

(Through the Bible) Exodus 1-5

by Chuck Smith

This sermon explores the early chapters of Exodus, focusing on the Israelites' oppression in Egypt and the formative years of Moses' life that shaped his destiny as a leader.

Duration: 1:23:21

Scripture: Genesis 50:26 - Exodus 1:5, Exodus 2:15-16, Exodus 4:1-7, Exodus 4:10-12

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that God is not just a passive observer of our struggles and suffering. He takes action to deliver His people from their hardships. The preacher also highlights the importance of not getting too attached to material possessions, as they can easily be taken away. Instead, our focus should be on the things of the Spirit and God's eternal kingdom. The sermon references the story of Moses and the Israelites in Egypt, where they faced oppression and hardship, but ultimately God delivered them.

Transcript

Exodus chapter 1, as we begin the book of Exodus. The word now could very well read and, as far as the Hebrew is concerned, for the book of Exodus is just a continuation of Genesis. The last verse of Genesis, so Joseph died being a hundred and ten years old, and they embalmed him and put him in a coffin in Egypt.

Now, these are the names of the children of Israel which came into Egypt. Every man in his household that came with Jacob. Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Ishkar, Zebulun, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

And all of the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls, for Joseph was in Egypt already. And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and that generation. So we can see how the first part of chapter 1 of Exodus is really just the continuation of the book of Genesis.

Again, written by Moses. It is interesting that the five books of Moses comprise almost one-seventh of the entire Bible, and that they comprise almost as much as two-thirds of the New Testament. Now, if God devotes one-seventh of the book to one particular period of history and study, it evidently is basic and foundational, and God wants us to really know it and understand it.

So, we have now the names of the sons of Jacob who came down with Jacob. They came down with their families into Egypt. Seventy souls, for Joseph was already there with his two sons.

And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty, and the land was filled with them. Probably a misunderstanding, it's probably an understatement. Children of Israel, fruitful, increased abundantly, multiplied, waxed exceeding mighty, the land was filled with them.

In other words, it's trying to tell you there's a population explosion among the Jews at that time. And indeed, there must have been. For the seventy souls that were there, about three hundred years after Joseph's death, when they made the Exodus out of Israel, at that time there were six hundred thousand adult males over the age of twenty-one.

So, you see when it says multiplied exceedingly and all, that's exactly what they were doing. They were doubling their population about every twenty-five years. Now, that's just about what's happening in the world today.

The world's population has begun to double just about every twenty-five years now. So, they were at a stage of population explosion about what we're experiencing now, a doubling about every twenty-five years. Now, there arose up a new king over Egypt which knew not Joseph.

And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we. Come on, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply and it come to pass that when there falls out another war, they will join also unto our enemies and fight against us, and then get out of the land. Now, the Pharaoh actually was fearful of their leaving the land.

And he felt that if another war would take place, that they would take advantage of it, fight with the enemies, and then leave the land. And so, in order to thwart this, the Pharaoh sent over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for the Pharaoh the treasure cities of Python and Ramses.

But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor.

And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage and mortar, brick, and all manner of service in the field. All their service wherein they made them serve was with rigor. So, they really began to afflict them, to oppress them, to lay upon them heavy burdens, to make life rather hard and miserable for them by inflicting heavy slave labor upon them.

Everything they did, they had to do it with rigor. Now, it is interesting that under these conditions, the children of Israel continued to multiply and grow. Probably one of the greatest weakening things that can happen to a nation is prosperity.

Nations seem to become strong and grow under adversity. The same seems to be true of the church. In the early history of the church, when the church was going through such severe persecution by the Roman government, the was growing by leaps and bounds.

Tremendous growth in the early church. But when the church began to be prosperous, Christianity began to be an accepted religion, almost a state religion. In fact, in many areas it did become the state religion.

And in all of those areas, the church became weak. Prosperity has a tendency of softening people, whereas adversity has the tendency of doing the opposite, making a people strong. So, the Pharaoh, in his endeavor to weaken them by the heavy labor and the rigorous labor, working with bricks and stones and really pushing heavy burdens on them, did not have the desired effect of weakening them, but actually just made them so much stronger.

They really all got in tremendous condition. And the king of Egypt spake with the Hebrew midwives. The name of one was Shepra and the name of the other was Pua.

And he said, when you do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women and you see them upon the stools, if it's a son, kill him. But if it's a daughter, let her live. But the midwives feared God and did not, as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive.

And the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said unto them, why have you done this thing and have saved the men children alive? And the midwives said unto the Pharaoh, because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women, for they're lively and they're delivered before we ever got to them. Therefore God dealt well with the midwives and the people multiplied and waxed very mighty. And it came to pass because the midwives fears God, that he made them houses.

And Pharaoh charged all his people saying, every son that is born, ye shall cast him into the river and every daughter ye shall save alive. So the Pharaoh, first of all, sought to cut off the male children by ordering the midwives to kill them the moment they were born. When that failed, then he gave a general order to just take the boy babies and cast them into the river.

