

## Hero of the Faith: Moses

### Bible Study Session 3

**Icebreaker:** Share one high point or one low point from the past week. Then share one way you saw God at work in your life (or the lives of those around you) this past week.

**Opening Prayer:** *A Collect from the BCP*

O God, you know that we are set in the midst of many grave dangers, and because of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright: Grant that your strength and protection may support us in all dangers and carry us through every temptation; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**Observe:** Working as a team and without looking at Exodus 14, retell the story of God's deliverance of the Israelites by the Red Sea from memory. Assign a scribe to write down all the details you can collectively remember and put them in chronological order to the best of your ability. If you have a larger group, you may want to split into two teams. Now, compare what you have written from memory with the text of Exodus 14. What details did you remember correctly? What details did you get wrong? What did you leave out? What did you include that wasn't in the text? Was your story in the right order?

#### Exodus 14

Then the Lord said to Moses, <sup>2</sup>“Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea. <sup>3</sup>For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, ‘They are wandering in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.’ <sup>4</sup>And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord.” And they did so. <sup>5</sup>When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, “What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?” <sup>6</sup>So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him, <sup>7</sup>and took six hundred chosen chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. <sup>8</sup>And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the people of Israel while the people of Israel were going out defiantly. <sup>9</sup>The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

<sup>10</sup>When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord. <sup>11</sup>They said to Moses, “Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? <sup>12</sup>Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians?’ For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.” <sup>13</sup>And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. <sup>14</sup>The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.”

<sup>15</sup>The Lord said to Moses, “Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. <sup>16</sup>Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. <sup>17</sup>And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. <sup>18</sup>And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”

<sup>19</sup>Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, <sup>20</sup>coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night.

<sup>21</sup>Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. <sup>22</sup>And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. <sup>23</sup>The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. <sup>24</sup>And in the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, <sup>25</sup>clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel, for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians."

<sup>26</sup>Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen." <sup>27</sup>So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the Lord threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. <sup>28</sup>The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained. <sup>29</sup>But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

<sup>30</sup>Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. <sup>31</sup>Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

### **Interpret:**

- What was the most surprising detail you forgot from the story? How does this detail change the story of God's deliverance by the Red Sea?
- Were there any ways that Moses's behavior or speech was different than you remembered? How does the text change your perception of Moses's role in God's deliverance?
- As you look at the story in Exodus 14 with fresh eyes, what is God's purpose in delivering the Israelites by the Red Sea?
- What makes Moses a hero of faith in this passage?

### **Apply:**

When the Israelites despair, Moses says to them: "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. <sup>14</sup>The Lord will fight for you." There are many times that Moses complains to God or even argues with God. Yet this passage shows that he had a steady and confident faith that God would act on his behalf. Is there an area of your life where you need to hear Moses's words: "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation he will work for you today"? Is there someone you are called to encourage this week with these words who is in despair?

### **Closing Prayer:** *A Collect from the Easter Vigil*

O God, whose wonderful deeds of old shine forth even to our own day, by the power of your mighty arm you once delivered your chosen people from slavery under Pharaoh, to be a sign for us of the salvation offered to all nations by the water of Baptism: Grant that all the peoples of the earth may be numbered among the offspring of Abraham, and rejoice in the inheritance of Israel; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.