

God Gives You Something to Talk About!

A sermon based on Exodus 15:1-11.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

In 1991, Bonnie Raitt's melodic voice rang out, "Let's give them something to talk about." I'm sure many of you have heard that song before, a song that talks about rumors of two people being together, but maybe they do like each other, so let's get together so they'll really have something to talk about.

Seems these days, there's quite a bit for us to talk about...elections, corruption, Wikileaks, Vladimir Putin, sexual assault allegations, budget issues, ISIS, nuclear capabilities, hurricanes, the latest with this celebrity or that celebrity...anything else I'm missing? You notice a common thread? Sometimes, it seems better not to give others something to talk about...not a whole lot of bright spots in the news these days.

Could you use a pick me up? It's been about six months since we last talked...really talked about Easter, how wonderful that day is, what it means for us. Maybe the excitement of the day and the season has passed for you. But let's renew that today. Because in the resurrection, God gives us something to talk about. He gives us something to talk about always!

It must have been like a scene out of Star Wars (Return of the Jedi) or Independence Day or one of those movies where the entire planet was in danger, its inhabitants on the verge of extinction...watching as the enemy, their ships, were destroyed, the threat eliminated...just the sheer elation, the rejoicing, the singing, the celebrating an amazing, seemingly impossible victory.

The scene must have been like that, there on the shores of the Red Sea. Perhaps you know the story well. Moses and the Israelites, freshly freed from slavery in Egypt, but that freedom seemed short-lived. Pharaoh had a change of heart. He wanted the cheap labor back. He took his entire, enormous army to reclaim his "slaves." And it looked like he would, backing the Israelites up against the Red Sea, with nowhere to go...

Until God intervened...and parted those waters and gave his people an escape, crossing the Red Sea on dry ground. And if their escape wasn't enough, he gave them complete victory, hurling those waters back onto the Egyptian army as they gave chase...and we're told those **"deep waters covered [the horses, the chariots, the soldiers],"** and **"they sank to the depths like a stone."**

And the Israelites would have been remiss to just stand there and watch and do nothing, except maybe breathe a sigh of relief. No, God had just given them something to talk about...something even to sing about...and they did.

Take a look at their song again. See the focus...it focuses squarely on the Lord and what he had done for his people for their salvation (from the Egyptians).

Listen again to some snippets of that song, **"The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation...The LORD is a warrior...has hurled [Pharaoh's chariots and his army] into the sea...Your right hand, O LORD, shattered the enemy...You unleashed your burning anger; it consumed them like**

stubble...The enemy boasted...you blew with your breath, and the sea covered them. They sank like lead in the mighty waters. Who among the gods is like you, O LORD?"

The answer? No one. He's the only one who could topple an army...shatter an entire empire with his breath. The LORD, the warrior, acted, demonstrated his strength, and Israel's enemies were nothing more than dead lead weights at the bottom of the mighty sea. Again, that right there, gave Moses and the people something to talk about.

What about you? Has the LORD, has God given you something to talk about? You probably don't even have to think hard. Ok, so it might not be as thrilling as the suspense-filled, near-death experience of being chased by a massive army, passing through the middle of a sea, these huge walls of water surrounding you, barely escaping, riding the high of seeing your enemies suffering a different and tragic ending. Anything you could think of might pale in comparison. I get that.

But God has given you something to talk about, hasn't he? If you're struggling to come up with something, then even just think of what we're celebrating today, how the effects of Easter and the effects of Jesus' resurrection are still enduring, yes, even 6 months after Easter...even close to 2000 years after the resurrection took place. You have a different kind of salvation than the Israelites here...a better salvation to talk about.

Do you? You know, for the Israelites, you can't imagine they wouldn't have forgotten about this experience any time soon. You would've expected something this big, this great, to be the big buzz for weeks, years, maybe even generations. The elation, the gratitude, however, only lasted three days. A few verses later, ***"For three days [the Israelites] traveled in the desert without finding water...So the people grumbled against Moses."*** And then, less than a couple months later, ***"The whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron..."If only we had died by the LORD'S hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death."*** Seems they found something else to talk about....something else to complain about.

6 months past Easter, you haven't forgotten about what Jesus has done for you, have you? The elation you had on the day we celebrated Christ's resurrection, God's guarantee that sin, death, and the devil have all been soundly defeated. The peace we have with God because of sins forgiven, the very same peace Jesus, on the night of his resurrection, told his disciples, and us, "I am sending you" to go and share that with others...you haven't forgotten about that, have you?

And it's not just the resurrection (although that's the cherry on the top!), but all of Scripture, God gives you and me something to be excited about...something to sing about...something to talk about.

Again, do you? I'll be the first to admit I struggle at times to talk about Jesus more...about my salvation more. The weather, the Packers, the upcoming election, the latest board game...no trouble there. Maybe for you, it's clothes, cars, movies, guns, food, kids. Talk about one of your favorite topics, and there's excitement...there's joy...there's ease. Talk about Jesus, though, and maybe it seems more forced (unnatural), more timid, more awkward.

