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Pondering Who Splits the Sea

TRANSCRIPT (AUTO-GENERATED)

Well, hello, and welcome to Ponder by NorthernLife. We're having a conversation about the Word of the Lord as it was preached to us on Sundays and as we encounter it in our everyday lives.

My name is Jack, I'm joined by Ben, Tristan and Jono today, and we are discussing Jono's sermon on the God Who Saves, part of this new God Who Saves series, and especially looking at the 11th hour God.

Jono, did you want to maybe tell us some things you were thinking about or learning as you were preparing for this sermon and then give us the outline for it?

Yeah, sure. The God Who Saves is a topic, a series that is really built around what many call the controlling narrative of the Bible, the Exodus story.

So, the God Who Saves is really an idea to look at various aspects of the big story of God's acting with people, the story of the Bible, in relation to what he did for the people of Israel with Exodus.

He does that again and again and again. And so that's why they call it the controlling narrative. So my hope was to unpack that grand story.

So we just looked at what happened.

The people of Israel were graciously rescued from Egypt, brought to the edge of the Red Sea, and they started complaining and saying, why didn't you let us have our graves back in Egypt?

What are you doing, Moses, God? And then, of course, there's that amazing moment where God says, put your staff on the sea and they'll open it up.

And so that idea of God opening the Red Sea easily applies to most of us in our lives.

We can relate to being stuck with our toes in the sand at the edge of a moment in our lives where we can't find a way through.

And so that relates to our actual salvation, where we realize I'm stuck in my sin, who can rescue me from this condemned body, Romans 7 and 8, and it's Jesus.

But so many times in our lives, we get to the point where we're stuck, we're asking God for help.

And I called it the 11th hour God or the 11th hour faith, because many of us would testify that God takes His time in answering our prayer. And then there was another little twist in there as well.

I tried to explore what happens when God's plans are not to answer our prayer, but He's got something different for us. And so 11th hour faith, like with John the Baptist, turns into 13th hour revelation.

It's the cross of Jesus. It's like Jesus doesn't have the Red Sea opened up before the cross. But through the cross, foolishness of the world is the resurrection.

And we get introduced to the God who raises the dead. And so we can hope for that and believe for that. And that's the sort of faith that we're called to have.

So, sorry, a bit of a ramble, but that's the idea. The God who saves, and how the controlling narrative of Exodus plays out in all of our lives.

Any reflections, Ben, Tristan?

Yeah, very relatable story, that feeling of being between a rock and a hard place, or the sea and the army in Exodus, in Israel's case.

And I was going to mention that Jono the Baptist thing was such a crucial moment in the sermon of realizing what happens when the sea doesn't part.

And so I was encouraged that even in that case, what God is looking for is relationship with us. When he parts the sea, he does it to bring us into relationship.

And when he doesn't, he does it to bring us to relationship to him as well.

Yeah, that was similar to my reflections on the sermon. It also brought up a question of whether we should live our lives having 11th-hour faith.

Like, should we live our lives to the 11th hour, so flippantly or loosely relying on 11th-hour faith? And my answer was, we shouldn't.

Do you want to expand on that a little bit more?

So my definition of 11th-hour faith is you live your lives to the last resort.

So you live in your life in a way where you can do whatever you want, you allow your sinful desire to take over, and then when you're on your deathbed, you say, okay, I'm ready to make that commitment now.

I think that's a trap door where you rely on, I'm gonna do it later. Like, I'll come to Jesus later. Let me do what I wanna do now.

Like, that was the question that was, yeah, many thoughts.

Yeah, well, that's not at all the angle I was taking, but it's very true. It's very true. Wait, and I'll do it at the last minute.

That's a genuine twist and perversion of what the idea is. 11th hour faith is trusting that God will come through and he takes his time. It's not licensed for us to take our time.

Yeah, that's a very good point.

So thinking about this 11th hour faith, and I think by its very nature, there is an element of waiting involved, where we're waiting for God to act, hoping, trusting, having faith that he will act in the 11th

hour. And that waiting process can feel sometimes quite powerless. And I think that's part of its formative strength, is that you learn to be without power.

But I wonder, I guess, for people wondering who might be in that space, what do I do in the meantime? I'm sitting around waiting for God to act. What do I do in the waiting?

The whole purpose of life, I think, is relationship.

I made the point that faith is relationship. And I think this regular process that God takes us through, that we are invited by Him to wait for His answer, that is to build our relationship.