Save the girl babies, that they of course might be servants and slaves. There is a problem here of the obvious lie of the midwives. When the Pharaoh called them on the carpet, how come you haven't fulfilled my order? They said, oh these women are just so lively before we can get to them.

The babies are already born. They're not like these Egyptian women who have a life of ease and leisure. Now this of course could be true.

It seems that where women are forced into hard labor and all, their body condition becomes such that they can have a baby and go back to work out in New Guinea where the ladies do so much of the farming and so much of the work. They'll have their baby and they'll go right, they'll strap it on their back and go back out and work again in the field. And so it, I know that some of you women think, oh no, you know.

And you remember how it was when you had your baby, but you're just softies, that's all. And we like you that way. It's nothing against you at all.

I wouldn't want you to be muscular and all like those women in New Guinea. And so it's a, it is very possible that this was not a lie, but some look upon it as a lie. Whether or not it was, I don't know.

But if it were a lie that they were telling to the Pharaoh, then indeed how is it that God blessed them? I don't have any answer. Sorry to disappoint you, but I don't know everything. And those are, you know, that's one of those difficult things.

I don't understand it. I don't know. All I know is that's what it says.

God blessed them. So God dealt well with them. There went a man of the house of Levi, and he took to wife a daughter of Levi.

And the woman conceived and bare a son. And when she saw him, that he was a goodly child, she hid him for three months. The word goodly is beautiful.

So this woman had a beautiful little boy, and she just couldn't bring herself to throwing him in the river. Now that was the order of the Pharaoh. But he was such a beautiful little boy, and of course what mother could really just throw her son into the river.

And so she hid him for three months. And when she could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime, and with pitch, with tar, and put the child therein. And she laid it in the flags by the river's bank.

So in other words, she was fulfilling. Cast the child in the river, but she just fixed a little basket and waterproofed it so that she put him in the river, but in the basket. And his sister stood afar off to find out what would be done to him.

And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river, and her maidens walked along by the riverside. And when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she opened it and saw the child, and behold the baby cried.

And she had compassion on him and said, this is one of the Hebrews children. So we see the beautiful story of God's preservation. The child was placed in this little waterproof basket there in the river.

His sister stayed back in sort of the bushes to watch the basket to see what happened. Here the Pharaoh's daughter came down to take her bath, and they saw the basket, and she sent one of her maidens out to get the thing and find out, you know, curiosity. And she opened it up, and just at that time little Moses started crying.

And her heart was touched. Said, oh it's one of the Hebrews children. So Moses' sister came running up, Miriam, who we will learn about more later.

And she said to Pharaoh's daughter, you want me to get a nurse of the Hebrew women that she may nurse the child for you? Now that was a very common thing in those days, wet nursing. And so you get a woman to just wet nurse your child for you. And so that's what Miriam is offering to do, get a woman to nurse the child.

And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, go. And so the maid went and called the child's mother, Moses' mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will give you wages.

And so the woman took the child and nursed it. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses, which means to be taken out of the water, because I drew him out of the water.

So interesting way that God has of working. Moses was able to grow up at home during the early years, where he received the strong inculcating of the Hebrew traditions, imbued with the sense of a nation of destiny, and certainly is a tremendous example of what the proverb declares, if you train up a child in the

way he shall go, when he is old he will not depart from it. Because in those early formation years, Moses had received such a strong foundation, that it was strong enough that he was able to withstand all of the pressures of the many years of the education within the Egyptian schools.

Don't underestimate the value of those early years. It is said that the Jewish mothers, from the time the baby was first cradled in their arms, would begin to whisper in their ears, Jehovah is God. I think for some of you mothers, one of the greatest things you can do is just whisper in your children's ears, Jesus loves you.

Paul wrote to Timothy and spoke of how from a youth, he was taught in the Scriptures by his godly mother and grandmother. What a heritage. I thank God that I had a similar kind of a heritage.

From my youth, taught in the Scriptures by my mother. I didn't have the normal Goldilocks and the three pig bedtime stories. I wasn't frightened by those horror tales.

Imagine the wolf eating up your grandmother, you know. And the woodsman coming and chopping the wolf. So go to sleep now, honey.

I can't quite understand our mentality, you know, in some of the stories that we call bedtime stories. Even the rock-a-bye baby on the treetop. When the wind blows, the cradle will rock, and when the bow breaks, the cradle will fall.

Poor child, how are we marking our children? My parents were wiser than to fill me with that garbage, and so I grew up knowing how God would always take care of his children. How God delivered the giant into the hands of David. I knew all about Moses and the bulrushes, and God's delivering power.

I knew about God's deliverance from the lion's den. I knew that no matter what would happen, God would be with me and protect me and shelter me. My mother used to follow me around the yard while I was playing ball or swinging or whatever, and just giving me Scriptures, making me repeat them, helping me to memorize them, filling me with the knowledge of the Word of God.

Those early years are important years. Even before you think your child can understand, begin its education and training. In the very first few months, it is so important that their brain be stimulated, because all of these little neuron connections are being made back there, and they are being made according to the stimulus that the child receives.

