

# How to Get Through the Waters

#0460

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—October 17, 1964

I love to hear the words of Scripture sung, don't you? You know, that hymn that we opened our worship with this morning, much of it is taken from the words of Scripture. That stanza I called your attention to:

“When through the deep waters I call thee to go,  
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;  
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,  
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress”  
*Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, #509, third stanza.

I want to study with you this morning how to get through or crossing the waters. If any of you haven't met any waters yet, you'll come to them presently, because you can look on almost any map in any part of the world and sooner or later if you follow any road you come to a river or some arm of the sea, and there's water. And water usually presents a barrier, an obstacle. Am I right? The question is, how are we going to get across? How are we going to get through?

Of course, there *are* some things that are imaginary. Some troubles are imaginary. Some waters are imaginary. I remember over 40 years ago, we were traveling across the Mojave Desert in a Model T, and the roads then were not what they are now with these broad concrete ribbons, and we were following what had probably been not long before a wagon trail.

And presently, we came onto the bed of an old dry lake, and that was smooth driving, you know, that nice hard-baked surface. And soon, we noticed in the distance some water. Thought it might be the lake that had receded, you know. And we wondered where the road was going to take us across.

We kept driving, and presently we saw the trees along the water, whether it was a river or lake. And as we kept driving, we still were wondering, “Well, where is the bridge?” We didn't see any bridge. And by and by, we didn't see it anymore, and we looked back and there it was back of us. We'd gotten through that one all right.

What was that? A mirage. And you know, dear friends, some of our troubles are like that. That's right. They're just imaginary, and the best way to get through them is just drive right on. And by and by, we look back, and there is the trouble back of us that we were wondering how we were going to get through.

But it's not that kind of trouble that I want to study with you this morning. It's the real waters, the real waters. When God took His people out of Egypt, He gave them a lesson on this the first thing. You remember that they started going east from

the land of Goshen. And if you studied your Bible maps, you'll remember that if they had continued the way they were led in the beginning, they wouldn't have had to cross the Red Sea at all. Their route lay straight across.

But God, for reasons that He knew better than Israel, more or less reversed their course. That is, they were going east, and He turned them southwest and back around and then ahead again, where they would come directly up to the Red Sea. God does that sometimes. He deliberately takes us into trouble.

Now, I'm not talking about the troubles we make ourselves. I'm talking about the troubles that God deliberately leads us into.

Well, they came there to the Red Sea, and you'll remember that just about the time they got there, somebody else got there too. Who was that? Who? The Egyptians, yes. Pharaoh was after them.

Let's turn to the 14<sup>th</sup> of Exodus, the 13<sup>th</sup> verse, and notice. And as the children of Israel found themselves hemmed in there between the mountains and the sea, and looked back and saw the army of Pharaoh coming to take them as prisoners, carry them back as slaves, or kill them, they began to murmur and complain just like we're tempted to sometimes today when we get into difficulties.

But Moses cried to the Lord. And thank God, God showed him how to get through those waters.

"And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will show to you to day..." Exodus 14:13.

So, they were going into a wonderful miracle. Sixteenth verse:

"But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea" Exodus 14:16.

That's quite a way to get through the waters, isn't it, friends? Just have the waters divide. Now true, they had to march right down to the water's edge, put their feet in the water as it were, and then it just split, split, split. And they didn't even have to wade all the way across.

And when finally, the last Israelite had marched up the shore on the other side, and Pharaoh and his army presumptuously coming in behind were down there in the sea bed, God said, "Now Moses, lift up your rod again," and the waters rushed together and drowned all their enemies.

So, that which *seemed* to be a barrier became a highway and also the grave of their enemies. That which *seemed* to be their greatest problem became the solution of their problems.

Now, we're told in Hebrews 11, and the 29<sup>th</sup> verse what it was that made it possible for that to happen:

"By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land:  
which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned"  
Hebrews 11:29.

How'd they get through? By faith. And what is faith? Faith is believing God. Faith is *doing* what God says because we *believe* what He says. And in spite of all their murmuring and complaining, they had a measure of faith in God and in His servant Moses. They did, dear friends, what the Spirit of Prophecy told them to do. Is that right? That's what they did. They did what the Spirit of Prophecy told them to do.

And as the result, they got through the waters. Not one of them drowned. Not one of them even got a sore throat from exposure or anything like that. They didn't get wet. They went through on dry land.