And so what do you do while you're waiting? You press into relationship. Faith, the Bible says, faith comes by hearing.

Faith comes by hearing. There are questions. There was a question.

I'm jumping ahead. But how do you know? How do you know whether God is going to come through in the eleventh hour, or it's John the Baptist, and it's after that, it's the thirteenth hour.

My answer is, I don't think that has to be vague and weird. It's just faith comes by hearing.

The more you get used to interacting with the God who walks with us, the more confident you will have, the more faith you will have that He has spoken.

So I think it's up to Him to talk, but it's up to us to ask and listen. So I feel like that you can have a discernment. Faith comes by hearing.

You can grow in your trust about how well you can hear from God. And I think, you know, in the Old Testament, like it says a few times, the word of the Lord was rare.

The word of the Lord is not meant to be rare in the New Testament and post the New Testament.

The word of the Lord is meant to be regular, that we're hearing from the Spirit and He's walking with us, He testifies to us, He prompts us, He guides us.

So, yeah, I think that's actually one of the challenges in the journey of faith, asking and hearing and like James says, don't doubt when you feel like you heard, walk with it. You know, does that make sense?

And the opposite of that is what the Israelites do, which is grumble.

Exactly.

Because the faith that you're talking about is what Moses demonstrates and what Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego demonstrate that even if God doesn't save us, God still prays him.

But the faithlessness, an example of what it is to wait badly, back to your question, Jack, is what the Israelites do.

They grumble, like, oh, you know, was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us out here to die? And Moses brings them back to faith. Don't be afraid.

Stand firm and see what God will do.

And it's interesting, isn't it, that when Yahweh says, let my people go, He actually says, so, I want to take them to the wilderness so they can worship me.

And so the people are implicitly saying, we don't want a relationship with you. We don't want to worship you. We don't want to be on this program that you've got us for.

We'd rather go back to our relationship with the Egyptians. We'd rather go back to slavery. And I guess that's the New Testament idea, that the dog returns to its vomit.

But I think still, faith doesn't exist that strongly with that relationship. But Moses has this growing relationship. He's had some really powerful encounters with God.

And he's talking to God through the process, isn't he? And he's like, what's going on here, Lord? And he's like, well, this is what to do next, my son.

And, you know, it's faith in the context of relationship. That's what we need.

And that's the key part of that relationship, is that there is that converse going back and forth. It's a two-way sort of conversation.

And we did, it's funny, we did Patience as Free to the Spirit with the kids on Sunday. And we looked at Hannah Story and Samuel, where she asked God for a son and she's waiting.

And I used that verse, Psalm 27, 14, wait for the Lord, be strong, take heart, and wait for the Lord. And one of the kids actually said, but wait on, Hannah was not just crying, she was praying.

Like, is that what we do while we wait? I was like, yes, that's exactly what you do, you pray. That's the key part of waiting for the Lord.

You're not just waiting, taking a backseat, waiting for something to happen. You're in that relationship of pleading, maybe, or asking, requesting, and just praying.

It's interesting, too, that eventually God tells Moses to actually put his stick out and hit the water and act. And in Moses' acting, God parts the sea.

It's like the prayer is not a passive thing, where we're sitting back and just praying for God to open the waters.

In praying, God says, okay, I've heard your prayer, now take a step out in faith, like that Indiana Jones thing. And as you take the step, I will part the waters before you.

It's like, yeah, not passive prayer, but waiting on God to tell us the next step and taking that step. It's cool, too, how the New Testament picks up the Exodus pattern.

You mentioned the controlling narrative of the entire Bible is the Exodus. And you see in Jesus' life, he, the technical term is recapitulates. He relives the story of Israel.

And you see it, especially in the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew has seven times, he says, this happened in order to fill, fulfill what was written through the prophets.

And Jesus goes to Egypt and then comes out of Egypt, just the way Israel did. Jesus gets baptized in the waters. That's the parting of the Red Sea.

As he comes out of the water, the Spirit descends on him like a dove, which is the glory of God descending on the tabernacle.

And then Jesus goes up the mountain, Matthew 5, and delivers the Sermon on the Mount, which is the new law, which is Moses giving the law, and then Jesus' ministry continues.

So in Jesus' life, he is mirroring and fulfilling the story of Israel, which is what NT. Wright talks about. Jesus is the faithful Israelite, the Messiah, the true kind of human who's here to save us.

Because it's really, it's the controlling narrative. The Exodus story is that pattern which repeats itself so many times.

Now, you touched on it a little bit about this idea of the 11th hour faith and that God actually kind of wants to draw us out into this waiting for the way that it can form us.

I wonder what would be the fruits of an 11th hour faith?

If you think about people you know who've had to wait or yourself who've had to wait for God to come in at the last minute, how has that transformed them or transformed you or borne fruit in their spiritual

journey?

At night church, we, at the end of the sermon, kind of had a bit of open time to share stories of 11th hour faith.

And a few people shared, and it seemed like one of the themes in their stories is that when you get to the end of yourself and what you can make happen, it leads you to depend on God more.

And so it enriched their faith with patience and with trust that God is the one who acts on our behalf, which is really encouraging.

Even there was a couple of moments where we spontaneously clapped to praise God for his provision for a certain person in the story of what God had done for them.

And so it produces joy at seeing God act and save us, produces faith, patience for next time as well.

It often produces peace, if not anxiety, before peace. You know, there's a lot of anxious waiting. But then we remember that Jesus says, bring all that to me.

Bring your burdens to me. Philippians 4, pray for everything that you need. And the peace that transcends all understanding will come upon you.

Guard your hearts and minds. So I think that's what I was talking to someone on Sunday that's at the edge of the Red Sea in their situation, just lost their job and unknown future.

But they were so at peace in that 11th hour place. So that's often what you find, because they have been stripped of a lot of their own ability to take control.

And if they press into the Lord, there's something really special you notice about them. And I would probably summarize that as peace.

Yeah, I would say it taps into a lot of the fruits of the Spirit. But my thought, just pondering over the question, is the posture that it produces.

So when you're in that 11th hour of your faith, it's almost like it's what we spoke about last week. God wants you weak and waiting for Him. It's that posture of total reliance.

It's almost like you hunched over and you waiting, and that produces a multiple, multitude of different responses.

Like I don't know how to word it, but it's just that posture of weakness, but also just surrendering everything.

Yeah, which is the handover outcomes to God line, if you can live in that.

I find it startling when I'm with someone and there's some, really, one example is someone a few years ago who was trying to sell their house, and it's a big deal, it's a heavy financial part of your life.

And they were just like, I just totally trust God's in charge. And I'm like, you should be more worried. Where's your anxiety?

And they're like, no. And they're doing the hard yards behind the curtain. They're spending time with the Lord, receiving from him.

So it's not, they're not making it up. They're spending time with God, and the Psalms are coming true. He is giving them a piece.

And then they sold and got an amazing price. And then the whole thing was finding a new place. And I'm like, aren't you stressed?

This is stressful. They're like, no, God's in charge. And it went so far to the 11th hour, and they were just like so at peace.

And then they found a great place, and it all sort of worked out. Now, it doesn't always work out like a fairy tale, but sometimes it does. And this person was walking with the Lord.

Faith comes by hearing, and they were walking.

I want to talk about those instances where it doesn't turn out, when the Red Sea doesn't seem to part.

Which, because I think that was an important point for you to make in the sermon. And, yeah, I wonder in a similar sense of what do we do while we're waiting? What do we do?

We're sitting there, it's the 13th hour, the Red Sea hasn't parted. Okay, what do we do now?

Most typically, we move into a phase of painful reflection of grief. Typically, you go into a little bit of shock, and your body has been designed to keep functioning.

So you shut down how much hurt you are experiencing from disappointment.

And so then after that, you go through these stages of grief, and you start to process, and sometimes you get a bit angry, and you blame God and maybe other people. Yeah, and your process, it's...

Typically, you could summarize this stuff by the death of a dream. Most of us are praying for something, because we hope that there will be something to happen in the future.

And when you think about some of the real life options, it could be a job, it could be a spouse that falls apart, that doesn't happen.

It could be a lot of people trying to have kids, and it's just like terrible when it's like, that's not going to happen.

There are so many dreams that people have, and yeah, the human condition is like working out, what do I do with that? And we often talk about this, the place of community in that process.

That's essential, isn't it? Tristan's about to give some wisdom on that, because it's your jam. But that's what you have to do.

Ministry in the 13th hour, it's real.

Yeah, there's lots of stories I could tell when it comes to people ministering to me when I'm in that situation, or just talking to someone else.

But the first part before that grief is acknowledging it, I would say, when you're in that, I find myself sometimes in an apathy cycle that's a little bit more than a cycle.