And so that's why they say have mobiles in the crib, and colors that will move, and all kinds of action to stimulate the development of the connections there during that crucial time, because their future mental capacities will be directly proportionate to the number of connections that are made in those early months. And so Moses' mother did an excellent job, but God even saw she got paid for it. I like the way the Lord operates.

And so rather than losing a son, she gained a son, and also had wages as she nursed him, and then she brought him into the Pharaoh's court and presented him, and then he was schooled in Egypt. Now, Hebrews tells us it was by faith that she put that little ark in the river. By faith, she refused to obey the Pharaoh's order, but built a little ark and placed the child in it.

And by faith, Moses, when he came to age, refused to be called the son of the Pharaoh's daughter, or to identify himself with the Egyptians, but he identified himself with the people of God. He refused to be

called the son of Pharaoh's daughter in order that he might enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, for he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. That shows you that there was such a strong background in Moses.

Now, not only a strong background, but a sense of destiny and God's purpose for these people was instilled into Moses. So that Moses, when he went out in the field, which we'll be studying in just a moment, and found an Egyptian mistreating an Israelite, killed the Egyptian. And the next day, when he saw two Israelites driving together, and he went to break them up, when they said, who made you a judge over us? Are you going to kill us like you did that Egyptian yesterday? We are told in Stephen's oration in the Acts of the Apostles, that Moses thought that they understood that God had destined him to be the leader to lead them out of their bondage.

Moses thought they'd understand that. He had such a sense of destiny in those early years. Let's move on.

And it came to pass, verse 11, chapter 2, in those days when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brothers, and he looked on their burdens, and he spied an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brothers. So he had this identity with the Hebrew people, rather than with the Egyptians. And it had to come in those early years.

And he looked this way and that way. And when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. Now someone said this mistake was he looked this way and that way, but he didn't look up.

We make that mistake so often. We look this way and that way, and then we act, not realizing that God sees us. He tried to hide his deed by burying the Egyptian in the sand.

Now, as I said, Moses had a sense of destiny. Somehow he felt, and perhaps because of the position, somehow he felt that he was destined to lead these people out of their bondage. He seemed to have this awareness and consciousness.

He was surprised that they didn't recognize it. The problem with Moses was that he just got ahead of God. He tried to do what God wanted done in the ability and in the power of his own flesh.

Knowing what God wanted, aware of the purposes of God, his big mistake was getting ahead of God. Now this is a mistake that we often make. We know what God wants to do.

We don't wait for God or his empowering to do it. We get out and we try to do in the energy of our own flesh what we realize God desires to be done. But I want you to notice how unsuccessful he was in trying in the ability of his own flesh to do what God wanted done.

He was not even successful in burying one Egyptian. Now when God was going to do it, he wanted to bury the whole army, which he did later in the Red Sea. We must be careful about this zeal that we oftentimes feel for the work of God where we start off without the anointing and the direction of the Holy Spirit.

To in the ability and the energies of our flesh accomplish the work and the purposes of God, we like Moses will end up in failure. The work of the Spirit can never be accomplished in the abilities of our flesh. To do the work of the Spirit, I must be anointed, empowered, and directed by the Spirit of God.

And so many of my problems have arisen from this same mistake that Moses made. Having a consciousness of what God wants to do, having an awareness of the purposes of God, I try to fulfill the purposes of God without the leading and the direction and the help of the Holy Spirit. I get ahead of God and every time I do, I botch things up just as Moses did.

He tried to hide the Egyptians. Now when he went out the next day, two men who were Hebrews were fighting together. And he said unto them that did the wrong, why did you smite this fellow? And he said, who made you a prince and a judge over us? You intend to kill me like you killed the Egyptian? And Moses feared and said, surely this thing is known.

Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of the Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian and he sat down by a well. So when the Pharaoh discovered that Moses had taken the side of a Hebrew over an Egyptian, he had determined to kill Moses.

Moses fled and went out to the area of Sinai, the Sinai Peninsula. Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters and they came to draw water and they filled the troughs to water their father's flocks. And the mean shepherd boys came and drove them away.

They stand back and watch the girls draw all the water up and then they come and chase the girls off and water their own flock. Moses saw what was going on and so Moses stood up and he helped them and he watered their flock. And when they came to Ruel, their father, he said, how come you're home so early? And they said, an Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds and he also drew water enough for us and he watered the flock.

And he said to his daughters, where is he? Why did you leave the man? Call him that he may eat bread. Typical kind of Bedouin hospitality. And Moses was content to dwell with the man and he gave Moses Zipporah, his daughter, and she bore him a son and called his name Gershon, which means stranger.

For he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land. And it came to pass in the process of time that the king of Egypt died and the children of Israel sighed by reason of their bondage and they cried and their cry came unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning and God remembered his covenant with Abraham and with Isaac and with Jacob.

And God looked upon the children of Israel and God had respect unto them. Now between verses 22 and 23, a period of about 40 years. And so it doesn't really show it in the text, but it is there.

Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the backside of the desert and came to the mountain of God, even to Mount Horeb. Now no doubt Moses experiences there in the wilderness were going to be necessary experiences.

Number one, while he was there, he was learning the lay of the land. As he was out there as a shepherd following the flock through the Sinai desert and around Mount Horeb, he became very well acquainted with the area. He knew where all of the wells were.

He began to know a little bit about the weather conditions and really beginning to get a lot of good practical savvy on survival in the wilderness. These things were all to be helpful for him in the big project that God had for him in leading the children of Israel from Egypt to the promised land. So he was out there now learning in this school of experience the wilderness or desert survival, which would prove to be very handy later.

And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. And he looked and behold the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I'm going to take a look at this and see why the bush is not burnt.

And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush and he said, Moses, Moses. And he said, here am I. And he said, don't draw near, but put off your shoes from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. Moreover, he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob.

And Moses hid his face for he was afraid to look upon God. And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people, which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters. For I know their sorrows, and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians.

So God began to speak to Moses out of the midst of the burning bush. First of all, warning him against approaching any closer, telling him to remove his shoes. He was on holy ground, declaring himself who he is.

I am the God of thy father, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And then God declares, I have surely seen, I have surely heard, for I surely know. In the Hebrew it is, seeing I have certainly seen, knowing I have certainly known, hearing I have certainly heard.

It's an emphatic in the Hebrew. God declares the fact that he has seen, he has heard, he knows. These are the characteristics of God emphasized by Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

Your father sees, your father hears, your father knows. These are characteristics of God that are always challenged by the unbeliever. Is there any knowledge in the Most High? How does God know? They feel that they can hide from God.

They scoff at the idea of prayer. And yet these characteristics of God are emphasized over and over by Jesus Christ. How your father loves you, and his ear is open to your cry, and how he sees, how he hears, how he knows.

But more than that, I have come to deliver. God just doesn't see and say, oh my, isn't that terrible. He doesn't hear the cry and say, oh what a shame.

But he does something about it. Sometimes our friends offer us great sympathy. They see, they hear, they say, oh my, what a shame.

That's so bad. That's just terrible. Oh my, thanks.

But the Lord said, I have come to deliver out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land into a good land, unto a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey, unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and Jebusites, and the PLO. These glasses I didn't see. Now therefore behold the cry of the children of Israel is coming to me.

I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppressed them. Some of you have been very oppressed by people. You've been lied against.

You've been rejected. You've been hurt. You think, oh nobody knows what I'm going through.

Nobody knows what I'm feeling. Oh yes, someone knows. I have seen also the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppressed them.

Come now therefore, and I will send you unto Pharaoh, that you may bring forth my people, the children of out of Egypt. And Moses said, who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt. Now 40 years earlier Moses was gung-ho for the job.

He started out to do it on his own, thinking surely they will understand. But his experience brought him such disappointment. And now the 40 years in the wilderness had an extremely mellowing effect upon the guy.

Moses you remember was of the tribe of Levi. And we remember concerning the Levites, the prophecy of Jacob for Levi, cruel and treacherous, cursed to be your anger, hot-tempered tribe. Moses had that hot Levite blood coursing through his system, that short fiery temper.

Turned on the Egyptian and killed him. And now after 40 years the fire is gone. He's not that short-tempered, ready to go to battle anymore.

In fact he has become very meek. When God said I want you to go to the Pharaoh to bring my people out of the land. He said, hey who am I that I should go to the Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Who am I? An interesting question. I think that everyone who is called of God probably asked that question. Who am I Lord? That I should be the one to do this.

I think that it is always valuable that we have a sense of our unworthiness as being an instrument through which God might do his work. I think that God had to bring Moses to this place, but Moses carried it a little far. Who am I? God said well I'll be with you.

Certainly I will be with you. And this will be the token unto you that I have sent you. When you have brought forth the people of Egypt you will serve God amount upon this mountain.

Now he was at Mount Horeb. And when you bring them out of the land you're going to worship me right here on this mountain. This will be the proof.

It was here at Mount Horeb that he received the commandment. Moses said unto God behold when I'm come to the children of Israel and shall say unto them the God of your fathers has sent me unto you. And they'll say unto me what is his name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses I am that I am.

And he said thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel I am hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses thou shalt say to the children of Israel the Lord God of your fathers the God of Abraham the God of Isaac the God of Jacob hath sent me unto you. This is my name forever and ever.

This is my memorial unto all generations. Now Moses said who shall I say sent me? God said to Moses I am that I am. Now this really is to Moses.

God is declaring to Moses that relationship. I am. I am what? I'm whatever you're gonna need.

The name of God. A verb. To be.

I am. Because God always wants to be to you whatever your particular need might be. I am your peace.

I am your strength. I am your help. I am your guide.

I am your righteousness. I am your salvation. I am your hope.

Whatever you might be. God will become to you whatever is the need in your life. How beautiful that is.

The Becoming One. His name Yahweh. The Becoming One.

As God becomes to you whatever your need might be. Now to the children of Israel. Verse 25.

