

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

We will continue our study through the book of Exodus.

Our text today will cover Exodus 4:18 – 5:23

### **Dealing with Discouragement**

**Let's pray...**

In our study last week, Moses had an encounter with God at Mt. Sinai.

And God revealed to Moses that He had heard the cries of the Hebrews and He was going to do something about it – not only was He going to deliver them from the bondage of slavery – He was also going to bring them into the Promised Land that He had promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

God also revealed to Moses how He was going to do it –

I am going to send you Moses – you are going to be my human instrument.

Moses responded with excuse after excuse.

Who am I??? I'm just a shepherd shepherding sheep that are not even my own. **Who cares Moses – I am going to be with you.**

What if they don't listen to me? **Moses – they will listen to you**

God then equipped Moses for his commission with the ability to perform miracles using his shepherd's staff.

God gave Moses a testimony – by making his hand leprous and then restoring it.

And He gave Moses a sign of His power by turning water from the Nile River into blood.

And after all that – Moses responds with, I have a speech impediment – send someone else. So God tells Moses that Aaron will speak on behalf of Moses.

A move that will create more problems down the road for Moses.

So with no more excuses, we come to verse 18.

**[Exo 4:18-31 NKJV] 18 So Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him, "Please let me go and return to my brethren who [are] in Egypt, and see whether **they are still alive.**" And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace."**

Moses is 80 years old – and he's asking his father-in-law's permission to return back to Egypt.

Why?

Jethro was going to miss his daughter and grandkids and most likely Jethro was going to have to find someone else to watch over his sheep.

Church, we should always think of how our decisions will impact those we love.

In the end, we must follow the Lord's definite leading; but we should do so with humility – and that is what we see Moses doing here with Jethro.

Now, there are those who suggest that Moses, when he said he wanted to see whether the Hebrews were “still alive” was being less than forthcoming about his real mission.

Going to Egypt to see whether they are “still alive” implies – I am going there to see how they are doing??? It doesn't imply, I am going there because God has commissioned me to return to Egypt to deliver His people.

It is important to note that Moses was under no obligation to explain everything to Jethro.

**19 Now the LORD said to Moses in Midian, "Go, return to Egypt; for all the men who sought your life are dead." 20 Then Moses took his wife and **his sons** and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the rod of God in his hand.**

In Chapter two, we learned that Moses took Zipporah as a wife and she bore him a son named Gershom. There was another son – his name we find out later in chapter 18 – his name is Eliezer.

**21 And the LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. But **I will harden****

**his heart**, so that he will not let the people go. 22 "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel [is] My son, **My firstborn**." 23 "So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn." ' "

I asked you to highlight where the Lord tells Moses that He will harden Pharaoh's heart.

As we will see in the next couple of weeks, as Moses brings these plagues upon Egypt – the scriptures will mention that Pharaoh hardened his own heart and other scriptures will note that Pharaoh's heart was hardened.

It is not until the 6<sup>th</sup> plague where the scriptures tell us that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. (9:12)

Thus we say that Pharaoh had every opportunity to repent, but refused, and the result was that God left him to the rebellion in his heart.

**The hardening God did was to let Pharaoh be confirmed in his own choice to disobey.**

Turn with me to Jeremiah 18 –

Because there will be those that will argue that Pharaoh was predestined to disobey God. That Pharaoh had no free will.

**[Jer 18:7-10 NKJV] 7 "The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy [it], 8 "if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. 9 "And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant [it], 10 "if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.**

This is what the Lord is telling Jeremiah -

I will mold a nation one way or another based on their free-will response to Me.

God foreknew Pharaoh's response to Him. And that is what He tells Moses here. I also had you make a note where the Lord addresses Israel as His firstborn.

Spiritually speaking, God was Father to Israel.

It was His miracle of opening up Sarah's womb to conceive Isaac when she and Abraham could no longer have children that led to the "birth" of the nation of Israel.

Firstborn does not mean "first" in chronological order.

Ishmael was born before Isaac but Isaac was considered the firstborn and the inheritor.

Esau was born to Isaac and Rebekah before Jacob, but he sold his birthright to Jacob who was then the firstborn who inherited the blessing.

It means "first in rank," firstborn by way of preeminence with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of a "firstborn."

Many nations existed before Israel became one under Moses.

They weren't the first nation but they were to be considered the firstborn.

The further fact the Savior would come from Israel would only enhance their preeminent status among the nations.

**24 And it came to pass on the way, at the encampment, that the LORD met him and sought to kill him. 25 Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast [it] at [Moses]' feet, and said, "Surely you [are] a husband of blood to me!" 26 So He let him go. Then she said, "[You are] a husband of blood!"--because of the circumcision.**

There are many questions and disagreements over these three verses.

