

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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SERMON TITLE Move Forward

SERIES

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KEY SCRIPTURE Exodus 14:10-16

SYNOPSIS What does it take to move forward with the Lord?

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ Move Forward

Last week Paul talked on Let's Move Out in Deuteronomy 1. It was a good message, especially about not settling for something nice and good, when God's best is still ahead. Today's message has a similar theme.

☞ Exodus 14:10-16

10 As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the Lord. 11 They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? 12 Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!" 13 Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. **Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today.** The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. 14 **The Lord will fight for you;** you need only to be still." 15 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to **move on.** 16 Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground.

In this scripture God's people were being chased by Pharaoh's army. Before them was the Red Sea and behind them came Pharaoh and his army and chariots with bad intentions.

Moses told the people of Israel to *stop*. This is not in conflict with God's instruction to move **☞ on**. It's actually a directive to **keep the faith**. The phrase "be still" is sometimes translated as "hold your peace" or "hold your tongue." The Hebrew is Charash. Here are the various ways it's translated: cease speaking, deaf, devise, engrave, plow, remain silent, be still. Apparently, none of those words quite get there: there's a word we don't know, hiding between those translations. Something to do with plowing, with preparing, with devising. Something to do with silence and stillness.

There's a moment, in planning for something, when you've done all you can, and then all that remains is to wait, with the next steps in mind, but the time for action still out ahead. Charash seems to point toward that moment. There's a time in a pregnancy, when preparations are done, the baby is due, and all you can do is wait. It's out of your hands. Charash carries something of that motionless expectation. It's an attentive stillness: eyes open, ears alert.

I think this represents where we are right now as a Church. God has been leading and the enemy has been pursuing. Something phenomenal is about to happen, but we don't know exactly what **☞ or when**. So, before moving forward, the instruction is to Charash – **be attentively still**. "What is God saying? What is God doing? What is God asking of us? How is God leading?"

This is often the Lord's direction to the believer in a time of crisis. *Despair* will cast you down, keeping you from standing. *Fear* will tell you to retreat. *Impatience* will tell you to do something now. *Presumption* will tell you to jump into the Red Sea before it is parted. Yet as God told Israel, **☞ He often tells us to simply stand still and hold your peace** as He reveals His plan.



Moses didn't know what God would do, but he knew what the result would be. He knew that God would save His people and that the enemies of the Lord would be destroyed. Then, when the time was right and God's instruction was clear, Moses took action and the people moved forward. It's one of the greatest miracles recorded in the Bible. Ultimately, they got the victory in spite of Pharaoh's great army and chariots. And there is also a victory for us if we face every day with the attitude that we will not back up or give up, but we are going forward as God leads.

☞ **What does it take to move forward? A Change of Attitude**

☞ Where we are **now is only temporary**. This is not our final destination. There are better days ahead and ultimately, heaven is our goal, not the things that this world has to offer. But sometimes we get used to the "now." The Israelis were comfortable in Egypt; they were used to living as slaves; and they were used to settling for the leftovers. They said, "It would have been better for us to be slaves in Egypt than to die in the desert." They had developed a slave mentality. They said, "were there no graves in Egypt that you brought us to this desert to die?" "Didn't we tell you in Egypt to leave us alone and let us serve the Egyptians?"

People of God sometimes get accustomed to their worldly surroundings. We sometimes become accustomed to not receiving the promises of God. We get used to the hand-me-downs even if it's not the best that the Lord has for us. But God says, "You are the head and not the tail," "above and not below," "blessed in the city and blessed in the field," "blessed going in and going out."

We need a change in attitude which is not satisfied with the things of this world. We need to see ☞ that there is more still ahead of us. **God's best is still in the works**. Let's not settle for less than God has for us.

☞ What does it take to move forward? Faith in God, using your gifts.

v.16 God said to Moses; "Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the waters so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground." Notice that the only thing that Moses had was faith in what God had promised, and a stick.

