

Exodus 5-6 “Stick To The Plan”

So tonight we are going to be covering 2 chapters instead of the usual 1 and we need to just briefly remember where we are in the narrative.

Moses if you remember had been called to return to his people who were being held captive as slaves in Egypt after being in the desert for 40 years. Sadly, as God called Moses we saw throughout chapters 3 and 4 that Moses came up with 5 different excuses as to why he could not possibly be the one that God would call to go and help the people of Israel find freedom.

First, he said “Who am I?” He doubted that God could call him and perhaps his doubt came from his previous failure when he had tried to make things happen on his own which ended up with him killing an Egyptian as he beat an Israelite.

Second Moses was worried the people would not recognize that God had sent him and he asked God to give him the name of the One that was sending him to which the Lord said that he was to tell them “I AM WHO I AM” had sent him...meaning the God of the Hebrews, the One that is over all things, the one that would do everything needed on their behalf.

Third, Moses found himself with a case of the what-if’s or Lord suppose they do this or that when I come. Moses was thinking Lord what if they don’t accept me, what if they won’t listen, what if they end up turning against me...and I think everyone goes through the what-if’s as the Lord calls them and works in them in various situations.

Fourth, Moses said Lord I am not eloquent in speech...in other words Lord I don’t think I will be able to say things in a way the people will

respect and certainly the king won't listen...and Again for the fourth time the Lord responded by saying He would give him the words to say and the Lord asked "who is it that has created the mouth of man?"

And then finally Moses just flat out said "Lord send someone else" and at this point after all the patience that God had towards Moses we were told the Lord was angry and this is when the Lord said Aaron would go with Moses and be a spokesperson for him. Moses would receive from God and pass it to Aaron who would then speak to the people.

And then at the end of chapter 4 we saw Moses and Aaron go before the people of Israel and if you remember there were 3 signs Moses was to do. He was to throw down his rod and it would become a snake, to put his hand in his clothing and it would come out as leprous and to pour out water and it would turn into blood...and as Moses did these signs we were told in Exodus 4:29-31 if you look at that with me the following **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.**

So the people as they heard Aaron and they saw Moses perform the signs became convinced that God had indeed visited His people and their initial response is to worship the Lord and to be thankful for what the Lord had said that He was going to accomplish on their behalf.

Sadly, they won't stay in this place of trust and faith and we'll see that develop in our text.

Ok with that in place let's look here at verse 1 of chapter 5 which says **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.'"**

I guess I have a question right away as we look at this but how did Moses and Aaron ever get in to see the king of Egypt? I mean Moses was for the most part at this point a nobody and Aaron we don't know too much about and I don't have the answer for this but somehow these two men that God had called were able to end up in front of perhaps the most powerful man on the planet.

And Moses and Aaron are pretty bold here to simply say to the king that the people of Israel were to be allowed to go into the wilderness to hold a feast unto the Lord.

Let's see how the Pharaoh responds in verse 2 which says **2And 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."** As I look at this the king of Egypt is seen here responding very poorly and in our minds we may think he is being disrespectful or sarcastic in his response when he says "who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?"

What I want to submit to you though is that this was a man that worshipped numerous gods...and at this point really all he knows is that the Israelites are a people group that is under his thumb so to say. They are his servants and he had no interest in knowing about them as a people group or understanding the God they worshipped.

I will say that what the king asked here is a question all of us must answer in life. We all must answer Who is the Lord? Even Jesus asked the disciples the following when He said this over in Luke 9:18-20 which says **18 And it happened, as He was alone praying, that His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, “Who do the crowds say that I am?”**

19 So they answered and said, “John the Baptist, but some say Elijah; and others say that one of the old prophets has risen again.”

20 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

Peter answered and said, “The Christ of God.”

We could ask this evening who do you say that Jesus is? Or who do you say the God of heaven is? The King of Egypt had no idea and he even says I do not know the Lord...I will say that he is definitely going to know the Lord by the time this is all done and over with.

Look at verse 3 which says **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.”**

Again Moses and Aaron speak what the Lord had given them and this time they clarify to say we only want to go for 3 days into the desert to sacrifice to the Lord...and notice they say that if they don’t they would encounter pestilence or even death.

So Moses makes it clear that if they as a people are not allowed to do this that there would be a penalty upon them as a people...Certainly if you were the king you wouldn’t want your slaves to be sick, suffering

and even dying. So it would make sense for the king to let them go at this point.

You might even notice that Moses was quite polite when he did this saying PLEASE let us go...So no demand is made to the king of Egypt they are just asking for a short three-day vacation after decades of serving the Egyptians.

Some look at this and say why did God do this when the ultimate goal was to let the people of Israel go permanently from the land? I mean why the 3 day journey?

