As the Israelite slaves fled for their lives, God affected a miracle. All of Pharoah’s Army of chariots -majestic as they were and far superior to any type of vehicle the Israelites possessed – could not catch up with them because God intervened. God delivered the Israelites from what had enslaved them. But more importantly God re-created them as a new people.

We remember the creation story of Genesis, where God separated the light from the darkness, and the waters from the dry land. We see parallels with this story of God’s deliverance of his people from slavery. We see the pillar of cloud – the light of God – move into the darkness of the night to bring light to the Israelites and to separate the symbolic darkness – the evil of Pharoah’s army – from the light of the Israelites. God turned the sea into dry land (just like God separated the waters from the waters at creation to make dry land). God created dry land in the midst of the chaos of Pharoah’s armies giving chase, in the same way God created an orderly world from the midst of chaos at first creation. All through the night, God put up a wall to protect the Israelites from the danger – and in the morning, God destroyed that danger completely. The light overtook the darkness. The Israelites were free from the chains that had bound them and, with that morning light, walked into a place of new possibilities.

When evil chases us – even if what is behind us brings with it superior fire power to what we ourselves possess – God will deliver us. God will put up a wall between us and that evil to get us through that darkness and then God will re-create us in the process, transforming us into a new people, more into God’s image, free from bondage.

We are not slaves in the sense that the Israelites were slaves in Egypt. We have freedom to move about freely, to make choices about where we work and live, to earn money to buy things we need and want, to marry whom we want. But we do become enslaved sometimes to evil forces just as powerful as that of ancient Egypt. Addictions – alcohol, drugs, gambling – fit into this category. Mental illnesses or feelings of lack of self-worth often enslave us and prevent us from fully realizing that we are wonderfully made in God’s image and loved unconditionally. Desires for things we ought not to have can sometimes consume us to the point that they enslave us – sometimes our possessions own us. Fears can overcome us to the point that we can no longer live a full life. Sometimes we don’t even realize that we are enslaved to these fears, or addictions or insecurities. Ambition for power or money also can enslave us – taking over our hearts, making them dark, not allowing the goodness within us to break free. Sometimes these fears or ambitions or addictions take over gradually, when we don’t even realize it, ensnaring us.

Colson Whitehead, author of the bestselling novel about the Underground Railroad, says the following through the voice of escaped slave, Cora. “Sometimes the only way to know how long you are lost in darkness is to be saved by the light.”

God can save us by God’s light. God can put a wall between us and these things to protect us through the night, and can provide dry land amid that chaos. God can re-create us out of that chaos.

We, however, need to do something ourselves to be part of this re-creation. We need to exercise our faith.

Martin Luther King Jr said “Faith is taking the first step even when you cannot see the staircase.”

We are called to step out in faith – walking with God as the pathway becomes clear in the darkness. We need to believe God can deliver us and to be willing to walk into the light of new possibilities. Sometimes we are called to do that even if we don’t realize all that we need to be delivered from, just trusting that God knows what is ahead of us and that God can help to separate the light from the dark, to bring us into the morning of light.

When God parted the waters, the Israelites had to believe enough to walk through that wall. If they had been afraid, Pharoah’s armies would have caught up to them and they would have remained in bondage forever. But once they acted in faith and stepped through, God freed them.

God will deliver us from whatever enslaves us and will re-create us anew. Christ was born, died and rose again to buy for us this freedom and to make us that new creation. We must believe enough to take that walk with God every day through that parted sea and to believe that our awesome God can and does conquer evils bigger than we are.

Amen