

July 12th, 2020
Standing on the Promises
Exodus 5-6

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

July 5	Psalms 108-114	July 9	Psalms 120-132
July 6	Psalms 115-118	July 10	Psalms 133-139
July 7	Psalms 119:1-88	July 11	Psalms 140-145
July 8	Psalms 119:89-176	July 12	Psalms 146-150

Lesson Introduction: Our lesson this week finds Moses and Aaron appearing before the Pharaoh for the first time to call on him to let the people of God go. They are met with much opposition. In fact, it turns out that their request ends up making things more difficult on the Hebrew people than they had already been. As we study this week, we will see how following the will of God is not always easy, but that through it all, He is faithful to keep His promises and reveal His glory.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS:

- ***God's people face trials of various kinds (Ch. 5)***
- ***The LORD is faithful to fulfill His Promises (Ch. 6)***

Read Exodus 5-6

Discussion Section 1: The Cost of Obedience (Ch. 5)

-What is the result of the obedience of Moses and Aaron in this passage?

- Why did Pharaoh command his taskmasters to make the work more difficult? (**V. 6-9**)

-What was the response of the Hebrews to their hardships? (**V. 15-21**)

-Have you ever responded to God during hardship in the same way Moses did in this passage? Was Moses' response to God acceptable? (**V. 22-23**)

Note: After God appeared to Moses, called him to go before the Pharaoh, and assured him that He would be with him and provide Aaron as his mouthpiece, Moses was ready to make his first plea before the king of Egypt. He had been commanded by God to tell the Pharaoh to let His people go, and he was obedient to do just that. What we see in this passage is that obedience to God's

commandments does not always mean that things will go smoothly for us as we obey. In fact, what we will see is that obedience to God's commandments can sometimes make life even more difficult.

After Moses told Pharaoh that the Lord had said to let His people go, Pharaoh initially responded by simply expressing that God's word meant nothing to him. In verse 2 we see him state, "***Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover, I will not let Israel go.***" Pharaoh had no regard for the LORD, and completely scoffed at the idea of acting favorably toward the Hebrew people in response to His directive. We are reminded here that often the world has no understanding of why we would live by the commandments of the Lord because, simply put, they have no knowledge of Him. It should not surprise us when those who do not know the Lord are hateful or mocking toward us when we try to live for Him. As Christians we can be certain that those who do not know God will ridicule us for living according to His standard. And ridicule might not be the only thing we have to live with, for as we see in this story, sometimes obedience to the Lord's commands results in persecution and hardship.

In **verses 6-21** we see how miserable life became for the Hebrew people after Moses was obedient to the command of the Lord to go before Pharaoh. They were no longer provided straw for making brick but were expected to continue the same output each day and punished severely when their quotas were not met! As you might expect, this led to great discouragement amongst the Hebrew slaves. They were so discouraged, in fact, that they called down judgment on Moses and Aaron for bringing them such trouble (**V. 21**). Moses himself even became discouraged and had some questions for God as to why it was that things had turned out the way they had after he walked in obedience to His command. Tony Merida points out in his book ***Exalting Jesus in Exodus*** how we might see ourselves in Moses here:

"From verse 22, notice how Moses is beginning to question (1) God's goodness ("why have You caused trouble for this people?"), (2) God's purpose ("why did You ever send me?"), and (3) God's actions ("You haven't delivered Your people at all"). Moses reminds us of ourselves. Moses was an imperfect sinner, like us. He was a man in desperate need of God's mercy and grace, like us. Here, he is at a crisis of belief.

On a positive note, at least Moses was addressing God. He cried out to God. It was an honest groaning before the Lord. Moses' complaint is like the prayers in the Psalms, as people lamented and cried out (see Ps 77). It is okay to cry out with questions. Even Jesus, while on the cross, cried out, "Why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt 27:46). These questions are not sinful. They just need to be humble, honest, and faithful. Ask God your questions! But do not ask sinfully or rebelliously. "And remember, God does not have to answer our questions (He never answered all of Job's!), but He does hear our questions." (Merida, Exalting Jesus in Exodus, pg. 42-43).

Ultimately, what we learn in chapter 5 is that following God's way does not make us exempt from trials. To the contrary, being committed to obediently following Christ can often bring more trials on this earth (**John 16:33, 2 Timothy 3:12, James 1:2**). As we face these trials may we be quick to call out to God in humility! We do not know the answers, but He does. Now let's turn our attention to Chapter 6, where we will be reminded that one of the best ways to fight discouragement in the Christian life is to cling to God's everlasting promises!

Discussion Section 2: God's Encouragement (Ch. 6)

-What does God point to in order to reassure Moses that He would deliver the people of Israel? (**V. 1, 5, 8**)

-How have you seen the Lord be faithful to His promises in your life?

-What promises do you love to cling to in God's word?

Note: In desperation, Moses asked God some serious questions at the end of chapter 5. *Why have you done this? Why did you ever send me?* And then tells God that ever since he went before Pharaoh things had only gotten worse, and He had still not delivered His people. Amazingly, rather than finding God angry with Moses' questions, in chapter 6 we find God reassuring Moses, lovingly reminding him of the covenant he made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Before that, however, God simply reminds Moses of His incredible strength. In **V. 1**, He says, **"Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will send them out, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land."** The king of Egypt would have

been the most powerful world leader at that time, and he was known to his people as a god himself. Here the LORD simply reminds Moses that He has all the power over this "god," and that he would cause Pharaoh to let His people go through strong actions against him and the people of Egypt.

He then begins to remind Moses of the covenant he had made with Abraham (**Gen. 12, 15**). In **verses 2-8**, God speaks about the promise He had made to the patriarchs, and how He would bring it to pass. Verse 7 is a beautiful word of reassurance, **"I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God..."** We saw throughout the book of Genesis how God would continually remind His children of the covenant promise He had made. What a gracious thing it is that God would take time to comfort His children. He never forgets anything, but he realizes that we do, and that we need His patient reassurance from time to time.

As we consider the trials that we face, may we remember the strength and promises of the LORD. There is nothing that is difficult for Him. He is all-powerful, and what seems impossible to overcome on our own is no problem at all for God. May we remember the words to the old hymn, **A Mighty Fortress is our God:**

**"And though this world, with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us.
The Prince of Darkness grim,—
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo! His doom is sure,—
One little word shall fell him."**

Not only is our God strong, but He is true. When He says He will do something, it is as good as done. The Scriptures are filled with wonderful promises from God that we can confidently take to the bank because we belong to Christ Jesus (**2 Corinthians 1:28**). Cling to what God has told us in His word. Rest in His promise. He will surely bring all of them to pass!