

The three most common words heard among Christians in times of crisis are: "Lord, do something!" It is totally against our nature as human beings to stand still and do nothing when we face perplexing trials. In fact, **waiting patiently for God to act is probably the most difficult thing about the Christian walk.** Even devoted believers panic when the Lord doesn't move according to their timetable.

We constantly give God deadlines and time limits. We cry, "Lord, when are You going to do something about this? How long will You take? If You don't act now, it will be too late!" But God is never too late. He always acts -- and not according to our schedule, but His.

Our God is always searching the earth for a people who will trust Him in every crisis, trial and hopeless situation. Indeed, He often leads us into situations that are alarming, critical, difficult, in order to test us. He wants to see if we're willing to stand still and wait for Him to bring supernatural deliverance.

The Bible states very clearly: *"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way"* (PSA 37:23). The Hebrew word for "ordered" here means "prearranged, step by step, fixed, ordained by God."

This means it is God, not the devil, who leads us into difficult places. We may cry out, "Lord, why are You allowing my crisis to continue?" But the truth is, not only does He allow our trial, but He does so deliberately -- for a purpose. And that is hard for us to accept!

Stand Still and See the Salvation of the Lord

Yet God allows these hard things in our lives in order to produce faith in us. He is molding and shaping us into Godly examples of faith -- to be His testimony to a faithless, ungodly age.

I firmly believe **every step we take is ordained by our Heavenly Father.** And if that is indeed true, then I can't believe God would ever lead me to the brink of a difficult situation only to abandon me. He wouldn't say, "Okay, David, I've directed you up to this point. Now you're on your own!"

No! God is absolutely faithful to His children, in every crisis. And He is always asking us, "Will you be one I've been searching for? Will you be one who won't panic -- who won't charge Me with forsaking, abandoning and hurting My children? Will you stand still in your crisis, and lean on faith, trusting Me to see you through?"

The Bible Is Filled With Examples of Great and Alarming Crises -- Deliberately Set Up by the Lord!

The Old Testament lists many times of testing for God's people. Perhaps the greatest example of these was the crisis at the Red Sea. This trial wasn't instigated by

the devil or by Pharaoh. It was a crisis completely arranged by God - set up by His very own commands to Israel. After all, Scripture says, it was God Who hardened Pharaoh's heart, Who caused the Egyptians to pursue Israel, and Who allowed the Egyptian army to overtake them by the sea.

God had told the people specifically to camp between Migdol and Pihahiroth. This location was situated between two mountain passes, with the sea bordering a third side. The only possible route of escape was back into the wilderness -- and that was blocked by Pharaoh's approaching army. Now the Israelites were horrified at their situation. Their God had led them there!

Let me point out something here: God could have prearranged to knock the wheels off the Egyptians' chariots at any time. He could have done it in the wilderness, stranding the Egyptians and starving them to death. But, instead, he waited until they were between the walls of the separated sea.

God also could have sent the supernatural cloud down upon the Egyptians' camp to confuse them. Those soldiers would have run around in the confusing mist for days. But, instead, he chose to

send the cloud behind the Israelites as protection.

Or, God could have sent a single angel to slay the entire Egyptian army, in the blink of an eye. He could have chosen to destroy them at any point.

But the Lord didn't do any of those things. Instead, he squeezed Israel into a tight, alarming situation -- a crisis that was impossible to escape by human means!

I believe the Lord had two purposes in allowing this impossible situation for his people:

He was determined to so annihilate Israel's enemies, they would never again have to look over their shoulders in fear. God was saying, in essence, "I'm going to strew your enemies' bodies along the shore, so you can see every one of them dead. Then you will know I have all power!"

God wanted to provide an opportunity for his people to put their lives in His hands -- to stand still and trust Him to give them direction.

How do we know God arranged this frightful situation to test His people? His own word says so: *"Thou shalt remember all the ways which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments, or no"* (DEUT 8:2).

This verse spells it out clearly: "...all the ways which the Lord...led thee..." **It was God who led them to the Red Sea -- not the devil!**

But, why did God do this? The same chapter tells us: *"...that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end"* (verse 16).

God was saying, in essence, "I was after something in you. I brought you into these situations so you could practice your faith. **Only these kinds of circumstances could produce true faith in you.** Only your absolute trust in Me could ever get you out!"

"He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger..." (verse 3). In other words: "I gave you hard places, hungering places, thirsting places, places that were alarming, terrifying

-- to see if you had a trusting heart!"

