

Exodus 14: The Lord will fight for you.

Through stunning displays of his power over the pagan gods of Egypt, the Lord freed the Hebrew slaves from Pharaoh's oppression. As Exodus 14 begins the Lord has intentionally led the Hebrews to a campsite that doesn't seem logical--up against the sea, without a sensible escape route. The Lord tells Moses that he will use this to harden Pharaoh's heart against them.

Sure enough, the trapped Hebrews look up and see Pharaoh coming with his army and his war chariots. Moses knows that the Lord is doing this for his own purposes. The other Hebrews don't seem to know it, because they immediately blame Moses for leading them out of the frying pan and into the fire. Moses speaks three imperatives and a promise: "Don't fear. Stand firm. Be still. The Lord will fight for you."

Then the Lord speaks again to Moses: Why are you crying? Get going. Divide the sea. I will send Pharaoh after you. I will use Pharaoh to glorify myself so that the Egyptians will know I am God."

Even knowing such stories, our faith is not much better than that of the Hebrews. When threatened we lash out in fear and anger. We wish we had stayed in bondage. We have to be told to move toward the storm-tossed waters and rely on the Savior. The idea that the Lord might be using our struggles to make himself known to Egyptians isn't even on our radar.

In 2011 the Lord spoke to me in a dream. This doesn't happen to me often, but it has happened at some key turning points in our life. It wasn't an ordinary dream. It was the kind in which you wake up knowing the Lord has spoken to you. I have learned that when you say that some people know exactly what you mean, and some people jump to the wrong conclusions.

Separately, the Lord spoke to Lorie during a corporate prayer gathering. Both of us knew that the Lord said he was doing something new (He was), that it would involve the attack of the enemy (it has), that it involved turning counter-intuitively away from human control (don't get me started), and that He is calling us to rest in him (He is). I could write a book about how those things have played out so far these past four years, but the stories are far from over.

The Lord kept sending us other people to echo and clarify what we had both heard. Some of them had heard the same kind of message from the Lord, and many of them had been led to the same Scripture passages which the Lord had been impressing on us.

One of those was Exodus 14. Just days after the Lord had spoken to me so powerfully, a friend handed me a card. She had been praying one night when the Lord called her attention to this verse and prompted her to write it down and give it to me. We weren't meeting with her regularly at the time, and she had no idea what we had been going through.

The card read: **"Do not be afraid. Stand firm, and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. . . The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still"** (Exodus 14:13-14). I have needed those instructions again and again since then. Threats still loom. But the Lord has brought us this far, even parting the waters a few times.

Oh, and last week I had my first conversation with an Egyptian. It was friendly, and the Lord was brought up.

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