



Exodus

Freed to Worship

Exodus 5:1-23

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Sunday Evening Service

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Exodus: Freed to Worship

Exodus 5:1-23

Opening Comments

- Turn to **Exodus 5**
- We are continuing our study: **Freed to Worship**
- Last time, we finished chapter 4
- Moses has met with God at the burning bush
- Yahweh has given his commission – go back to Egypt
- Tell Pharaoh to let My people go
- For four hundred years the descendants of Abraham’s grandson Jacob/Israel have lived in Egypt
- They grew from 70+ people to a population that was between 2 and 3 million
- They were originally invited to dwell in the land as guests of Pharaoh
- Because Israel’s Joseph had saved Egypt from a famine that would have devastated Egypt
- Because the Pharaoh listened to Joseph who spoke on behalf of Yahweh, instead of being devastated, the Pharaoh became richer and more powerful
- At some point a new Pharaoh came to power who did not remember what God had done through Joseph, and he started treating the people of Israel as slaves
- And no matter what the Pharaoh does, the Hebrews keep growing in numbers, and so he oppresses them more and more
- God looks down upon the suffering of His people, the Hebrews and raises up Moses to deliver them from their bondage
- Armed with the confidence of having met with the living God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
- And with the rod which Moses is to do the three miraculous signs
- Moses met with the leaders of Israel and told them that God had looked down upon their suffering and He was going to deliver them
- Sadly we can’t see the video of how Moses approaches Pharaoh in his first encounter with him
- It is not too hard to imagine him approaching Pharaoh boldly

- He may have been expecting a different response than what he got

Teaching

- **Exodus: Freed to Worship**

- Let's begin

- **Exodus 5:1**

- This is just what the Lord told Moses to say **Exodus 3:18**

Then they will heed your voice; and you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt; and you shall say to him, 'The LORD God of the Hebrews has met with us; and now, please, let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.'

- So far so good
- It is impossible for us to know what Moses expected from this first visit
- But God had told him not to expect a positive response **Exodus 3:19**
But I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand.
- And Pharaoh's response reminds us that God knows the future before it happens
- **Exodus 5:2**
- It is likely that Pharaoh was aware that the Hebrews worshipped Yahweh
- This is not a declaration of ignorance
- What he is saying is that Yahweh is not worthy of his attention
- To him Yahweh was a powerless regional god who had no authority over him
- The Hebrews were his slaves and an unknown god was not going to tell him what to do with his property
- Starting from here we are going to see God making Himself known on a national level
- Before this, God would reveal Himself to individuals who would then describe Him to others
- Primarily this is for the people of God **Exodus 6:6-7**

Therefore say to the children of Israel: 'I *am* the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. ⁷ I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.'

- And then to the Egyptians **Exodus 7:4-5**

Pharaoh will not heed you, so that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My armies *and* My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. ⁵ And the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them.

- And then regularly through the OT you will see God doing things to reveal Himself, either to rebellious Israel or to other nations
- This reminds us that God is a personal God
- He wants people to know Him and it is offensive to Him when we choose not to know Him **Romans 1:18-25**

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them.

²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, ²¹ because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. ²⁴ Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, ²⁵ who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

- Throughout our study of Pharaoh's response to God in this and future studies, don't lose sight of one very important truth
- God is going to give Pharaoh repeated opportunities to humble himself before God
- That is God's grace – He could have sent Moses in and told Pharaoh, let My people go, or I will destroy you
- And then because of Pharaoh's response here, done just that – He could have destroyed the Egyptians and led the people out of the smoking ruins of an obliterated Egypt
- Because of how they treated God's people, God could very well have done with the Egyptians what He did to Sodom and Gomorrah
- One of the things we will probably say as we go through the ten plagues that God will bring against Pharaoh and his kingdom is how similar this is to the book of Revelation

- While the judgments themselves are different, they are similar in that God does gradually, what He could do instantly as an act of His amazing grace
- His hope is that they would repent so that He can relent
- We will see later that more than just the Israelites leave in the Exodus
- Regularly, God refers to foreigners – more than just the Hebrews left in the **Exodus 12:37-38**

Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children.³⁸ A mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds—a great deal of livestock.

- The ‘mixed multitude’ were various peoples from other nations that the Egyptians had enslaved
- This Pharaoh does not know Yahweh but that is going to change
- Moses and Aaron change their tone after Pharaoh responds as he did
- **Exodus 5:3**
- It is not hard to understand Pharaoh’s reluctance to let his slaves go
- ‘three days journey’ = 3 days out, one day for the sacrifice, and then three days back
- Moses and Aaron are asking Pharaoh to give the slaves a week off
- Of course, they don’t mention that they have no intention of coming back
- I imagine that is part of Pharaoh’s reluctance
- What I find interesting is what they say to pharaoh to justify their reason for asking, ‘lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword’
- There is not a record of the Lord telling them to say that
- The implication is clear though – Yahweh is not to be trifled with
- This also introduces the idea to Pharaoh that there are consequences to disobeying or rebelling against Yahweh
- Pharaoh is not convinced and will require a much more forceful approach before he humbles himself before God
- **Exodus 5:4**
- Pharaoh considered himself to be born of the gods and therefore above any god of any nation that his gods had delivered over to him
- To yield to their request would be acknowledge that Yahweh was greater than he was

