

Title: "Placed For a Purpose"

Text: Exodus 14:1-2

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Place: DCOG

Theme: Red Sea Rules

How many like Star Wars? How many like Star Trek?

I wasn't particularly enamored with the Star Trek TV series and the early movies that followed. I have enjoyed, however, the Star Trek movies in the last several years.

A reoccurring theme in several episodes is the test known as the Kobayashi Maru. The test was designed as a no-win situation whereby they could see how potential leaders would act under pressure.

Jim Kirk was the only student to beat the test. How? He cheated. He believed that there was always a way out.

Robert Morgan tells us about Reba Robinson in Starkville, Mississippi. She had a son, Dillon, who was assigned to a Marine commando unit. His assignments were secretive so he couldn't tell her where he was and what he was doing.

God seemed to move her to prayer at different times each day. Which she did.

She didn't know about...

1. The night he swam 10 miles from a submarine to the coast of a hostile country.
2. That he parachuted behind enemy lines from a high-flying aircraft.
3. That he jumped from a chopper through a hail of bullets to retrieve a dead comrade.
4. That a terrorist stuck a gun in his face, and when it misfired he was able to escape.

Then Dillon came home. He was a hero whose bravery could never be explained, declassified, or honored.

He tried making the transition back into community life but it wasn't working. He began to frequent the bar scene trying to forget.

Reba prayed on.

Like Dillon's mother, we sometimes go through prolonged periods of pain and pressure. Trapped by circumstances. Hurting. Afraid. Facing impossible odds. Traversing long, dark valleys.

The Hebrews had been in bondage for several generations. It was a period of abuse, long hours, and no reward. They had seen their children killed so as to limit the growth of the Hebrew people.

It was during this time that Moses was born, rescued by Pharaoh's daughter, and raised in the palace. At 40, Moses killed an Egyptian soldier who was beating a Hebrew slave. Out of fear, Moses departed from Egypt for another 40 year romp in the wilderness.

It was then that Moses was confronted by God and sent back to Egypt to rescue the Hebrews from slavery and to lead them to the Promised Land.

Moses was somewhat successful. He, following ten plagues that ravaged the Egyptians, was able to lead the people out of Egypt and begin their journey home.

Now, they have come to the Red Sea. They are between mountains with the only way out appearing to be the way they came in. C. H. Mackintosh wrote that they were in a cul-de-sac permitted and ordered of God.

Exodus 14:1-2

Then the Lord said to Moses, [2] "Tell the Israelites to turn back and encamp near Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. They are to encamp by the sea, directly opposite Baal Zephon.

How would you respond? How did the people accept the GPS directions that Moses was supplying?

Now my unit would say something like this. “At the next safe intersection, please perform a legal U-Turn and proceed back.”

That is what the people wanted to do.

1. The people were filled with fear and worry.

*John R. Rice said, “Worry is putting question marks where God has put periods.”

*Bishop Fulton Sheen called worry “a form of atheism, for it betrays a lack of faith and trust in God.”

- Worry is not a problem when things are going great.
- Worry doesn’t consume our thinking when things are far away.
- Worry is taken lightly when it doesn’t involve us but rather involves others.

2. Sometimes worry doesn’t release its tenacious grip.

- When your commando son is being secretly inserted into deadly situations?
- When your outflow exceeds your income?
- When your financial portfolio is collapsing?
- When your loved one is diagnosed with Cancer?
- When your job is terminated?
- When your child is troubled?
- When your safety is at stake?

How can you not worry when the Red Sea faces you, the desert surrounds you, and the soldiers of Egypt are speeding towards you with drawn swords?

*Just so you know, Reba Robinson, continued to pray, converting her worries into prayers, and her fears into faith. She prayed earnestly for her son, trusting God to intervene, to redeem, to help, and to heal.

Dillon was asked by a friend to attend a Revival service. Intending to leave quickly, the message that night struck paydirt. Dillon was hanging on to the pew but God was hanging on to him. Later he admitted, "I had faced death without shaking, but that night I was trembling like a leaf.

He staggered to the altar that night and received Jesus as his Lord and Savior.

In the story of the Hebrews, they were pretty excited to be led by God's pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. That is until he deliberately led them into the cul-de-sac. Penned in they faced before them a sea too deep to be forded and too wide to go around.

The Lord had given directions:

1. Specific, step by step instructions
2. Leading them to apparent ruin

What kind of instructions does he give you?

1. Testing your faith.
2. Leading us into hardship.
3. Teaching us wisdom.
4. Showing us His ways.

Our first reaction may be to panic, but we must learn to consult the scriptures for guidance.

- Jesus and the disciples went to the temple knowing that there were those who would seek to kill Jesus
- Paul went to Jerusalem knowing that they were likely to put him into prison

- Though they had already sought to kill him, Elijah confronted Ahab and his soldiers and priests
- David faced the giant, Goliath
- Joshua and his company marched around the mighty Jericho
- Ruth, with no money, returned to Judah with Naomi
- Noah, who had never experienced “rain” built a boat on top of the mountain

Are you catching my drift? “When you are in a difficult place, realize that the Lord either placed you there or allowed you to be there, for reasons perhaps known for now only to Himself.”

The same God who led you in will lead you out!

You can trust Him!