

FIRST (SCOTS) SERMONS

“NO POSSIBLE PATH?”

Scripture Lesson: Exodus 14: 10-31

*This sermon was preached by Hewitt McKenzie on Sunday, February 8, 2026
at First (Scots) Presbyterian Church in Charleston, South Carolina.*

Exodus 14: 10-31

10 As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back, and there were the Egyptians advancing on them. In great fear the Israelites cried out to the LORD. 11 They said to Moses, “Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? 12 Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, ‘Let us alone so that we can serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.” 13 But Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the LORD will accomplish for you today, for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. 14 The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to keep still.”

15 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Why do you cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. 16 But you lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground. 17 Then I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them, and so I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots, and his chariot drivers. 18 Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gained glory for myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his chariot drivers.”

19 The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. 20 It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided. 22 The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. 23 The Egyptians pursued and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh’s horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. 24 At the morning watch the LORD, in the pillar of fire and cloud, looked down on the Egyptian army and threw the Egyptian army into a panic. 25 He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, “Let us flee from the Israelites, for the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt.”

The Pursuers Drowned

26 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.” 27 So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the LORD tossed the Egyptians into the sea. 28 The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. 29 But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

30 Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. 31 Israel saw the great work that the LORD did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the LORD and believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

No Possible Path?

Leader: The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Just as the Israelites couldn't see a path through Egypt, many times in our lives, we can't see a path either.

In Exodus 14, the Israelites look up and see Pharaoh's army coming toward them. Behind them is slavery. In front of them is the Red Sea.

They are trapped, with no escape, no answers, and no visible way forward. In that moment, fear takes over.

How often does life feel the same way for us?

We pray, but we are often unable to see God's solution. We trust God, but the situation still looks impossible.

Grief clouds our vision. It makes it hard to see hope.

Like the Israelites, the struggles in life can make us say, "God, where are you?" or, "Why did this have to happen?"

Some of you might remember July 19th, 2024. Most of you will not. For those of us who were traveling, this is the date thousands of flights around the world got canceled because of a software failure.

As our mission team arrived in Mexico City, after the first leg of our journey home, we discovered that our flight to Atlanta had been canceled, and we were being told that it would be four days before we could get a flight back into the U.S.

Panic and exhaustion hit at the same time. Now don't get me wrong, our time in Chiapas was amazing, but I was ready to see my dog and sleep in my own bed.

Let me remind you our youth pastor was on sabbatical this trip, and he left five great adults to fill his place. Thank you, Mom and Dad.

Those four days were stressful because everyone with us, and inside the United States, continued looking for a path home, with no luck.

Just as the Israelites couldn't see God's path, neither could we.

Looking back, those four extra days in Mexico City were great. We got to explore Mexico City, have great meals, and stay in a super nice hotel.

The Israelites forgot God's promises because fear was louder than faith. But even in their grief and fear, God never left them. The pillar of cloud moved behind them. God was protecting them even when they couldn't see it.

In our grief, God is still present even when it feels silent.

When God parted the Red Sea, what once caused fear became a testimony. The same people who cried out in panic walked forward on dry ground.

Their sorrow turned into praise.

Joy didn't come because the situation was easy. Joy came because God was faithful.

And that reminds us: Joy isn't the absence of trouble. Joy is knowing God makes a way where we see no possible path.