As the Egyptians quickly approached, there was no place for the Israelites to run. The mountains on both sides were bare, with no trees or caves to hide among. And the sea hemmed them in on the other side. They simply had no place to run. It was an impossible situation!

Scripture says that at this point, *"...the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord"* (EX 14:10).

Try placing yourself in their situation: Your family is gathered around you -- children, grandparents, relatives. And suddenly you hear the rumbling of chariot wheels, the rattling of sabers, the fierce war cry of a murderous, bloodthirsty army. Wouldn't you be afraid?

The truth is, God is patient with us when the awful flush of human fear overcomes us in a sudden crisis. Our Lord is not a hard taskmaster. And He knew this would be a frightening experience for Israel.

In fact, He would have been pleased with a prayer such as, "Lord, we're afraid! Yet we know You have always been faithful to deliver us. When we were in Egypt, You delivered us from the death angel and from all the plagues. And we know You have the power to deliver us out of this crisis as well, no matter how bleak it looks. Father, we commit our lives into Your hands!"

But was this Israel's cry? No! Scripture says, *"They said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?...it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness"* (verses 11-12).

They were being sarcastic, almost to the point of blasphemy. And they charged God with intent to destroy them. This was not the cry of faith!

Are you facing your own crisis right now? Perhaps you carry burdens so heavy, your friends would fall on their faces weeping if they knew

about them. Yet, the fact remains -- you have been led into your very difficult situation by the Lord Himself. The simple, biblical truth is that if you are His -- **if He has ordered your steps -- then He has put you where you are.** And He must have a good reason for it. You are being tested!

You may ask, "What am I supposed to do when I'm brought into such a crisis? What should I do when everything appears hopeless -- when there is no visible escape? What happens when I'm overcome with fear because everything is coming down all around me -- and I have nowhere to turn, no answers for my problem, no one to tell me how to get out of my trouble?"

Here is how God answered Israel, when they faced their crisis: *"...Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord...the Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace"* (verses 13-14).

The Lord was saying to them, **"The first matter you must deal with is your fear! I will fight for you. And I will save and deliver you. Now, let that promise be your strength. Let it drive out all your fear!"**

Now Let Me Apply This to the New Covenant!

First, I want to talk about bondage to sin -- that is, your battle with the flesh. **Under the New Covenant, God will allow situations to show us how helpless we are -- and how wholly dependent we are on Him to deliver us through faith.**

God will never lead you into temptation. But He will allow you to come to your wits' end. If you have a besetting sin, that sin is the Pharaoh in your life. And his army of lying spirits comes against you continually with demonic lies: "You're not going to make it. You're going down. You will end up destroyed!"

You hear the rattling of chains as satan tries to bind you to your habit once more. And you wonder, "Lord, how will I ever get up from this? I've gone down so low!"

What can you do? You know you can't outrun the enemy. And you are no match for him in a fight. You are helpless against him. So you

stand before him, cowering, trembling, fearful.

You may say to yourself, "I'll just go back to my old ways. That way, at least I'll be spared from all this spiritual warfare. It's too much for me!" But you know **you can't go back to your old master. If you turn back now -- if you desert Christ -- it will cost you your life!**

I ask you -- how many Israelites would have been spared if they'd returned to Egypt? Not one would have survived! They all would have been hewn to pieces. Why? The enemy is a bloodthirsty killer, out to destroy us!

At this point, many Christians become caught in the hellish cycle of sin and confess, sin and confess. They run to friends, counselors, anyone who will listen to them as they weep, cry and pray. Such believers will do everything except stand still and trust the Lord to bring their deliverance.

Yet the Old Testament gives us example after example of how we have no power in our flesh to fight spiritual battles. Our old man is utterly weak and powerless. But we have a new man inside us -- and he is to submit his life totally to the Lord's hands. **The new man understands there is no human way out -- that God has to do all the fighting for him.** We resist the devil not in our strength, but by the power of the Holy Spirit, which is revealed in us by faith alone.

I Believe That God, by His Spirit, Saves and Delivers His People by Giving Them Clear Direction!

God speaks to His people by His Spirit. And He makes the Spirit's voice clear to us: *"Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left"* (SA 30:21).

The voice of God's Spirit comes to us primarily through the scriptures. He may open up to us a biblical passage that will be the key to our deliverance. **But before we can hear His voice of direction, God requires something of us: We are to stand still and wait upon Him to act!**

This word is not a suggestion, but a commandment. And it is the secret to our total victory and deliverance. Indeed, the Lord commanded his people to stand still on many occasions.