Why is that? You know, I understand it's tough to talk about some parts of Scripture. It's not easy to approach someone about their lack of regular church attendance or to talk about something you

overheard them say that they probably shouldn't have said or to have a serious conversation about issues of sexual immorality (in connection to God's Word). I get that.

But talking about the best part, Jesus, who died for our sins and has risen to set us free, why is talking about that so hard for you...for me?

It's because of what we call the "unholy trinity," that is, the devil, the world, and our sinful nature. The devil...how tirelessly he works to downplay the gospel and keep Jesus and his salvation on the backburner of our minds and hearts. The world...how it gives us the impression talking faith, talking Jesus is so out of vogue and so offensive certainly doesn't help to embolden us. And then the sinful nature, who knows you best, who knows all your weaknesses and imperfections and plays on your fears and insecurities...anything to distract or prohibit you from talking about what's really important.

Three against one. The unholy trinity against that New Man, that one entity inside of us still eager to talk about Jesus. It doesn't seem fair, but that's the daily struggle, the daily/lifelong battle we're in. In this battle though, there's an x-factor. ***"The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is his name."***

We know from life experience just how difficult, how strong our spiritual enemies are. But look at this victory song from Moses and the Israelites. See how many different words Moses used to describe and praise the Lord - my strength, my song, my salvation, my God, my father's God, a warrior. By way of contrast, the enemy is described as being without strength at all - they sank to the depths like a stone.

Their song foreshadows our song of joy on this day. You see, the evil foe, the unholy three sought to pull us back into the slavery of sin. Yet the hand of the Lord has saved his people. The warrior Jesus entered into the battle. God is often pictured as a king leading his people into battle. And that's exactly what Jesus did for us. He didn't only lead the charge...he fought the entire battle for us. He didn't expect us to do anything he wouldn't do first. And so, he was the first to live a perfect life for us. And, because he knew we couldn't follow in his footsteps there, he met the devil, sin, death head-on at the cross and crushed them. Shattered their strength even more soundly than God did at the waters of the Red Sea, with the Egyptian war machine. Sure, it looks like there, death gained the upper hand, but what we're here to celebrate today, Jesus' resurrection, that proves who the ultimate victor is...Jesus...the LORD...our warrior.

Again, though his life, death, and resurrection, Jesus, our warrior, our King, showed us he didn't expect us to do anything he wouldn't do first. But here's the best part...because of what he did, and the battle he fought and won, we'll never have to endure what he did. We don't have to live the perfect life (although we still want to and will strive with all our might to) because Jesus did. We don't have to die and suffer God's eternal wrath and hell because Jesus did. But the victory, the triumph of his resurrection, that's ours. The forgiveness of sins, the promise of eternal life in heaven, that's ours.

And that gives us something great to talk about. God has done too many good things (with salvation at the top of the list) for us to possibly keep quiet. How can we talk about it?

First, connect it to you. You may not be able to present a well-articulated sermon about what God's Word says Jesus has done. That's ok. You don't need to. But you have a story. For the Israelites, it was the miracle at the Red Sea. You have something (you probably have a lot of things) going on in your own life right now or even in the recent past. That's your story.

Secondly (and this is the fun challenge), make it all about Jesus. It's easy to get caught up in "here's what happened to me, and here's how I got through it"...that kind of mindset. Make it all about Jesus...because he's there, he cares, and he's always been active for you.

It doesn't have to be hard. My grandma passed away, but Jesus reminds me, just like he did with Martha when Lazarus died, that he's the resurrection and the life. She's with him now, and I will be, too, when I die.

I just received an unexpected yet substantial monetary gift in the mail. I appreciate God's goodness in providing and making sure I'm always being taken care of (and you could even add how he's provided for my greatest need, forgiveness, through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection).

I stubbed my toe on the way to church this morning. The sharp pain (as small as it might be) gets me excited to be with Jesus in heaven, where he says, "No more tears, no more sadness, no more pain."

I had a hard time sleeping last night (just too many things on my mind). I remembered God says he never slumbers nor sleeps, so it was a perfect opportunity to chat with him in prayer.

My friend was just diagnosed with Alzheimers. Now I get to spend my time sharing again and again with him Jesus and his eternal love.

It doesn't have to be hard. Just get your story. Make it all about Jesus. And then, be willing and happy to talk about it. It's a good exercise to counteract the common, "What's new with you? Oh, not much!" But there is! Jesus, his love, his forgiveness!

The news of Easter's too great to just keep to one Sunday. Jesus' love and salvation is too great to just keep to ourselves. God has done so much for us; we can't keep quiet. We won't.

God gives us something to talk about. Jesus' resurrection gives us something to talk about. And we will....to praise him....to exalt him...to give glory to him. And through us, Lord-willing, God'll give others something to talk about. Amen.