

**Text: Exodus 15: 1-2**

**Theme: “A Freedom March”**

I believe beyond the shadow of a doubt that the feeling experienced by Israel after they had safely crossed the Red sea was the same feeling felt by Nelson Mandela when he was released from Prison in 1990. He said at a rally in Johannesburg “the road to freedom was far from smooth but today we can shout from the rooftops FREE AT LAST, WE ARE FREE AT LAST.”

I also believe that the feeling that The Children of Israel felt was equal to that felt by Martin Luther King Jr. when on August 28, 1963 he delivered his famous I have a dream speech and echoed the words “FREE AT LAST, FREE AT LAST, THANK GOD ALMIGHTY, WE ARE FREE AT LAST.

Moses the Israelite leader never made a speech.  
He wasn't standing in a famous square in Washington.  
He was not imprisoned for 27 years and no, he was not standing in Freedom square in Johannesburg, South Africa.

He was standing at the Red sea and yes he was on the other side, the side where he and the Children of Israel were now safe and FREE AT LAST.

Unlike Mandela and King he never had on a three piece jacket suit nor did he have any body guards. Unlike them he had no speech writer, but his moment of celebration for the freedom from the hands of the Egyptians was just as sweet. In fact it was such an exhilarating moment of deliverance that he marked it with a song. A song that today we read of in Exodus 15: 1-2, our text for reflection today.

In his song he says:

*“I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously;  
Horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.  
2 The Lord is my strength and my might  
and he has become my salvation;  
this is my God, and I will praise him,  
my father’s God, and I will exalt him.”*

For us to understand the fullness of Moses and Israel’s song to the Lord we have to go back a little and understand what was happening before.

Why did he sing this song of freedom, and why did he use these glowing words that so beautifully tuned this song to the Lord.

The Children of Israel were in slavery in Egypt for 430 years. During their time in slavery they were stripped of their Israelite rights. They could not worship their Israelite God; they could not read their Israelite literature which taught them about the greatness of Yahweh. They were stripped of everything that meant anything sacred to them and they were now forced to live a life where Yahweh was no longer the centerpiece.

But the time had come when God called Moses and sent him to Egypt to act as a representative and play a role in leading Israel out of bondage and back to their life in God. In fact Moses would lead them towards achieving this great promise which would culminate in Canaan the land of great promise. After much debate and to and fro they left Egypt and came to a place called the Sea of Reeds or as we know it the Red Sea.

It is interesting to note here friends that their journey from Egypt to Canaan could have been much shorter and easier, but that was not how God wanted them to go.

The most direct route from Egypt to Canaan would have been through Philistine country, a trip of about two weeks along the coastal road known as “The Way of Horus.” But this was a busy thoroughfare, under constant surveillance by the Egyptian army. To save his people from attack and the discouragement that would follow, God led them by a more southerly route through the Sinai Peninsula.

Sometimes we cannot understand the places and paths the Lord is leading us in but we have to understand that like Israel the Lord knows best and victory is guaranteed. There are times when the way in which God is leading us and the places he is carrying us are a way of testing us, which leads me to my first point.

### **1. In Your March to Freedom, FAIL NOT THE TEST.**

The Lord directed the Children of Israel to a place near the Red Sea where for them it seemed difficult to navigate. In fact where they were in the region near the Red Sea made their escape from Egypt seem impossible.

Pharaoh thought they were lost and would find themselves right back into his hand. The region was dark and cloudy and had several swamps and huge areas of shrubs on the outskirts which made walking there much harder. The Israelites had a lot of load with them, lots of sick people who they had to lift up and carry and lots of babies and children who they had to bear on their backs. They were in big trouble.

Pharaoh upon realising the route they took thought they were trapped and set out after them with his choice chariots and his Egyptian army. His aim was to overtake the almost two million Israelites and lead them back to slavery in Egypt. Israel found themselves at a place where we could safely say as the saying goes, “they were caught between the devil (Pharaoh) and the deep blue sea.”

They became afraid and some of them began to curse Moses, “You should have left us in Egypt to serve the Egyptians rather than carry us out here to die in the wilderness.