Who was the Lord seeking to kill??? Moses or Gershom?

Based upon the text – I believe that the Lord sought to kill Moses

I had you make a note where it states that the Lord sought to kill him because it demonstrates God's grace – You see, if God wanted Moses dead – Moses would have been dead.

God is giving Moses an opportunity to repent and obey.

And the reason appears to be that Gershom had not been circumcised.

Remember that circumcision was important as a sign of the covenant God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Circumcision was the entrance into the covenant relationship with God and showed that one belonged to Israel, God's covenant family.

One could not be part of the covenant unless one was circumcised.

So Zipporah circumcises Gershom and throws the foreskin at the feet of Moses while repeating the phrase "Husband of blood"

Some say that Zipporah was anti circumcision – that she viewed it as barbaric.

I came across an explanation where a language scholar stated that

"the phrase often translated as "husband of blood" does not necessarily mean

"husband," but rather, "one bound" in a covenant of blood, in this case referring to

Gershom's circumcision."

Zipporah's words might simply have been a declaration that now that he was

circumcised, Gershom was bound to the covenant God had made with Abraham.

**27 And the LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." So he went and met him on the mountain of God, and kissed him. 28 So Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD who had sent him, and all the signs which He**

had commanded him. 29 Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. 30 And Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. Then he did the signs in the sight of the people. 31 **So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.**

Moses and Aaron arrive in Egypt.

He tells them that the time has come for them to be delivered.

Moses shows them the rod – he gives them the testimony of his leprous hand – he shows him the signs and they believe – just like God had told Moses that they would.

Church, this is the goal of life: to believe and worship God.

Notice this is God's purpose in setting the people free from their slavery.

The goal of the freedom of Israel is that God would be praised, glorified, served, and worshiped.

When the people heard that the Lord had seen their affliction and visited them, they bowed their heads and worshiped. This is the right response.

We worship when we understand that God was concerned about our condition, saw our affliction as slaves to sin, and set us free through the death of his Son, Jesus Christ.

**[Exo 5:1-23 NKJV] 1 Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.' " 2 And Pharaoh said, "Who [is] the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go."**

Moses and Aaron go to Pharaoh and ask that he give them permission to allow the Hebrews to take a long weekend to celebrate a religious feast.

This was a reasonable request as it was not going to hurt the economy.

Pharaoh responds by denying their request.

His refusal establishes that he was against God from the beginning. He was making a willful choice to disobey God.

If he wasn't going to allow them to leave for the long weekend – there was no way he was willfully going to allow them leave Egypt for the Promised Land.

He also responds that he doesn't know who Yahweh is???

The Egyptians worshipped many gods – Pharaoh was looked upon as a god himself.

Certainly the God of the Hebrews cannot be that powerful since the Hebrews have been in bondage under the Egyptians for over 400 years.

As believers in Jesus Christ, we must embrace the fact that our Lord seems puny and powerless to nonbelievers.

They look around at the evil state of the world and come to two conclusions.

1. There is no God
2. If there is a God, He doesn't care

Little do they know our God has the power to save and that the evil in the world is something He tolerates in order that more lost and perishing humans can hear the Gospel and receive eternal life.

**3 So they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to the LORD our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword."**

Moses had experienced firsthand the seriousness of obeying God after his experience with the circumcision of his son.

He knew that worship and sacrifice in the desert was a command – not an invitation.

Sometimes, we fail to see the seriousness of God's word.

**[Heb 10:25 NKJV] 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as [is] the manner of some, but exhorting [one another], and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.**

Each of us must decide for ourselves where to attend church, and how often we should attend church.

But we should never think it merely as an invitation to meet with the Lord when everything is just right. It's a command - a blessed one, having our best interests in mind.

Jesus is so incredibly gracious that it's easy to think His commands are mere invitations.

**4 Then the king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people from their work? Get [back] to your labor."**

Pharaoh doesn't think they are serious about wanting to worship God. He just thinks they want to get out of work.

**5 And Pharaoh said, "Look, the people of the land [are] many now, and you make them rest from their labor!" 6 So the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their officers, saying, 7 "You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. 8 "And you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made**

**before. You shall not reduce it. For they are idle; therefore they cry out, saying, 'Let us go [and] sacrifice to our God.'**

In order to make bricks – one needed straw.

Pharaoh commanded that they no longer provide the Hebrew slaves straw to make bricks – the Hebrews were supposed to get the straw and make the same amount of bricks as they were making before.

