

Remnant Life Church
March 23, 2025
Embracing the Detours
Exodus 13:17-22

When you are driving someplace there is a sign no one likes to see

- Road Closed – Follow Detour
 - You immediately think, this is going to delay me in getting where I want to go
 - I did not plan for this
 - It is not the shortest, quickest route
 - Because so much today is measured by how fast or how short a time something takes
 - Ziti recipe Katerina uses
 - We don't like detours because they slow us down

But within the life of a Christian...

- There are many times when detours are absolutely necessary
- Without us knowing why, when we live a life submitted to God, they will always be within His will for our lives
- And when the detour is over, we will very often realize that it saved us from ourselves

READ – Exodus 13:17-22

1. The number of Israelites who left Egypt at the time of the Exodus varies and few biblical scholars can agree on an estimation
 - When God's people first arrived in Egypt, it was under the time and watch of Joseph as the second in command in the land
 - What we do know, however, is how many came into Egypt
 - **Gen 46:27** - *With the two sons who had been born to Joseph in Egypt, the members of Jacob's family, which went to Egypt, were seventy in all.*
 - Just 430 years later, we read in **Ex 12:37**
 - *The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Sukkoth. There were about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children.*
 - The questions always raised seem to center around the physical possibility and practicality of what that number would mean – around 2 million
 - So it is not likely you will find any agreement, but I will always hold to the fact that God is not bound by our understanding of possible or practical

2. When the Israelites set out, I would think they believed that when they left Egypt they would take the most direct route to the promised land
 - After all, the shortest distance between two points is a straight line
 - But even though God had brought them out of slavery, they were not ready for that full journey would entail
 - They needed to develop as a people group, a nation first and that was going to take time

- God will often allow a situation to develop in your life simply to provide an opportunity for you to grow
 - Timing is critically important and God's is always perfect
3. The shortest route would have been –
- Due east along the southern shore of the Mediterranean
 - This was a well-traveled, well-known route of about 250 miles
 - But a known route would not have required them to depend on God for where they were going
 - a. And so using this direct straight line would mean the journey could have been completed in about 4-5 weeks
 - b. But there was something else about this route that would have made a significant difference
 - a. It would have taken them through the heart of the Philistine nation
 - b. This would have caused problems they were simply not ready to handle
4. To know how best to handle a detour begins with understanding what it is
- (Def) A detour is a temporary indirect route to your destination
 - A detour does not cancel your trip
 - And yet how many times is that exactly what a person will do when they are delayed?

So when you encounter a detour, many times one that God puts up, what options do you have in response?

- Many are traveling so fast that they crash right through
- Others may recognize the detour but will choose to go around it anyway and continue to travel on the same path they were on – usually to an undesired result
- Some see a detour sign, get discouraged, and turn back
 - The detour did not cancel their trip, they did
- Some will follow the detour but increase their speed to try and make up for the extra distance traveled or time lost

But God took the Israelites on a detour for their own good, to provide for safer travel, and ensure their arrival at the place He was taking them

- If they had gone through the land of the Philistines, they would have been treated as run-away slaves and, at best, returned to Egypt – at worst, wiped out in a war.
- God also knew that they needed more time to make things right within their camp
 - There were still issues that needed to be addressed
 - There was still idol worship from the influence of the Egyptian culture
 - And there were laws, regulations, and covenants that needed to be put in place as they began to learn what it meant to be an independent nation

5. In every way, this was a detour directed by God, but it was also, in part, self-directed by the Israelites themselves
- Not only were they not ready to fight, they did not even know who they were as a people of God

- And that would have led to them making choices outside of God's commands for how they should live
 - Two examples of how actions will determine direction...
 - David at the time of war
 - **I Chron 20:1** - *In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, Joab led out the armed forces. He laid waste the land of the Ammonites and went to Rabbah and besieged it, but David remained in Jerusalem.*
 - The reason that is pointed out is that was not where he belonged – but he chose to stay home
 - David should have been away from Jerusalem leading his army
 - If he had been, he would not have been on the rooftop that night where he saw Bathsheba taking a bath on the roof of another building
 - He would not have committed adultery, had her husband killed, and lost his son if he had simply been obedient to the laws God had given
 - His actions, his choices, brought great consequences
 - Prodigal Son told in **Luke 15:11-32**
 - A parable told by Jesus
 - The younger son of a wealthy man did not want to wait for his inheritance
 - Took all that his father gave him, squandered it with bad choices and had to return humiliated to his father
 - His detour was not one forced on him, he created the path himself
 - The point in all of these is that choices always bring with them consequences
6. So then, why did God take the Israelites the long way around?
- a. To protect them – from the Philistines and from themselves (**13:17**)
 - b. They were not ready for war
 - Remember, they had just spent the last 400 plus years in slavery
 - They not only could not prepare for war, they had not had any weapons for over 4 generations
- This is what often gets many Christians in trouble
 - They believe they can handle anything they find themselves in (both the situations out of their control and those of their own doing) and don't need to listen to or obey God
 - If this had been the attitude of the Israelites, they would have been slaughtered
 - The Philistines were a warring people with great experience and many victories
 - And they continued to torment Israel for several hundred years until the time of Samson who began to fight back
 - And then David, who finally ended their threat for good
7. What should we realize and learn from this account of God's detour of the Israelites?

God's ways are always best for us

- **Rev 15:3** - *...Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the nations...*
 - What we must be willing to embrace is that it takes faith to follow God's plans for our lives
 - He does not usually make us aware in advance
 - But He is with us through every part of the journey
 - And if we walk with Him, we will never miss the detours
 - Meaning we can live without fear of the journey

He has given us His Word to be with us

- **Ex 3:12** - *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 will worship God on this mountain."*
- In **Gen 26** God said to Isaac, I will be with you
- God said the same thing to Joshua, Solomon, and Isaiah
- And that same promise is for you, wherever you go and for however long it takes to get there

He has given us the Holy Spirit

- **Luke 24:49** - *I am going to send you (the Holy Spirit) what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.*
- The Holy Spirit is God's presence within each of our lives as His children
 - He is with us no matter the circumstances
 - And no matter what the plans we set or how much they have changed

He has a plan for each of us if we are willing to fully submit our lives to Him

- **Jer 29:11** - *For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*
- He must prepare us as a part of that plan
- And just as we said earlier, within that preparation is our willingness to make decisions in surrender to the righteousness of God
- In second Timothy, Paul is instructing the young preacher on the health of the church
 - He uses a house as a metaphor for the church
 - He warns that people must flee from their evil desires and separate themselves from the lusts and temptations of the world
 - There are the decisions that will often determine the length of your detour

II Tim 2:20-22 - *In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart*