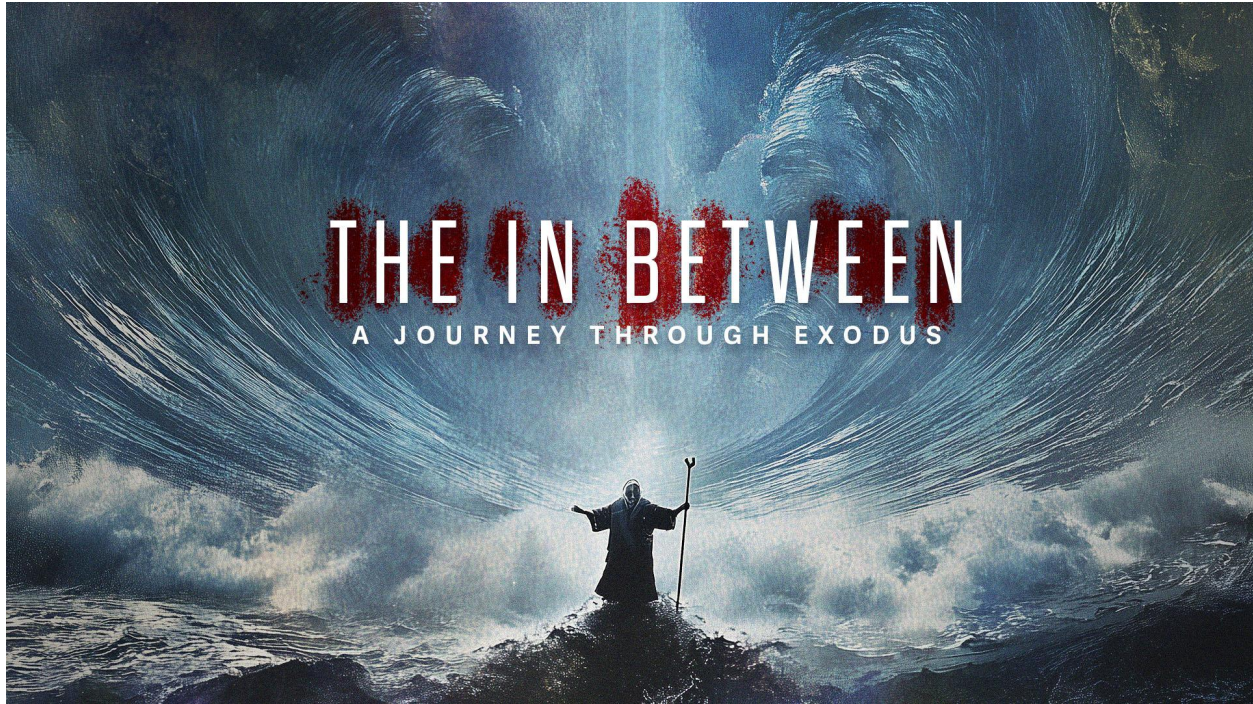




Engage Page: Facing a Crisis of Belief

When God is leading us into a new level of knowing and experiencing him, one of the tools he will often use is a crisis of belief. Whether that crisis is caused by an unexpected job loss, a blind-sided relationship breakup, a devastating medical diagnosis, a financial setback, the loss of a loved one, loss of a home or some other overwhelming situation for which we feel totally caught off guard, that crisis can disguise the fact that there is a miracle wrapped inside of it. This is part of the journey of a growing faith.

So is it any wonder that as God led the nation of Israel from slavery in Egypt to freedom that he would use crisis after crisis to grow their faith along the way? You will discover that this has a direct connection to every follower of Jesus since a crisis of belief and the development of our faith go hand-in-hand.

For reflection and discussion:

Was there a difficult circumstance or a pivotal event or a crisis that God used in your life to awaken your faith? If so, what was that? Review Exodus 13:17-21 and Exodus 14:1-28 (p.81-82 *Christian Basics Bible*) to provide the backdrop for what we'll discuss today as we learn how God can use a crisis, no matter the cause, to build our faith..Then read the statements below and look up any accompanying verses and discuss any experiences you had that resonate with the principles below:

1. **God is preparing you for what's ahead.** Also look up Exodus 23:28-30 (p.94). When you can't see God at work in your crisis, based on these verses of what can you be reassured that he is doing in you and of what can you be confident he is doing behind the scenes? What does knowing that God is at work behind the scenes do for your ability to wait on God and be at peace? Have you ever had an experience where looking back, you realize that God had prepared you for something difficult?

2. **God is teaching you the difference between believing in him and trusting in him.** The stress of a crisis will often cause a question to rise up – “Can God be trusted?” This has been the devil's tool from the beginning. Yet while circumstances change, the character of God does not. Look up and read aloud 1 John 1:5 (p.1433) and Hebrews 13:8 (p.1410). Discuss this quote from Pastor Mark – “Our problem is that we want faith to be all about believing in God, but God wants belief to be all about trusting in Him.” Why does trusting in the Lord give us a deeper, fuller knowledge of the Lord than merely believing He exists?

3. **God is elevating your life to a greater purpose** through your crisis – *if you trust Him with it.* Read 1 Peter 1:6-7 (p.1420) and Exodus 14:18. In the same way, how could God use your difficult circumstance for a greater purpose? Instead of asking, “What is God's will for my life?” ask the question, “How can I give my life to fulfill God's will?” How would that change the way you go through a crisis? And what do you think you will be able to look back and see if you approach it that way?

If anyone in the group is going through a crisis, please take time and pray for them and always encourage one another with the truths you have learned from God's Word.

Memory Verse:

So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. 1 Peter 1:7b