☞ So, as usual, **we have to start with faith. Do you really trust God? Do you really believe God's promises?** He has made some wonderful promises in the Bible, some of which are yet to be fulfilled. Do you believe him? He has also made some very specific promises to OBC. Do you believe him? Perhaps you've received some personal promises from the Lord and are still waiting for the fulfillment. Will you continue to believe? Will you continue to trust?

☞ While you're waiting for the promise, God wants you to **use what you already have for his glory**. Using what you already have is a demonstration of faith. What has God given you? Perhaps a talent like singing or playing an instrument, administration, organizing, fixing something, encouraging, helping others, intercessory skills, etc. It doesn't matter what it is, use it for the glory of God.



Sometimes our attitude needs to be this... “I’m still waiting for the promise, but in the meantime, I will use what I have to serve the Lord; I’m not giving up or backing down.” Whatever it is, put it to use in the Kingdom of God. It will not only push you forward, but others also. Moses had a stick, but he used it to advance an entire nation. What can God do through you?

☞ What does it take to move forward? **The power of God.**

Zechariah 4:5 says, “It’s not by power nor by might but by My Spirit” says the Lord. The Lord has given us power by His Spirit to move forward and conquer. As we step out in faith, following his lead, using our gifts and talents to serve the Lord, he empowers us supernaturally to accomplish his purposes.

☞ **We actually partner with God.** This is one of the reasons for the Charash where we started... the attentive stillness, before moving forward. We don’t want to go in our own strength, but in the power of God. And, he does promise power.

Acts 1:8 “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses.” You may feel inadequate, and that may actually be true. But it doesn’t all depend on your ability, but rather on God’s infinite power. Trust him to use your gifts.

1 Corinthians 1:27

God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. And God has chosen the weak things of this world to confound the things that are mighty.

We often feel inadequate for the task at hand or the calling the Lord has put on us. That’s actually ☞ a good place to be, because then God will empower us and he will get the glory. **Don’t let your insecurities diminish or restrict the power of God in your life.**

2 Corinthians 12:9

But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”

☞ What does it take to move forward? **Unity**

Once the Israelis shut up and quit complaining, God gave Moses clear direction. And, when the time was right, they all went together through the Red Sea on dry ground. It was a miracle, with walls of water on the right and left, yet a path of dry ground through the sea. God made a way where there was no way, and **the people moved forward in unity. They did it together.**

We see a similar miracle based in unity just a few chapters later...

Exodus 17:8-13



8 The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. 9 Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands." 10 So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. 11 As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. 12 When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up — one on one side, one on the other — so that his hands remained steady till sunset. 13 So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.

☞ **When there is unity in God's people, it's easy to move forward.** Pastor Moses interceded and lifted up God's standard while the leaders helped by taking some of the load. All while the rest of the people of God fought the good fight. You see how we are all in this together?

God is calling us and leading us forward, but there will be obstacles and threats along the way. Instead of complaining and griping, we need to be still and give our full attention to the Lord. He didn't bring us out this far to take us back again. He didn't lead us this far to simply drop us. **He still has a plan for our future.**

Let's check our attitudes and not get too comfortable in this sin-fallen world. Let's put our faith in the Lord, trusting him to keep his promises. And, he has made some very specific promises for Boone OBC. Do his promises ever fail?

While we wait for his next step, let's use what he has already given us to bring him glory. If you're not using your talents and gifts for the Lord, you are robbing him and his church of what could be. Give it all to God! And, let's lean into the power of God. Even as you use a talent or gift, ask God to multiply it and empower it with his anointing. If you can sing, don't just sing, but let God's anointing flow through your singing. It's the same with every other gift – encourage with God's power; serve and help with his anointing, etc.

And, Church, let's do this together. We each do our part, but not all alone. We are in this ☞ together. **God's power will achieve his purposes as we each do our part in unity.**

If you get determined to move forward and heed the voice of the Lord, then nothing will stop you. But if you choose to drift back into the place of comfort, it's like giving up or backing down. God has given you all that you need. Let's do it. Let's move forward and refuse to give up or back ☞ down, but **keep moving forward as God leads.**

Faithful Now