

What is Jesus Doing?

THE LORD THAT PARTED THE RED SEA, CAN...

Have you ever had so many problems, so many bills, so much pressure at work, friends who you knew were talking behind your back and it was breaking your heart... Maybe you did something that you realized later was terrible and you wish you could take it back and you just can't because you can't unring that bell and you just can't stop thinking about it...

You can't eat because you can't stop thinking about it. You can't sleep because you can't stop thinking about it. Maybe it's a bully at school or even at work and you know that person is gunning for your back all the time and you're just afraid... because you just never know when the other shoe is going to drop and you'll get fired or expelled or you'll have to fight for your life, your wife, your kids, your job, your faith.

Like what if you have an alcohol problem or a drug problem or a gambling problem or some weird stupid addiction that you hate doing but you can't stop doing and you just can't stop thinking about it? Maybe you're stressed out because your circumstances just seem bigger than God. Have you ever felt like that?

You want to pray about it... you want to pray for relief... you want to pray that God will remove that problem or that person from your life... you want to pray that He will miraculously make your debts disappear, or your addiction go away, or that he'll open the door for another job because you just can't stand where you are anymore, or that He will help you because you are tired of being homeless, or loveless, or lonely, or faithless... but now your anxiety is so high that you feel your prayers aren't being heard... or worse, that God is deliberately withholding His mercy or even that your problem is your own fault so that God won't do anything.

You are not alone.

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Listen to what King David says in the 77th Psalm...

*I cried out to God with my voice—
To God with my voice;
And He gave ear to me.
In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord;
My hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing;
My soul refused to be comforted.
I remembered God, and was troubled;
I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.
- Psalm 77:1-3*

And then David names his fear...

*Will the Lord cast off forever?
And will He be favorable no more?
Has His mercy ceased forever?
Has His promise failed forevermore?
Has God forgotten to be gracious?
Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies?
- Psalm 77:7-9*

But then David says this...

*And I said, "This is my anguish;
But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High."
I will remember the works of the Lord;
Surely I will remember Your wonders of old.
I will also meditate on all Your work,
And talk of Your deeds.
Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary;
Who is so great a God as our God?*

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*You are the God who does wonders;
You have declared Your strength among the peoples.
You have with Your arm redeemed Your people,
The sons of Jacob and Joseph.*

- Psalm 77:10-15

WHO IS SO GREAT A GOD AS OUR GOD? Says David, and so say we all... AMEN?

And he says... YOU ARE THE GOD WHO DOES WONDERS.

And then David uses this... the greatest and most awe-inspiring act of deliverance in the history of Israel, the parting of the Red Sea... to describe his hope in powerful words that show us why he was known as the sweet Psalmist of Israel.

*The waters saw You, O God;
The waters saw You, they were afraid;
The depths also trembled.
The clouds poured out water;
The skies sent out a sound;
Your arrows also flashed about.
The voice of Your thunder was in the whirlwind;
The lightnings lit up the world;
The earth trembled and shook.
Your way was in the sea,
Your path in the great waters,
And Your footsteps were not known.
You led Your people like a flock
By the hand of Moses and Aaron*

- Psalm 77:16-20

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David remembers the Awesome God Yahweh, His Lord, who led His people through the waters on dry land. This is the same David, now King of Israel, who as a young man had the faith to defeat the giant because he knew who the God of Israel was.

The God of Israel was the God that parted the waters of the Red Sea. And Moses victory song after the Lord delivered the people on dry land through the Red Sea and destroyed the Egyptian army as the waters closed back over them can be our song of victory over our problems as well...

*The Lord is my strength and song,
And He has become my salvation;
He is my God, and I will praise Him;
My father's God, and I will exalt Him.
The Lord is a man of war;
The Lord is His name.*

- Exodus 15:2-3

When the first generation of Israelites passed through the Waters of the Red Sea, they immediately forgot the Lord their God, who had done that great and awesome miracle. First, they complained against Him, and then they made a golden calf idol to worship instead of Him.