Pharaoh's reasoning was that if they had time for worship, they weren't working hard enough.

Pharaoh wanted the people of God to be so busy serving him that they had no time for worship.

Church, the world does the same thing – it bogs us down with all these distractions.

Through work

Through activities

**9 "Let more work be laid on the men, that they may labor in it, and let them not regard false words."**

Moses said the people needed to worship God. Pharaoh calls those "false" words, deceiving, disappointing.

Satan will tell you that seeking after God, doing a daily devotional, worshipping God, coming to church, seeking God's truth, it's all a waste of time.

It is not. It is the way towards deliverance.

These are all things that prepare us for when the enemy attacks.

**10 And the taskmasters of the people and their officers went out and spoke to the people, saying, "Thus says Pharaoh: 'I will not give you straw. 11 'Go, get yourselves straw where you can find it; yet none of your work will be reduced.' "**  
**12 So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. 13 And the taskmasters forced [them] to hurry, saying, "Fulfill your work, [your] daily quota, as when there was straw." 14 Also the officers of the children of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten [and] were asked, "Why have you not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and today, as before?"**

The Hebrew slaves no longer had access to the straw fields – now they had to venture far to find inferior “stubble” wherever they could.

And they still had to meet the daily quota that was set forth by the taskmasters.

And if they didn't meet the quota – the officers, who were Hebrews and acted as crew chiefs – they would get beaten.

Church, sometimes deliverance doesn't feel very good.

Sometimes, things will get worse before they get better.

Sometimes we will feel like we're being beaten up for doing the right thing.

**15 Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried out to Pharaoh, saying, "Why are you dealing thus with your servants?"**

The first question I have is, why are they crying out to Pharaoh?

Why are they not crying out to Moses or Aaron or more importantly crying out to God?

**[Isa 30:1-3 NKJV] 1 "Woe to the rebellious children," says the LORD, "Who take counsel, but not of Me, And who devise plans, but not of My Spirit, That they may add sin to sin; 2 Who walk to go down to Egypt, And have not asked My advice, To strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, And to trust in the shadow of Egypt! 3 Therefore the strength of Pharaoh Shall be your shame, And trust in the shadow of Egypt Shall be [your] humiliation.**

We are never told in scripture that they prayed about it before they went to seek

Pharaoh –

And this sets the tone for the next forty years because for the next 40 years, they are going to be complaining against God's will, they are going to be complaining against God's leaders instead of praying first.

**16 "There is no straw given to your servants, and they say to us, 'Make brick!' And indeed your servants [are] beaten, but the fault [is] in your [own] people." 17 But he said, "You [are] idle! Idle! Therefore you say, 'Let us go [and] sacrifice to the LORD.' 18 "Therefore go now [and] work; for no straw shall be given you, yet you shall deliver the quota of bricks." 19 And the officers of the children of Israel saw [that] they [were] in trouble after it was said, "You shall not reduce [any] bricks from your daily quota."**

The officers complain to Pharaoh that they can't meet the quota because they are not given straw –

Pharaoh replies with – you have too much time on your hands.

Therefore you will continue to make bricks without being given straw and continue to make the quota.

In other words – things are going to get much worse.

**20 Then, as they came out from Pharaoh, they met Moses and Aaron who stood there to meet them. 21 And they said to them, "Let the LORD look on you and judge, because you have made us abhorrent in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us."**

The officers come out of their meeting with Pharaoh and they start to blame Moses.

It's all your fault Moses – our lives were much easier before you came in the picture.

Church, these are the lies that Satan puts in our hearts.

The Children of Israel had been crying out to God to deliver them from slavery and now when things get a little tough – they make it seem that Pharaoh was their buddy???

These officers might have been taking it out on Moses and Aaron – but really, their beef was with God.

At the end of chapter 4 – they were worshipping God because Moses told them that God was going to do something about it.

And here in chapter 5, they are blaming God for doing something.

**22 So Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people? Why [is] it You have sent me? 23 "For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all."**

In verse 22, Moses does the right thing by coming before the Lord and asking Him Why – Why is it You have sent me???

Moses had forgotten what God had said at Mt Sinai.

God had told Moses that Pharaoh was going to resist at first.

But Moses reacts as though he is surprised and so therefore he complains.

Maybe Moses had in mind that delivering God's children was going to be a cake walk.

Many believers become discouraged in their walk when they face adversity and they become discouraged.

Discouragement in our Christian walk is to be expected.

No matter how much we are reminded that we will suffer, and have trials, and be afflicted, it stills stops us in our progress.

But the good news is that God never stops. He began this good work in each of us, and He will be faithful to complete it.

Amen.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

