

GOD'S GPS

Trusting God's direction when the road is not the fastest.

BIG IDEA

God's guidance is not always the shortest route, but we can trust His presence and grow through the detours.

MESSAGE SUMMARY

After freeing Israel from Egypt, God led the people away from the shorter road through Philistine territory because they were not ready to face war. The winding route toward the Red Sea was not a sign of abandonment: **God was leading**. Using GPS, Lightning McQueen, and a story of unexpected protection, the sermon invites us to trust God during delays, notice what waiting may teach us, and choose faithful responses. Village Church's journey toward a new meeting space offers a present-day example.

READ TOGETHER

Exodus 13:17-18 - God leads Israel by a longer route.

Exodus 13:21-22 - God's presence guides the people.

Optional background: Exodus 14:10-14 - Israel faces fear at the sea.

ICEBREAKER - CHOOSE ONE

Option 1: When has a detour or delay turned out differently than you expected?

Option 2: Are you a "fastest route" person, or do you prefer a slower, less stressful way? Why?

TALK IT THROUGH

1. Why did God lead Israel away from the shorter road through Philistine territory? What does that detail tell us about His care?

If needed: Israel might face war, lose courage, and return to Egypt.

2. The sermon emphasizes the words "So God led." How is trusting a guide different from knowing the entire route in advance?

If needed: presence and direction do not require a full explanation.

3. Where are you experiencing a "squiggly-line" season rather than the direct route you hoped for?

If needed: waiting, work, relationships, family, or church transitions.

4. The sermon says, "Quiet protection is still protection." How might that idea change the way we interpret a closed door or delay?

If needed: we may not know every danger avoided; avoid assuming we know God's reasons.

5. What could we miss by rushing to the destination? What might God be growing in us during the journey?

If needed: patience, relationships, trust, or readiness.

6. As Village Church waits for its new space, what would it look like to respond with faithfulness rather than blame or frustration?

If needed: encouragement, flexibility, service, and gratitude.

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Name one delay or detour you are facing. Each day, pause to ask: **What is one faithful response I can choose today?** Take one concrete step - encourage someone, serve where you are, or practice gratitude - and share it with your group next time.

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A SIMPLE 60-MINUTE RHYTHM

- 1 Connect (10 min)** - Welcome everyone; choose an icebreaker.
- 2 Read (10 min)** - Read Exodus 13:17-18 and 13:21-22 aloud.
- 3 Discuss (30 min)** - Select 3-4 questions; allow space for real stories.
- 4 Respond (10 min)** - Name one faithful next step and pray.

LEAD THE CONVERSATION

1. Begin with the text: God chose the longer road because Israel might turn back if confronted by war.
2. Emphasize God's presence, not a promise that every detour will feel good or make immediate sense.
3. Distinguish the initial route in Exodus 13 from the later forty-year wilderness experience; the sermon connects them, but they are not the same event.
4. Do not claim to know why a specific hardship happened. Invite humility rather than easy explanations.
5. Keep the conversation practical: move from frustration about timing toward a faithful response today.
6. Protect confidentiality and leave room for people who are still waiting without resolution.

HELPFUL FOLLOW-UPS

What part of Israel's story feels familiar? What makes waiting hardest?
What is within your control today? What might trust look like this week?
Who could use encouragement during a delay? How can we pray for you?

KEEP THE MAIN THING CLEAR

- God did not choose the shortest road; He chose a route that accounted for the people's vulnerability.
- "So God led" is the sermon's center: God's presence matters more than a preferred timetable.
- "Quiet protection is still protection" invites trust without claiming certainty about unseen events.
- Waiting may be formative, but hardship should not be minimized or presented as automatically good.
- Village Church can gather, encourage, and serve while waiting for its new space.
- We may not control every circumstance, but we can choose how we respond.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, thank You for leading Your people even when the road was long and unfamiliar. Help us trust Your presence when our plans change. Give us patience in waiting, wisdom in uncertainty, and grace in how we respond. Grow our faith and make us faithful to serve and encourage others right where we are. Amen.

BEFORE GROUP

Read Exodus 13-14 for context. Choose 3-4 questions. Prepare one brief personal example of a detour. Plan time for the weekly challenge and consider who may need follow-up.