

## Episode 045

# Courage To Face Impossible Situations

Have you ever felt hemmed in? You are stuck in some situation? It seems like an impossible situation you are in? You cannot find a solution to move forward?

In this passage of Scripture, we can learn some key principles to face impossible situations. For the Israelites were stuck in an impossible situation. Let us look at the context. There are some theories about where the Red Seas crossing occurred. I believe it occurred at the Nuweiba Beach. The beach is large enough to hold 2 million people. Today there are hotels and a village there. It is at the Gulf of Aqaba and was then called the Red Sea. Evidence of chariots wheels and bones were found in the seabed. The path to the Wadi (a river valley) was a meandering path between canyons. Ex 14:3 (KJV) ...They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in.

The Israelites were totally “hemmed in” at the beach. They could not turn inland nor could they go north because there was a 3 storey Egyptian fortress there. There was nowhere to run. The situation looked impossible.

So what principles can we learn from this story to help us today?

### 1. STAND FIRM TO FACE OVERWHELMING SITUATIONS (v10-12)

“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!”

The Israelites were overwhelmed by the terrible situation. Pharaoh pursued them with the full force of his army (v6-9). 600 elite chariots with a fearsome reputation plus the rest, thousands of chariots, horsemen and troops. Josephus the historian recorded 50,000 horsemen and 200,000 foot soldiers in pharaoh’s army.



The Israelites were not equipped to fight. As they had been slaves and had no weapons. Against Pharaoh's well-equipped and trained army, it would be a massacre. Fear gripped their hearts, and they panicked. Would you have panicked?

Maybe recently, you had to face very challenging situations. Perhaps during the pandemic, people left. Projects stalled. Finances dropped. Leaders and volunteers stepped down. Some even died or suffered major health issues. During those years, many American pastors quit and plan to quit! Maybe you face other situations at church or personal situations that feels overwhelming.

When faced with overwhelming situations, do not to lose your nerves. To be overcome by fear and panic will lead to certain defeat. The impossible situation will simply eat us up alive. Fear and doubt ushers in unbelief and drives out faith. Remember in Matt 14:28 - 31 (NIV) when Peter walked on water and started to sink? What caused his miracle to dissipate was doubt! Peter started in faith but wavered with fear and doubt.

Fear clouds our judgment. Panic blocks us from thinking clearly or objectively. Instead of looking to God, we grabbed a compromise solution. Many years ago, we had 2 female students staying in our home. One day a terrible intruder came into our house. It was a mouse! Immediately all the females screamed and jumped out of the way. I told them the mouse was so small. Even if we accidentally trip and fell on it, it would be the end of the mouse. Why are we so afraid of this little mouse?

What should we do instead? By focusing on God's faithfulness in the past, we can face crisis with confidence rather than with fear and doubt. The attitude of thanksgiving & gratitude is a good place to start when we are feeling fearful. What are the things you can be thankful for? Remember the things God helped us!

## 2. DON'T LOSE HEART BUT PERSEVERE (v13-20)

The Enemy will push us to lose our nerves, to be fearful. Then he tries to make us lose heart, to stop believing that you can go through it. An important step in trusting God through a seemingly impossible situations is to gain a divine perspective on the situation. That is why Moses urged them, "Do not be afraid!" We must stay calm in the face of such impossible odds and begin to see it through the eyes of God.



Gaining a divine perspective helps us see as God sees. An opportunity rather than impossibility. How do we do this?

**a. Believe in God's breakthrough (v13-14)**

“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.”

We must turn to God for help! We are not in control of everything but God is! God is sovereign over all matters. Why not turn to God in such times and seek His face. Stop worrying! Start looking to God!

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Daniel's 3 friends were thrown into a fiery furnace. In Dan 3:17-18, they did not lose heart but placed their complete confidence in God to save them! Their entire lives were placed in God's hands. What trust!

During the COVID years it has been very difficult to work with the teenagers in Hope Kuching. As everything was online it was difficult to build connections, and the youth seemed to drift apart. Their experience of God and commitment to Him was weak. In those 3 years, their leaders also moved on. Azriel and his leaders were a new team and were praying for a spiritual breakthrough amongst the youth. During the church conference in Feb where Lai Ling and I ministered, many youths began to respond to God and they were touched by God. Spiritual breakthrough occurred amongst the youth! It surprised even the leaders! Today, there is a spiritual momentum amongst the youth.

God turned up and gave the breakthrough. Let's trust Him for it!

**b. Seek for divine guidance (v15-16)**

“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.”

Godly solutions need God's ways, God's instructions. Our part is to seek God for His leading, His instructions.

From beginning of Brisbane church, we wanted to reach both Asians and Caucasians.



We tried very hard, but it was many times easier and more effective with Asians for us, particularly the international students. I was frustrated with that. After a while I realised that I had to recognise God's leading. Jesus spoke about seeing what the Father was doing. The Father was giving us success with certain groups and less so for others. God assured me that it was ok. I realised many years later that Australia was Asianising. So in one way, we are decades ahead of the demographics! We never stopped reaching out to the Caucasians, but we gave priority to the groups God was giving us success. We had to trust God's leading.

### c. Discern God's purposes (v17-18)

“17 I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them. And I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. 18 The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen.”

In every situation, whether good or not, God has a purpose for it. We must figure out what God is trying to teach us this time. Rather than being upset with God, why not start asking God, “What would you like to teach me through this circumstance?” Do not allow doubt to come in and pull you apart when the situation gets worse or does not seem to improve. Prov 3:5-6 (NIV) 5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

Ps. Kusolisi in Zimbabwe had planted a few churches. But he has a bad heart and has ended up in hospital a few times. Despite his bad health, he is very zealous to plant more churches. Just before the pandemic, Lance had helped him set up life groups in his churches. Then COVID hit and no church meetings were allowed in Zimbabwe. We were very concerned for him due to his bad heart and the danger of COVID to him. Around that time his wife ended up in hospital because of high blood pressure. It was a difficult time.