God said moreover unto Moses thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel. Now they're gonna say who sent me? To the children of Israel you say the Lord God of your fathers. The God of Abraham.

The God of Isaac. The God of Jacob hath sent me unto you. This is my name forever and this is my memorial to all generations.

So this is by which God identified himself to the nation. The God of your fathers or the Jehovah God of your fathers. The God of Abraham.

The God of Isaac. The God of Jacob. Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say unto them that Jehovah God of your fathers.

The God of Abraham. Of Isaac. And of Jacob appeared unto me saying I have surely visited you and seen that which is done to you in Egypt.

And I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites and the Hivites and Jebusites into a land that is flowing with milk and honey. And they shall hearken to your voice and you shall come down the elders of Israel under the king of Egypt and you shall say unto him Jehovah God of the Hebrews hath met with us. Now let us go we beseech thee three days journey in the wilderness that we may sacrifice to Jehovah our God.

So to the Hebrews he was Jehovah God. The God of Abraham. The God of Isaac.

The God of Jacob. To Pharaoh he was to be Jehovah God of the Hebrews. And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go.

Not by a mighty hand. And I will stretch out my hand and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof. And after that he will let you go.

And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. And it so come to pass that when you go you shall not go out empty. But every woman shall borrow of her neighbor and of her that sojourneth in her house jewels of silver, jewels of gold, raiment.

And you shall put them upon your sons and upon your daughters. And you shall spoil the Egyptians. So God's teaching them how to rip off the Egyptians.

But in reality what they were taking was really the wages that were due to them through the several years of slavery and servitude in which they were not paid. And so it was just really collecting back wages for all of the years that they had been slaves to the Egyptians. And Moses answered and said but behold they'll

not believe me.

Now he's not convinced. They're gonna say who sent you? Alright God said tell them you know Jehovah God. God of your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

But Moses objects. They'll not believe me nor hearken unto my voice. For they will say oh Jehovah didn't appear to you.

The Lord said what have you got in your hand? And he said a rod, a walking stick. God said throw it on the ground. And he threw it on the ground and it became a serpent.

And Moses fled from before it. Lord said to Moses grab it by the tail. And put forth his hand and caught it.

And it became a rod again in his hand. God said that they may believe that the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob hath appeared unto thee. The Lord said furthermore unto him put now your hand into your bosom.

So he put his hand into his bosom. And when he took it out behold his hand was leprous as snow. And he said put your hand in your bosom again.

And he put his hand into his bosom again. And he plucked it out of his bosom. And behold it was white again like the other.

It had turned again rather like the other flesh. And so it came to pass. It shall come to pass Lord said if they will not believe thee nor hearken to the voice of the first sign.

They will believe the voice of the latter sign. And it shall come to pass that they will not believe these two signs. Neither hearken unto your voice.

That you shall take of the water of the river and pour it on the dry land. And the water which you take of the river shall become blood upon the dry land. So you want signs? All right.

You think they won't believe you? You know when you get there and they say ah the Lord has appeared. You just throw your stick down. When it becomes a snake and starts chasing them they'll believe.

And if they don't believe that just put your hand in your side and pull it out and it'll be leprous. And they'll all start to flee from you and all you know. And then just put it back in and pull it out again and it'll be whole.

So armed with these signs Moses said unto the Lord oh my Lord I'm not eloquent. Neither here to foreign or since. You have spoken unto your servant.

I'm slow of speech and of a slow tongue. Lord I can't speak. I just you know.

The Lord said unto him and this to me is very interesting. Very interesting. God said who made man's mouth or who makes.

Wait a minute. Who makes the dumb or deaf or the seeing or the blind. Have not I the Lord.

You mean God made blind people. And God made deaf and dumb people. That's what God is saying.

He's taking the responsibility for it. Now to me that's quite a responsibility to take. Because immediately it puts my heart at odds with God.

Because I don't understand why. Why would God allow a child to be born blind or create a blind child as he declares there. Why would God create a deaf and dumb child.

You see immediately my whole concept of God is challenged. And yet God has declared that in certain cases he has created certain physical infirmity. And notice he doesn't even offer us an explanation why.

He just declares the fact. This becomes one of the greatest challenges of my faith. But if I can overcome this hurdle.

I will have a greater faith in God. In fact an unshakable faith in God that nothing will be able to shake. If I only believe what I can understand.

That doesn't take faith. That only takes intellect. Believing what I can't understand is that step of faith which honors God.

And without faith it's impossible to please God. So if I can believe that God has created a blind child. And yet believe that God is love.

And that God is just. Because the scripture declares to me that God is just. And God is love.

I am now believing something that I can't understand. How can a loving God create a blind child. I don't know.

But I know he did. He said he did. And I believe his word.

And I believe in him. And though I may not understand it or be able to put it together in my mind. Yet I believe that God is a God of love.

I believe that he is a fair God. And even though he has done things which I cannot understand. It doesn't shake my faith in his love.

Because I can't reason it out or understand it. Actually I am now coming to a deeper relationship of faith in God. And God has used that blind child not to destroy my faith.