We don't know for sure why God did it this way but some think that perhaps God was showing Moses and Aaron how hard the heart of Pharaoh was...Perhaps God wanted them to see that even a small request was going to be rejected.

And it may be that perhaps if the King had permitted them to go out of the land for 3 days that the 10 plagues that would eventually come on the Egyptians could have been less severe or perhaps the Lord could have liberated the Israelites with less judgment than what ended up happening.

We can't know for sure why it began this way but we do see the Lord trying to be reasonable with the Pharaoh and Moses was polite about it initially.

Let's see how the king responds this time in verses 4-5 which say **4Then the king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people from their work? Get back to your labor."** ⁵ **And Pharaoh said, "Look, the people of the land are many now, and you make them rest from their labor!"**

Hmm...well that's not what Moses and Aaron expected I don't think. The King had no room for compromise and it has now been exposed to be such as Pharaoh says you are causing the people to be distracted from their work and they need to get back to their labor.

Moses and Aaron should not have been surprised by this response for God had said in the last chapter in Exodus 4:21 which says 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.** God had been clear that the king would respond poorly and so Moses should have known in his heart that this was expected...what we'll see though as this develops is Moses and the people of Israel thought things would go differently.

Has that ever happened to you? Where you thought the Lord spoke to you about something and you were following by faith and then things did not go the way you thought or imagined they would? You are in good company, for many have seen this happen in their lives.

Even the apostle Paul I believe went through something similar in that he believed he would one day travel to visit Rome...What I don't think he knew was that when he did go to Rome he would go as a prisoner rather than a free man...and yet as his life developed I think he could see the sovereign hand of God as he was given many opportunities along the way to serve the Lord.

Let's see what else the King did in response to the request of Moses and Aaron in verses 6-14 which say this 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.' ⁹ Let more work be laid on the men, that they may labor in it, and let them not regard false words."

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?"

Now this is interesting to me...Moses and Aaron are sent on a mission by God to see the people set free...they follow by faith and do the signs before the people of Israel and they in response worship God...then they go to the king of Egypt and they speak to him and they essentially tell him that the people need to be able to worship God for 3 days...and as God is beginning to work to liberate his people what does the enemy of the people of Israel do?

He makes the situation even worse doesn't he? The king decides the people of Israel must have to much time on their hands and they are thinking to much about being free and so he requires that the people

not only make the bricks for construction but also that they now have to gather the straw that was needed to make the bricks...This was something they didn't have to do previously...and then the king says your quota for the day will remain the same even though you are doing more.

We even see the leaders of the Israelites who are called officers beaten when the people couldn't meet what was demanded by the king.

Now I want to take just a minute here to develop something that I believe we can glean from this situation. I want you to think about your own life and probably we can see this the most when the Lord was working to call us to Himself...at least that's where I have seen it the most in my life.

Before I came to Jesus as I went through life I did what I wanted when I wanted and I had no concern whatsoever for anything that God might think or want for my life.

But something interesting happened in that when the Lord began to reach out to me that I believe the enemy of my soul began to work even harder against me trying to destroy my life and cause me to hate God. For me, many people came to me and began to speak to me about how Jesus could set me free from the life that I was living and He could give me a better more fulfilled life.

And for me when I heard that I only became more and more angry against God and I believe the enemy was working to try and frustrate me and to cause me to hold on even harder to the things of this world.

I believe very much that when a person is either close to making a decision to follow Jesus or the Lord is desiring to use that person that the attacks of the enemy are ramped up even more...Satan always works harder against those God is working in and using.

I have to tell you if the Lord wants to use you and you want to be used by the Lord that the enemy is going to work very hard to come against you...Often times this trick of the enemy to cause hardship in our lives is enough to cause many to choose to take the easy way or the path that is wider.

Paul said to Timothy if you want to live a godly life you should expect persecution. Jesus said they persecuted me they will persecute you also...So we should expect that if we desire to stand strong in Christ that the world is going to come against us.

Imagine being one of the Israelites and this is the response the king gives when you request to only leave for 3 days...Your flesh is going to say wait a minute I want things to go back to the way they were when it was easier and the natural desire of a person will say what do I need to do to just see all this stop...the flesh will look for the easy way out.

So instead of seeing immediate deliverance in the situation the people of Israel saw immediate difficulty in their lives...and that's never fun.

Let me ask you something and then we'll move on here. When things get rough and tough in life, when the world is coming against you how do you think you should respond? Who should you run to for help in times of need and difficulty? I think it's obvious that I'm referring to our need to run to Jesus with our problems and yet watch what the

Israelites did in verses 15-19 which say ¹⁵Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried out to Pharaoh, saying, “Why are you dealing thus with your servants? ¹⁶There 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.”

