

Next Step

Exodus 40

Pastor Guy Gray

Movement

What a journey it has been! Exodus means: “The Road Out” this is what we have seen in epic proportions as we have studied this book. How far is the distance from the opening scene in Exodus 1 to the closing verses of chapter 40? Measured not just in miles, but in life transformation, it is monumental! From a life of bitter slavery and meaningless labor to a community set free, with a new identity as a kingdom of priests for God who live with divine purpose and meaning in life. Wow! From a people who basically didn’t have a clue about God, to a people who have experienced the greatest revelation of the glory of God in history and coming to know the very heart and character of God. Incredible! After all that, the journey isn’t over. The journey is actually just beginning. Exodus doesn’t really end at Chapter 40. The story goes on. God is still at work—building on all of this and accomplishing His purpose in and through His people in this broken world. *The call of God is to always keep moving forward. Yes... but how?* The closing verses of Exodus show the way.

God at the Center

One final picture is given in Exodus—the cloud of God’s glorious presence filling the tabernacle. It’s the glory of God at the very center of the community. It is the reality of God as the focal point of their lives. It is trusting, loving, and worshipful relationship with the Lord, a relationship that overshadows all the other circumstances of their lives. Here in the desert—they are literally “in the middle of nowhere.” That is the beauty of the picture. With God in their midst; God as their focus of love and trust, they are fine. More than fine, they are free! Here they are learning to find their identity and their purpose in their relationship with God, not in their circumstance or their “environment”. With God as the center of their lives, they are strong and content and blessed, no matter where God might lead them or what challenges they might face. One of the keys to this journey of moving forward with God is to always be sure to keep God at the center of our faith, our love and our life.

God as Guide

The story is always about movement forward and so they must learn to follow the leading of the Lord. When the visible sign of God’s presence moves, they too must move! God has a reason for every new direction He guides His people into. He has a reason for His timing too. Sometimes God wants us to stop and stay for a time. There is a reason for this. God is teaching us, healing us, building us. Other times God wants us to get up and move—take a bold step. God knows the right time. God is pushing us, challenging us, directing us. There are different seasons in our journey of faith. Another key in this journey of moving forward is to watch for the leading of the Lord and do our best to respond in faith. Sometimes that means sitting still for a season. Sometimes that means moving quickly. May the Lord help us as individuals and as a community to be sensitive to the prompting of His Spirit that we might follow as He leads us forward in His time and His way!

Next Step – A Question for Application

The title of our weekly church bulletin is “Next Step.” This is because we believe that each week, as we come to hear the Word of God proclaimed, there is always something that we should do to respond. God always take the first step. He comes to us in grace and power and love. He Redeems, He reveals, He teaches and He guides. But then we must respond. We must take some real step of faith in our lives, big or small. When we do, amazing things begin to happen in and through us. So right now—what is your next step? What do you need to do, big or small to keep God at the center of your faith and life? What do you need to do to respond to God’s leading and move forward in your life of faith? Make that step! Pray for River West Church, that we as a community will also step forward in faith as we respond to the leading of Christ, who has promised to build His church in the midst of this hurting world.

Questions for Discussion & Reflection

This section of our Exodus series was titled, “Rescued for a reason” and now as we look back we get a clear vision of that reason. The people in Exodus learn that they are to find their freedom,

identity and purpose, not in a location or activity, but in a relationship. That still holds true for us today. This week dedicate time to your relationship with God. Focus on who He is (Exodus 3:11-17, Exodus 33:18-34:14, Colossians 1:13-20), What He has done in your life (Ezekiel 36:22-28, Ephesians 2:1-10, 1 Peter 2:4-10), and what responses He wants from you today. Share what you discover with your community group or a friend.

TODAY

Sunday School Move up
Day for all Grade Levels

SATURDAY 06/16

Ministry Prayer Time
8-9:15am @ RWLG

**WEDNESDAY 06/20-
SUNDAY 06/24**

High School Summer
Camp. See Josh for
Details

SUNDAY 06/24

All Church Barbeque
Fairwell to the
Alexanders, 11:30am-
1:30pm @ RWLG

Shape Seminar 4-8:00pm
@ RWCC

**MONDAY 7/9-
FRIDAY 7/13**

Vacation Bible School
9:00am-noon @ RWGT
See Lindsie for Details