But to deepen my faith in God. And to take my belief in God from just sheer intellect to a heart faith. Which is so important.

Now I do believe that if God has created a blind child or a deaf child or a child that has cystic fibrosis or multiple sclerosis or any of these things. That there is a purpose of God in allowing that child to be that way. Though I may not be able to understand the purpose.

My intellect fails at this point. And I stumble intellectually. Then when I am stumbling intellectually is when I've got to grab for something else.

And I grab for faith. God I believe. God I trust you.

Though I don't understand you. And my faith is really deeper now than it ever was. I do believe that if God does create a child that way.

That he had a definite reason and purpose for creating the child that way. Whether I ever know the purpose or not. I can guess.

I can surmise. I can offer conjecture of why it may be. Maybe to let us know that this isn't a perfect world.

Maybe to to just sort of jar us from complacency. I can remember back in the Depression years about the most favorite chorus they used to sing in church went. I'll be so glad when day is done.

I'll be so glad when Jesus comes. There will be no sorrow in God's tomorrow. I'll be so glad when Jesus comes.

Back in the Depression years they were really looking for the Lord. During the war years popular chorus. After the war the post-war prosperity and all.

The chorus died. Didn't sing it anymore. Lord just wait around.

I'm gonna get this new home and this new car and I need a swimming pool. Just wait Lord. I'll be so glad if you just wait a little while now.

And you know things are going pretty good Lord. You know got a secure job and all of this. And and you know now that again there are very real threats on the horizon.

The energy crisis. Life isn't gonna be so comfortable anymore. You're not gonna be able to just jump in your car and run whenever you want to.

You're not gonna be able to heat your swimming pool as high as you used to have it. You're not gonna be able to have the air conditioning on as high as it once was. Life's not gonna be so good.

Oh I'll be so glad when day is done. Of course I predict a revival for it. Oh but God aren't you a God of love.

Yes but the church was getting soft. The church was becoming complacent. The church was settling in her leaves.

And God had to pour us into another vessel. To make us realize that this earth this world is not our home. That we're just passing through.

That it isn't God's intent that we get all deeply involved in the possession of material things. But that our hearts be on the things of the Spirit and his eternal kingdom. And so he starts showing us how quickly and how easily the material things can be taken away.

And all of a sudden I'm looking for deeper roots. I'm beginning to long for his eternal kingdom. And as I look at sickness.

As I look at physical impairments in my heart. I say even so come quickly Lord Jesus. Hasten the day when the blind will see the glory of God.

When the lame will leap for joy. When the dumb will be singing praises unto thee. Oh Lord hasten by day.

God declared I have made them. I don't understand it. I can't explain it to you.

But it does not at all alter my faith in God. Nor my belief in that he is a God of love. And that he is fair.

Though I cannot in my mind explain to you how. Though I cannot give you a rationale. Because it hasn't really been reduced to my intellect.

And thank God it hasn't. I must just believe his eternal word and trust in him. And thus my faith in God is greater.

Now therefore God said go. And I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say. And he said oh my Lord send I pray thee by the hand of him whom you will send.

Literally he said oh Lord please send someone else. After all of this. Lord they're gonna say who sent you.

What shall I tell them. The Lord says I'll just say you know Jehovah God. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

But Lord they're not gonna believe me. Well what do you got in your hand. A rod.

Well use that. But Lord I can't speak. I'm not eloquent and all.

All right I'll be with your mouth. I'll give you the words to say. Lord would you mind sending someone else.

Man talk about a guy that's mellowed out. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses. And he said is not Aaron the Levite your brother.

I know that he can speak well. Also behold he's coming forth to meet you. And when he sees you he'll be glad in his heart.

And thou shalt speak unto him and put the words in his mouth and I will be with thy mouth and with his mouth and will teach you what ye shall do. All right. That's the way you want it.

We'll let Aaron go with you. Let him be your mouthpiece. But that wasn't God's you might say direct will.

It was permissive. You're gonna argue and you see Aaron became a real stumbling block along the line. It wasn't the best.

God will lift you to the highest level that you will allow him to lift you. And then he'll do the best for you on that level. But so many times with Moses we are limiting God to the level by which we will allow him to lift us.

He could have been lifted to one higher level. God would have been with him and helped him. He didn't need Aaron.

He didn't need Aaron to get in the way later on. But you want it. All right.

You're going to have it. But you're a step below God's best for your life. And it's possible for you to live one two three rungs down the ladder when God would have you over the top and totally victorious.

Your unwillingness to allow God to lift you to the highest level limiting the work of God restricting the work of God within your life. God is still so loving and gracious. He'll lift you to the highest level you will allow him and then you'll do the very best for you on that level.

But unfortunately we seem to always be restricting that work of God in us. Settling for compromises alternate courses. All right.

You want Aaron. Fine. He can speak and let him.

You put the words in his mouth but I'll still be with your mouth and I'll be with his mouth too. And I will teach you what you shall do and you shall be and he will be your spokesman under the people and he shall be and he shall be to the instead of a mouth and thou shalt be to him instead of God. In other words you'll be the go between.