But now, some other people said, "If Israel can do it, we can too."

Did they? No. What happened to them? They were drowned. You mean they got drowned doing the same thing that Israel did? Exactly, exactly. Why? They did not do it by faith. They did it presumptuously.

And my dear friends, when you see God doing things for other people, don't get excited and rush in and try to do the same thing. Just be sure, be sure that you're doing it by faith. Be sure it's something that God has told you to do and that you're doing because you have faith in it. And if it is, then you won't get drowned. You'll get through all right. Israel did—every one of them. I'm thankful for that. Aren't you?

Now, there are other ways to get across water. Water has been walked on. You've heard of that, haven't you? Yes. Water has been walked on. Let's go and read about that. That's a very interesting story that's quite different from the way Israel got through the Red Sea. There God divided the sea, but this time He didn't divide the sea. He just walked on it.

The 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew, the 24<sup>th</sup> verse beginning, this is the disciples out there on the Sea of Galilee. A stormy wind had come down. The elements were just churning:

"But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water. And He said, Come..." Matthew 14:24–29.

Isn't that interesting? Peter got the idea he'd like to walk on the water too?

Jesus said, "All right. You come."

You know, it's interesting what we can get from God if we ask Him. Some people would never have thought of that idea.

Some people, if they *had*, they would have thought, "Oh no, I wouldn't ask for anything as audacious as that."

But not Peter, he was audacious. He was ready to ask for whatever came in his mind. And he got it. Of course, he got into trouble too, as we see, but then he got out.

"And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus" Matthew 14:29.

Did he walk on the water? Yes. Who? Peter. Not only Jesus, but Peter walked on the water.

"But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Matthew 14:29–30.

But did he walk on the water? Yes. First, he walked looking to Jesus, then he sank looking away from Jesus, then he walked with Jesus ahold of him, and they walked together on the water. That's one way, friends, to get through. That's one way to cross the waters, walking *on* the water, walking right on top of the problem.

Of course, it takes a miracle, doesn't it? Yes. It took a miracle to *divide* the sea, and it takes a miracle to walk on top of the sea. But either way, it's the power of God.

"Thou didst reach forth thy hand and mine enfold,  
I walked and sank not on the storm-vexed sea.  
'twas not so much that I on Thee took hold,  
As Thou, dear Lord, on me."  
Author Unknown.

Yes, the thing that keeps us from sinking is not that we hold Him so tight, but He holds us so fast, friends. It's the hand of Jesus that holds us up as we walk upon the waters.

Now, there's another way, friends, to walk on water besides that method, but it takes quite a change of temperature. Anybody here ever walked on water that was frozen? Anybody here? Oh, yes. And when a chilling blast comes, from circumstances or men, remember, God may be freezing the water so you can get across. That's right.

I remember reading about in the early days of this message, Sister White and her husband, with some helpers, were going out to Iowa to visit some of the brethren out there that were discouraged and needed help. It was in the wintertime. They came to the Mississippi River. There was a question of whether to cross or not. The weather was just like this. There'd been ice, but now there was a bit of rain. The question was whether it had melted enough, so it was dangerous.

Well, they got there, and they inquired. The reports were uncertain.

And they said, "What shall we do?"

Sister White said, "In the name of Israel's God, go forward."

And away they went across, the horses pulling the sleigh across in the slush on top, but firm ice underneath. Well, without God's command, that would have been a risk, wouldn't it? Yes. The point is they crossed the river. They got through.

But it was cold. She tells on that trip how, as they went, they had to every now and then treat their ears or their noses because they were getting frozen. But that's how anxious they were to get out and give the message.

I was reading an interesting experience of a man who, in a country like that where the rivers freeze, came to a river and he was going from one city to another, one part of the country to another. And he was concerned as to whether the ice would hold him up. So, he was very uncertain whether to venture out or not. But finally, he decided that he'd distribute his weight better if he'd just go like this, you know, on all fours because that way there'd be less weight on each part of the ice as he went.

And as he got part way across, he heard singing and some other sounds. And he looked back, and there was a man with a four-horse team galloping across the ice. Well, he got up. He didn't do any more careful, tension-filled walking the rest of that day. He ran like the horses. In fact, somebody wrote a little poem about it:

"A traveler crossed a frozen stream in trembling fear one day,  
Later a teamster drove across and whistled all the way.  
Great faith and little faith alike were granted safe convoy,  
But one had pangs of needless fear, the other all the joy."  
Author Unknown.