This is where God wanted them though as he was about to test their faith and then bring about their freedom through what we have come to know as one of the greatest miracles in history.

Have you ever been at a place in your life where you thought that this is it, this is the end of my life. Have you ever been at a place where you felt battered, beaten and discouraged and feel as though you will never find a way out. Have you ever been caught between the proverbial devil and the deep blue sea or the between the rock and a hard place where you thought that you were forsaken by all and sundry.

Sometimes God takes us to these places and moments in our lives to test us. He takes us to these trials, mountains, hurdles, depths, red seas in order that he may see what we are really made of and also to make that moment of deliverance even more marvelous. These Red sea moments come to test us from time to time. They may come at work, they may come at home, they may come from your children and family members, they may come through your marriage, they may come through your

bills, and they may come through your church. However it comes remember it is a test from God as he carries us towards freedom. FAIL  
NOT THE TEST.

**2. Secondly, In the March toward Freedom, Forget Not the Power of Your God.**

Moses after answering God's call to be his representative in Egypt, experienced many challenges. His authenticity was questioned by Pharaoh and his officials. He was asked to prove that his God was real. As a matter of fact even some of the Israelites doubted whether or not Moses had a legitimate story as the current generation of Israel never knew the God that Moses was speaking of.

While they stood at the Red Sea they cursed Moses, they ridiculed him with insults and chastised him for taking them out of Egypt. They accused him of taking them to die in the wilderness.

Regardless of all this Moses looked to God.

He remembered the God he met at Horeb when he saw the burning bush, the God who told him not to worry about what to say or how it was going to be done. He remembered the God who promised that he would be with him. He remembered the God who showed up in Egypt and did all those miraculous acts to prove himself to the Egyptians. He remembered the God who showed up in Egypt and brought several plagues on the Egyptians so that their resolve would be broken.

Exodus 3: 11-12

11 But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

12 And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you<sup>[b]</sup> will worship God on this mountain.”

All this time Moses did not lose hope, he went about his task with perseverance and belief. He did not give up even in the face of ridicule from a rebellious generation of Israel.

He knew the power of his God.

I want to encourage some of us today not to give up on some things you have prayed long and hard for. Do not give up on that family member whom you have prayed to God for time and time again that they may see the light and change their ways. Do not stop praying for your children or your friends that one day they too will be saved by the Grace of God. Do not stop praying that God will rise up other men and women to keep this Brentwood Church going for years to come. Forget not the Power of God that He caused an east wind to blow all night so that the water was rolled back. Forget not the power of God that he not only took Israel to safety but he destroyed their enemies forever. No longer did they have to worry about Pharaoh and his army pursuing them.

As God’s people we are bound for freedom. In your march to Freedom, Do not forget the power of your God.

**3. Finally, In your March to Freedom, Faith ensures a Song of Victory**

**There is something interesting about the attitude of Freedom  
Fighters  
The sang when they achieved freedom**

Moses and the Believers sang:

*“he has triumphed gloriously;  
Horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.  
2 The Lord is my strength and my might  
and he has become my salvation;*

When Moses and the Israelites saw what had happened before their eyes they lifted their voices to God and sang a song of victory. This song though could only have been sung by those who had faith in the Power of the Lord. This song could only have been lifted by those who passed the test and remembered the faithful promises of God.

They did not sing out of mere happiness or because singing was characteristic of all of them. I believe that those who sang were those who had faith in the power of God. Those who sang were those who were praying and calling on God while others were cursing Moses. Those who sang were those who knew that God had brought them thus far and the freedom he had promised, he was going to secure.

What is the character of your song today brothers and sisters?

As we march toward freedom the road will never be easy.

There will be moments that it will seem as if you are all alone but somewhere in the midst the Lord is carrying out a test of your character.  
Do not fail that test.

*1 Peter 4: 12-13*

*12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you:*

*13 But rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy.*

As we march toward freedom, circumstances may change and things just do not go as you had planned, but do not forget the promises of your God. He is saying to us “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Like it was for Moses and the people of Israel, the rough journey will end, the problems will pass at some point. As we march toward freedom, keep the faith and at the end you will be able to raise a song of victory to the Lord.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.