I'll speak to you and give you my words and you give my words to Aaron. So now you've got a you know a step between. Now who was it that made the golden calf out there in the wilderness.

Aaron brought a snare upon Israel. Moses is insisting that God come down to his level rather than to he arise to God's level. So you shall take this rod in your hand and with it you will do signs and Moses returned to Jethro his father in law and said unto him Let me go I pray thee and return to my brothers which are in Egypt and see if they're still alive.

And Jethro said to Moses go in peace. The Lord said unto Moses in Midian Go return to Egypt for all the men are dead which sought your life. And Moses took his wife and his sons plural.

So it doesn't tell us when the other son was born. We only know of Gershom and he set them upon a donkey and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the rod of God in his hand and the Lord said unto Moses when you go to return into Egypt see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand and I will harden his heart that he shall not let the people go.

Now that word hardened there in Hebrew is a word that literally means strengthen I will make strong his heart. Now as we read of Moses dealings with Pharaoh and we'll get into this next week we read Pharaoh hardened his heart. The word there in Hebrew is hardened.

And Pharaoh hardened his heart and then we read and the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh. Different Hebrew word the Lord made firm the heart of Pharaoh or the Lord strengthened the heart of Pharaoh. In other words Pharaoh set his heart and God strengthened him in that set.

God strengthened him in his position. He took his position God strengthened him in that position. You want to be stubborn? All right I'll strengthen you in your stubbornness I can really bop you good.

That's basically what it was. You want to be stubborn? All right Pharaoh set his heart against the Lord harden it and God strengthened him in his position. Made strong the heart of Pharaoh and God is declaring here I'm gonna make strong or strengthen his heart.

He'll not let the people go. And you shall say unto Pharaoh thus saith Jehovah Israel is my son even my firstborn and I say unto thee let my son go that he may serve me. And if you refuse to let him go behold I will slay your son even your firstborn.

Now God said tell Pharaoh this look Israel is my son my firstborn now let him go and worship me. And if you refuse to do it God's gonna wipe out your son your firstborn. And it came to pass by the way in an inn that the Lord met Moses and sought to kill him.

Hard to understand. The Lord says go to Egypt now Moses is going to Egypt and God meets him in the inn and starts to kill him. What happened I don't know maybe he had a seizure.

It is interesting his wife knew exactly what was going on. I think that Moses and his wife had probably had a dispute over the kids. You see God had commanded that the Hebrew children should be circumcised on the eighth day.

And that circumcision was a mark of the covenant relationship of these people with God. They were to be people who were walking after the Spirit not after the flesh thus the cutting away of the flesh. It was a symbolic action by which these people were identified as God's people.

The mark of their covenant relationship with God. Now when Moses went to Midian married the daughter of Jethro the priest that was there Zipporah. When he had his son Gershom he probably said now we need to circumcise.

Oh you're not gonna mutilate my child. And probably resisted Moses and Moses again was you know he was so broken by his failure that he just let it go. He didn't circumcise his son.

Rather than getting a hassle with the old woman he just said all right you know a meek guy and just let it pass. And yet she knew when God met Moses and started to kill him. And just by what method I don't know the scripture doesn't say.

But she immediately knew what was going on. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskins of her son. And threw it at Moses feet and said surely a bloody husband you are to me.

In other words she was still angry about the thing. She she went in she gave in on it. But showed the bitterness that she had concerning the thing.

So the Lord let Moses go. And again she said a bloody husband you are because of the circumcision. So here Moses was going to lead God's covenant people out of the land.

And he had not even fulfilled that covenant mark in his own children. His own sons. And because of Moses failure God was just impressing on him that he meant business.

And Moses wife suddenly realized that God meant business. But she still sort of blamed Moses for it. And seemed to be angry with him.

Now the Lord said to Aaron go to the wilderness and meet Moses. And so he went and he met him in the Mount of God. And he kissed him.

And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord who had sent him. And all of the signs which he had commanded him. And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel.

And Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken to Moses. And did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed.

And when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel. And that he had looked upon their affliction. They bowed their heads in worship.

Here's deliverance. And they're excited. They bowed their heads in worship.

And afterwards Moses and Aaron went in. And told the Pharaoh thus saith Jehovah God of Israel. Let my people go that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.

And Pharaoh said who is Jehovah that I should obey his voice and let Israel go. Well you'll find out buddy. I know not Jehovah neither will I let Israel go.

So a definite challenge to God by the Pharaoh. Who is Jehovah that I should let the people go. I don't know him and I'm not going to let them go.

And they said the God of the Hebrews hath met with us. Let us go we pray thee for three days journey into the desert. And sacrifice unto the Lord our God.

Lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with a sword. And the king of Egypt said unto them wherefore do ye Moses and Aaron let the people from their work. Get back to your burdens.

And Pharaoh said behold the people of the land are now many. And you are making them rest from their burdens. Who do you think you are demanding that I let them off work.

Get on back to work yourself. Pharaoh commanded the same day that the taskmasters of the people and the officers. And he said you shall no more give the people straw to make their brick as you've done before.

