

LENT 2024

JOURNEY to FREEDOM

TUESDAY 5TH MARCH

READ: Exodus 11

‘The Lord said to Moses, ‘Pharaoh will not listen to you, in order that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.’ Exodus 11:9

Dunkirk, May 1940. The incredible rescue of over 300,000 surrounded soldiers from France during World War Two, by an unlikely fleet of small boats which has been described as ‘the Miracle of Dunkirk’. I only learnt recently that the King had called for a ‘National Day of Prayer’, and on the day of national prayer, the evacuation began! Those who had taken part in the National Day of Prayer must have been thanking God for His wonderful response, and I’d imagine that even some who did not usually pray or trust God must have been prompted to think that perhaps Someone was listening!

In the early chapters of Exodus it seems that Pharaoh agreeing to let God’s people leave Egypt is an impossibility. However, in our passage today God tells Moses that ‘I will bring one more plague upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go from here’ (v.1), and not only that, God tells Moses that the Egyptians will be giving the Israelites their gold and silver on the way out! This seems impossible. But I wonder if you noticed the repetition of ‘will’ in our passage, as unlikely as it seem, this ‘will’ all happen, and (forgive the spoiler!) it does happen, just as God said!

When we were working through Exodus in our Church Bible study, the question kept coming up: ‘but why did it take so long?’ God could have ‘clicked His fingers’ straight away and His people would be free from slavery, but, verse 9 of our reading highlights something of why God chose the route that He did to free His people: ‘The Lord said to Moses, ‘Pharaoh will not listen to you, in order that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.’ The fact that Pharaoh was asked repeatedly to let God’s people go, and that he responded with such a firm ‘no’, meant that when the Israelites were finally allowed to leave Egypt there was no doubt that ‘only God can do that!’ It was clear that it was a miracle, and even those who didn’t follow God would see His ‘wonders...multiplied’ in Egypt.

As we take the opportunity that Lent provides to examine our lives and consciences we will all find things which aren’t good and ways in which we give in to temptation again and again. In human terms the rescue from slavery to freedom is impossible, but as we prepare ourselves to celebrate Jesus’ wondrous and miraculous victory over sin and death to save us, we are left thinking ‘only God can do that!’ Thank God that He did.

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