

Seeking Direction

Exodus 13:17-22

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¹⁷ When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, “If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt.”

¹⁸ So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea. The Israelites went up out of Egypt ready for battle.

¹⁹ Moses took the bones of Joseph with him because Joseph had made the Israelites swear an oath. He had said, “God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up with you from this place.”

²⁰ After leaving Sukkoth they camped at Etham on the edge of the desert. ²¹ By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. ²² Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.

sermon notes

THE BIG IDEA

God did not _____ me here to _____ me here.

MEMORY VERSE

“In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed.
In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling.”

- Exodus 15:13

LEARNING TO BE LED

1. _____ the unexpected.
2. _____ on faithfulness.
3. _____ the Leader.

THE BOTTOM LINE

God's presence _____ me all I need to _____ me where I
need to _____.

my next step is to

- Trust Jesus as my Lord and Savior for the first time.
- Memorize Exodus 15:13.
- Pray and ask the Lord to lead me in this area of my life:

- Focus on following through on all my commitments this week.
- Look for a way today to encourage someone who is struggling to rely on God's direction and provision.

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grow group discussion questions

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BUILD

- What are one or two things from Pastor Jordan's sermon on Sunday that encouraged you or challenged you?
- Share about a time when you got lost. What happened? How did it feel? How did you eventually find your way back?
- When you're driving, what's your favorite navigation tool? (e.g., paper map, Google Maps, or 'The Force.')
- What do you like about it? Has it ever led you astray?
- Have you ever experienced God "guiding" you or helping you know what path to take? If so, what tools did he use to give you that guidance?
- In your day-to-day life, how do you include (or fail to include) God in your decision-making?

DIG

- On Sunday, the big idea of Pastor Jordan's sermon was, "God didn't lead me here to leave me here." What does this mean in your own words?
- Read Psalm 23. This Psalm describes five or six different "places" that followers of God might find themselves. List out these places. How are they different from each other? What do they have in common? In the sermon, Jordan talked about how God led the Israelites both during the day and during the night. What principles about God's guidance can we learn from this story and Psalm 23?
- Psalm 23:4 says "He guides me along the right paths." In the very next verse, it says, "Even though I walk through the darkest valley." What do you think it means that these two verses are side by side?
- Psalm 23 starts "in green pastures," goes "through the darkest valley," and ends up "in the house of the Lord forever." What does this say about what we should expect on our journey? What are some of the things that keep us from seeing our ultimate destination? How would it change the way we view "the darkest valley" if we were sure we'd end up "in the house of the Lord?"

- Read Proverbs 3:5-6. What is the promise found in this verse? Compare the phrase, “he will make your paths straight” in verse 6 with “the right paths” in Psalm 23 and how God took the Israelites “the long way around” in Sunday’s sermon. How might these three passages be making the same point in different ways?

TRAIN

- Proverbs 3:5-6 encourages us to “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.” In what areas of your life could you grow in trusting God with more of your heart? What is a practical step you can take to help you do that more fully this week? What is one way you could include God to a greater extent in your decision-making in the coming week?
- In the sermon, Jordan encouraged us to “focus on faithfulness” as we wait for God to lead us, and to be faithful to the commitments we have already made and the direction God has already given us. What does this look like for you? What are the areas where God has already given you clear direction? (think about your family, your job, your friends, etc.) How can you “focus on faithfulness” in these areas this week?
- How else is God speaking to you through the sermon and our conversation today?
- Share a way we can pray for you as you put today’s conversation into practice this week.

DIGGING DEEPER:

- God often does some of his best work in the desert. Read each of the following passages and reflect on the ways God was faithful in this desert situation.
 - o 1 Kings 19:1-18
 - o Matthew 4:1-11
 - o Deuteronomy 8:2-6
- One of the great things about the desert is that you can’t rely on your own resources. Instead, you’re forced to rely on God. Read Jeremiah 17:5-8. What are the dangers of relying on yourself? What are the benefits of relying on God?
- Memory verse: *“In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling.”* Exodus 15:13