But let them go and gather the straw for themselves. But the number of bricks that they make. You will lay upon them.

You shall not diminish. For they are idle. For they are crying saying let us go and sacrifice our God.

They don't have enough to do. They want to go out and sacrifice to their God. So give them more work to do.

Make them produce the same number of bricks but don't furnish the straw anymore. Let them go and gather the straw for themselves. Let there be more work laid upon the men that they may labor therein and let them not regard vain word.

And so the taskmasters of the people went out and the officers and they speak to the people saying thus saith the Pharaoh I will not give you straw. Now you go get your own straw where you can find it. And yet you must come up with the same quota of bricks.

So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather the stubble instead of the straw. And the taskmasters hastened them saying fulfill your works your daily quotas the same as when you had your straw. And the officers of the children of Israel which Pharaoh's taskmasters had said over them were beaten and they demanded.

They said they said why haven't you fulfilled your task in making the bricks both yesterday and today as you've done before. The officers of the children of Israel came and cried into Pharaoh saying why are you dealing with your servants like this. There's no straw given to your servants and yet they say unto us make bricks and behold your servants are beaten.

But the fault is with your own people. But he said you are idle you're idle. Therefore you're saying let's go and sacrifice to Jehovah.

Go therefore now and work but there shall no straw be given you yet shall you deliver the same quota of bricks. So the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in an evil case after it was said you shall not diminish from the number of bricks from your daily task. And so they met Moses and Aaron who stood in the way as they came forth from Pharaoh and they said unto them the Lord look upon you and judge because you have made our savor to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of his servants to put a sword in their hand to slay us.

And Moses returned to the Lord and said Lord what have you done this evil to the people. Why is it that you have sent me. God I told you I didn't want to come.

Why did you send me Lord. Why did you create this evil and all. For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name he's only done evil to the people and neither has he delivered your people at all.

Now it is interesting in the city of Python which of course is one of the cities that is mentioned here where the children of Israel made for the Pharaoh. That the archaeologist in uncovering the ancient city of Python found walls where in the lower layers the bricks have cut even straw in the bricks. As you get into the higher layers of the same wall the bricks have uneven straw scattered in them and in the upper layer of the bricks in the same wall there is all kinds of stubble roots and everything else in mixed in with the bricks which are a perfect proof of the story that is here in Exodus there in the walls and the ruins of Python.

You can see the various bricks as the task was made harder as first of all they refused to give them the straw and let them gather straw and then later said you just gather stubble whatever you can. And so the weeds and the roots and all that were in the upper level of the bricks and so a great confirmation of this particular chapter in Exodus is there today for the visitor to see the proof of God's Word that that indeed did happen. Moses is beginning his problems with the children of Israel.

They are complainers and grumblers from the word go. Here they're crying unto God Oh God deliver us. Now God sends the deliverer and the first thing they do is start to give him a bad time and they continue to give him a bad time the rest of his life.

I really feel for Moses and the task that he had in leading these people out and into the wilderness and the wandering in the wilderness. But we read how that Moses then went to the Lord and began to pour out his complaint to the Lord. Lord why have you done this? Why did you send me God? Things aren't getting better they're getting worse since you sent me.

It's not that people aren't better they're worse off. You know quite often Satan when you embark on a work of God throws so many things in the way that things look like they've just gotten so much worse you wonder oh man did God really tell me that or did God really call me and he does his best to discourage you right at the onset of any program that you endeavor for God. You'd be amazed how many problems can arise when you make a commitment to God you desire to serve the Lord.

Not going to be peaches and cream not going to be rosy. Satan will do his best to discourage you and so often things look like they have just gone from bad to calamity because you've launched out in faith to do a work for God. Satan will do his best to hinder it and stop it at the beginning and he'll do anything to stop it.

Discouragement, lies, anything to stop that work of God that you endeavor for him. So the secret is just keep on. If God has called you to a task do it.

Don't get discouraged at initial responses. Years ago I thought God called me to the ministry and so I trained went to school prepared and spent 17 years trying to minister until I became so discouraged I thought well maybe God didn't call me to the ministry. I was ready to quit ready to give up so many times put out applications for different kinds of work get out of the ministry get into something secular.

I was discouraged I was tired fighting the hassle trying to feed a family and patch the squabbles of little people. The thing the interesting thing is it was just after my period of greatest discouragement and really just sort of resigning from the ministry and going into home Bible studies that God really began to bless and anoint my ministry. Just when I had a good job started making money.

Satan will do his best to discourage you he'll make you question your call. He'll challenge you on every corner. If God has called you to do it stick with it.

God will bring it through. God will work. I know exactly how Moses felt.

I've turned in my resignation to God so many times Lord I've had it through. Thought you called me to the ministry. Lord there's nothing happening.

Tired. I get out there and get back to work. Crying into me.

Next week we'll take the next five chapters of Exodus as we continue on and we find out how Moses finds out who Jehovah is. He'd be sorry he ever asked that question when God gets through with him.

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