

September 9, 2012
Satan's Favorite Lies

God Can't Be Trusted

Exodus 14:10-15

Opening Words:

The numbers are interesting. According to the Gallup research group, 98% of Americans believe in the existence of God. However, only 70% of Americans believe in the existence of Satan. I thought that second figure would be higher. After all, we live in an ugly world. Daily, the news is filled with stories of violence, immorality and disease. Each one reminds us that we are living in Satan's playground. Each day we are forced to play the part of Job, who refused to denounce his faith. Have you ever questioned God's ways? Has your faith ever faltered during a time of personal crisis? In this sermon series, *Satan's Favorite Lies*, we are going to look at one of the adversary's more effective weapons. However, I am not going to talk about violence, immorality or disease. Instead, I am going to talk about something more basic, more personal. I am going to talk about your attitudes. How many of Satan's favorite lies have crept their way into your believe system? They maybe logical but they are not Biblical. In the next seven messages we are going to look at Satan's favorite lies. Today, we will examine the lie, *God Can't Be Trusted*. May God give you ears to hear this morning's Gospel lesson, Exodus 14:10-15.

Exodus 14:10-15

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!" 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." 15 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on."

If you remember your American history then you will remember our 23rd President was Benjamin Harrison. He was a republican from the state of Indiana and only held the office for four years, 1889-1893. However, it was during his term that the White House was wired for electricity. Harrison must have wished they would have waited for his successor, Grover Cleveland. Historian tells us Harrison was intimidated by electricity. He and his wife, Caroline, refused to touch a single light switch. They were so paralyzed by fear that the Harrisons slept with the lights on, if no servants were present to turn them off. Have you ever been paralyzed by fear? If that makes you think say, **"Amen!"** Like last week, the scripture lesson for today comes from the Old Testament. And like last week, the main character in the scripture is Moses, the one who looked like a

young Charlton Heston. He was the one God selected to liberate the Jews from Egyptian rule. You remember the story. After a series of plagues the Pharaoh released his slave labor and the people are freed. It must have been an exciting day for God's Chosen People. They were urban people, who were about to begin a rural life. Everyone was enjoying their freedom until this morning's text. Suddenly, the mood changed. The people had made it as far as the Red Sea. Most eyes were on that body of water in front of them. However, someone looked behind them and saw the Egyptian army coming. They knew what had happened. Pharaoh had changed his mind. What started off as a great day quickly turned into a very bad day, their last day. Logically speaking, there was no hope. There was no where to turn. The waters of the Red Sea were in front of them and the Egyptian army was behind them. However, this is the truth. This is not really a story about a group of Jews who lived thousands of years ago. It is really a story about our time.

Have you ever found yourself in a difficult situation? It may have been the time you children's marriage was staggering? You tried to ignore the signs for years. You prayed they would have what you have, a happy marriage. The problem is your grandchildren tell you about all the fighting. You have a front row seat to a really bad drama. It may have been the time you flunk out of school. The program was harder then you anticipated and you just didn't have time to study. Flunking out of school is embarrassing enough but now then student loans have come due. It may have been the time you tried to sell your house. The appraisal revealed what you have known for a long time. You owe more then your house is worth. It may have been the time you were pulled over that the DUI check point. Do I have to go on? Do I really have to go on? This little list is not complete. The list of difficult situations is boundless. Each one of us has stood on the shore of the Red Sea with the Egyptian army in hot pursuit. You can't go forward because it seems impossible. You can't go backwards because it is over there is no retreat.

Today, I want to talk about the three ways the Jews handle their difficult situation. They handle the situation poorly so they will act as our negative examples. The three ways they handled the situation prevented them from moving forward. The goal is to move forward. The goal is not to be paralyzed with fear. Do you know of anyone who can't move forward because they keep **looking back**? Do you know of anyone who can't move forward because they are consumed with **self pity**? Do you know of anyone who can't move forward because they can't stop **blaming others**? If you want to move forward when life is difficult then you only have one option. You must trust God! So if you are ready to begin say, "**Amen!**"

Go Back

Do you know of anyone who can't go forward because they keep looking back? That is what the Hebrews did. Look at the text with me. The Egyptians are coming and things are looking bad. What do they do? They remember a time when life was better. In two verses, 11 and 12, Egypt is referred to five times. Slavery looked good next to death. They looked back to Egypt and remembered the good old days. When was the last time you recalled the good old days? How often do you recall the good old days? Is it

possible your good old days are preventing you from fully living today? If that makes you think say, **"Amen!"**

This week the most sinister character in the history of Cleveland sports died, Art Modell. I know this is wrong but I have to say it. It was hard to hear nice things about him. He was the one who moved the Browns out of Cleveland after the 1995 season. I will never forget hearing the announcement on the radio. It seemed impossible. The Browns were leaving! My heart was broken and I could not understand why. How do you own the Cleveland Browns and lose money? How do you fill an 80,000 seat stadium each week and lose money? How do you walk away from a fan base that supported the team for decades? I bought the shirts, bought the tickets and bleed orange. I sat in the Dog Pound before it had a name. I believed someday they would turn it around. I was a devoted fan but on the day Art Modell moved the Browns I stopped caring. (I am sure Art Modell will not need a sweater where he is spending eternity!) His death reopened those old wounds.

