

Introduction

If you have your Bible, I want to invite you to go ahead and open that up with me at this time. We're going to be in Exodus chapter 14. We're continuing our series through the Book of Exodus, and this morning we're specifically looking at the crossing of the Red Sea, a timeless tale that really has a lot to do with you and me. Before we jump into the text this morning and see what God has to say to us through His Word, let's pray together.

"God, You are in the business of changing lives, but Lord You never do it just for the life's purpose itself. You do it so that the life might be changed to bring glory to You. Thank you for that. God, this morning I pray that prayer over this congregation. God, please change hearts, and in changing those hearts I pray that those lives would begin to point people to Jesus Christ. Father, may we never draw attention to ourselves but always exalt You, point to You, look to You. God, we love You. We thank You for Your goodness. Father, for anyone who is here today that does not know You, I pray that this would be the time when they would turn to You in faith. Father, for any person that has come in here in the midst of a battle, I pray that the words today would speak to them. God, we ask by the power of Your Holy Spirit that You would be present in this place and, Lord, that You would move among us. God, we know that we need to hear from You, but God some of us need to be encountered, pushed, changed, prodded... God, whatever You need to do, we give You free rein in this place. So, Father, we pray in the Name of Your Son Jesus, through the power of Your Holy Spirit, to transform us today in this place. We ask this in Jesus Name. Amen."

Exodus 14: *"Then The Lord said to Moses, 'Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, 'They are wandering in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.' And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord.' And they did so.*

"When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, 'What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?' So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him, and took six hundred chosen chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, kind of Egypt, and he pursued the people of Israel while the people of Israel were going out defiantly. The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

"When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, 'Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.' And Moses said to the people, 'Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.'

"The Lord said to Moses, 'Why do you cry to Me?' Tell the people of Israel to go forward. Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on

dry ground. And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots and his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.'

"Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night.

"Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And in the morning watch, the Lord in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces, and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, 'Let us flee from before Israel, for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians.'

"Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.' So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the Lord threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained. But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

"Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses."

1. He Weakens Our Position (v. 11)

God always fights differently, doesn't He? If you go back and you read the Scripture, you will see: "It's time to fight a nine-foot Philistine giant; who are we going to bring into battle? I've got an idea. Let's get a young shepherd boy with no armor, no sword, and give him a rock." "It's time to defeat the oncoming army. Gideon needs to go out and to fight into battle. Let's take his thousands of men and whittle them down to three hundred, and the way we'll choose that army is based on the way that they drink from the river." God never chooses to use military tactics that are normal. He always fights in a weird way. I've noticed that whenever God fights, one of the first things that He loves to do, is He loves to put the people that He's fighting FOR in a position of weakness. He likes them to start in a place where they are completely vulnerable.

A few months ago, Joy and I were talking. My wife just kind of caught me off guard. She said, "Hey, can I talk to you about something?" I said, "Yeah, sure." She said, "I've noticed that over the last year or so you get angrier than you used to get." "What do you mean?" She said, "Well, if you get frustrated with something, for whatever reason, your temper goes higher than it ever has in fifteen years of marriage." Now you don't know this, but this is a big concern of mine because I come from a lineage of people with legendary tempers. Many of those that are my predecessors, their temper led them to violence against

family members. So this is something that I certainly don't want to see made manifest in my own family. It was shameful. It is bad to have your wife say, "You're angry. You're an angry man." It's kind of embarrassing, when you think, "I'm supposed to be the spiritual leader of a church, and my wife says that I'm angry." You begin to ask God, "How are You ever going to change me?" As I started to think about that, I went, "You know... I think she's right. I do get angrier than I used to. How am I ever going to fight?" I noticed as I looked back across the course of my life that I've been in this position before, a place where something in me needed to change... a temptation or a sin or a need... and I knew that God had provided and come through for me time and time again in my past, but I also noticed that when that happened, it always started with this moment of recognizing that I was completely powerless... that I was entirely weak.