Now life groups were not banned and his met once or twice every week. Amazingly, the life groups began to grow quickly. At the beginning of the pandemic, he had 3 churches in the town area with multiple life groups in the surrounding area. When the pandemic ended, he had almost 20 churches. For many life groups became so big, they formed churches. A number of pastors and their churches also joined him at that time.



#### d. Persevere for God's breakthrough (v19-20)

"19 Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, 20 coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long."

Finally, at the eleventh hour, God intervened. Just in time, the divine column moved to stand between them and the Egyptian army. Hebrews 10:36 (NIV) You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

God will turn up. Eventually. Sometimes at the 13th hour! So persevere! Wait for God's intervention. Don't quit! Hang on, trust God!

### 3. NEVER BACK OUT: WALK THROUGH (v21-29)

Sometimes, impossible situations require impossible solutions. A natural response to seemingly impossible solutions is, "I can't do this! It is impossible!" Yet nothing is impossible for God. Matt 19:26 (NIV) Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

So how do we walk through the impossible situation?

#### a. Exercise faith according to the rhema word (v21)

"Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided..."

Moses heard from God and he acted upon it. The key step is act upon the rhema word. When we are faced with an impossible situation, human solutions will not work. We need God-solutions.

Hope Seattle had to stop their services and lease of the venue during the pandemic. It was a very difficult time as everything had to be online. When they wanted to lease it again, the rent had shot up several times! Warinda prayed and felt God tell them to buy their own venue. In 2021, they found a church building for sale. It was the right location and right size. The church only wanted to sell to another church as they were going to merge into a larger church.



So they sold it to Hope Seattle for a very low price.

They had been fund-raising for quite a number of years, they had a decent sum and the additional giving of the people helped them have a good sum. But they still needed bank loan. Some months later one of their members decided to sell his restaurant and gave a chunk of the proceeds to pay off the church debt. They were completely debt free in less than a year. Today, the value of the church facility has nearly tripled what they paid.

Do you want God-solutions to your situations? Then you need to respond with faith when God releases His rhema word! Moses acted upon the rhema word, so must you!

#### **b. Rise up to the fearsome solution (v22-29)**

“22 and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh’s horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea. 28 The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen—the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived.”

To escape the Egyptian army, the Israelites had to walk into the depths of the Red Sea with only a divine wind holding back the sea on both sides. The only thing separating them from death in the sea was an invisible hand of God holding back the sea! God parted the Red Sea at night and closed it back at dawn. They only had several hours to cross the Red Sea. They had to walk about 13 kilometres across the bed of the sea on a land bridge. It gently sloped down to 300m deep and the land bridge was about 900m wide. Imagine walking for a couple of hours through this sea!

At times, impossible situations require impossible God-solutions. Taking hold of the impossible solution requires courage. Courage enough to walk in it. This may challenge us to the limit of our faith. Sometimes the solution may be almost as fearsome as the crisis.

One key reason why many Christians fail to break past the impossible situation is not because of the lack of a God-provided solution. The problem is the lack of courage, the lack of faith in God to walk in the solution. Take heart in the knowledge of God’s promise that He would not allow us to be tested beyond what we can bear. The problem is not about exceeding what we can bear but our premature giving up!



So rise up to the challenging solution! Rise up in faith and walk through the impossible situation by taking hold of the God-solution. It may be doing things differently. It may mean having more convictions and commitment. It meant pushing through more intensely. It may be about growing of the leaders faith and maturity.

Vision 2030: Transforming Lives Everywhere

God can transform lives everywhere. We want to see lives impacted, matured towards Christlikeness. That is what a glorious church is about! That is the quality we truly want to believe for. God can raise the thousands of leaders. God can open doors for breakthroughs to see churches in 3000 locations. God can work in ways we have not done before or seen before. If we are open to God's leading.

We must maintain faith as we walk in the impossible solution! Don't think, "Surely I can't be doing this! It is impossible. Nobody has done it before!"

In Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back, Luke Skywalker was stunned by Yoda the tiny Jedi Master's incredible feat of lifting his space craft that had sunk into the marsh by using the Force. And bringing gently back to land. Luke exclaimed in amazement, "I can't believe it!" And Yoda reply was simply, "That is why you fail."

Believe God, trust Him! Have courage to walk in the fearsome solution!

## CONCLUSION

As the Israelites trusted God, God fully delivered them in a supernatural fashion that sealed the devastation of the Egyptians as recorded in v30-31. When we trust God in an impossible situation, it will lead to a supernatural victory and lead us to a deeper place of trust in God. God's name will also be glorified.



## Discussion Questions

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These questions could be done personally or as part of a group discussion.

1. A key point was made that we ought to “Stand firm in the face of overwhelming odds”. That we ought not let fear, panic nor doubts drive out our faith. How does this speak into some situations you may have faced or are facing?
2. Another key point emphasised the importance of persevering rather than to lose heart, despite the challenges along the way. We outlined a number of key steps in doing so. What are some keys you have learnt in this segment?
3. It was suggested that we should never back out but walk through with the journey God has placed before us. That we should look to God for His solutions, even the impossible looking ones. What impacted you in this point?

## Actionable Steps

Following questions are to prompt us on suitable actions. Importantly, come up with steps you will take to make progress. Give them datelines and priority.

1. Perhaps you have struggled to stand firm against overwhelming odds in the past. What are some practical steps you could take to improve your ability to stand firm under such circumstances?
2. Have you been inspired to walk through God’s purposes without backing out? What are some aspects that you will need to grow in to reach such a point? What steps can you take to grow in these?







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