

24. July 2023

## “The Lord Fights for You”

Ex 14:5-18

*'When Pharaoh king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, he and his officials changed their attitude towards the people. 'What have we done,' they said, 'allowing Israel to leave our service?' So Pharaoh had his chariot harnessed and set out with his troops, taking six hundred of the best chariots and all the other chariots in Egypt, with officers in each. The Lord made Pharaoh King of Egypt stubborn, and he gave chase to the Israelites. The Israelites marched confidently away, but the Egyptians, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, his horsemen and his army, gave chase and caught up with them where they lay encamped beside the sea near Pi-Hahiroth, facing Baal-Zephon. As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up -- and there were the Egyptians in pursuit of them! The Israelites were terrified and cried out to the Lord for help. To Moses they said, 'Was it for lack of graves in Egypt, that you had to lead us out to die in the desert? What was the point of bringing us out of Egypt? Did we not tell you as much in Egypt? Leave us alone, we said, we would rather work for the Egyptians! We prefer to work for the Egyptians than to die in the desert!' Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid! Stand firm, and you will see what the Lord will do to rescue you today: the Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will do the fighting for you; all you need to do is to keep calm.' The Lord then said to Moses, 'Why cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to march on. Your part is to raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, so that the Israelites can walk through the sea on dry ground, while I, for my part, shall make the Egyptians so stubborn that they will follow them, and I shall win glory for myself at the expense of Pharaoh and all his army, chariots and horsemen. And when I have won glory for myself at the expense of Pharaoh and his chariots and horsemen, the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord. '*

It is the enduring message: What is the use of horses and chariots, what is the use of the superiority of the enemy when he fights against the Lord? The Lord was on the side of His people and glorified Himself: *“When I have won glory for myself at the expense of Pharaoh and his chariots and horsemen, the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord...”*

We hear again and again in the accounts of the Exodus from Egypt about the people's small faith and their fears. When they became aware of Pharaoh's great force behind them, they reproached Moses and would rather be slaves again than die in the desert.

It is not easy for people to fight for true freedom and to live in it, although they are called to it, long for it and it is only in freedom that the true dignity of human life unfolds.

If we - on whatever level - struggle for true freedom, then the Lord will stand by us. Only the Son makes you free, says the Holy Scripture (cf. Jn 8:36). True freedom is to do the will of the Lord, to live in the truth.

Anyone who seriously sets out on this path will have to deal with "Pharaoh and his army", who does not want to let us go and tries to enslave us further: to our own senses, to illusions, to sin, to the temptations of this world, to a comfortable life, to the manifold offers that give us honour and prestige in the world.

Even if we ourselves cannot defeat the powers of darkness, which here - in a spiritual interpretation - are metaphorically manifested in Pharaoh and his army, it is nevertheless necessary for us to have firm trust in the Lord that He will bring to a happy end the path of freedom he has begun to lead us on. In view of the overwhelming power of the enemy, which we do not know how to resist, it is all the more important to place our trust completely in God: *"You will see what the Lord will do to rescue you today... the Lord will do the fighting for you; all you need to do is to keep calm."*

This keeping calm, however, is not about inertia and simply surrendering to the situation. It is about actively watching and paying attention to what the Lord is going to do: how the Lord saves you today. And indeed, those who become very attentive constantly see the Lord at work, guiding His own even in hopeless situations. The more we perceive this, the calmer we can become inwardly, for it is said, *"the Lord will do the fighting for you; all you need to do is to keep calm."*

May all who listen to me wisely apply these lessons from today's solution to their personal situation and to the many war-like conditions around us. Let us not be driven by fears, even when everything looks dark and hopeless, whatever it may be: the world situation, the church situation, etc.

What is important is that we live in true freedom and figuratively leave the fleshpots of Egypt behind (cf. Ex 16:3) without looking back. We must be able to say: Better to die in the wilderness with the Lord than to sin and live a comfortable life in Egypt.

Even if an army rages against me, I still remain full of confidence, says the Holy Scripture (cf. Ps 27:3). Even if hell rises up against the faithful and tries to take away everything that is dear and valuable to them - they will not be able to do anything in their war against the Lamb. The Lamb will defeat the powers of darkness in their rebellion (Rev 17:14). If we stay with Him and are faithful to Him, then we will see: *“the Lord will do the fighting for you; all you need to do is to keep calm”*.

*“Let anyone who can hear, listen!”* (Rev 2:11)