



When God's Way is THROUGH the Sea

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Have you ever been in the middle of the sea?

My wife Anjel and I got to go on a cruise with my mom and dad and my sister and brother-in-law as we each celebrated our respective anniversaries. It was a special time for all of us.

But I remember the second day walking on the top deck and looking out all around only to see water on every side. I remember feeling a bit disoriented. I had no clue where we were. All I knew is that we were in the ocean and that we were headed somewhere. I also remember thinking how frightening it would be if the ship went down with no land in sight.

What in the sea would I do?

As I read Psalm 77 for my devotions one day this past week, verses 19 and 20 stood out:

"Your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters; yet your footprints were unseen. You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron."

Psalm 77:19-20

Following God is not always a walk in the garden. There are certainly those times too. But sometimes, God's way is THROUGH the sea, his path is THROUGH the great waters.

This psalm is recounting when God saved Israel from the hand of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. God hand rescued them from slavery through a great display of power and through almost unbelievable signs and wonders proving his supremacy over Pharaoh and all the false gods of Egypt.

Now, they are staring at the Red Sea and they have Pharaoh and his army bearing down on them to kill them.

What with the sea were they to do?

God's way was *through the sea*. His way was *through* the great waters.

What? That's crazy!

To the human mind and heart, God's ways are crazy. They make no sense. And yet, that's the point. God does things to make the jaw of man drop to the floor, hopefully, in humility and awe instead of stubbornness and pride.

So, God tells Moses to hold up the staff and the waters would part so that the people could walk *through* the sea.

The waves are piled up on both sides. If they came crashing down, they would be doomed. But the God who made the waves surely had enough power to hold them up. They may have even felt some of the spray and got a little wet as they walked.

It might have seemed that he wasn't even there because they couldn't physically see his footsteps. But He was there, leading his people like a flock because he is our Good Shepherd.

Good shepherds don't leave their sheep in times of trouble. They lead them through whatever takes them ultimately to safety and peace. This is our Triune God who leads us in and through Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Father has promised never to leave us nor forsake us. Jesus is our Good Shepherd who has promised to be with us always, even to the end of the age and he has given us his Spirit to indwell us forever.

How much more present can he be than IN US?

So, in the midst of our "Red Sea Season," we need not worry. God is with us wherever we are in Christ and by his indwelling Spirit.

The winds are blowing and the waves are piled up on both sides. There is a way forward where

our faith will be strengthened, but it is likely to be *through the sea*, not walking around it on dry land.

Sometimes, God's path for us is to take another step through the sea and he calls us—commands us—to follow him through the great waters.

But God is with us in Christ and by the Spirit and he even chooses to use other human vessels to lead and guide us along the way, so we can walk with others through the sea. We may not see God's footsteps but we have his promises in his word that are "Yes!" and "Amen!" in Christ.

Remember, Jesus walked on the water and when he told the winds and the waves to "Be still!" they obeyed. This same Jesus is our ever-present Lord, Savior, and Treasure.

Church, we are eternally in this together and by God's grace, we *will* make it through every sea that God has ordained we must walk through until we get to the other side where the waves are no more and the sea is as still as glass.

It may feel at times as though the water is up to our necks and we may wonder if we are going to go under.

Hear the words of God to Isaiah:

Isaiah 43:1–3

*"But now thus says the LORD,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:*

*"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.*

*When you pass through the waters,
I will be with you; and through the rivers, they
shall not overwhelm you;*

*when you walk through fire
you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.*

*For I am the LORD your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior."*

If the cruise ship had gone down, I hope these texts would have come to mind to give me peace in the midst of the sea. I'm sure I would have been afraid, but I wouldn't have been helpless.

If God wills that we walk through the sea, then he will give us grace to take the next step.

Let's help each other take another step of faith and let's bring as many as will come along with us!

The world is watching us in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis. We are all in the middle of the virus sea with folks being infected right and left.

We are not promised absolute protection from all the suffering and pains of life. But by God's grace in Christ, we can keep going forward in faith, trusting God to be faithful to his promises when he calls us *walk through the sea, through the great waters, and through the rivers.*

What's the next step of faith God is calling you to take?