Christian Wiman who was a poet who was born in Snyder, Texas... I know... Snyder, Texas, produces poets. Who would have guessed it? But there is a man named Christian Wiman who wrote a book called "My Bright Abyss". He's talking about meditations and what it means to be a modern-day believer. He's a poet. He had walked away from his Southern Baptist faith many, many years ago, but as an older man he found that he could no longer write. For some reason he went through this bout of writer's block and was then diagnosed with a terminal blood cancer. In the midst of this terminal blood cancer, for whatever reason, God brought him back to faith. He said he was completely powerless. He had nothing that he could do to fight. He started... he said, almost in a joking way... praying again. Then he found himself walking into a church one day, and he found himself worshipping and believing that Jesus truly was who He said He was. He went through painful bone marrow transplants and actually ended up being saved from the disease. On the other side of the disease, healthy again, he wrote a poem called "Lord Is Not A Word." In the final four lines of that poem say this:

"Lord, suffer me to sing
these wounds by which I am made
and marred, savor this creature
whose aloneness you ease and are."

Wiman's point is this: It's that in those wounds, that brokenness, our admission of weakness, where God is able to work.

Last week, I spoke with a woman after Dusty gave his testimony. She said, "How do I grow spiritually?" She shared with me the struggles that she had. Her story was one, like all the rest of us, brokenness and sin and need and ugliness were there in her life. I said, "Find a woman or two in this church that you trust and tell them everything. Don't sugar-coat it; don't hold back. You lay out every sin right there before them." Why? The Bible tells us to confess our sin because it's only when we recognize and realize that we are completely weak that God has us precisely where He wants us.

I don't know if you know this, but in military tactics, God put the Israelites in a bad spot. He told them, "Go camp next to the sea." Okay. So the Israelites had no weapons... they're not a army, filled with women and children, slow-moving because of all the livestock... they are backed up against the sea, and here comes an advancing army. What are they going to do? Swim for it? It's a bad place to be, and yet God says, "This is precisely where I want you to camp." He gave them the exact location... "Right here, next to the water."

2. He Protects and Provides (v. 14)

Whenever you begin by recognizing and admitting your weakness, that is when God finally is able to walk through the door. This is what I'm coming to recognize: The weakness that we confess is the door through which God walks to do His greatest work. But He wants you first to camp precisely where He has asked you to be, which is an admission, a recognition, and perhaps even a sharing of the weakness which you carry about in you every single day. It's only then in that weakness that then God is able to do the fighting for you.

Exodus 14:14: They're there camped by the sea. Here comes the army. They're about to be annihilated. Everyone can see it. The people... they're so kind to Moses. They have some great one-liners; verse 11... *"Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness?"* The cemeteries were too crowded back next to the Nile. Moses has an interesting retort. He says in verse 14, *"The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."* He says, "Just be quiet and God will take care of everything." I bet they wanted to scream at him and say, "Hey... I don't know if you've noticed this, but there's a big body of water right here and there's an army right there. We're toast!" But instead, he says, "Sit here, be quiet, and watch what the Lord does on your behalf."

So then what happens? The Lord sends a strong wind. It blows all night long. While the wind is blowing, the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire that's been leading them now moves from in front of the people to behind the people, between them and Pharaoh's army. So now, as the advancing army is coming, they encounter the angel of God and the fire in the pillar. So, for whatever reason, they are frightened by this and they stop and they say, "We can't go any farther." So God is protecting them. He becomes the rear guard. The wind blows all night long and suddenly the sea is parted. "A wall of water..." the Bible says, "... on the right and on the left." And they are able to walk through on dry ground. They get to the other side. When they get there, then the pillar moves and comes and joins the people again. The Egyptian army goes into the midst of the water. Moses waves his hand over the water. Every pint of water weighs a pound and what happens? Millions upon millions of pounds of water come and crush the bones of the Egyptians, and just as Moses said, "You'll never see them again, after today," it came to pass. They were destroyed. The Lord did indeed fight for them. They had only to remain silent.

