

January 6, 2023

Be Strong

This Shabbat we are entering the book of Sh'mot, Exodus where the narrative picks up some long after Yoseph's death. The children of Ya'akov have resided in Egypt for quite some time and have truly prospered...

**Exo 1:7** The descendants of Isra'el were fruitful, increased abundantly, multiplied and grew very powerful; the land became filled with them.

Adonai had caused them to increase in numbers as was promised to Avraham...

**Gen 12:2** I will make of you a great nation, I will bless you, and I will make your name great; and you are to be a blessing.

The people have been living in the land of Egypt and their customs, truly not knowing the God of their fathers. Yet, they would come to know Him in a rather profound way.

Sh'mot is probably the most foundational book in Scripture when it comes to the historical aspect of the children of Israel. They went into Egypt a family and left Egypt a nation.

Within Sh'mot is the Passover one of two paradigm shifting moments in Scripture. One so profound that we still remember it to this day, some 3,500 years later. As a congregation we have memorialized Passover through our seders for 13 years. This will be our 14<sup>th</sup> Seder in April.

Within the pages of Sh'mot we read of the challenges this young and burgeoning nation will encounter both internally and externally. They will deal with the memories of Egypt while encountering other nations and peoples. All of which reveal the character of the people as Adonai leads them by the hand.

**Exo 6:6** "Therefore, say to the people of Isra'el: 'I am Adonai. I will free you from the forced labor of the Egyptians, rescue you from their oppression, and redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.

**Exo 6:7** I will take you as my people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am Adonai your God, who freed you from the forced labor of the Egyptians.

The people are leaving slavery with all the potential before them because their God is without limits when it comes to potential. If they would follow Him and the one He chose to lead, nothing would be impossible...

**Exo 15:11** Who is like you, Adonai, among the mighty? Who is like you, sublime in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders?

**Exo 15:12** You reached out with your right hand: the earth swallowed them.

**Exo 15:13** In your love, you led the people you redeemed; in your strength, you guided them to your holy abode.

**Jer 32:26** Then this word of Adonai came to Yirmeyahu:

**Jer 32:27** "Look, I am Adonai, the God of every living creature; is there anything too hard for me?"

Even with the influences of Egypt, there was always the potential for this people, this generation to succeed. Yet what held them back was their heart and a lack of faith in the one who redeemed them.

Is this generation really any different than the Generation who is being prepared to enter the land and is being encouraged by Moshe?

**Deu 31:1** Moshe went and spoke the following words to all Isra'el:

**Deu 31:2** "I am 120 years old today. I can't get around any longer; moreover, Adonai has said to me, 'You will not cross this Yarden.'

**Deu 31:3** Adonai your God—he will cross over ahead of you. He will destroy these nations ahead of you, and you will dispossess them. Y'hoshua—he will cross over ahead of you, as Adonai has said.

**Deu 31:4** Adonai will do to them what he did to Sichon and `Og, the kings of the Emori, and to their land—he destroyed them.

**Deu 31:5** Adonai will defeat them ahead of you, and you are to do to them just as I have ordered you to do.

Reminding this new generation not to be fearful or discouraged because what you witnessed not too long ago, back in Numbers 21 what Adonai had done was intended to encourage them further.

Where Moshe conveys the following inspired words...

**Deu 31:6** Be strong, be bold, don't be afraid or frightened of them, for Adonai your God is going with you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you."

This is our verse for the year to focus on and meditate on, for any situation you may be going through or encounter.

The previous generation had all the potential as well.

**Num 13:1** Adonai said to Moshe,

**Num 13:2** "Send men on your behalf to reconnoiter the land of Kena`an, which I am giving to the people of Isra'el. From each ancestral tribe send someone who is a leader in his tribe."

The decision was already made and the battle was already won for Adonai is giving them the land.

Moshe sent them to find out what the land was like and the people.

**Num 13:17** Moshe sent them to reconnoiter the land of Kena`an, instructing them, "Go on up to the Negev and into the hills,

**Num 13:18** and see what the land is like. Notice the people living there, whether they are strong or weak, few or many;

**Num 13:19** and what kind of country they live in, whether it is good or bad; and what kind of cities they live in, open or fortified.

**Num 13:20** See whether the land is fertile or unproductive and whether there is wood in it or not. Finally, be bold enough to bring back some of the fruit of the land." When they left it was the season for the first grapes to ripen.

An information gathering expedition. Yet it would be 10 who would see something different than the other two.

**Num 13:27** What they told him was this: "We entered the land where you sent us, and indeed it does flow with milk and honey—here is its fruit!

**Num 13:28** However the people living in the land are fierce, and the cities are fortified and very large. Moreover, we saw the `Anakim there.

