I. INTRODUCITON

A. ILLUSTRATION

1. AUGUST 1776 - weeks after America declared Independence, GW met the British at the Battle of Brooklyn
   a) Disaster - 300 soldiers died. 1000 missing. 800 injured | Retreat.
   b) Problem - British in front with their backs to the East River.
      (1) If... British warships sailed into the East River.
      (2) If... British broke through American defenses, they'd destroy the army.
2. Their backs were against the water, and they were running out of options.
   a) Evacuate the army across the East River in the middle of the night.
   b) Colonel John Glover and a regiment of fishermen ferried them across.
   c) Even that went wrong - wind & tide made it difficult - sunrise approaching.
3. Then something remarkable happened.
   a) Sun rising.. but wind changed direction... thick fog settled over Brooklyn...
   b) By 7 a.m., the army had escaped to Manhattan.
   c) 9000 soldiers. Their weapons | Supplies | Horses | Artillery
   d) Had escaped after a night of almost certain capture.
4. You can explain the fog however you want...
   a) But I imagine when Washington watched the last boats reach the shore, he experienced something he couldn't explain.
   b) TRUTH - There r moments in life when you lack the power to save yourself.
   c) The enemy is in front of you, water is behind you, out of options.
   d) And it is in those moments you realize how little control we actually have
   e) Then we become capable of seeing what God can do.
5. Israel is about to find itself in exactly that kind of place.

B. TODAY'S THEME

1. **Today I want to talk about how trials reveal who we really are.** Let's pray.

C. PRAYER

1. Heavenly Father, I ask that you be with us today and hold up a mirror to our souls so that we can know the true strength of our resolve, the depth of our faith, and the hope in our hearts. Let us be measured against your scriptures, and let us be filled by your Spirit, so that in times of trial we put all our trust in you. I ask that you and you alone receive the glory today. In your Son's name, we pray. Amen.

D. SERMON

1. If you have your Bibles handy, open to Exodus 14
2. This story captures the hearts and imaginations of all who read it. One of my ..
3. Today is about holding a mirror up to our souls to see the measure of our faith.
   a) Israelites lack understanding; they are going to learn who YHWH is.
   b) This story still speaks to us today... We will face a time when we lose hope.

E. TRANSITION

1. Join me in Exodus 14:1 as we see that TRIALS REVEAL GOD IS SOVEREIGN.

II. TRIALS REVEAL GOD IS SOVEREIGN

A. TEXT - READ EXODUS 14:1-4

B. INTERPRETATION

1. We know what happens next: Pharaoh takes 600 chariots and goes after them
2. Israelites do NOT take the obvious pathway (roundabout way).
   a) God intentionally takes them in the wrong direction from Canaan.
   b) He takes them to a place that is indefensible - no escape - no way out.
   c) Ever felt like you had no way out? - panic reaches critical? - some of you even know what it's like to have an armored division bearing down on you.
   d) People begin to panic - accuse Moses of taking them into wilderness to die
   e) Desperate people do desperate things
   f) Panic leads to narrow focus - all you see.

3. GOD led them there... they forget that.
   a) God has Israel right where he wants them - but they can't see that.

4. GOD wouldn't do that... would he? Not what we typically think of...
   a) God leads us away from difficulty - doors should open - road straight...
   b) But sometimes following God leads you directly into trial | harm's way.
   c) That's uncomfortable to think about.
   d) Israel is not here because they disobeyed | bad decision | they followed...
   e) Pharaoh thinks Israel is trapped. Israel thinks Israel is trapped.. only God sees the whole picture.

5. We have a word for that... SOVEREIGNTY.
   a) God isn't surprised when Pharaoh comes - he planned it - he knew - the pieces are moving as he planned them. But Israel is blind...

C. **APPLICATION** - Trials reveal God is sovereign, but they also reveal...

1. Trials reveal the limits of our perspective.

a) See only the end of our nose - diagnoses, empty bank account, a person yelling at us. Closed door. The thing we're terrified of.
b) When we lack perspective, we lack understanding... we turn on God.

2. Trials reveal our disappointment in God.

a) God doesn't always do what we expect or want him to do.
   (1) What do you mean I have to walk through cancer?
   (2) What do you mean I have to rebuild my house?
   (3) What do you mean I have to find a new job?
   (4) God, I thought we were on the same team? Why are you doing this?
   (5) When God leads us somewhere we never thought he'd lead us, sometimes we miss the forest through the trees.