Do you believe that God fights for you? Do you believe that in your moment of weakness, when your back is against a body of water and there's nowhere to go... when the oncoming army is coming, do you believe that in that moment that God fights? That is the command of Scripture: Here in this moment, He protects, He provides, so you now must recognize this is the way that God fights. He puts you in a position of weakness where it looks like you're completely doomed and then He rescues.

I don't know if you've heard the story about the little boy whose dad felt like his son needed to go to church, but he didn't want to go to church, so he just dropped him off for Sunday School one morning. He said, "I'll pick you up afterwards, right here." He came and picked up his son afterwards. He said, "Well, what did you study today in church?" He said, "Oh, we studied the story of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea." He said, "Okay. Good. What did they tell you?" He wanted to kind of test his son to see if he had learned anything. He said, "Well, they said that the Israelites were being chased by Pharaoh's army. They came across the Red Sea. Moses called in the Army Corps of Engineers. (Laughter) The Army Corps of Engineers built a giant bridge right there, across the Red Sea. They went right across it on the bridge, got the other side safely, and then Pharaoh and his army started chasing them across the bridge. Moses got on the radio, called in the Air Force. The Air Force came in and blew up the bridge, and all of Pharaoh's army

was drowned." (Laughter) The father, a little bit incredulous, said, "Is that really what they told you today in Sunday School?" He said, "No... but if I told you the way they told it, you'd never believe it." (Laughter)

Here's the thing, people: We too often refuse to believe that our God is in the business of supernatural rescue. What happens is that we find ourselves with our backs to the water and an advancing army... a need, an illness, a brokenness, a sin, a temptation... and we are called to surrender, be silent, and wait on God to rescue us. We instead choose to kick and to strive and try to fight our own way out. But God demands that we sit still. I don't understand why it is, but this is the way grace works. Grace in the New Testament is given freely, unearned, undeserved, and grace in the Old Testament is the same because it is from the same God. Only when you sit still and are silent will the gracious God be able to work because it's there, when you've done nothing, that God is able to step in and rescue. So when Paul writes, two thousand years later, in Philippians 4:19: *"My God will supply every need of yours, according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."* He is telling us, "God has fought for you in what He did on the cross." In the incarnation of Jesus Christ, God has already fought the battle on your behalf. The battle has already been won, and yet time and time again, in the midst of our need and in the midst of our brokenness, when it's time for us to fight against our sin, do you know what we do? We try to say, "I can beat this. I'm going to fix this." We are convinced that we are better fighters than the Lord, so we start calling in the Army Corps of Engineers, believing that we can be rescued... instead of trusting in the truth: "The Lord will fight for you." All you have to do is be silent. I can tell you time and time in my life when I was rescued, when I was sick and God healed me, when we were in need and God provided for me. And I can also tell you, time and again, that it always came at a time when I not only was powerless, but I finally was beaten back so far by circumstances that I just stopped. There really literally was nothing else I could do, and finally then God would be able to work.

I think the mark of spiritual maturity is when you learn how to stop trying to fix it yourself, even when you have the ability to try and do so. You see, spiritual maturity is when you still think, "Well, I could try A, B, and C..." or you could just jump straight to that part where you surrender and ask the Lord to fight on your behalf. We don't go quickly to that. For us, God is a fail-safe plan. "Well, I've tried everything else; I guess I might as well pray about it." Instead of saying, "Lord, I'll be silent; I'll be still. Please fight on my behalf."

3. He Employs Obedience (v. 16)

You know the crazy part about this story, to me though, is that He says, "All you have to do is be silent and sit here, and the Lord is going to fight you." But then, oddly enough, God uses Moses' obedience in the midst of it. Look at this... look at verse 16: The Lord tells Moses, *"Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground."* So then in verse 21 what does he do? *"Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back."* Verses 26 and 27: *"Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.' So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to normal..."*

This is the crazy thing to me: God says to Moses, "Hey; I'm going to fight on your behalf so you be still." But then He tells him, "Now, you raise your hands over the water." Did Moses part the water? No; it was God. But for whatever reason, the Lord thought it appropriate to ask Moses to put his hands out there and do it. Do you think that Moses was a little nervous before he did that? (Laughter) Do you ever wonder about that? Can you imagine... you stand up there and you're in front of the Red Sea... "Ta Da!" ... and then nothing. (Laughter) That would be a problem, right? Do you think that there were people there who

saw Moses move his hands and the sea begin to part, and do you think that they thought that the power was in Moses instead of God? I bet there were people there that thought that too. There's certainly a danger and confusion in that; but for whatever reason, the Lord chooses to fight for us on our behalf by using our obedience as a tool.