Like once you acknowledge that point, and I would say the first thing I always try and do is wrap myself around people that will be comforting towards me.

And also just not trying to solve my problems, just being there is huge. Just be present and allow yourself on the other end to be ready to receive that.

Because I feel like sometimes when we're in that phase of the sea is not parting, I'm panicking, I'm gonna isolate myself, maybe that's the way to go.

And you isolate yourself from God, you isolate yourself from the community. And that's the opposite of what you actually should be doing.

You should be drawing closer to Him, draw closer to people that He's surrounded you with.

It's hard to respond to that question without the specifics of the context of the story. I would just commend a person who empathizes with that question, Jack, to read Hebrews 11.

Especially, I'm struck now by verse 17. It says, By faith, Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice.

He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned. And this is the interesting bit.

Abraham reasons that God could even raise the dead. And so in a manner of speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death. That's another 11th hour story.

Abraham is about to sacrifice Isaac, and God provides the ram at the last minute.

But Abraham's logic is, I think the logic that's helpful for us to have, even if God doesn't save, and my son does die right now, even if the Red Sea doesn't part, we serve a God who raises the dead, who

brings hope on the other side. And so, I mean, I talk about it all the time. One of my favorite metaphors for resurrection is that Jesus goes into the cave of death and kicks out the back wall.

And so, in any situation that we find ourselves in, the gospel is that death has been defeated, and there's a back door at the end of that cave of death, and resurrection is coming.

And so, even in the midst of lament and all these things that we're talking about, you need community. But also know that God raises the dead.

And one day, I think, I trust that God will bring some good out of that situation. He'll bring a 13th hour resurrection, even when the 11th hour faith didn't see the miracle that it was looking for.

So read, you know, don't worry about anything I just said. Read Hebrews 11. I think that will be encouraging to you.

And you can learn from that.

When you're in that and you go through that process, it gets you ready for being on the other side of being a Titus, of saying, oh, I went through this, I read this passage, or you don't have to give them a

blueprint, but just you know, and you're equipped to be comforting for the next person.

I found a good quote this week.

I won't say who it's from. The initials are DW.

Who could it be?

The quote said, you are a spiritual being having a human experience. You are a spiritual being having a human experience. What that says to me is, we are destined for another place.

This is very real with where the flesh is not evil. But we, we are temporary residents here, and we're heading for the new creation.

And so this relationship with God, who is above all the machinations, is the main deal. And that's what we have to have.

And so for, when God doesn't come through for the 11th hour, we just have to keep pushing ourselves to have a perspective that sees beyond. We're a spiritual being destined for heaven and the new creation.

Having a human experience on this side, and it's very temporary, it's very short. And the best thing we can do is just keep trusting God is good. And we won't understand everything that happens on this side.

All right.

Well, we have some questions to answer. In fact, a new question came in as we have been recording. I said a few weeks ago to send your questions in, and we can answer them the week after.

And since I said that, no one has sent any questions in. So I don't know if that was something I said, but please do send your questions in. We do want to answer them.

And yeah, we'll either answer them on the day or the week after. So please send your questions in.

But the first of our questions, and Jono, you kind of touched on this a little bit at the start, from Kathleen, a friend of the show, is how can I discern when to believe that God can do something?

Or to put my faith in Him, that He will do something?

And I wonder, I'm gonna sort of interpret this a little bit, if there's a sort of essence of wanting to guard my heart in that, do I wanna, when do I put myself out there and believing, yeah, God, I think

you're gonna do this, and then He doesn't do it. How do I save myself from disappointment? I wonder if that's part of the question. Thoughts?

My answer is what I said before, that faith comes by hearing.

We're gonna foster a relationship with God, that we get better and better at hearing from Him. But I'd also just encourage, did the person say who they were?

That was Kathleen.

Yeah. Kathleen, hello, Kathleen. I would just keep on remembering the multiple times that Jesus said to people, what would you like me to do for you?

I just think He's interested in what's in our heart, and we can be confident that we can bring that to Him. And as we often talk about, the kingdom of God is based on requests and denials.

And so there's no way in the world that we could ever think God does not want us to bring our requests to Him.

So we bring our requests and we knock on the door, and we're even invited to have shameless audacity in knocking so many times.

So, to me, the burden is on us to tell God what we want, and He'll help us understand what we need.