When we study the Books of Chronicles and Kings, the histories of the Bible that show us the wickedness of the Kings of Israel and Judah that came after David, we see how they always walked in the ways of their fathers and worshiped idols.

Whenever the good Kings are described, the Bible says what made them good was that they walked in the ways that their father David had. They cast out the idols and remembered Yahweh, the God of Israel, the one true God that had parted the Red Sea and delivered Israel out of bondage.

What is Jesus Doing?

It was David's Faith in the God who parted the Red Sea that enabled him to have the courage to face the giant Goliath and defeat him. It is the faith that we have in the God of Israel who loved us so much that He gave his only begotten Son that we have the power to defeat the Giants in our lives.

Now I'll tell you something about me, before I gave my life to Jesus. I was absolutely consumed by fear. I was terrified by everything that we mentioned earlier. I was consumed with worldly things and self-made problems that had absolutely no value.

I was a functional Fearaholic, however. Nobody knew what I was going through. I knew how to appear confident. Nevertheless, I spent many, many sleepless nights in doubt and fear about what would happen the next day.

I would try to think of all the things that could possibly go wrong in some pseudo religious hope that if I could think of them then the universe wouldn't allow them to happen because I'd already brought them into being with my mind.

Yeah, I know crazy right?

Even though I had a well-paying job that I was good at... Even though I had friends that thought I had it all together and I was pretty well off by the world's standards, I was really a seething ball of acidic fear all the time.

Now, once I gave my life to the Lord, He immediately removed all fear from me and I became basically fearless. I had always known how to act fearless, and I was good at it, but now I had been made truly fearless because of what Jesus did for me.

I knew with no question that he had truly conquered the power of sin and had swallowed up death itself. I knew that in Christ Jesus I had nothing to fear.

What is Jesus Doing?

I quickly learned however, that not everybody who was a believer had that same deliverance from worry and fear. As I dived into the Bible like a duck into water and devoured scripture like a hungry hyena, I began to see why and how God is faithful and can be sovereign over all of our problems if we only will bring Him in.

As our Mama Ruth spoke last week, this scripture will bring you peace in times of trouble or doubt, or needless worry...

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

- Philippians 4:6-7

The week before last, I talked about crushing our idols and how we could be like the good kings of Judah. One of those kings was Hezekiah. In his days he had some pretty bad problems.

There was an Assyrian warlord king named Sennacherib who had conquered many kingdoms all around him and had now set his sights on Judah and camped out around Jerusalem to siege it and destroy it.

Now I'm kind of a movie buff and I don't know if any of you have seen movies about these kinds of warlord Kings like Genghis Khan or Attila the Hun or Alexander the Great... or even some of the marvel Avengers movies where there's a big bad super villain named Thanos, who has conquered many planets and made their Kings his vassals to go and do his dirty work and conquer other Kingdoms for him.

Well, Sennacherib was like that. He had one of these under-chieftains named 'The Rabshakeh' who sent his messengers to threaten Hezekiah...

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This is what he told them...

“Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying: ‘Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, “Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.”

Look! You have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by utterly destroying them; and shall you be delivered?

Have the gods of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed, Gozan and Haran and Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Telassar? Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?’ ”

- 2 Kings 19:10-13

So what does Hezekiah do? Does he run and hide?

Nope. Hezekiah seeks the Lord...

And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord and spread it before the Lord.

Then Hezekiah prayed before the Lord, and said: “O Lord God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.

Incline Your ear, O Lord, and hear; open Your eyes, O Lord, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God.

Truly, Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were not gods, but the work of men’s hands—wood and stone. Therefore, they destroyed them.

Now therefore, O Lord our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the Lord God, You alone.”

- 2 Kings 19:14-19

What is Jesus Doing?

So check this out guys... our problems... even the really bad ones, are just gods of wood and stone. They have no power against the One who holds our very lives in his hand.

And as Hezekiah well knew they have no power against the One who parted the Red Sea. Because this is what the Lord that parted the Red Sea did for King Hezekiah...

