

- **I remember taking Cooper fishing about 45 minutes north of our house. 2 big lakes.** We were fishing at the southern lake hadn't caught anything and told him to pack up to go to the other lake. **As we get up to where we can literally see where we will be fishing on the northern lake, I say, "Coop dog, follow me and I take him 100 yards away from our fishing spot before working our way back up.** Cooper's wondering, "Why is daddy leading me way over here?" I don't understand. **He could have said, "No! Its too far, I have by pole and my little chair and I can't walk that far."** Was I a big meeny! By the way, Cooper was great. He just followed me, no questions asked. **And it's a good thing too, because If I told him he would have freaked out, because when I got to the top of that hill. I saw a humongous snake and Cooper was deathly afraid of snakes.** Had we went that way, we wouldn't have fished at all. If he encountered that snake, he may have never gone fishing again.
- **Here's the thing. My decision didn't make sense to Cooper because he didn't know what I knew. I knew Cooper and I knew there was a snake. It reminds me of today's passage.**

*¹⁷When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. **MAP** – Why the longer route? God explains it here. 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.*

- **khaw-moosh' "harnessed" "armed" "In formation" They may have been equipped, but they were certainly not ready to battle.**
 - Ever met someone who thought they were ready to fight but had never been in a fight before.
- **Making bricks doesn't prepare you well to fight the Philistines unless you're gonna throw bricks at em'.**
- Maybe this has been your experience, or you are going through it right now. .
- Why didn't you let me have that job? Why am I going through all this abuse, people speaking ill of me? Why are you making me wait so long to get married? Or why do all these doors closing on me? They all look so good and so obvious.
- God? Are you sure you know what you're doing? Because I can see happiness for me right in front of me and you want to lead me all over only You know where?

1. God is smarter than you. His way is best because He knows things you don't know.

¹⁹Moses 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."

- You're like, "Come on!" Really? Joseph died 400 years ago and we are running for our lives and have the presence of mind to remember a promise made 400 years ago to take Joseph's bones with them out of Egypt to the promised land.
- Before you poo poo this, Here's the passage in Genesis 50 ²⁴*Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out*

*of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."²⁵ And Joseph made the Israelites swear an oath and said, "God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place." And Hebrews 11 tells us this is a great sign of faith. ²²*By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones.**

- **Let's bring this into modern day. 400 years ago it was 1625AD.** This was the height of Israel's power through Joseph. **But Joseph held tight to the promise God gave to his great grandpa Abraham that Egypt wasn't the promised land. Canaan was. And so, Joseph, on his deathbed makes his brothers promise not to bury Him in Egypt.**
- **So, for 400 years. Since 1625 Joseph's bones have been in a box not buried. Hey, "What's that box"? That's Joseph's bones. "Why didn't they bury him like 400 years ago?"** Because Joseph made his brother's promised to take his bones with them when we enter the promise land. **"Yeah, but that was 40 years ago."** Isn't there a statute of limitations on bone transference. **No.**
- 2. **God doesn't always lead us on the quickest route to fulfill His promises, but He ALWAYS fulfills His promises.**
- **That is some serious faith-based estate planning there! That's kinda a big ask.** Like bigger than help me move or take me to the airport. **Here's what Joseph makes his brothers promise: No matter how long we have to wait for God to give us the promised land, Even 400 years. Make sure your great, great, great, great, grandchildren haul my bones with em' when God eventually leads us out of Egypt into the promised land and bury me there.**
²⁰After leaving Sukkoth they camped at Etham on the edge of the desert.
- 3. **God is always present with His people.**
- These people were scared. They running. They've never been this way before. Ever been scared? Up all night! Stomach turning. Plotting out every possible scenario of what could happen? Is that lump cancerous? Is my son gonna end up in Jail? Am I going to lose the house? I'm gonna have to confront that person and I don't know how it might go.
- These are scary roads God leads us on and the only thing that will get you through it is knowing that God who made the plan is smarter than me, That he works all things for the good of those who love Him **and He will not leave me.**
- **God doesn't send us on the journey with a map and say "Good Luck".** 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. ²²Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people. Day,* night, He is with you on the journey.
- **How many of you wish as you went through that cancer battle or that tumultuous time at work, or that marriage, or that heartache that you could look out and see God in a pillar of cloud or pillar of fire?** Guiding you. Comforting you with His presence.
- **The truth is, we have it better now than they had it then.**

4. The fire of God's presence is now within the believer via the Holy Spirit.

John 14:17 ¹⁷the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. **We can't see Him like the pillar.** But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

John 16 ¹³But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. Just like the pillar is with them and guiding them, the Holy Spirit is in us and guides us. Sometimes by conviction, sometimes by opened opportunities. . .

Sometimes through the word.

Acts 2 ²Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit . . . Notice that the Holy Spirit is identified like fire. Pillar of fire. Tongues of fire.

- It's as if the pillar of fire that stayed with the Israelites day and night guiding them and comforting them with God's presence is now inside the believer.
- Once you take the step of faith to follow God out of your life of sin and slavery, God is with you for the entire journey, day and night. In the person of the Holy Spirit God comes and lives in you.

14 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. **Ok, let's wrap this up. MAPS**



- **So, they already God past the tower.** They are heading north. Well on our way to freedom now. **And God says, “Stop!”.** Turn back. Go back south toward that Egyptian Watchtower at Migdol.
- **Is this good military strategy? How about good ‘Running Away’ strategy?**
- **No God says turn back and camp.** So, Stop and camp. **I thought we were running for freedom.** Nope. Stop and camp. **But those Egyptians in that tower will see us! They's think we're confused in the head.** Yep. **But we'll be trapped by the water and lose an entire route of retreat.** Uh Hu

³Pharaoh will think, ‘The Israelites are wandering around the land in confusion, hemmed in by the desert.’ ⁴And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them. But I will gain glory for myself through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord.” So the Israelites did this.

- **So, the Israelites did this. Why? For some of you this seems ridiculous, for others not so much.** If you've walked with God long enough, you've learned that God's path is always best because He knows stuff you don't know and has things He wants to accomplish you don't know about. **Counter-Cultural.**

5. It's a bad idea to leave God for your own path, because God knows and has plans you don't know of.

- Rationally speaking, turning back and getting blocked in by the sea makes no sense, but what they don't know is God plan is to eliminate Israel's oppressors completely. Have 'em chase them into the red sea & deal a final death blow to Egypt. **But we didn't know Your plan.** Would you have believed it if I told you?