

# WHEN YOU FEEL TRAPPED

*Faith, Fear, and the God Who Goes Before You*

PASTOR VLAD • HUNGRY GENERATION CHURCH

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## PREACHING TEXT

*Exodus 14:13-15 —*

*“Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.”*

A man was hit by a car and woke up in the hospital after being in a coma. He opened his eyes and saw his wife sitting beside him, holding his hand. He said, “Honey, you’ve always been there for me. When I failed college exams, you were there. When I couldn’t find a job, you were there. When I lost my first job, you were there. Every setback in my life, you were always by my side.” Her eyes filled with tears. “That’s so sweet.” He looked at her and said, “No. I think you’re bad luck.”

That is funny, but it is exactly what fear does. Fear becomes a lens. Once you are looking through it, everything confirms it. Every delay becomes proof God has forgotten you. Every closed door becomes proof you are cursed. Every hardship becomes proof nothing will ever change.

The Israelites had just witnessed the greatest miracles of their lives. God destroyed Egypt’s gods, sent the plagues, and delivered them with a mighty hand. He covered them with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Then Pharaoh showed up, and suddenly they forgot every miracle and could only see one problem.

*“Fear has terrible eyesight. It only sees what is chasing you. Faith sees Who is leading you.”*

Israel faced three enemies at the Red Sea: Pharaoh (spiritual), the Red Sea (natural), and a slave mentality (mental). God is powerful enough to deal with Pharaoh and the Red Sea. But He has a particular concern with your mind. God shifts how He works with His people: He is no longer just doing miracles *for* you. He begins to do a miracle *in* you and *through* you.

*Exodus 13:21-22 —*

*“The LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people.”*

1

Don’t Be Afraid

God does not say “don’t be afraid” because He promises to remove every reason for fear. He says it because the cloud is over you. His presence does not guarantee an easy path but it guarantees you do not walk it alone.

- **Fear exaggerates the devil; faith exalts God.** Fear sees chariots; faith sees the cloud.
- **Fear is amnesia.** When it paralyzes your mind, everything God has done disappears into the rearview mirror.
- **Fear always needs someone to blame.** The Israelites blamed Moses. But it was God who led them there, and it was God who would lead them through.

*Exodus 14:11 —*

*“Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness?”*

Fear does not create new facts; it changes how you interpret them. Israel and Moses saw the exact same Red Sea, the same Pharaoh, the same cloud. The facts were identical. The interpretation was opposite: fear said, “We’re trapped.” Faith said, “God has us exactly where He wants us.”

Whatever you feed grows. Whatever you starve dies. Complaining is not a reaction to circumstances; it is a habit. Do not wait for God to change your circumstances to change your confession.

*Romans 4:20–21 —*

*“He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.”*

Abraham gave glory to God before he held the son in his arms. True faith is expressed in worship not when deliverance manifests, but when you are still facing the enemy. Complaining before the miracle and praising only after it is still living by sight.

## 2

## Stand Still

Before you can walk in faith, you may have to learn to stand still in faith. Fear stirs your emotions; faith stills your heart.

*Exodus 14:13 —*

*“Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever.”*

*Ephesians 6:13 —*

*“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”*

When God is not opening a door forward, do not run backward. Stand on His promise, trusting in His presence. Standing still does not mean inactive; it means confident. When God is not guiding you, He is

grounding you.

- **Faith that sleeps in the storm can speak to the storm** (Matthew 8:23–27).
- **Faith that sleeps in prison gets freed from prison** (Acts 12:6).

Jesus was in the boat when the disciples panicked. He did not rush to do the miracle. He worked with their faith first: “Why are you afraid?” Then He stopped the storm. If you cannot sleep in a storm, you will never stop it.

God pauses the miracle outside you so He can work a miracle inside you. He will deal with your mind before He deals with your Pharaoh, your Red Sea, your finances, or your circumstances. Until your mind is renewed, your life cannot be transformed (Romans 12:2).

## 3 | Go Forward

If you go forward in faith, God will back you up in power.

**Exodus 14:15** —

*“And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward.’”*

**Exodus 14:19–20** —

*“And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them. So it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. Thus it was a cloud and darkness to the one, and it gave light by night to the other.”*

When the enemy comes at you from behind, God becomes your rear guard (Isaiah 52:12). When the impossible stands in front of you, God makes a way where there is no way (Isaiah 43:19). God did not destroy Pharaoh immediately; He restrained him. Sometimes victory is not that your enemy disappears. Victory is that God will not let your enemy touch you.

God will provide a boat, fish, power to walk on water, or strength to swim through. If none of those, He will divide the sea. What He will not do is let you drown.

- **Isaiah 41:10** — “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”
- **Isaiah 42:16** — “I will bring the blind by a way they did not know; I will lead them in paths they have not known.”
- **Romans 8:38–39** — “Neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

It pleases God when you trust Him. Hebrews 11:6 says it is impossible to please God without faith. Be open to the possibility that God will allow situations where trusting Him is the only way out.

### CLOSING

Florence Chadwick became famous as the first woman to swim the English Channel both ways. On July 4, 1952, she set out from Catalina Island to the California coastline. Sixteen hours in, with the finish close, fog rolled in. Unable to see the shore, she climbed into the boat. She discovered she had stopped less than a mile from her goal.

Two months later she tried again. The fog returned. This time she kept a mental image of the shoreline in her mind the entire swim, and she made it.

*Some of you are at the place right now where the fog has settled in. You are close. The fog is real, but the cloud that carries you is more powerful. Keep that mental image. The Lord will defeat your Pharaohs, divide your Red Seas, and develop you into the person He has called you to be.*

*Do not be afraid. Stand still. Go forward.*

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