Now, I want to talk about this for a second. It seems contradictory, right? "Surrender completely... surrender completely and then be obedient." We don't like to do that. You see, the obedience that God gives us in Scripture oftentimes is not anything like the tactics that we would choose. I mean, we're going into battle; we know how to fight, so we've already chosen the battle plan for us. People start coming against us. They start saying things about us. We know exactly what we're going to do. We're going to go on a smear campaign against them. We're going to knock out their reputation; we're going to go for revenge, and we're going to go fast, and we're going to go hard. We know exactly the way to go into battle in those places. And then we pick up the Word and we read... Now what are we supposed to do when people curse us? Oh... "Bless them." "That seems like a really good idea, Jesus. Bless people who curse me?" You see, that seems like a failed tactic. That feels like the same thing. I'm standing here in front of the water and I'm just going to wave my hands over it and something is going to happen? You see, that's the part about following Jesus that's different. He has given us our marching orders, and they're there in the Scripture, but the problem is that we choose not to obey.

What would have happened if Moses wouldn't have raised his hands? We don't really know, do we? But it seems to indicate in Scripture that if Moses doesn't raise his hands, then the Lord is not going to part the sea. Could the Lord have parted the sea? Absolutely. But if Moses chose not to be obedient, then I suppose the Lord wouldn't have done it. I don't know. Thankfully we don't have to find out. But here's the thing: So many of us are saying, "Lord, rescue me. I've surrendered to You." He says, "Great. Now obey Me." Then we say, "Well, you know, that's kind of tough." Then we get caught in the same cycle over and over and over again.

What happens when you bless your enemies... the person who curses you? You know, what's funny is we don't like to do it, so we kind of try to just work our own way into it. People curse us, so what do we say? "Well, just ignore them." That's not in the Bible. "Ignore your enemies." Nope; it's not there. "Love them; Bless them. Go buy them a giant can of caramel popcorn. Put a big bow on it; write them a note. Get them a new buck knife." Whatever it is that you think would bless them, and then say, "I felt like the Lord was telling me to bless you." They'll think you're crazy, there's no doubt; but might their heart be changed? You see, when it comes to the tactics of the human heart, the Master Strategist is Jesus Christ. He has given you the tactics. It's not that His methods won't work; it's that we don't use them. G.K. Chesterton said it, most famously: "It's not that the Christian life has been tried and found wanting; it's that the Christian life has not been tried." So here's the thing: You have been asked to be obedient but will you?

Steven Mansfield used to be a pastor and now he's a writer. He wrote this great book. It's a new book. It's called "Mansfield's Book of Manly Men." I mean, you feel you're growing a beard the second you start reading it. I mean, it's incredible. "Mansfield's Book of Manly Men" and in there he tells this story: Whenever he was visiting with an African bishop who came and was preaching in his church, and he said that they were having a Q&A time at the end of one of the worship services and someone asked the bishop, "Bishop, why is it that in Africa we see more and more miracles and more of the power of God, but not so much here in the west?" And he said, "I wish I could have kept him from answering it because it kind of indicted everyone there," but the African bishop looked right at the congregation and he said, "In

Africa, we worship and we obey our God. In America, you study God." Yeah... You can go home now. (Laughter)

You see, the thing is that you know exactly what you're supposed to do to be able to overcome the obstacles that have been given to you: Surrender to the Lord's will, and part of that surrender means obedience. The problem is that you think, deep down, that you know better than Scripture. That's the truth.