For example, in Joshua 3 we read of another crossing Israel had to make, at the Jordan River. God instructed the people: *"...When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan"* (JOS 3:8). Then the Lord added: *"...as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests...shall rest in the waters of Jordan...the waters of Jordan shall be cut off...and they shall stand upon an heap"* (verse 13).

God was saying, "When you get to the water, plant your feet in it and just stand there. Be still, rest. Don't try to figure out what I'm up to. Just wait for me to act. I will part the waters for you!"

The Hebrew word for "stand still" in this passage means **"stop all activity, cease all striving."** Yet, how many Israelites obeyed when they came to the Jordan? As they stood with their feet in the water, many must have thought, "How do we know this is going to work?"

Some might have been tempted to build some kind of pontoon bridge and try to get across on their own ingenuity. But that would have been all in vain.

God did act on that occasion -- he did part the waters. And he did it because Israel's act of obedience was accompanied by faith. They did what God had told them, and they rested in it. God answered their faith!

On another occasion, Israel's king was commanded to stand still rather than act. After Samuel anointed Saul as king, he escorted him to the edge of the city. And at one point, Samuel said to Saul, *"...stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God"* (1.SAM 9:27).

Samuel was saying, "Saul, I've just anointed you, and yet already your mind is racing. You're thinking, 'What is God doing? How can I know His voice, His will?' Stop striving, Saul! Do you want to hear from God? Do you want direction from him? Then stand still and listen. I'll give you God's word."

This perfectly illustrates the principle I want to emphasize here: The word of the Lord -- the voice of direction and deliverance -- is given to those who come to a place of standing still before God!

In Second Chronicles we read that Judah was being invaded by a coalition of mighty armies. Scripture says King Jehoshaphat *"...feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah"* (2.CHR 20:3).

The people began to pray, crying, *"...in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?...for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee"* (verses 6, 12).

Once again, we see there is nothing wrong with being afraid. God is longsuffering toward us, and He does not hold our fear against us. In fact, we are to pray the same prayer that Jehoshaphat prayed: "Lord, I'm frightened! The enemy is coming in like a flood, and I don't know what to do. But I do know that You have all power and might. So I will do nothing, Lord, except to pray. I will fix my eyes on You!"

"Then...came the spirit of the Lord in the midst of the congregation" (verse 14). Here is what the Spirit commanded: *"Be not afraid nor dismayed...for the battle is not yours, but God's....Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you...."* (verses 15-17).

The phrase "set yourself, stand still" means "take your position; do not waver in this matter." In other words: **"Take a position of faith. Be convinced the battle is the Lord's.** Any demon that comes against you has to come against Christ in you. **It is the Lord's battle to fight -- not yours!"**

You may remember what happened in this story. When the men of Judah went out to fight the great army, they found their enemy already slain on the battlefield. The mighty soldiers had gotten up in the middle of the night and begun to fight themselves -- and they ended up destroying each other!

So the army from Judah simply picked up the spoils and marched back home in a great victory

processional. They hadn't even lifted a sword. The Lord had done all the fighting for them!

The psalmist writes, "*Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth*" (PSA 46:10). The literal translation in Hebrew is, "Cease and forsake all your striving, and acknowledge that I am God." In other words: "Quit striving! Stop all your efforts to deliver yourself. Acknowledge that God alone can save you!"

You may say, "But, Brother Dave -- didn't Israel sometimes have to take up arms and do battle?" Yes, they did -- but on this condition: that they first stood silent before the Lord and received detailed directions from Him. That's what Joshua did before the battle of Jericho. He got detailed marching orders before doing anything. And his victory brought God all glory!

Let Me Tell You What I Believe Is Required in This Matter of "Standing Still" Before the Lord.

The phrase "stand still" does not mean being passive or resting on fate. Fate says, "Whatever will be, will be." But faith changes everything. And "standing still" is an act of faith -- an active resting on God's promises. It is a determination to cease all questions, doubts and useless strivings.

Ever since I've been in the ministry, a major area of striving for me has been this matter of knowing the voice of God. I believe this struggle is common to many Christians today. We constantly ask, "How can I know if a voice I hear is God's? How can I discern whether it's His, or mine, or my flesh's?"

Whenever I face a critical need that requires an answer, I turn to the Lord in prayer. I cry out, "Father, Your word says You speak to Your people. Please, God -- speak to me. Give me Your direction!" And I end up quoting every scripture promise I know:

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (JN 10:27).

"Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand,

and when ye turn to the left" (ISA 30:21).

"(My) word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart..." (DEUT 30:14).