- Pharaoh would not easily bend his knee to this unknown God of the Hebrew slaves
- God is at work in the lives of all people to get them to bow their knee to Him
- And the Bible says that all will do that **Philippians 2:9-11**
God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
- We will bow in this life or after this life, but it is an absolute certainty that all will bow before Jesus
- The difference is that by doing it before death we bow in worship and rejoice
- If someone waits until after death they will bow in submission and mourn because their eternity is judgment and suffering forever
- It is much better to bow now
- Pharaoh tells Moses and Aaron to get back to work
- **Exodus 5:5**
- Based on this, it appears that the Hebrews expected Pharaoh to let them go right away
- They appear to have stopped working and maybe were packing their junk
- That doesn't sit well with Pharaoh
- The Hebrews and other enslaved nations were how he was building his empire
- It was the slaves that built the pyramids and other great structures of Egypt for generations
- A work slowdown was not going to be tolerated
- **Exodus 5:6-7**
- The primary building material of this time period were mud bricks
- If you go to Egypt today, you can visit places where they show how it was done, and you can even make bricks yourself
- The straw was a vital part of the production process
- The straw made the bricks much stronger, about three times stronger than mud alone

- Based on this, the Egyptians had been providing straw for the Hebrews to make bricks
- We can also extract from this that brick-making was the primary occupation of most of the Hebrew slaves
- Life was about to get harder for the Hebrews
- **Exodus 5:8-9**
- The word ‘idle’ in verse 8 can also be translated as ‘lazy’
- Pharaoh determines to make life harder on the Hebrews so that they will ‘not regard false words’
- Pharaoh doesn’t want them to get the idea that they might be going somewhere
- So now they have to work harder to produce the same amount of output
- Not an ideal situation in an already oppressive environment
- **Exodus 5:10-14**
- There is an ancient leather scroll from the time of Rameses II describing the quotas of bricks a list of people were required to make
- Interestingly, in this scroll, all of the actual production was less than half of the quota
- The taskmasters beat the leaders of the children of Israel asking why they hadn’t made their quota
- You have to imagine that didn’t go over well with the ‘officers’
- **Exodus 5:15-16**
- It is interesting that these leaders have access to Pharaoh
- They complain and say to him, ‘It’s not our fault’
- Pharaoh will have none of it
- **Exodus 5:17-18**
- This is what you get for listening to Moses
- Maybe now you will get to work and stop thinking about going out into the wilderness
- **Exodus 5:19-21**
- This is all your fault Moses and Aaron
- We were doing fine before you showed up
- They have already forgotten God’s promises

- They have forgotten that God said that Pharaoh wasn't going to believe and that he wasn't going to let them go without God's mighty hand falling upon them
- This will begin a pattern of behavior that we will see with the children of Israel
- A pattern of complaining about God's will and the criticizing of God's leaders
- And I would like to say that this is exclusive to the Jews, but it isn't
- It still fairly common in the lives of Christians today
- Sometimes the will of God will take them through a tough time on His way to taking them where He wants them
- And instead of trusting in God's promises, they complain about all the trouble they are having in life
- God's will is always good and His timing is always perfect
- If the pathway that God allows us to walk gets rough, God didn't make a mistake, it is necessary
- But why, you might ask – I don't know – only God might be able to answer that question
- And He might not answer it
- We will see in the next chapter that the Lord does not explain why He allowed Pharaoh to make life harder for them
- He simply repeats His promise to deliver them
- As we go through this life, the road might sometimes get rough
- Rather than complaining and accusing others, cling to the promises of **God 2 Peter 1:2-4**

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.

- Choose to trust God no matter what comes into your life **Proverbs 3:5-6**

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;⁶In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

- The officers of the children of Israel accused Moses and Aaron of setting them up to be destroyed by the Egyptians

- Moses' response is a good lesson for all leaders when those who should be following are resisting our leadership
- Moses goes to the Lord
- **Exodus 5:22-23**
- Moses goes to the Lord, and lays out what he is feeling
- Before we are too harsh with what he says, we need to keep in mind that his faith is very young
- It was probably only a couple of weeks before this that Moses encountered the living God at the burning bush
- Before that, he really didn't have much of a relationship with God
- What is important for us to pick up out of this is that Moses is honest with God
- Just like the officers of the children of Israel, he is struggling with why God would do it this way
- And he did what we should all do when we don't understand, go talk with God
- Be real with Him
- Next time we will look at chapter 6 and see God's response to Moses
- It will be a response that suggests that God is not offended by Moses' outburst
- Be real with God – He can take it
- But also be humble because He is worthy of our respect, reverence, and worship
- **Amen?!**
- God bless you