Yeah, awesome. And our second question has come in. I'll read it out.

A beautiful message on Sunday about our God who saves. I've experienced the saving grace of God in the 11th hour. I wonder sometimes if we create that 11th hour grace with prayer as our last resort.

I feel like I sometimes try to fix things in my own strength instead of going to God first. I also believe that God's timing is perfect. So, does He let me figure out that I need Him in the waiting?

So, I think that's questions sort of saying is that that part of the reason why He waits the 11th hour is He wants you to come to Him and we don't always do that at the start.

The funny thing is, Jolene wrote that question. That is literally the point that her son Tristan made earlier in our recording.

I think that's a very, very wise way to describe it. I think that that's what he is doing. He's always teaching us stuff, isn't he?

We're learners and the typical thing for us is that we try to do it in our own strength, and we come to him later in the process. It's not always the case.

I think he makes us wait sometimes, but I think that is the truth. He's teaching us, which in a way that the general truth we've been discussing is exactly that.

That he takes time in answering our prayers, in even allowing us to get a bit scared to teach us stuff, typically about what he's like and who he is.

The New Testament definitely, like I said in the sermon, shows a God in human flesh, Jesus, who has all power over the dark, scary stuff over the sea.

And he has power over all of the red seas that we are standing in front of.

All right.

Well, it might be time for our Pallet Cleanser question sponsored by Patrick Ross. And today's question will be, what is the worst injury you have ever had?

I'll go quick, because I've only had one physical injury. I was in year nine, so just started high school or second year of high school. And I was going down this hill on this electric scooter.

And like in South Africa, we call it a dussie. It's a big, like wombat looking type of marsupial thing that just ran across the road. And I swerved on this, and I almost like high sided myself on this scooter.

And I went tablick down on the gravel, and I like sprained my right wrist. And it was still during school, so I was like trying to type with my left hand or write with my left hand.

That's heavy.

But yeah, let's see.

I'm not trying to diminish the pain that you went through. You're saying the worst physical injury you ever experienced was a sprained wrist.

Yeah.

Okay, that's good. Good for you. Yeah.

Well done.

Like, fainting doesn't count. Like, I fainted on the Cricket Field ones, but that's not an injury.

Can I also just jump in here and say I'm fairly similar in that I have had almost no major industries?

I probably, yeah, the worst thing I've had is probably, yeah, like falling over on the pavement and like spraining my ankle.

But mine is like shocking because I was wild. I was a rabbit as a kid. I would do anything.

So thankfully, I was.

I feel you're a lot calmer now.

Yeah, for sure.

I've never broken a bone of my own, but I've broken my brother's bone. I was doing like some assault, and my foot landed on Lockie's collarbone and just snapped it in two, which that's not my physical injury.

The greatest physical injury that I have ever done unto myself or others, is I broke a man's collarbone.

The real question is why was his collarbone in your landing zone?

It's a long story. I'll tell you off air.

I have not broken a bone apart from my nose, which I never knew I had done, but I just have a crooked nose, so I did get punched in the face, so I must have broken my nose without knowing it.

But apart from that, I was in a car accident and the car hit my, as a passenger, hit my window, smashed the glass all over me, cut my face up pretty bad.

But one of the things that first came to mind was being about, I don't know, I reckon seven or eight, probably, pretty young.

And I've said this in a sermon before, but genuinely, I was standing on the garage roof as a really young kid, and I just went, I so remember it. It's just like, I just went, how cool would it be to fly?

Like, I was on the edge of the gutter, and it's a full three meters high plus, and I just jumped, and my knees went through my face, like they just went through.

I don't remember losing teeth, but I just, I'm pushing my fingers into my eyes as I speak now, because of just an early concussion.

Wow.

But yeah, that's what comes to mind. Just awful.

Speaking of sermon illustrations, I seem to remember you talking about skateboarding down a hill once, Ben, and...

Yeah, that was a grazed knee.

That wasn't too bad, yeah.

You made it sound a lot worse in the sermon.

I was trying to make a point. Can I just say, this is not a palate cleanser question. The point of the palate cleanser question is to lift our spirits, not to reflect on it.

I think it's...

you're cleansing your palate from...

Theological.

Theological stuff.

Yeah, okay.

Okay. Well, we'll call it there. Thank you all for listening.

Please feel free to send in your questions. You can send them in through the link. You can email me.

You can text them to me if you have my number. But otherwise, we will see you on the next one. Bye bye.