Indeed, a still, small voice often comes to us -- and as God begins to speak, we suddenly have a great sense of peace and calm. The voice is comforting, soothing, and we leave our prayer closet feeling wonderful. He most assuredly does lead us and deliver us by the voice of the Holy Spirit.

But all too often, the word we hear in prayer doesn't come to pass. In fact, it can sometimes prove to be wrong. And we realize we've heard another voice -- not Christ's. In such a case, it had to be either the voice of our own desires and ambition, or the voice of our flesh.

Please understand -- I'm not talking about hearing "foolish things." Over the years I've heard people attribute many stupid, fleshly things to the voice of the Lord. Rather, I'm talking about godly believers who cling to God's word and faithfully seek Him for direction. And when the word they receive somehow goes wrong, a cloud of doubt comes upon them. They end up confused, crying out:

"Oh, God -- I did everything I know to do! I prayed. I held to Your word. You know I want Your will, Lord. And I know I'm under Your blood. How could I have messed up so badly? How did I mistake another voice for Yours? Oh, Lord -- how can I ever trust any voice again?"

Paul describes the feeling this way: *"...we are perplexed, but not in despair"* (2.COR 4:8). Yet, we forget that Paul also says, *"There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification"* (1.COR 14:10). There are thousands of voices -- including a voice of the flesh, a voice of the will, a voice of ambition -- and all scream for our mind's attention.

It doesn't matter how much we pray, how close we are to the Lord, how many hours we spend in His word. We all are fallible, and we all make mistakes. Our flesh still has a voice -- and at times it will get in the way.

Let me tell you how God brought me through this test of faith: **I HAVE BECOME SET ON THE TRUTH THAT THE LORD ORDERS MY EVERY STEP!** I am convinced God prearranges and sets up all my circumstances. He has promised, by covenant, to lead me and guide me by His Spirit and to keep me from falling. So, now I pray in faith, believing His word to me. And I stand still and wait for Him to act.

You see, when God makes a promise, it is no longer a matter of grace. Rather, it is legal. He seals all His promises with an oath -- and we have the right to stand on them "legally." God can't back away from any of his promises, or He wouldn't be God. So, we can hold to each promise and say, "Lord, I'm going to stand on what You've said. No reply is necessary! Your promise is Your voice -- speaking directly to me!"

You may say, "Wait a minute. Do you mean we're not supposed to commune with the Lord?" Of course, I don't mean that. But the fact is, our communion with God isn't restricted to worship, praise or prayer. Our communion with Him also includes trusting Him. We commune with Him by actively leaning on His written, revealed Word!

The Holy Spirit "speaks" mostly by leading us to pertinent scripture passages, showing us God's mind on any matter and telling us what steps to take. Why should He speak with an inner voice when we will not "hear" His revealed, written voice?

The fact is, God doesn't have to tell us everything for us to have intimacy with Him. He doesn't have to reveal all His plans to us. In fact, we can have intimacy with God simply by giving up our efforts to figure out His voice. This kind of intimacy says, "Lord, even if I never hear another word from You, You've still given me everything I need. I know You love me -- Your Word has come to me -- and I'm going to rest in that. All I ask is that You keep Your promises to me. There is no reply necessary!"

Meanwhile, we are to be satisfied with the revelation we have in God's word: *"God...hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son..."*

(HEB 1:2). And God has given us enough covenant promises to see us through any crisis or trial:

"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature..." (2.PET 1:3-4).

David is an example of this kind of trust. As this godly man lay on his deathbed, he said: *"Although my house be not so with God..."* (2.SAM 23:5). In other words: "I have not yet seen all the words the Lord has given me come to pass. My house is still not as it ought to be. Three of my sons are dead. Yet I have

been given a promise that my house will not fall!" *"...he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure..."* (same verse).

God had promised David's forefather, Abraham, *"I will give you a sure house with a firm foundation. I will bless you, and the whole earth will be blessed through your seed"* (meaning, Christ).

David had no prophet standing nearby, telling him these things. He had no dream, no vision, no inner voice speaking to him. No -- as he faced eternity, David didn't look for any of these things. Instead, he said, "God gave me a covenant promise in His word. And I'll go into eternity standing on that promise!" *"...for this is all my salvation, and all*

my desire..." (same verse). He was saying, in essence, "I can face death now -- because His promise is all I need."

We may fail in our discernment, our hearing, our decisions. But we can rejoice in our God, Who is our strength! He will make us to walk in the right way. It is all His work. And we must simply yield, stand still and see His salvation!

The Lord promises: *"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness"* (ISA 41:10).

Hallelujah!

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