

Clarity

Exodus 6:1-13

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HDBC

Most of us pray often. We ask God for things. We tell Him how we are doing. We share our hurts and celebrate our wins. We express our frustrations. And when we pray, we trust that He hears and will respond. However, let's be honest, we are less focused on listening for His response than we are in sharing our thoughts. Even though we expect an answer do we really watch and listen for that answer? I confess that I'm lacking in this area. **But God does answer,** not always in a clear, unmistakable voice or in an obvious way, but He does.

In the last chapter, Moses and the people experienced a major **setback**. The people blamed Moses. Moses blamed God. He said so in his prayer. His prayer was heart-felt but lacking in theological depth. That often happens when we quickly react to bad news of a sudden negative turn in our lives. It generally leads to the kind of prayer uttered by Moses.

He accused God of doing nothing when He should have been doing something. I'm sure that sounds familiar. I'm guessing we've all been there. It's easy to criticize an inactive, apathetic God. **However, God** was not apathetic, or inactive. He simply had not acted **how** or **when** Moses thought He should. **But God** responded with grace, certainty and clarity.

Read Exodus 6:1-13

Moses mistook God's inactivity for not caring. In His response, God brought **clarity** to the situation. He reminded Moses of three things that needed to be clearly understood. If Moses could remember these three things it would change his perspective of God and of the situation. He reminded Moses of . . .

1. His Power (1)

Note how emphatically he told Moses what was **going** to happen. No uncertainty, no ambiguity, no doubt. *You claim that I have done nothing . . . Watch what is about to happen. You haven't seen, but you will see.* It was a clear reminder to Moses that God had the power to do what He planned. Nothing is too difficult for Him. **Note the phrase**, what I will do. Moses was not the source of power, God was.

The people **would indeed** go free because Pharaoh would let them go under compulsion. In fact he would drive them out under compulsion. **Compulsion** pictures a strong wind moving a ship, or a mighty army forcing a weaker army to surrender.

Pharaoh will let the people go and when he does it will be because God has done it. **Just because you have not seen God act in response to your need does not mean He is not acting or will not act. God's way is seldom our way. God's timing is seldom our timing.** God's word equals his power. That is not true of us. Just because I say it does not mean I have the power to do it.

Tim Keller writes:

*God's words are identical with his actions ... We humans say, "Let there be light in this room," but first we have to make sure the room has been properly wired. Then we have to walk across the room and flick a switch, or go to the cabinet and grab some matches so we can light a candle. Our words need deeds to back them up and can fail to achieve their purposes. God's words, however, cannot fail their purposes because, **for God, speaking and acting are the same things.***

When God speaks there is clarity about what will happen.

2. His Person (2-5)

God not only reminds Moses of **His power**, but also of **His person**, His nature, who He is. 3 things to note. He is the . . .

1) God who appears

The one who appeared to Moses was the same one who appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. **He is a God who shows up.** He reveals Himself to people. He is consistent. What He did for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, He did for Moses. He stepped into their lives. He has now stepped into Moses' life. He steps into our lives. He shows up.

2) God who relates

When he appeared to the Patriarchs it was as **God almighty** and not as **the Lord**. There is a progressive nature when it comes to the revelation of God. As the Bible story unfolds chronologically, God reveals more of Himself. To Moses He is **the LORD**. As we've already noted this is the personal name for God. It points to His desire to have an intimate relationship with us.

To emphasize the point, he reminded Moses that He had established a covenant with them. Not only would have had a relationship with them that was **family (intimate & personal)**, but it would be **permanent**. He would not change His mind. He would stick with them. Commitment.

3) God who hears

Isn't it frustrating when you talk with someone but they don't listen. It happens to all of us. God hears because He listens. He turns His ear toward those who are His own. The cries of His people in Egypt have reached His ears.

He is the God who **appears, relates** and **hears**. He is trustworthy. Don't give up on Him. Keep trusting who He is, even when you can't see what He is doing. *Graham Cook* put it well, *God is consistent, but he is also unpredictable. He is consistent in his nature. You always know where you are with God, but you seldom know what he is going to do next. You cannot find security in what God is doing. There is only security in who God is.*

So God reminds Moses of His **power** and of His **person** (nature).

3. His Promises (6-13)

In verse 1 God said to Moses, ***you will see what I will do . . .***

In the rest of the chapter God says what He **will do**. The repetition of the phrase ***I will*** speaks of certainty. These are not idle plans or hopes. There is a strong assurance that God will do them. His power & His person insure that He can and will fulfill his promises.

(6) I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians

(6) I will deliver you from their bondage

(6) I will redeem you with an outstretched arm

(7) I will take you for My people

(7) I will be your God

(8) I will bring you to the land

(8) I will give it to you for a possession

Seven promises God makes. Each one provides a clear benefit to the people. The day you realize that God acts for your good is the day you will begin to trust Him more and to rest in His promises even when things don't seem to be happening as you wish they would.

Many Bible scholars have noted the clear parallel that is found in the **promises of God to the Hebrews** and to **the salvation we have in Christ**. Those *I will* statements were intended to communicate that God was about to save His people, Israel. But they were also intended to point to the great salvation which we have in Jesus. There are five concepts found in the *I will* statements in the Exodus and that are clearly present in the salvation found in Jesus. **Tony Merida calls them five *gospel words* or *words of salvation*.**

We not only are getting a **history lesson** (how God worked), but also a **theological lesson** (how God saves). Here are the **five words**.