3. **Trials reveal God's bigger plans.**
    a) You can be exactly where God wants you, and still have your back to the sea.
    b) Exodus 14 teaches us that just because you can't see what God is doing doesn't mean God doesn't know what he's doing.
    c) Israel could see the Sea. Israel could see Pharaoh... even see God. Could not see the other coast.

D. TAKEAWAY

1. Sometimes when our backs are against the sea, and there seems to be no way out, God reveals most clearly who he is. He is a God who will never forsake you.
2. **God will never FORSAKE you.**
    a) The sea does not mean God has abandoned you
    b) The chariots do not mean God has lost control
    c) The absence of a path does not mean God left you behind.

3. **READ HEBREWS 13:5**
4. Trials reveal God's sovereignty because even when you cannot see what he is doing, he remains in control

E. **TRANSITION -** Trials reveal God's sovereignty, but they also expose what we trust.

III. TRIALS EXPOSE WHAT WE TRUST IN

A. READ EXODUS 14:10-12

B. INTERPRETATION

1. When pressure rises, temperatures rise.
   a) Vs. 10 Terrified
   b) Terror exposes their hearts. - cry out to God, but then turn on Moses.
   c) Why did YOU bring us here? We told you this would happen. We were better off in Egypt...

2. How soon they forget
   a) They just watched 10 plagues of Egypt - water into blood, sun blotted out, cattle dying, death of the firstborn... yet now they turn on Moses?
   b) They've seen it all, but one glimpse of Pharaoh's chariots... question everything

3. Trials expose what we trust
   a) Israel trusted Yahweh when Egypt was behind them. Now slavery doesn't sound so bad to them
   b) Charlie questioned me about this this week. Why would they go back?
   c) Sometimes the danger you know is less scary than the danger you don't know.
   d) The familiarity of the broken world feels safer than the journey with Jesus.
   e) Not all trials are sent by God like this one... sometimes bad things just happen. But the outcome is the same. God can meet you in your fears.

4. God meets them in their terror
   a) READ EXODUS 14:31
   b) See the transformation?
      (1) Enter the trial fearing Pharaoh.
      (2) They leave the trial fearing Yahweh
   c) God isn't merely trying to get them out of Egypt.
      (1) God is forming Israel by getting Egypt out of them.

C. APPLICATION

1. **Trials expose where our trust lies**
   a) We all have things or people we lean on when in a tight spot
      (1) Money? Intelligence? Social Network? Relationships? Work ethic?
      (2) Here's the problem: people want to be the savior
      (3) They want to be the person others rely on, swoop in like Superman
      (4) People want to be known for not needing help
      (5) But that's not reality. Eventually, all so-called saviors reach limits.
   b) God will let you reach the end of yourself so you learn to trust him.

2. **Trials expose that our God Reigns**
    a) We talked about this last week with the plagues and the gods of Egypt.
    b) The beginning and end of this story tell us everything we need to know.
    c) Trial didn't just change circumstances... it changed them.
    d) Before the sea - God led them out; after the sea, God can be trusted.

D. TAKEAWAY

1. Once all these other saviors fail you,
2. When money fails, health fails, plans fail, you fail... you can finally learn
3. **GOD WILL NEVER FAIL YOU.**

E. TRANSITION

1. But there's still a problem
2. Knowing God is sovereign and that God can be trusted doesn't stop us from trying to control the outcome.
3. Sometimes the hardest thing faith requires is doing nothing at all.
4. Moses looks at a terrified people, trapped between Pharaoh and the sea, and gives them an almost impossible command.
5. "Be Still."

IV. TRIALS REMIND US TO BE STILL

A. READ EXODUS 14:13-14

B. INTERPRETATION

1. Think about how ridiculous those words must have sounded.
   a) Pharaoh is coming - chariots bearing down - sea behind them... terrified.
   b) BE STILL?!! Really?
   c) Everything inside them says run! Fight! Surrender! Go back to Egypt!
   d) But Moses tells them their salvation doesn't come from what they do, but from what God does.
   e) "See the salvation of the Lord that he will provide for you today!
      (1) Notice who provides... not Israel, not Moses. THE LORD!

