**The Women Behind the Exodus Series**

**“Miriam – Rejoicing in God’s Deliverance”**

**Exodus 15.19-21**

**Introduction**

Currently we are looking at the stories of four remarkable women who played a major role in the exodus of God’s people out of the bondage of Egypt. As you recall God had brought the children of Israel to Egypt to escape a famine. But over time the population of the children of Israel outgrew the population of the Egyptians and the king of Egypt became concerned that the people of Israel would take control of the country. So, the king ordered the Israelites to be made slaves and appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor. For years the Israelites lived as slaves in Egypt until God called Moses to deliver them out of bondage.

*Then the Lord said, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey.*

*Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”*(Ex.3.7-8, 10)

And after a series of plagues Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, let the people of God leave Egypt and begin their journey to the Promise Land. But then Pharaoh regretted that he allowed the Israelites leave Egypt so he chased after them with all of his army, his chariots, and his horses catching up to them near the banks of the Red Sea.

*When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord.*

*And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.” The Lord said to Moses, “Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground.*

*Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.*

*And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.*

*Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.” So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the Lord threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained.*

*Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord, saying, “I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.**The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.* (Ex.14.10, 13-16, 21-22, 26-28; 15.1-2)

Moses continues to sing his song of deliverance and as he ends his song the Scripture reads,

*Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and dancing. And Miriam sang to them: “Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.”* (Ex.15.20-21)

**The Exodus**

The Exodus of God’s people out of Egypt is the greatest redemptive event in the Old Testament. The Exodus is major part of the Psalms and the Old Testament prophetical books. Many themes of the Exodus are taken up in the New Testament and paralleled with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The people of God were in slavery and God raised up a deliverer to lead them out of bondage to the Promise Land.

In the Exodus the people were in slavery to Egypt – in the New Testament the people are in slavery to sin. In the Exodus God raises up a deliverer by the name of Moses – in the New Testament God raised up a deliverer by the name of Jesus. In the Exodus God’s deliverer leads his people to the Promise Land in Canaan – in the New Testament our Deliverer leads us to the Promise Land in Heaven.

The parting of the Red Sea was God’s final act to deliver His people from slavery in Egypt. Now we may be tempted to think that this is a wonderful story of God’s miraculous saving power on display, and leave it at that. However, we would be missing the bigger picture in the story of redemption. The Old Testament prepares the way for the New Testament where all of God’s promises find their “yes” and “amen” in Christ.

The Exodus from Egypt, though a real, historical event, prefigures the saving work of Christ for His people. What God did through Moses was to provide physical salvation from physical slavery. What God does through Christ is provide spiritual salvation from a spiritual slavery. So the parting of the Red Sea not only finalized God’s redemption of His people from slavery in Egypt, but it also prefigured the greater spiritual reality of God’s redemption of His people from slavery to sin through the work of Christ. This redemptive connection between the parting of the Red Sea and the cross of Christ is why the book of Revelation tells us that we will sing both the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb in Heaven. (Rev.15.3)

Every believer at one point or another has a Red Sea moment, a situation from which there is no escape, and only an undeniable act of God can lead you safely out. What is your Red Sea moment? A client who pulled his business unexpectedly? A bad diagnosis? A low test score that hinders you from going to the college you wanted to attend? Depression? Discouragement? Betrayal? Of all the miracles in the Bible, the Exodus from Egypt is the one that most defines God’s redemptive plan. The Scriptures continually refer to God as “the God who led you out of Egypt” calling us to remember who He is, what He has done, and what He is capable of doing. Our God wants to lead us out of Egypt; bring us to the banks of the Red Sea, so that He can work wonders in our lives. One of the most overlooked aspects of the Red Sea moment is this: it was God who led them there. There was an easier route they could have taken that would not have trapped them on the banks of the Red Sea. But the Lord told Moses the reason He led them was so the Lord to be honored and glorified. And your Red Sea moment, as scary as it seems right now, could be a defining moment in your life where God is exalted as He brings you through a difficult situation without any mud on your feet!

*Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses. Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord, saying, “I will sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider He has thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise Him, my father's God, and I will exalt Him.* (Ex.14.31; 15.1-2)

*Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and dancing. And Miriam sang to them: “Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.”* (Ex.15.20-21)

**Miriam**

I believe that the crossing of the Red Sea, the defeat of Pharaoh’s army, and Moses’ song of deliverance were so glorious that Miriam could not stop rejoicing in God’s deliverance. God had chosen Moses to be the leader of God’s deliverance but He had also called Miriam to be a prophetess and she was going to proclaim God’s Word to the world.

So, she *took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and dancing* (Ex.15.20). By taking a tambourine in her hand, she led the congregation in a celebration of singing and dancing that would be modeled for centuries to come. (Jgs.11.34; ISam.18.6-7; Ps.68.25) Miriam wasn’t satisfied with singing just one chorus of God’s deliverance so she led the people of God in rejoicing in God’s deliverance again and again. Miriam becomes an example of women rejoicing in God’s deliverance.

**Women Rejoicing in God’s Deliverance**

Even though the men in the Bible get most of the press, God has used women throughout the ages to proclaim His word. Godly women like Hannah, the mother of the great prophet Samuel (ISam.1). And prophetesses like Deborah (Jdg.4.5), Huldah (2Chr.34.22), and Anna (Lk.2.36-38). Women throughout the centuries that emulate the virtuous women described in Proverbs 31 that concludes, *Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: Many women have done excellently but you surpass them all. Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.* (Pro.31.28-30)

And what is seen in the shadows in the Old Testament is clearly revealed in the New Testament. The Bible records a multitude of women surrounded and supported Jesus during His earthly ministry. Let’s not forget that women were the last disciples at the cross and the first at the empty tomb. (Lk.24.8-10) Women were integral to the work of the church in its early centuries. One of the best-kept secrets in Christianity is the enormous role that women played in the early church.

There was a group of women who were part of the 120 that gathering in the Upper Room, who were filled with the Holy Spirit, and rushed into the streets of Jerusalem proclaiming the Gospel on the Day of Pentecost. We see Priscilla and his husband Aquila were partners with the Apostle Paul in planting churches in the cities of Corinth and Ephesus. The Apostle Paul mentions many women in the end of his epistles who assisted in the ministry of the church throughout the Roman Empire. And he offers the characteristics of godly women saying that they have a reputation for good works, show hospitality, wash the feet of the saints, care for the afflicted, and devote themselves to every good work. (ITim.5.10)

Women rejoicing in God’s deliverance didn’t stop in the first century. God has used women throughout Church history to proclaim His word. Because of time I can only mention a couple. Let’s first consider Catherine Booth.



Catherine Booth grew up in England. Catherine was a devout Christian and by the age of twelve she had read the Bible eight times. She had a social conscience from an early age. In 1855 Catherine married William Booth, a Methodist minister. William and Catherine had strong views on the role of church believing the church should be “loosing the chains of injustice, freeing the captive and oppressed, sharing food and home, clothing the naked, and carrying out family responsibilities.” In 1864 the couple began in London’s East End the Christian Mission that later developed into the Salvation Army.

Catherine Booth began to organize what became known as Food-for-the-Million Shops where the poor could buy hot soup and a three-course dinner for about ten cents. Catherine fought for woman’s rights and equal wages for woman. She trained women known as “Hallelujah lasses” to become street evangelist who led thousand to Christ. By 1882 a survey of London discovered that on one weeknight, there were almost 17,000 worshipping with the Salvation Army, compared to 11,000 in ordinary churches.

Catherine Booth was a woman who rejoiced in God’s deliverance. Now, lets consider Elisabeth Elliot.



Jim Elliot and Elisabeth Howard met as undergraduates at Wheaton College, a Christian College in Illinois. They loved each other and married in 1953 desiring to do missionary work among the unreached Auca tribe in Amazonia Ecuador, who had no contact with the outside world. In 1955 after discovering the location of the tribe, Jim and four other missionaries entered Auca territory. After a friendly contact with three members of the tribe, they were speared to death.

After the death of her husband, and now alone with her 10-month-old daughter, Elisabeth continued to her missionary work. During that time she met two Auca women who lived with her and taught her the tribe’s language. She then went as a missionary to serve the tribe that killed her husband, an unbelievable ministry of love. When she returned to the U.S. in 1963 she began a career as a writer, speaker, and radio host for over forty years. Elisabeth Elliot was one of the most influential Christian women of the 20th century. Her timeless teachings and courageous faith have influence believers and seekers of Jesus Christ throughout the world and a source of encouragement for decades.

Elisabeth Elliot in her own words:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CEf4qWlc-Ek>

**Closing Thought**

Through the Prophet Isaiah Elisabeth brings us back to Miriam.

*But now thus says the Lord,*

*He who created you, O Jacob,
    He who formed you, O Israel:
“Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
    I have called you by name, you are Mine.
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
    and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;* (Is.43.1-2a)

This has been God’s promise throughout the ages. *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;* (Is.43.1-2a)

The writer of Hebrews concludes the great chapter that is often referred to as the “Hall of Faith” with these words,

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith.* (Heb.12.1-2a)

As we celebrate Mother’s Day 2019 I want to challenge you to consider the great cloud of witnesses such as Miriam, Hannah, Deborah, Huldah, Anna, the women announcing Jesus’ resurrection, those in the Upper Room, those listed on the pages of the Pauline Epistles, Catherine, and Elisabeth. I want you to consider those women who have been a witness of God’s deliverance in your own life and those you hope to be a witness to.

As we confront our Red Sea moments *let us lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith.*

Let’s rejoice in God’s great deliverance through Christ!

**Call to Prayer**

*Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you.* (Dt.31.6)