**Num 13:29** `Amalek lives in the area of the Negev; the Hitti, the Y'vusi and the Emori live in the hills; and the Kena`ani live by the sea and alongside the Yarden."

They came back with a report of defeat, not of faith. Yet Kaleb saw something different...

**Num 13:30** Kaleb silenced the people around Moshe and said, "We ought to go up immediately and take possession of it; there is no question that we can conquer it."

Only to let the majority influence the people further...

**Num 13:31** But the men who had gone with him said, "We can't attack those people, because they are stronger than we are";

**Num 13:32** and they spread a negative report about the land they had reconnoitered for the people of Isra'el by saying, "The land we passed through in order to spy it out is a land that devours its inhabitants. All the people we saw

there were giant!

When negativity and faithlessness takes hold, it spreads like a cancer, a wildfire, consuming everything in its path...

**Num 14:1** At this all the people of Isra'el cried out in dismay and wept all night long.

**Num 14:2** Moreover, all the people of Isra'el began grumbling against Moshe and Aharon; the whole community told them, "We wish we had died in the land of Egypt! or that we had died here in the desert!"

Even when the faithful speak out, there is an enormous influence to curtail and transform...

**Num 14:6** Y'hoshua the son of Nun and Kalev the son of Y'funeh, from the detachment that had reconnoitered the land, tore their clothes

**Num 14:7** and said to the whole community of Isra'el, "The land we passed through in order to spy it out is an outstandingly good land!

**Num 14:8** If Adonai is pleased with us, then he will bring us into this land and give it to us—a land flowing with milk and honey.

**Num 14:9** Just don't rebel against Adonai. And don't be afraid of the people living in the land—we'll eat them up! Their defense has been taken away from them, and Adonai is with us! Don't be afraid of them!"

Joshua and Kalev attempted to do just that. Yet the masses could not be convinced and in essence rebelled against Adonai.

They did not trust Him and it was apparent by Adonai's response...

**Num 14:11** Adonai said to Moshe, "How much longer is this people going to treat me with contempt? How much longer will they not trust me, especially considering all the signs I have performed among them?"

Both Faithlessness and Faithfulness are recognized by Adonai.

It was then, when the people did not trust...

**Num 14:20** Adonai answered, "I have forgiven, as you have asked.

**Num 14:21** But as sure as I live, and that the whole earth is filled with the glory of Adonai,

**Num 14:22** none of the people who saw my glory and the signs I did in Egypt and in the desert, yet tested me these ten times and did not listen to my voice,

**Num 14:23** will see the land I swore to their ancestors! None of those who

treated me with contempt will see it.

While the one's who did trust were blessed...

**Num 14:24** But my servant Kalev, because he had a different Spirit with him and has fully followed me—him I will bring into the land he entered, and it will belong to his descendants.

And Joshua...

**Deu 31:7** Next Moshe summoned Y'hoshua and, in the sight of all Isra'el, said to him, "Be strong, be bold, for you are going with this people into the land Adonai swore to their ancestors he would give them. You will be the one causing them to inherit it.

**Deu 31:8** But Adonai—it is he who will go ahead of you. He will be with you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you, so don't be afraid or downhearted."

Is this same trust not also required today among us?

Trusting in Messiah for what He has done for us.

That His sacrifice, that of the Lamb of God is sufficient. That the Exodus is truly about Him. All events leading up to the Passover, that one paradigm shifting moment in time that would again be a paradigm shifting moment in time, occurring on the same day, hundreds of years apart.

Notice the connection because just as there were those at the time of Moshe lacking in faith and trusting in Adonai, so to at the time of Yeshua there were people lacking of faith and trusting in Adonai.

All would either abandon Him or flat out reject Him.

Notice the parallel.

Yet consider Yeshua's words to Thomas, upon His resurrection...

**Joh 20:24** Now T'oma (the name means "twin"), one of the Twelve, was not with them when Yeshua came.

**Joh 20:25** When the other talmidim told him, "We have seen the Lord," he replied, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands, put my finger into the place where the nails were and put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe it."

**Joh 20:26** A week later his talmidim were once more in the room, and this time T'oma was with them. Although the doors were locked, Yeshua came, stood among them and said, "Shalom aleikhem!"

**Joh 20:27** Then he said to T'oma, "Put your finger here, look at my hands, take your hand and put it into my side. Don't be lacking in trust, but have trust!"

**Joh 20:28** T'oma answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

**Joh 20:29** Yeshua said to him, "Have you trusted because you have seen me? How blessed are those who do not see, but trust anyway!"

So what am I saying here.