¹⁷But he said, “You *are* idle! Idle! Therefore you say, ‘Let us go *and* sacrifice to the Lord.’ ¹⁸Therefore go now *and* work; for no straw shall be given you, yet you shall deliver the quota of bricks.” ¹⁹And 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 Israelites ran to the enemy and looked for relief...They actually go to the king himself and ask for mercy...and they would find none and I think we should remember that though we look for mercy from the ways of this world that none will be found.

I exhort us today as followers of Jesus not to look for our answers to life's problems from the ways or the things of this world.

And so the king responds poorly.

Then watch what they do in verses 20-21 which say ²⁰Then, as they came out from Pharaoh, they met Moses and Aaron who stood there to meet them. ²¹And 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.”

When they don't get what they want from the king they turn on Moses and Aaron complaining against them saying the Lord judge you two

because you have made things even more difficult for us as we are forced to serve the Egyptians.

I might remind you that it wasn't that long ago that they were seen worshipping God for what He had said through these two men.

Instead of complaining against the leaders sent to lead them they should have prayed for them...they should have leaned on the promises of God and known that God was more than capable of dealing with the Egyptians.

Now watch what Moses does as the people are against him in verses 22-23 which say 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? ²³For 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."**

Notice Moses does not respond to the people, he doesn't look to justify himself, he doesn't try to explain things to them but instead he is seen running to the Lord. That's the right response isn't it?

So often people will respond emotionally in a situation or they will fight even against what God is wanting to do, instead they should be running to the Lord and asking for His help and His wisdom.

Now Moses here makes a mistake I believe even as he talks to the Lord. Notice he says in verse 23 For since I came to Pharaoh he has done evil to this people and You have not delivered the people. Essentially what Moses is saying here is Lord you aren't doing things fast enough and you aren't doing things the way I thought they should happen.

It would seem Moses had a hard time just comprehending what God had said previously...It would seem he forgot that God said the king would harden his heart and that many signs and wonders and destructions would need to take place before the people of Israel were able to go free.

It would seem that Moses wanted the promises fulfilled without the struggle...and I think we are all like that.

I think we forget that sometimes the struggles God allows in life are given to us that we might learn many lessons...God may want to accomplish things in and through your life and so often we can just give up when things get hard...Instead we need to learn to lean into the promises of God, we need to lean into the Lord when trials take place asking the Lord to show us all we need to learn through it.

It's so hard isn't it when trials are going on? I know that from my own life as well, trials stink, you just want them to be over, you don't want to struggle and suffer and yet as you do the Lord shows up in so many ways and you learn so many lessons that you would never learn if God just made everything happen right away.

Moses is understandably upset, he is seeing his people suffer, things are difficult and he is just laying that all out before the Lord and then look at how the Lord responds in chapter 6 verse 1 which says **6 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land."**

I don't want us to miss this...Moses is coming before the Lord and laying things out and the people are against him and the Lord

responds by saying “NOW YOU SHALL SEE WHAT I WILL DO TO PHARAOH” It’s almost as if Moses was thinking he was going to do these things in his own strength and by his own might and now that he has failed and the people are complaining the Lord is saying to Moses “Are you done trying?” “Are you ready for me to step in and do things?”

God again reminds Moses that it will be with a strong hand that the king will let them go and that he will drive them out of the land when it’s time.

God will take care of the situation the Israelites have found themselves in...I also want you to just notice that God loved Moses and as Moses was having a hard time God was there to reassure him and strengthen him and even remind him of all that he had said.

In fact look at how the Lord continues in verses 2-5 which say ²And God spoke to Moses and said to him: “I am the Lord. ³I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name Lord I was not known to them. ⁴I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers. ⁵And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant.

God reminds Moses that He is the LORD and that’s the covenant name of God that is mentioned there...He then reminds Moses that He Himself had appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and that He had made a covenant with them and that the land of Canaan was to be theirs and that God had heard the groanings of the people of Israel as they were in bondage.

Notice this is all about who? It's all about God, it's not about Moses. God is here and moving forward going to be asserting His authority and His rulership over the situation and He is going to remind Moses of all He is going to do.

Look at verses 6-8 which say ⁶Therefore 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. ⁸ And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the Lord.'”

So Moses was again to go to the people of Israel and he was to just let them know all that God would do...If you are an underliner of your Bible you might just mark the following I WILL statements that are found here in this text and there are 7 of them.

God said I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from them, I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and great judgments, I will take you as my people, I will be your God, I will bring you into the land I swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and I will give it to you as a heritage.

God is here promising some incredible things to the people of Israel...and notice that all of this is unconditional...meaning God would do these things for the people of Israel and there were no requirements for them...God didn't say I will do this IF you do these things for me...No this was God's mercy even when they didn't

deserve it, this was God fulfilling His promises, this was God loving on His people and Moses again gets to take this awesome message to the people of Israel.