The other day I started lecturing my family about the ills of the old fool, Art Modell. My youngest daughter, Anna who is 22, looked at me and said, "How was Art Modell?" My son-in-law said, "The Browns left Cleveland?" (I can excuse him. He was raised in Alaska.) Suddenly I found myself being the person I never wanted to be. I was living in the past. Do you know what God was telling me? Stop looking back and move forward. When you live in the past you miss today! Is anyone here living in the past? How much time do you spend looking back? If that makes you think say, **"Amen!"** Do you know of anyone who lives in the past?

Self Pity

Do you know of anyone who can't move forward because they are consumed with self pity? That is what the Hebrews did. Look at the text with me. Verses 11 and 12 are coated with self pity. They say, *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? 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!"* Is anyone here frustrated because your life isn't on schedule? How many pity parties have you thrown for yourself lately? If that makes you think say, **"Amen!"** Did you know there are guidelines for holding a proper pity party? According to the internet, so you know it is true, there are four things you need for a proper pity party. I am not recommending these things but this is what is required for a top rate pity party.

1. Alcohol
2. Lounging Gear
3. Food
4. Music, movies or journaling

There is only one problem with a pity party. They don't change anything. Wearing comfortable clothes does change the facts. Eating until you explode won't change the facts. Drinking till you pass out won't change the facts. Being absorbed in your favorite entertainment won't change the facts. As a matter of fact it may make things worse. Self pity is only a distraction. Don't invite God to your pity party because he won't attend. God expects you to deal with your problems; God expects you to move forward.

And all of God's people said, **"Amen!"** Do you know of anyone who lives in the past? Do you know of anyone who likes a good pity party?

Blame Others

Do you know of anyone who can't move forward because they are so busy blaming others? You know the slogan: it is hard to soar like an eagle if you are surrounded by turkeys. That is what the Hebrews did. Look at the text with me. Listen to verses 11 and 12 again, *"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? 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!"* What are the Hebrews doing in those two verses? They are blaming Moses for their situation. If Moses hadn't taken them out of Egypt then they would not be in this difficult situation. Do you know of anyone is having a difficult time taking responsibility for their own lives? Do you know of anyone who blames others for their difficult situation? Do you know of anyone who blames others for their limitations? Is it possible you have blamed others in your time hardship? If that makes you think say, **"Amen!"**

You know it is true. One of the most known stories in the Bible is the story of Adam and Eve. They were living in the Garden of Eden. They had everything they needed to be happy and they only had one rule. You know the rule. Eve broke the rule first and then encouraged Adam to take a bite of the apple. When God discovers their innocence is lost he confronts them. Do you remember what Adam did? Adam blamed Eve. Do you know of anyone who blames others for their actions? Do you know of anyone for their difficult situation? Who have you blamed lately? If that makes you think say, **"Amen!"** Do you know of anyone who lives in the past? Do you know of anyone who likes a good pity party? Do you know of anyone who blames others? Do you know of anyone who trusts God and moves forward?

This is lie number one. Satan says you can't trust God. Why? Because, Satan does not want you to move forward in life. He likes you just the way you are. He wants you to keep looking back. He wants you to be consumed with self pity. He thinks you are perfect in your present state. God wants you to move on the perfection. Look at the text with me one more time. Moses stands in stark contrast from the rest of the crowd. Moses doesn't look back, get filled with self pity or blame others. What does Moses do? Moses trusts God and moves forward. Verse 13 says, *"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.'" Verse 15 says, "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on.'" The choice is really yours. You can be paralyzed by fear or you can move forward trusting God.*

Is anyone here paralyzed by fear? Are you afraid because your medical test looked a little funny? Are you afraid because the young in your life are hanging out with the wrong people? Are you afraid because your job is being phased out? Are you afraid to learn something new? Are you afraid because you don't know what to study in college or what you are going to do in retirement? Are you afraid your spouse is cheating on you or the tax man is going to audit you? Are you afraid because you don't know what

to do with the rest of your life? Is anyone one here paralyzed by fear? Is anyone here standing on the shore of the Red Sea waiting for the Egyptian army to arrive? Let me tell you what Moses told his generation. *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.* "You can trust God! Move forward! And all of God's people said, **"Amen!"** Let me end with an old preaching story. You may have heard it in the past. Janez Rus went into hiding in his sister's farmhouse in June of 1945. He hid because he was afraid. During the Second World War he had been part of the Nazi party. He was afraid his party's activities would lead to his arrest. He stayed in hiding for years and didn't come out until he was discovered in 1977. He hid for thirty two years. He lost thirty two years of his life! He missed everything because he was paralyzed by fear. Let me ask you one more question. How much of your life are you wasting because you are paralyzed by fear? Bruce Wilkinson once said, *"Dependence upon God makes heroes of ordinary people like you and me!"* And all of God's people said, **"Amen!"**