

Ebenezer Baptist Church
Small Group Discussion
February 12, 2023

Sermon Title: The Courage to Move On
Speaker: Reverend Dr. Carolyn A. McKnight
Text: Exodus 14:1-5; 10-15

¹⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, ² "Tell the Israelites to turn back and camp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall camp opposite it, by the sea. ³ Pharaoh will say of the Israelites, 'They are wandering aimlessly in the land; the wilderness has closed in on them.' ⁴ I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, so that I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD." And they did so. ⁵ When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the minds of Pharaoh and his officials were changed toward the people, and they said, "What have we done, letting Israel leave our service?"

¹⁰ As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back, and there were the Egyptians advancing on them. In great fear the Israelites cried out to the LORD. ¹¹ They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? ¹² Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, 'Let us alone so that we can serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." ¹³ But Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the LORD will accomplish for you today, for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. ¹⁴ The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to keep still."

¹⁵ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. ¹⁶ But you lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground. ¹⁷ Then I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them, and so I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots, and his chariot drivers. ¹⁸ Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gained glory for myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his chariot drivers."

Sermon Summary:

In keeping with Ebenezer's spiritual 2023 theme: '*The Courage to Be*,' Reverend McKnight reminded us, to employ '*The Courage to Move On*' in order to have all that God has in store for us as a nation, church, community and individuals. It is one of the most difficult lessons in the lives of believers in God, yet it remains an inescapable necessity for us all.

In the text, "*the Courage to Move On*," is demonstrated in the exodus of the Israelites from enslavement in Egypt. Subsequent to the growth and prosperity of the Israelites in Egypt, there arose a Pharaoh who "knew not" Joseph who was threatened by their propensity and who decided to "deal wisely" with them by targeting their children and eventually enslaving them all.

Despite being outnumbered, militarily under-equipped, and geographically encapsulated by a terrain that led them to the shores of the Reed Sea, the people of God developed the Courage to Move On to the 'Promised Land'. They believed God would help fight their battle, so they proceeded on a seemingly impossible 40 year journey through the wilderness led by an octogenarian named Moses. These circumstances were orchestrated to be difficult so that Egypt and Israel would know that God was in control. The lesson shows us God will rid us of our enemies yet God uses wilderness or barren situations to take us out of Egypt and to "*take Egypt out of us*."

The sermon offers three significant points that will give us the Courage to Move On

1. Don't be afraid – Don't panic, God is on our side
2. Stand Still – Wait for the move of God.
3. See the deliverance God has for you – Watch God do it for you

Discussion Questions:

1. What similarities do you see between Israel's and African American experiences?
2. What impact did God hardening Pharaoh's heart have on Israel's ability to move on?

3. Describe a wilderness experience you've had in which you were delivered from enemies and/or opposition.
4. How has the church represented a community on the move in your life?
5. Explain the concept of "taking Egypt out of you?"
6. How have you overcome challenges to having the Courage to Move On?