Look at verse 9 and you would think the people will respond with great joy once again...well, not really it says this ⁹**So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel; but they did not heed Moses, because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage.**

So hard were things for God's people that they just couldn't see the truth, they couldn't grab hold of the promises, they essentially reject what God is saying as they can only see what is before them.

I'm thankful that the Lord's work on our behalf is not dependent on us because I can often be like the people of Israel. I can't see the solutions to my problems, I can't see how things are going to work out and yet the Lord has a way of doing what He needs to as we follow by faith and often times as He simply carries us through life as He will do for the people of Israel.

Verses 10-11 say ¹⁰**And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,** ¹¹**“Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the children of Israel go out of his land.”**

So Moses goes to the people again and they essentially reject him and are seen in great despondency and then the Lord says to Moses Go back to the king and tell him to let the people of Israel go...God is essentially doubling down here, the mind of God hasn't changed, the plan must move forward and Moses is here given the command to get moving.

It's like God is saying don't pay attention to what's happening around you instead put your eyes on me and just be obedient...It's like the Lord is saying you don't worry about the details, instead just be obedient and I'll deal with the king however I need to.

Moses then in verse 12 says this ¹²**And Moses spoke before the Lord, saying, "The children of Israel have not heeded me. How then shall Pharaoh heed me, for I am of uncircumcised lips?"** Again Moses objects and he says they won't listen to me and if my own people won't listen to me Lord how is it that Pharaoh will listen to me.

Verse 13 says ¹³**Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, and gave them a command for the children of Israel and for Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.** God essentially says this is not if you want to do this but you are going to do this. You are to go and command that these things are going to be.

That's a hard place to find yourself...No one seems to be listening to Moses and yet God is saying "go and be obedient anyways."

Have you ever found yourself in that kind of position? No one else can see what you have in your heart and what God is communicating to you...It may even happen that the people you are close with just can't see what it is that God has put on your heart and the Lord may speak to you and say "Follow the plan anyways."

That's what Moses was to do, it didn't matter what the Israelites said or what the king thought **what mattered was Moses needing to be obedient to the Lord.**

Now let's finish the chapter here and you are saying whoa there are a lot more verses...If you just glance at your Bibles you will see there are

names from verses 14-27 and we are not going to run through all these instead I am going to just let you know that this genealogy is going to cover three of the sons of Israel...They are Reuben, Simeon and Levi...Levi is going to be the tribe that gets focused on for in the tribe of Levi is one who is born named Kohath and to Kohath was born Amram and Amram if you look at verse 20 married his father's sister who was Jochebed and to them were born Moses and Aaron and then after that we see the sons of Aaron that were born and in verse 23 if you glance at that we have 4 sons listed...Nadab and Abihu will serve as priests for a time but they will offer to God an offering that is ungodly and will lose their lives...and then there is Eleazar and Ithamar as well.

And then the focus goes to Eleazar who had a wife and they had a child named Phinehas.

So essentially we are seeing a family tree of Moses and Aaron...why it's placed here in the narrative I'm not sure but we do know that God makes no mistakes and that this family was important to the narrative and the deliverance of the people of Israel.

Ok look at verses 28-30 briefly here and we'll finish up which says

²⁸And it came to pass, on the day the Lord spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, ²⁹that the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "I *am* the Lord. Speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say to you."

³⁰But Moses said before the Lord, "Behold, I *am* of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh heed me?"

So it's almost like a little break here between verses 10-13 and verses 28-30 and its almost like we see a repeat of what had just

happened...and really this sets things up for chapter 7 which we'll get to next week.

In closing tonight, I just want to say that this section of scripture is a very interesting one to look at **as we see that for Moses and Aaron and even the people of Israel things** did not pan out the way they thought they hoped they would. **Instead of getting better the situation only got worse.**

And when we look at the king here it seems he is unwilling to budge, he won't even consider letting the people go for three days into the wilderness let alone letting the people of Israel go free.

I am thankful that the response of man is not the final say...And we will see as the book of Exodus unfolds that God has a way of taking care of business as He will do all that He has promised His people. God will set them free, the people of Israel will and still are a people that God calls His own and He will fulfill all His promises.

Today as we go through this world and we often encounter times of great difficulty as we look to serve the Lord **we can know that at the end of the day and the end of the age that God will fulfill all He has said.**

We should be comforted by this that even though Moses is struggling and the people of Israel won't believe that God is faithful and He always will be. Even when we are faithless the Bible says He is faithful.

Let's build our lives upon that truth, let's trust the Lord for big things in our lives and let's focus in on His promises to us as we seek to mature and grow in our faith.

Let's pray.

Exodus 5-6 “Stick To The Plan”

Chapter 5

Introduction

Exodus 4:29-31

Verse 2

Luke 9:18-20

Verses 4-5

Exodus 4:21