



EXODUS

GOD PROMISES DELIVERANCE

Before Life Group

Read Exodus 5-6

In Exodus 5 we have the first show down between Moses and Pharaoh. In coming to Pharaoh, Moses came with the authority of the one true God to challenge a man who viewed himself as a god. There is almost this sense that you would hope Pharaoh would relent to the charges and commands of God and that the Israelites would be free to worship their God. Surely a man in a position such as the one Pharaoh was in would be able to understand the issue of true authority and know when to submit.

However, in this moment, the opposite occurs. Instead of viewing this as a chance to show himself as a benevolent king, he reveals his true nature. Pharaoh, when challenged by even the true authority, retreated to defend his power, which he felt was threatened. Immediately, the insecure leader sought to prove his dominance over the people who were already overburdened. It was with this news that Moses would have to return to the people. They had anticipated freedom as an answer to their prayers. Instead, they received the punishment of heavier labor and greater pain. The Israelites began to wonder if their prayers were truly heard or not and lashed out against Moses saying "May the LORD look on you and judge you! You have made us obnoxious to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us." [Exodus 5:21, NIV](#)

God, however disparaging the initial setbacks appeared, still promised His people deliverance. God knew the road that laid before His people and the difficulties they would face. During the time that Moses and the Israelites needed reassurance, God provided for the people. He reminded them, not with signs and wonders, but by recalling God's longstanding history of delivering his people. God had gone before them and would continue to do so, even today. He first reminded Moses that He was indeed the God of the patriarchs of the Israelites, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Genesis 6:2-3). Then God reassured them that His hand was a steady hand, faithful to deliver the promises he has given. There would be no conquering or defeating God because He was undefeatable. God promises deliverance for His people and makes safe paths for their freedom and redemption.

It comes as no coincidence that this is the point that Moses took to depict the genealogy of Moses and Aaron. God's promise of deliverance was not only for the Israelites but spanned throughout the course of human history and continues to weave through human history even today. As the Israelites would face trials, difficulties, and adverse situations, God would be with them every step of the way, just as He had been with them in countless generations before. God's hand of deliverance would guide the Israelites just as it had guided them in the past and will guide us into our eternal destiny today.

Adverse Consequences

As people, we tend to think that just because we are following God means that everything will go pleasantly. We expect that following God will result in the immediate raining down of monetary blessing, happiness, and never a negative feeling. In the case of the Israelites, it is possible that he thought his interaction with Pharaoh would result in the Israelites being safely escorted out with the provision they had helped amass along the way. Perhaps even they would receive the blessing of Pharaoh and a fond farewell. However deeply we desire this or crave the happy ending, this is not how things occurred for the Israelites.

The words of Moses had enraged the dictator Pharaoh and he took it out on the Israelites. In one command, he increased the work they were required to produce while simultaneously removing their provision of supplies. No more would they be provided straw to make the bricks. They would either need to split their manhood to get more, work longer hours, or do without. Did Moses do the wrong thing in coming to Pharaoh?

One of the more difficult things for those who follow Christ to understand is that sometimes you will do the right thing and you will experience adverse consequences because of it. This is not an indication that you did anything wrong, necessarily, but an indication that we have not yet arrived at the promised land. For the Israelites, they were strangers in a strange land, enslaved by a foreign power and Egypt was not the promised land God had for them. For us, along our path, we are not yet in the promised land of our eternity. We too are strangers in a strange land, pursuing a God that the world is hostile towards. This will have consequences.

There are numerous instances in which it is blatantly stated that following Christ and living according to His word will result in trouble. To expect that we are immune from that is arrogant at best. Challenges to our faith will occur and they will reveal where we truly put our trust. For Moses and the Israelites, faith in God required an absolute trust in the hand of God to lead them through persecution, torture, and in some cases, death. For us, while the world may look down at us, we stand firm in our faith because we know where our future lies. We can continue to pursue God because we know that He not only will save us from whatever situation we find ourselves in, but that He has already redeemed us from the consequences of our sin and death. While the suffering and pain may be now, our salvation is close at hand and we approach eternity with our Heavenly Father.

God Does Not Abandon His People

While it cannot be understated that a follower of God will endure adverse consequences, we must be careful not to assume that because we are enduring difficult times that God has abandoned us. For the Israelites, the coming of Moses was the mark that God had heard their cries. Moses was the sign that God had not abandoned them or left them to suffer. Though the sign was clear, Moses' coming was inaugurated by immediate difficulties. The suffering and pain the Israelites had endured as slaves was about to get worse as a direct result of the involvement of God through His servant Moses. It was no indication that God had departed but that God was stirring in the lives of those who follow Him and even in those who oppose Him.

There are plenty of times when it will feel that God has abandoned you. Surely, this is how the everyday person felt as Moses returned to meet with the elders. Then it would be announced that their burdens had increased by the ruling of Pharaoh. For us, the path towards redemption and sanctification can often appear to be a painful path. When we surrender to God, we willingly defy the previous oppressive order that held us



under a burden we could not bear. Situations will not immediately improve and the presence of God might be not immediately recognizable.

Yet, for all of the difficulties the Israelites faced and were going to face, it was not a sign that God had left, but a sign that God was moving. The status quo of most situations settles somewhere in the doldrums of our fallen nature. When we endure the oppression day in and day out, our oppression begins to feel normal and we accept that this is how life is now. However, the Gospel message is one of deliverance from our oppression, no matter how complacent we have become. When Christ comes, the settled dust gets kicked up and things dragged out into the clearing. The enemy does not appreciate being disturbed. Jesus disturbs that status quo by His coming.

For the believer, suffering, for however long it may be, must be viewed through the lens of eternity. God's plan for our salvation will take you through various struggles. Some will be removing you from the oppressive and vindictive rulers who seek your destruction. Some will be the refiners fire of the Holy Spirit removing the sin in your life. Whatever the struggle may be, God is not abandoning you but walking beside you. He is not seeking your destruction or wishing to heap burdens upon you but rather is seeking to give life and remove burdens from you for all eternity.

Discussion Questions

Read Exodus 5:22-6:12

1. What does Pharaoh's response to Moses reveal about his character? How do you think the people of Israel felt when they received the news that their situation would be getting more difficult?
2. What did God do to reassure His people during this time of difficulties?
3. God is able to promise with certainty and clarity amidst difficult times and adverse situations. In what ways does this speak to the nature of God and the promises God offers?
4. How do the stories of God's provision help carry us through the times when we feel abandoned by God? Why is it important to remember the faithfulness of God?
5. When in your life have you experienced an adverse situation that God used to shape you or guide you to the purpose He has for you in life?
6. Why is it important to keep faith during difficult times when it feels as if God has abandoned us? Where in our lives do we struggle with understanding that God has not abandoned us?
7. God has promised our salvation when we die to ourselves and put our faith in Jesus Christ. What promises has God given to His people regarding our eternal salvation? How do we achieve this? How do we respond to having it?

About the Author.

Pastor Daniel Burton lives in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. In May 2015, Daniel graduated from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary with his Master of Divinity. It was here that he began to explore his passion for Theology and deeper exploration of the word of God. Daniel believes that, at its core, Theology should be fun. Check out more of his work at <http://thegospeloutpost.com>