Now, how do you cross the frozen waters? Fearful? Tense all the time? Or thankful for the freeze that gives you firm footing? That's the question. Faith is what enables us in all these things. It was faith that divided the Red Sea, right? It was faith that enabled Peter to walk *on* the billows with Jesus. And faith will enable us to walk right across with Jesus, whether the waters are frozen or billowy.

Now, let's go to Ezekiel 47, the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse, and we'll find another way to get through the waters. Now, here was a river that the prophet was shown, and the

angel that was talking to him in the vision measured a thousand cubits out into the waters and brought the prophet out. The waters were to the ankles.

Well, how did he get there, then? What would you say if you'd gone through waters to the ankles? Why, he waded. That's one way to get through the waters, isn't it? Just wade through them. All right.

The fourth verse says:

"Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees..." Ezekiel 47:4.

Well, that's still wading, isn't it? Yes. And then:

"Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins" Ezekiel 47:4.

And the fifth verse:

"Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over..." Ezekiel 47:5.

Couldn't wade any farther.

"...for the waters were risen..." Ezekiel 47:5.

Now, what is it?

"...waters to swim in..." Ezekiel 47:5.

Ah, yes. That's another way, that's another way. Did you ever get into trials and troubles that you had to swim through? I hope you won't be like that fellow that was offered a wager as to whether he could swim across the river or not, but when he got halfway across, he decided it was too far and swam back. Too bad, too bad.

And ah, my dear friends, there's more than one soul that when he comes to judgment day will be surprised how close he was to the goal when he turned back, how close he was to deliverance when he gave up.

"...waters to swim in..." Ezekiel 47:5.

Do you remember Elijah up there on Carmel praying for rain? How many times did he pray? Seven. Suppose he'd given up when he'd prayed five times? Would he have gotten five-sevenths of a rain? No. Not a drop. And he never would have known how close he came to the rain, would he? No.

Ah, thank God, friends, faith says, "I'm going to go ahead. And if I have to wade, I'll wade. And if the waters are up to the ankles, okay, I'll wade in ankle-deep water. If they're up to my knees, very well, I'll walk through the water knee-deep. If

they're up to the loins, right up here, I'll just walk right ahead. And if they get so deep I can't walk anymore, then I'll take off and..." what? "Swim, swim."

I wonder why God lets us swim sometimes, and sometimes He opens up the Red Sea? And I wonder why He lets people walk on the water sometimes, and sometimes lets them walk *in* the water? God will tell us when we get home to heaven.

"Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us, of which we know nothing" *Desire of Ages*, page 330.

But I'll tell you this, dear friends, His way is best, His way is best.

Now, let's go over to Isaiah the 43<sup>rd</sup> chapter beginning with the 1<sup>st</sup> verse, and find God's promise of taking us through the waters when we have to walk through them, I might say, up to our necks, waters that we can't swim in (perhaps we don't know how to swim), waters that He doesn't choose to give us the power to walk on and that He doesn't choose to divide as He did the Red Sea. Here is the promise of promises:

"But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" Isaiah 43:1–2.

This is the verse that the hymn writer got that stanza from that I called your attention to:

"When through the deep waters, I call thee to go,  
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow.  
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,  
And sanctify to be thy deepest distress."  
*Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, #509, third stanza.

I want you to notice an expression in Isaiah 43:2:

"When thou passest..." Isaiah 43:2.

What's the next word?

"...through..." Isaiah 43:2.

What does "through" mean? Means you're in it, but it means you get across. If you don't, you're not through, right?

We say to somebody, "Are you through dinner?"

“No. I’m not quite through. I’ve got a little yet.”

We say to somebody sitting, studying a lesson, “Are you through your lesson?”

“No, no. I’ve got another couple of pages yet.”

What does “through” mean? Finished, you’re through, you’re on the other side.

“When thou passest *through* the waters...” Isaiah 43:2.

Did the children of Israel get through the Red Sea? Yes. They got clear on the other side. Now, they did it by a miracle, but God doesn’t always work a miracle, in that sense of the term. He sometimes lets us wade through and walk through when the waters are not only up to our knees and loins, but they’re surging around our neck, and we can just barely keep our heads up. But He says:

“...I will be...” Isaiah 43:2.

What?

“...with thee...” Isaiah 43:2.

“...I will be with thee...” Isaiah 43:2.