When I started realizing that Joy was right, that I had been getting angrier, do you know what my initial reaction was? It was just shame. I thought, "Well, I'm going to beat this." That was the first mistake. I am not going to beat anything. Do you know what I finally realized, after prayer and soul-searching? I had been telling myself a lie. Do you know what my anger was coming from? I'll tell you: My anger was coming from a belief that was hidden in my heart that I was supposed to get to control my life, and when I didn't get to control things, I got angry about the way that things played out. You see, I was telling myself a lie, "I should get to control things." Ahhh... What does Scripture say? Who controls things? "Life and death is in the power and the hands of the Lord."...Job. "The Lord orders the steps of man"... the Psalmist. I began to search the Scripture and see that all control and all power comes solely from one place and that's from Him. Do you know what happens? Whenever I begin to get angry about control... do you know what I want to do? I want to talk... I want to yell... I want to scream. I want to combat.

Exodus 14:14 says, "*Be silent.*" Why? Because, here's the thing: Whenever you find yourself in a place where you are wanting to fight and to fix... do you know what you're going to do? You're going to want to listen to two things: Your head and your heart. Jeremiah tells us, "The heart is deceitful above all things. Who can understand it?" This is the deal. Your feelings and your thoughts... they will lie to you. They will lie to you. Where is the place where I can turn and find the weapon that God has given to battle my sin and my temptation and my brokenness and my need? Right here. This is the truth. So what do I do? Whenever I face that sin and that temptation, whenever I feel the need to say that I've got to be in control, I have to say "No; the Lord orders the step of man. No; the power of life and death comes from the Lord." I quote Scripture to myself, and I remember that control comes from the Lord. What's the point? I have to surrender first my heart and then say, "I now will be obedient to what the Scripture has said, and I have to lift that up instead."

The reason that I bring all this up is this: It's that I don't know what your battle is. I don't know if you're in the middle of fighting against a sin, a temptation... I don't know if you say, "I'm not going to be able to pay the bills this week." I don't know if you say, "I'm struggling against lust." I don't know if you say, "You know, I'm facing cancer." But I can tell you this: "Whatever the thing is when you struggle and you fight, you tell yourself a lie if you're not careful." So what do you have to do? You have to preach the Gospel to yourself, and you have to preach it straight from the Word of God. So when you say, "I have to combat lust," then you remember Job, "I made a covenant with my eyes and I will not look upon any woman in a lustful way." Whenever you say, "You know, I'm worried about illness," then you remember Matthew chapter 6. You quote Scripture to yourself over and over again. You say, "Well, I don't know any verses." Well, guess what? This is a good time to start learning because here's the thing. If you don't know the Word of God that will combat the lie that is coming up against you, then guess what? You are a powerless individual. God has freed you in the cross and given you the Holy Spirit, but listen... He has also given you this weapon, and people who choose to go into battle without their weapons, they call them victims. Are you ready to take up the battle? Then if so, get in the Word and learn it. Read a chapter a day. Just read a chapter a day. Well, you should read twenty, but just read one at least. Learn those verses because it's not that obedience saves you; it's that obedience teaches you the tools that you need to fight. You see, the

reason that we have to be silent is because we have to no longer speak to ourselves out of our own voice, but instead we have to hear what God says to us.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer famously said this: "Only he who obeys believes." That's a fancy way of saying this: "If you really trust what God says, then you will do it." He has given you the battle plan so act on it.