In this time, this challenging time where people are walking away from what they had come to believe, don't be one of the 10, don't be the majority.

**Rom 10:17** So trust comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through a word proclaimed about the Messiah.

Yeshua says...

**Luk 24:44** Yeshua said to them, "This is what I meant when I was still with you and told you that everything written about me in the Torah of Moshe, the Prophets and the Psalms had to be fulfilled."

**Psa 27:1** [*By David:*] Adonai is my light and salvation (Yeshua); whom do I need to fear? Adonai is the stronghold of my life; of whom should I be afraid?

**Psa 27:2** When evildoers assailed me to devour my flesh, my adversaries and foes, they stumbled and fell.

**Psa 27:3** If an army encamps against me, my heart will not fear; if war breaks out against me, even then I will keep trusting.

**Psa 27:4** Just one thing have I asked of Adonai; only this will I seek: to live in the house of Adonai all the days of my life, to see the beauty of Adonai and visit in his temple.

**Psa 27:5** For he will conceal me in his shelter on the day of trouble, he will hide me in the folds of his tent, he will set me high on a rock.

**Psa 27:6** Then my head will be lifted up above my surrounding foes, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing, sing praises to Adonai.

**Psa 27:7** Listen, Adonai, to my voice when I cry; show favor to me; and answer me.

**Psa 27:8** "My heart said of you, 'Seek my face.' " Your face, Adonai, I will seek.

**Psa 27:9** Do not hide your face from me, don't turn your servant away in anger. You are my help; don't abandon me; don't leave me, God my savior.

**Psa 27:10** Even though my father and mother have left me, Adonai will care for me.

**Psa 27:11** Teach me your way, Adonai; lead me on a level path because of my

enemies—

**Psa 27:12** don't give me up to the whims of my foes; for false witnesses have risen against me, also those who are breathing violence.

**Psa 27:13** If I hadn't believed that I would see Adonai's goodness in the land of the living, . . .

**Psa 27:14** Put your hope in Adonai, **be strong (Hazak)**, and let your heart take courage! Yes, put your hope in Adonai!

**Psa 31:1** [*For the leader. A psalm of David:*] In you, Adonai, I take refuge; let me never be put to shame; in your justice, save me!

**Psa 31:2** Turn your ear toward me, come quickly to my rescue, be for me a rock of strength, a fortress to keep me safe.

**Psa 31:3** Since you are my rock and fortress, lead me and guide me for your name's sake.

**Psa 31:4** Free me from the net they have hidden to catch me, because you are my strength.

**Psa 31:5** Into your hand I commit my spirit; you will redeem me, Adonai, God of truth.

**Psa 31:6** I hate those who serve worthless idols; as for me, I trust in Adonai.

**Psa 31:7** I will rejoice and be glad in your grace, for you see my affliction, you know how distressed I am.

**Psa 31:8** You did not hand me over to the enemy; you set my feet where I can move freely.

**Psa 31:9** Show me favor, Adonai, for I am in trouble. My eyes grow dim with anger, my soul and body as well.

**Psa 31:10** For my life is worn out with sorrow and my years with sighing; my strength gives out under my guilt, and my bones are wasting away.

**Psa 31:11** I am scorned by all my adversaries, and even more by my neighbors; even to acquaintances I am an object of fear—when they see me in the street, they turn away from me.

**Psa 31:12** Like a dead man, I have passed from their minds; I have become like a broken pot.

**Psa 31:13** All I hear is whispering, terror is all around me; they plot together against me, scheming to take my life.

**Psa 31:14** But I, I trust in you, Adonai; I say, "You are my God."

**Psa 31:15** My times are in your hand; rescue me from my enemies' power, from those who persecute me.

**Psa 31:16** Make your face shine on your servant; in your grace, save me.

**Psa 31:17** Adonai, don't let me be put to shame, for I have called on you; let the wicked be put to shame, let them be silenced in Sh'ol.

**Psa 31:18** May lying lips be struck dumb, that speak insolently against the righteous with such pride and contempt.

**Psa 31:19** But oh, how great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you do for those who take refuge in you, before people's very eyes!

**Psa 31:20** In the shelter of your presence you hide them from human plots, you conceal them in your shelter, safe from contentious tongues.

**Psa 31:21** Blessed be Adonai! For he has shown me his amazing grace when I was in a city under siege.

**Psa 31:22** As for me, in my alarm I said, "I have been cut off from your sight!" Nevertheless, you heard my pleas when I cried out to you.

**Psa 31:23** Love Adonai, you faithful of his. Adonai preserves the loyal, but the proud he repays in full.

**Psa 31:24** Be strong, and fill your hearts with courage, all of you who hope in Adonai.