First He sent a word through the prophet Isaiah to Hezekiah and he said this...

“Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the king of Assyria:

‘He shall not come into this city,

Nor shoot an arrow there,

Nor come before it with shield,

Nor build a siege mound against it.

By the way that he came,

By the same shall he return;

And he shall not come into this city,’

Says the Lord.

‘For I will defend this city, to save it

For My own sake and for My servant David’s sake.’”

- 2 Kings 19:32-34

And then the Lord did this...

And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the Lord went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home, and remained at Nineveh.

- 2 Kings 19:35-36

What is Jesus Doing?

That is what the Lord who parted the Red Sea did for Hezekiah... Here is something that the Lord who parted the Red Sea did for me recently. The Lord that parted the Red Sea parted the red tape.

One of our brothers who is here today, struggles with a deadly hereditary disease. He only recently was able to reconnect with his Neurologist after a lapse of four years. It is only because he has Medicare and Medi-Cal that he is able to get the services he needs to survive and manage his day-to-day life.

Well... through a series of circumstances out of his control, he was terminated by his Health Plan last week. We found out that it was because a deadline had passed for him to file a change of address.

When I first started to make calls to try to get this straightened out with his Health Plan, they sent me back to Medi-Cal, and I could not get through to Medi-Cal by phone because our friend had lost his Medi-Cal card, and so we didn't have the necessary credentials to get through to anyone.

I don't know if you have ever had to deal with a government agency, but if you ever have, then you know that the red tape and hurdles that have to be jumped over and through can be incredibly difficult, and even if you're able to do that, they usually have a waiting period before you can get reinstated.

I was pretty discouraged, and so I literally spread out all the paperwork that I had before the Lord and called my prayer warrior friends to pray that the Lord that parted the Red Sea would part the red tape.

The very next phone call that I made was to the Health Plan Member Services, where I had started to begin with. This time, I got a nice person who at least wanted to help, but was at a loss because our friend had by this time disappeared from the System.

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After much head scratching and apologizing for not being able to help, this Representative said all of a sudden... you know I have another number for Medi-Cal, why don't you try this one. When I called that number, I was shocked when I actually got a live person on the phone.

The Red Tape was starting to unravel...

As it happened, the person who answered the phone was supposed to have turned over the line to the automated system but for some reason had forgotten to do it.

As the Lord would have it, this person was way more helpful and knowledgeable than anyone I had been able to speak with to that point, and she told me about a local County office where I could take our friend and maybe talk to a live person. They didn't hold out much hope for a quick resolution, but they said at least you'll be able to get the process started.

You probably won't be surprised to hear that when we went and sat down, and spoke to a real person at the County Office, that person took pity on our situation and reinstated our friend's Medi-Cal coverage on the spot.

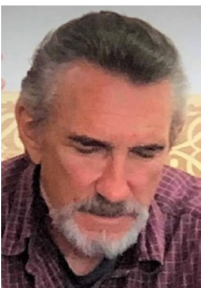
Hallelujah, right?

So here's what I believe and I want you to believe it too...

What is Jesus Doing?

- The Lord that parted the Red Sea can...
Heal your marriage.
- The Lord that parted the Red Sea can...
Break your addiction.
- The Lord that parted the Red Sea can...
Lead your children to Christ.
- The Lord that parted the Red Sea can...
Supply all of your needs.
- The Lord that parted the Red Sea can...
Cure your depression.
- The Lord that parted the Red Sea can...
Heal your diseases.
- The Lord that parted the Red Sea can...
Send you a Godly partner.
- The Lord that parted the Red Sea can...
Remove your obsessions.
- The Lord that parted the Red Sea can...
Change your perspective from fear to hope.
- The Lord that parted the Red Sea can...
Strengthen you in any trial.

Maybe you just need to spread that letter from the IRS, or that medical diagnosis, out before the Lord and trust Him with the outcome...



Let's Pray,

- John Henry Raskin, Roadhouse Rabbi