And it’s this kind of going through waters that you and I need to become well acquainted with, friends, for this is the way we’re going to get through Jacob’s trouble. God isn’t going to open up the Red Sea. He isn’t going to let us walk on the waters in Jacob’s trouble. We’re going to go through like this verse talks about. We’re going to go through, friends, and it’ll seem like it’s going to drown us. But it won’t.

“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee...” Isaiah 43:2.

I was reading an interesting experience that James and Ellen White had just 90 years ago this year, out in California on the Russian River. I’ve been there myself up in the valley where Healdsburg is.

You know, back in 1868, the work in California opened with Elder Loughborough and Elder Bourdeau, coming from the east. It was before there was a railroad out there, and they sailed from New York down to the Isthmus of Panama, went across the Isthmus and came up in a boat into San Francisco, and brought a tent with them. And they were looking for a place to pitch their tent there in San Francisco, and they didn’t find a place at once.

And presently, a man arrived from up in Sonoma Valley, Petaluma, up there, and he told a most interesting story.



He said, "You know, some of us were reading a newspaper from the east, and we read where two ministers were coming from the east to California with a tent to pitch." And he said, "Several of us up there have come down to see if we could find those men and ask them to come up and pitch the tent in our valley."

And they did. They raised up five churches there. That's another very interesting and wonderful story. But presently, Elder and Sister White came out to strengthen the new believers and help in organizing the work. And this that I'm about to tell you happened in 1874. It was the year, by the way, when the *Signs of the Times* was started.

Well, Elder Canright and Elder Cornell were going up to a little place called Cloverdale to pitch this same tent and hold meetings up there. But Sister White had a vision from the Lord and was shown that they shouldn't go to Cloverdale, that they should come to Oakland. Now, Oakland was a big city, you know, and Cloverdale was just a little place where up there beyond Healdsburg.

So, Sister White told her husband, "We must get hold of those men right away, and give them the message."

So, they inquired, and they found that the men had already gone and that the tent was loaded and up on the way to Cloverdale at a place owned by Brother Bond. And although it was toward evening now, Sister White and her husband decided that they must hurry on. So, they hitched up the team to the wagon, and away they went.

Well, on the north of Healdsburg, they had to cross the Russian River to get to Brother Bond's place, where the tent was and where they thought the ministers were. And it was already night when they came to the Russian River.

What should they do? They had to cross. Well, Elder White unhitched one of the horses, Sister White held the other one that was harnessed, and Elder White made his way on horseback down into the water, and the horse feeling its way across in the darkness, the dim light, he finally found where there was firm ground along, and came back. Hitched up the horse again and got in the carriage, and they went across. And as they came up the other side, of course, they were thankful to the Lord that He had led them through.

But as they came up to a rise of ground ahead of them, there was more water than ever. And they discovered they'd just gone through a side stream. The main river was still ahead. Now, what should they do?

Well, Sister White said, "Nothing to do but go ahead."

And so again, Elder White unhitched one of the horses and started out. And this time, of course, the water was deeper and swifter. He made his way across, but he still wasn't sure as to where he could get the team and the carriage through. So, he went across and back two times.

And the second time, he said to his wife, "Now, you watch, Ellen, and see if you can watch how I go measured on the horizon, on the mountain there in the distance, to see just how we can find our way across."

So, he came back the second time and hitched up. And this time as they went through the water, the water came clear up into the carriage, but the horses kept pulling on through, and finally, they got to the other side and on up to Brother Bond's. And the next day, they met the ministers, and the tent was brought back from Cloverdale and pitched in Oakland, and thereby hangs several wonderful tales.

But my point is, friends, somebody went through the waters first to find out where the firm ground was. I want to ask you something. Has somebody gone through the waters ahead of us? Oh, yes. And that One who has gone through every trial that we could ever experience says:

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee..."  
Isaiah 43:2.

Isn't that nice? He goes through the waters, and then He comes back and says, "All right. I've tried them out now. I know where the firm ground is. Come, and I'll go with you."

Oh, friends:

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to..."  
1 Corinthians 10:13.

Avoid it?

"...bear it" 1 Corinthians 10:13.

Thank God.

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee..."  
Isaiah 43:2.

Listen as some of these closing thoughts are put in verse by Annie Johnson Flint. I love this:

"When thou passest through the waters,'  
Deep the waves may be and cold,  
But Jehovah is our refuge,  
And His promise is our hold;  
For the Lord Himself hath said it,  
He, the faithful God and true.  
'When thou comest to the waters,  
Thou shalt not go down, but through.'