1) **Liberation** (6)

Seen in the first two *I will* statements. This is such a great picture of salvation. When God saves a person he brings them out from under the **burden** of sin and releases them from their **slavery** to sin. The Hebrews were toiling under a burden too heavy for them to lift. And they were enslaved in a system they were unable to escape.

The same is spiritually true of every person. We are under the weight of sin, in terms of the sin-debt we owe God. It is more than we could ever pay. But we are also enslaved to sin, in that we are unable to resist its power and influence in our lives.

When Jesus saves he liberates from both. At my salvation, Jesus lifted the burden of my sin, my sin debt. He was able to do so because He had paid the debt in full. When I was saved He broke the shackles that had kept me enslaved to sin and set me free to live holy and pure before Him. I'm no longer under the penalty of sin, nor am I a slave to sin.

2) **Redemption** (6)

I will redeem you with an outstretched arm. What a beautiful statement of what God would do for the Hebrews in Egypt and of what He does for us in salvation. The **redeemer** was a member of the person's family who acted to protect or bring a relative back into safety or security. The redeemer was there when you got in trouble and needed a helping hand. The redeemer would do things for you that you could not do for yourself.

If a person was **murdered**, it was the *redeemer* who made sure the murderer was brought to justice. If a person fell into **debt and was forced to sell their land or even sell themselves into slavery** the *redeemer* would pay the debt to recover the land or free the person.

In Moses' situation, God acted as the *redeemer*. He would come to the Hebrews and rescue them. When it comes to spiritual salvation, **Jesus is** the redeemer. He was the one who gave his life to purchase our salvation and bring us back into a good relationship with God.

3) Adoption (7)

I will take you as my people and I will be your God. To Pharaoh the Hebrews were **property**. To God they were **family**. In redemption God rescued them out of the bad. In adoption He brings them into the good.

The same is true of salvation. When a person is saved they are saved from the bad (redemption) and given the good (adoption). If you have trusted Jesus as your Lord, you are a child of God. You have entered into a permanent, unbreakable relationship with God. Being adopted by God into His family changes everything.

Anne Graham Lotz, daughter of Billy Graham was interviewed on CNN in December of 2001. She was asked about those who died on September 11th. If they were not saved by accepting Christ, the reporters wanted to know, would they go to heaven? She replied:

In my book, *Heaven: My Father's House* I tell about people who want to visit my father's home in North Carolina. They drive up the long drive and come to the gate. They knock on the gate and say: "Billy Graham, let us in. We've read your books; we've watched you on TV; we've written to you; and we want to come to your house."

And my father says: "Depart from me, I don't know you. You're not a member of my family, and you've not made any arrangements to come." But when I drive up that same driveway and knock on the gate, I say, "Daddy, this is Anne, and I've come home." The gate is thrown right open, and I go inside, because I'm the father's child.

Jesus said that heaven is his Father's house, speaking of God. Because heaven is God's house, he has the right to decide who comes in and who stays out. He says he will welcome anyone inside his home, anyone can come, but they have to be born again into his family through faith in Jesus Christ.

That gives us a wonderful hope, that when the time comes—whether death comes as a thief in the night as it did for those in the [World Trade Center] towers, or comes as an angel of mercy after a long illness—we can be assured that at the end of the journey, we'll step right into our Father's arms. We'll be welcomed there, because we're our Father's child.

4) **Inheritance** (8)

The Hebrews were saved with a future in mind. They would be brought into a wonderful land where they would establish themselves as a nation.

In Salvation, we are saved with a future in mind. That future includes living in a wonderful place. **For the Hebrews** it was a strip of land on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean sea. For us it is the new Heaven and earth which will be created for our enjoyment. The N.T. says it is *imperishable, uncorrupted and will not fade away.*

I see a natural progression in those four things.

Liberation sets us free from the burden and bondage of sin.

Redemption takes away the condemnation that would send us to Hell.

Adoption brings us into a father-child relationship with God.

Inheritance assures us of a wonderful future.

But there is one more ***I will*** statement in 7:4-5. One more truth.

5) **Mercy and Judgment** (7:3-4)

God says *I will harden Pharaoh's heart . . . I will put my hand on Egypt.*

The previous statements of God highlight the blessings that come with salvation . . . for the Hebrews then and for all who are saved now.

That's Mercy. It is for those who receive Christ, who trust Him. It is pictured in the Hebrews who believed God and were set free.

These last two statements of God highlight what happens to those who harden their hearts and reject God's grace. **That's Judgment.** It is pictured in Pharaoh and the Egyptians whose hearts were hardened toward God.

This pictures the great divide in all humanity. Those who receive mercy because of faith in Christ. And those who will experience judgment because they have rejected Christ.

There are many decisions in life, but only one will determine your eternity. When you stand before God the only things that will matter is what did you do with Christ. Did you received Him as Lord or reject Him? One leads to mercy and the other to judgment. It's as simple as that.

I want to challenge you to think beyond the moment, beyond the immediate future and think of eternity. This life will pass more quickly than you think. *A few years ago a study pointed out that Millennials were spending more money on coffee than they were on their retirement accounts.* It that is true, that's pretty foolish. But how much more foolish to fail to prepare for post-retirement. What then.

Imagine a three-year old child with a new toy. After playing for a few minutes the toy breaks and the child cries for the parent to fix the toy. The parents shares this. *A distant relative you have never met has died and left you 100 million dollars. It will be yours when you grow up.* How will the child respond? Keep crying and want the toy fixed. Can't see beyond the immediate. Can only focus on the here and now.

Please, please don't me like that child. Think . . . eternally.