

## “Scriptures for Journeying”

*Exodus 14:10-12, 16:1-3, Numbers 14:1-14, Ezra 3:12-13, Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, 11, Mark 2:22, Psalms Select Phrases, Revelation 21:1, John 11:25*

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May 5, 2024

**Prayer for Understanding** Gracious God please help us listen to your good news. Amen

From the beginning of time, God continuously guides people, and the church, through seasons of decline, death, grief, resurrection, and abundant life. We resist change. Even good positive change that we want to make is resisted by a part of us. There is a part of us that yearns to go back to the familiar, to the way things were in the past. Nostalgia cripples our journey. God set the Israelites free from slavery. They wanted this change. They prayed for this change for years. They dreamed about this change. You would expect the Israelites to be joyful over the change of their freedom. Often when one is in the midst of change, they blame others and blame the circumstances. Exodus tells of the Israelite’s attitude as they were leaving Egypt. **Exodus 14:10-12 NLT “As Pharaoh approached, the people of Israel looked up and panicked when they saw the Egyptians overtaking them. They cried out to the Lord, and they said to Moses, “Why did you bring us out here to die in the wilderness? Weren’t there enough graves for us in Egypt? What have you done to us? Why did you make us leave Egypt? Didn’t we tell you this would happen while we were still in Egypt? We said, ‘Leave us alone! Let us be slaves to the Egyptians. It’s better to be a slave in Egypt than a corpse in the wilderness!’”**

None of the people who left Egypt made it to the Promised Land, because they refused to change. It was the next generation that embraced change who entered the Promised Land. **Exodus 16:1-3 NLT “One month after leaving the land of Egypt. The whole community of Israel complained about Moses and Aaron. “If only the Lord had killed us back in Egypt,” they moaned. “There we sat around pots filled with meat and ate all the bread we wanted. But now you have brought us into this wilderness to starve us all to death.”**

Finally, the Israelites are about to enter the Promised Land. They have heard the report of the scouts that it is a wonderful land flowing with milk and honey. A few people doubted, so they started spreading rumors that there were giants in the land that would kill them all. Instead of changing, living freely in harmony with the inhabitants of the glorious Promised Land, the Israelites stubbornly refused to change, to journey into the next season. Numbers explains: **Numbers 14:1-4 “Then the whole community began weeping aloud, and they cried all night. Their voices rose in a great chorus of protest against Moses and Aaron. “If only we had died in Egypt, or even here in the wilderness!” they complained. “Why is the Lord taking us to this country only to have us die in battle? Our wives and our little ones will be carried off as plunder! Wouldn’t it be better for us to return to Egypt?” Then they plotted among themselves, “Let’s choose a new leader and go back to Egypt!”**

Fast forward thousands of years. The temple was built. They were carried off in exile. The temple destroyed. They returned and rebuilt the temple. Ezra describes the contrast between those who were still nostalgic for the past and those who were embracing the new season. **Ezra 3:12-13 NLT “Many of the older priests, Levites, and other leaders who had seen the first Temple wept aloud when they saw the new Temple’s foundation. The others, however, were shouting for joy. The joyful shouting and weeping mingled together in a loud noise that could be heard far in the distance.”**

As individuals, as families, as a church, as a country, we continually go through a myriad of seasons. We cannot see the whole scope of God’s work. Scripture promises everything, everyone, will be beautiful. God has planted eternity in our heart. By God’s grace, each of us is eternal, all the love, joy, hope, peace, and goodness we experience and share is eternal and exponentially grows. Some seasons are glorious. Some seasons are tough, arduous and confusing. Transitions between seasons, which the church is in now, are uncertain, scary, and turbulent. The wisdom of Ecclesiastes proclaims: **Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, 11 “For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven. A time to be born and a time to die. A time to plant and a time to harvest. A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to tear down and a time to build up. A time to cry and a time to laugh. A time to**

**grieve and a time to dance. A time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones. A time to embrace and a time to turn away. A time to search and a time to quit searching. A time to keep and a time to throw away. A time to tear and a time to mend. A time to be quiet and a time to speak. A time to love and a time to hate. A time for war and a time for peace. God has made everything beautiful for its own time. God has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end."**

**Jesus said: Mark 2:22 NLT "No one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the wine would burst the wineskins, and the wine and the skins would both be lost. New wine calls for fresh wineskins."**

**The psalmist sings: Psalm 25:16-17 I am lonely and afflicted. Disperse the troubles of my heart and free me from my anguish" Psalm 54:4 "Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me." Psalm 56:3 "When I am afraid, I put my trust in you." Psalm 56:13 "For you have delivered me from death and my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before God in the light of life." Psalm 68:19-20 "Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, who daily bears our burdens. Our God is a God who saves; from the Sovereign Lord comes escape from death." Psalm 147:3 "God heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." Psalm 25:4-5 "Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long." Psalm 136:1 "Give thanks to the Lord, for God is good, for God's steadfast love endures forever."**

**Revelation declares: Revelation 21:1 NLT "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared."**

**Jesus said. John 11:25 "I am the resurrection and the life." Amen**