Seas of sorrow, seas of trial,  
Bitterest anguish, fiercest pain,  
Rolling surges of temptation  
Sweeping over heart and brain,  
They shall never overflow us,  
For we know His Word is true,  
All His waves and all His billows  
He will lead us safely through.

Threatening breakers of destruction,  
Doubt's insidious undertow,  
Shall not sink us, shall not drag us  
Out to ocean depths of woe;  
For His promise shall sustain us,  
Praise the Lord whose Word is true!  
We shall not go down, or under,  
For He saith, 'thou passest through.'  
"Passing Through" by Annie Johnson Flint.

Oh, Thank God for that. Aren't you glad? You know, dear friend, we're going to sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb.

What was the song of Moses? It was a song of triumph when they'd passed through the Red Sea. And the song of the Lamb is the song of loving sacrifice and victory, the faith that took Jesus through the deep waters of Gethsemane, through the billows of Calvary.

You and I are privileged to share in some small way in these trials, these sorrows that we may learn by experience the faith of Moses, the faith of Jesus.

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee..."  
Isaiah 43:2.

Now, this morning I'm sure that there are a number who would like to bear their testimony, and I'm going to open the way this morning first of all to those who didn't get an opportunity to witness last night, either because you weren't here, or because the time was filled by others.

So, first of all, you who have not had a chance this weekend, you press in. And then, if there's time, we'll open the way for others. It's a wonderful thing to witness for God, my friends.

[Testimony meeting]

[Comments made by Elder Frazee during testimony meeting.]

You know, the children of Israel started out on their trip crossing the Red Sea, and then the last thing before they got into the Promised Land was what? Had to

cross Jordan. And what time of year was it? It was the flood time, it was the spring, and up in the mountains, the snows were melting, and the river was at flood tide.

The Bible says:

“...Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest”  
Joshua 3:15.

God deliberately led them there at a time when the water was at the highest and widest to magnify His name.

All right. Let’s sing number 266 [old *Church Hymnal* (1941)].

“I will follow Thee, my Savior,  
Whereso’ere my lot may be.”  
*Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, #623, first stanza (partial).

Each one of these stanzas is full of meaning, and you’ll notice the last one:

“Though to Jordan’s rolling billows,  
Cold and deep, Thou ledest me,  
Thou hast crossed the waves before me,  
And I still will follow Thee.”  
*Ibid.*, fifth stanza.

[Congregation sings.]

“I will follow Thee, my Savior,  
Whereso’ere my lot may be.  
Where Thou goest I will follow;  
Yes, my Lord, I’ll follow Thee.

Chorus: I will follow Thee, my Savior,  
Thou didst shed Thy blood for me;  
And though all men should forsake Thee,  
By Thy grace I’ll follow Thee.

Though the road be rough and thorny,  
Trackless as the foaming sea,  
Thou hast trod this way before me,  
And I’ll gladly follow Thee.  
Chorus.”

*Ibid.*, first and second stanzas.

Now, before we sing this next stanza, just let me give an invitation. There may be someone here this morning that feels a special need of help. If you’d like to come and be prayed for in a special way, whatever the need or burden that may be upon your heart, you just come and stand with bowed head here and we’ll remember you in the closing prayer.

Third stanza:

“Though I meet with tribulations,  
Sorely tempted though I be;  
I remember Thou wast tempted,  
And rejoice to follow Thee.

Chorus.

Though Thou leadest me through affliction,  
Poor, forsaken though I be;  
Thou wast destitute, afflicted,  
And I only follow Thee.

Chorus.

Though to Jordan’s rolling billows,  
Cold and deep, Thou leadest me;  
Thou hast crossed the waves before me,  
And I still will follow Thee.

Chorus.”

*Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, #623, fourth and fifth stanzas.

Now, dear Father in heaven, in response to Thy invitation, we have come.  
Here we are at Thine altar. Hear our prayers on behalf of ourselves and one  
another. In a special way, let Thy loving hand rest upon these who have come to be  
blessed. Oh, Lord, may they feel and know just now the touch of the Savior’s hand.  
And may they go in peace, knowing that Christ is with them to forgive, to strengthen,  
to bless, and to lead them through.

Dismiss us now with Thy benediction. We ask it in Jesus’ name, amen.

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