his glory resulted in God receiving glory. This is how our God works—He takes anything and everything and uses it for His glory.

How about us? We too have been called to give God glory in all we do (1 Cor. 10:31). But how will we do this? Will we be like Pharaoh, used by God while being unaware or even unwilling? Or will we engage with God on His mission to proclaim His glory to the nations? God gives us opportunities each day to do this—to show those around us how beautiful and amazing He is, to show an unbelieving world the gospel. Let us be a people who seek these opportunities and then take advantage of each one as we rest in God's power to make the most of them.

How has God positioned you to show His glory to others around you today? During the rest of the week?

Day 4: Read Exodus 14:13-31

If you have ever walked through mud, you know how difficult that can be. Imagine the children of Israel stepping foot onto the floor of the Red Sea; imagine how deep and heavy that mud should have been. Instead, God's people crossed the Red Sea on dry ground, surely making their travel much easier and faster as the Egyptians closed in hot pursuit.

But there is, perhaps, another reason for God to dry the Red Sea's floor. Not for practical purposes but to be an exclamation mark on the more noticeable miracle—the waters of the Red Sea walled up on each side. That miracle was astounding, as it should be. But hardened hearts can dismiss even the most amazing miracles of God. Skeptics could claim that the waters were held up by a natural phenomenon, perhaps a strong prevailing wind that “just happened to appear” at “just the right time.” But how can you explain the ground of the Red Sea floor drying instantly? You can't. It is in this seemingly small detail that we see God confronting even the most skeptical hearts.

What miracles of God have strengthened and deepened your faith the most? Why?

Day 5: Read Exodus 15:1-21

As we read through the Book of Exodus, we see an Israel who got it wrong almost every time. They refused to trust God over and over again. And yet, this generation did have their moments, such as this one here as they worshiped God on the far bank of the Red Sea. Exodus 15 records a wonderful song of worship declared by God's people to the Lord. They had just seen God rescue them through the waters of judgment, and this time, at least, they didn't miss the opportunity to give God the worship due Him.

And in this moment, we are reminded of our own need to be aware, because there are times—plenty of times—when we have more in common with Israel in Exodus than we care to admit. We can be just as clueless, perhaps even more so. We too can miss times to offer God the worship due Him, and this isn't just in the “high” moments like Israel experienced in Exodus 14–15. We need to fight to worship God without ceasing—in the “highs” of life as well as the “lows.” This is our goal: to respond properly to God's day-by-day, minute-by-minute acts of grace and mercy in our lives.

What has God done today that has been worthy of worship?

Encourage One Another

Join together with 2-4 people from your group, or with your family, sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and you are responding.

Share your thoughts and reflections on the truths from Scripture in this session:

- God delivers His people through His guidance (Ex. 13:17-22).
- God delivers His people for His glory (Ex. 14:1-4).
- God delivers His people through His power (Ex. 14:13-14,21-22,26-28).

How have you responded to these truths from Scripture?

Why should God's tangible and practical guidance of His people throughout history encourage you and deepen your faith?

How should God's omnipotence strengthen our faith and challenge us to live on mission?

References

1. History.com Staff, "Dunkirk," History.com, accessed June 4, 2018, <https://www.history.com/topics/dunkirk>.
2. Andrew Murray, *Working for God!* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1901), 158-59.
3. Tony Merida, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Exodus* (Nashville: B&H, 2014) [eBook].