2. BE STILL = Cross the sea
   a) Unexpected for sure, yet here it is.
   b) But stillness does not mean inactivity - look at the next verse. Verse 15
      (1) "Tell the Israelites that they should go forward."
      (2) Water in that direction? Fire and soldiers in that direction? Which way?
      (3) OF course God has a plan
      (4) God led them to this spot, for this moment, so they can see the wonder of our God.
   c) RAISE Your Staff over the waters.
      (1) Strong winds from the east.
      (2) Imagine with me
         (a) East wind. Coming from the east.
         (b) Crossing from west shore to the east shore - walking into that wind.
         (c) We can't know for sure - speculation.
         (d) We do know the wind was not working against God's plans.
         (e) The wind made a way when there was no way.
   d) Maybe there is something in that for us
      (1) Maybe what feels like resistance may actually be part of God's work of deliverance.
         (a) We feel the wind and think, God, why are you making this harder?
         (b) Why isn't this easier if it is of God?
         (c) We don't realize that God may be doing something through the resistance we cannot see.
      (2) That's what Be Still means
         (a) Trust God is who he says he is, will do what he says he will do, and move when he says move.

3. THE LORD WILL FIGHT FOR YOU
   a) The cloud of the Angel of the Lord blocks the Egyptians
      (1) Dark, but lights up the night. A mixture of cloud and fire.
      (2) When God fights for us, we don't have to be the savior.
      (3) Israel's responsibility is obedience.
      (4) God's is salvation. - Only God can part the Sea.

b) Egyptians pursue the Israelites through the sea.
   (1) Once Israel reaches the other side, God brings waters down, drowning the Egyptian men.
   (2) The Lord defened Israel that day in a way that he orchestrated
   (3) **READ EXODUS 14:30**...

C. TAKEAWAY

1. The crossing of the Red Sea is a reminder for the Israelites throughout their history, and a reminder for us today as God's people, that God will never stop fighting for us.
2. **GOD WILL NEVER STOP FIGHTING FOR YOU.**

V. CONCLUSION

A. Egypt to today

1. God didn't just bring Israel out of Egypt. He had to form Egypt out of Israel.
2. It starts with their crossing the Red Sea. - Israel will look back on this moment.
3. It is the decisive moment when God saved Israel from Egypt.
4. It is their baptism as a nation, passing through the waters, coming out new on the other side.
5. **READ 1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-2**
6. Dying to Egypt on one side, living for God on the other.
7. **See the salvation of the Lord today, so he can use you tomorrow.**
8. Because Israel crossed the Red Sea on dry ground, only to cross the Jordan River again on Dry ground.
9. One for freedom, the other was for mission.
10. God saves us so he can send us.

B. George Washington Crosses the Delaware

1. We opened with George Washington crossing the East River in August 1776. They were saved from the enemy before them and the river behind them.
2. Only four months later, on Christmas night, Washington and that same Continental Army approached another river - the Delaware
3. They crossed, this time not in retreat but in advance.
4. The army that had once been rescued across a river was now moving across another toward its mission to liberate.

C. Back to Israel
   1. The Red Sea was not the destination. It was the deliverance that made the mission possible.
   2. We are all faced with trials in life. Maybe yours will include something like the parting of the Red Sea. Maybe not. But remember...
   3. Jesus saves you today to send you tomorrow.
   4. Lyrics to the song "I made it"
      a) Oh, no matter what this life may bring
      b) I know You'll bring me through
      c) And even in my sufferin'
      d) Lord, I can trust in You,
      e) I'm comin out the other side stronger.
   5. The people God rescues are the people God sends
   6. Here's the punchline
   7. **Jesus saves you today to send you tomorrow.**

Prayer
Heavenly Father, you alone are good. You alone are holy. We thank you for faithfully delivering Israel so that, through them, you could bring your Son into the world. Through your Son, you offer salvation. I pray that today we might see the salvation of our neighbors, our family members, and our friends who may be distant from you. Maybe even someone in this room. I ask that you lay on our hearts the challenge to ask ourselves where you are sending us. Lay on our hearts a burden for the lost that is unsatisfied until we are obedient to you.

All God's people said, Amen.

Congregational Vote of Affirmation - There will be a vote on Sunday, October 4, to affirm the elders' selection of Tabitha Lumpkin as the new Student Ministry Director. NLCC members over the age of 18 may vote. Please see an elder with questions.

Tabitha has a degree in Education Ministries with a minor in Youth Ministry from Taylor University.

She has 14 years of experience serving as a Student Ministry Director

Training Meeting - There will be a meeting for lobby hosts TODAY after service.