4. All For His Name (v. 31)

Moses closes his hands, waves his hand over the sea, and the water comes crashing upon the Egyptians. The Israelites... they don't ever go over to Moses and say, "You know, remember that whole 'Are there no graves in Egypt thing'? Sorry about that." They don't ever do that. But they come up to Moses and apparently their hearts had been changed because the final verse of the chapter tells us this: "...*the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses.*" Can I tell you what? The reason that the Lord Jesus wants you to bless your enemies, forgive those who persecute you... the reason that you're to reconcile with those who have come against you... the reason that you're to value your marriage... the reason that you're to practice sexual purity... all of those things... none of those things are there just for your own benefit. Now please do not misunderstand me. They will benefit you. You will have a better life because the world is hard-wired to flow with the Kingdom of God. It's with the grain of the universe. I truly believe that. However, the reason that God asks you to act in these particular ways is so that when you do so, the people around you will do precisely what happens in Exodus 14:31: "The people will fear the Lord, and they will believe in the Lord." God fights on your behalf and rescues you... not so then you get to live another day. No. The Lord rescues you so that the people around you will say, "That woman... her God is real." "That man... his Jesus is alive." The reason that God fights on our behalf and He puts us in a position of weakness and says, "Surrender, and now act out of obedience." The reason that He does that is... do you know what He wants more than anything is that He wants every person, every name, every tribe, every tongue, every need about, He wants every person to cry out and say, "Jesus Christ truly is God." The problem is that when we act out of no faith and we refuse to believe that the Lord will fight on our behalf, is that we create an impotent faith that convinces people their God is not real... they don't even trust what His Book says.

The story of the Red Sea, when you get right down to it, is a precursor to the Gospel. Back against the wall, the onslaught of sin coming, a completely weak position... as Ephesians 2:1 says: "You were dead in your transgressions." You were dead. In 2 Corinthians 5:19: "But God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them." You see, even in that moment of powerlessness, God was still fighting for His people, just like He did at the Red Sea. He did it again but this time on a cross called Calvary, and this is what happened. He became sin who knew no sin, so that we might become His righteousness. Every person in this room, you say, "I want to know how to live a new life. I want to be changed." Well, guess what? God wants to change you, and the way that it happens is you realize you've already been bought with a price, and you've been saved through the cross of Calvary. You've been fought for. You say, "Nobody would fight for me; I'm worthless." That's a lie. Here's the truth. Romans 5:8: "...*while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*" Even though you're unrighteous; even though you say, "No one says that I am worth anything." Fine. God has declared you to be His child. He has declared you worth everything. You have been fought for, and you have been bought with a price. The Red Sea is a way for us to understand and see the Gospel. Listen to me. There are those of us that are here today that keep saying, "I've got to make God like me." Nah... You are never going to make that happen. There are also those of us here today who say, "God never would really truly bestow His love on me." Too late; He already did it. The question now is, if we're already in Christ, will we trust and surrender and allow Him to

fight the battle on His own terms, and will we be obedient to that? For those of us who are yet to be in Christ, would we finally stop kicking against the goads and surrender and say "Yes" to the things that God has called us to, which is to walk in the love of His Son Jesus Christ, as His beloved children? I call to you. I implore you. Admit that you're weak. You are broken and you are sinful and you are needful, and it begins by confessing your sin that God rescues you. I plead upon you. Please turn to the cross and allow God to fight for you. I implore you and I beg of you now; please stop fighting and start surrendering today and say "Yes" to Jesus. Finally, if you are here and you are already in Christ, stop trying to fight your fight on your own term and obey the Word of God. In doing so, God can then be powerful in this church and in this city and He can use us.

So the prayer today is this: "God please let us be obedient, not because we save ourself, but because we surrendered to the saving grace of Jesus. God please use us for your Name's sake. We ask that every person would call upon the One Name, the One Name of Jesus. Today is the day; the time is now. Let's surrender."

Let's pray. "Father, we thank You for Your goodness. God, You are beyond any gift that we could ever imagine. Lord, You are our great reward. Father, You are the One... You are the One who has rescued us. Father, You are the One who fights for us. You are the One who has declared us righteous, so Lord now in this place, I pray, above any other need in this place, Lord, that You would reconcile any person here who needs to be reconciled to Your Son Jesus Christ. Father, anyone who is here who has yet to turn to You in faith, I pray that this would be the day. And God, for every person who is here who is fighting on their own terms and refusing to be obedient to the call that you have placed, God, I pray that they would surrender and say 'Yes' to Your methods and 'Yes' to Your tactics. God, may we allow You to fight on our behalf, and Father may we use the plan that You have given us. God, we pray this in the Name of Your Son Jesus Christ. Amen."