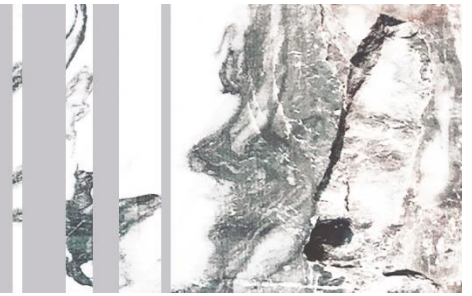


EXODUS

Daily Devotions Week 4



DAY ONE

Before beginning today's lesson, be sure to pray and ask the Lord to reveal Himself to you through His Word.

Read Exodus 5:1.

Chapter 4 ended with Moses and Aaron telling the elders of Israel everything the Lord had said to Moses and performing the signs God had empowered him to do. Convinced Moses had met with God; the elders bowed in worship because God had heard their cry, and rescue was imminent. This decisive encounter left Moses and Aaron feeling confident, and they boldly approached the king of Egypt. After arguing, after doubt, after second-guessing, Moses stepped into his role as a leader and did as God told him to do.

Read Exodus 5:2. How did Pharaoh respond to Moses?

Well, that didn't exactly go as planned, did it?

Have you ever been convinced God would do something a certain way only to have it turn out differently? If so, describe how you responded and how it did or didn't affect your faith in God.

Moses may or may not have been surprised by Pharaoh's response. Let's hope he wasn't because of what God told him in Exodus 3:19. **Glance back to this verse and note what God said Pharaoh's response would be.**

Read Jesus' words in John 16:33 and describe how His words can bring you comfort when things don't go according to plan.

Consider writing a prayer asking the Lord to grow your trust in Him, so when things don't go as you'd hoped, your faith and trust in God remain firm.

Glance back at Exodus 5:2. Pharaoh asked the question that everyone asks in one form or another, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey Him?"

How would you answer that question today? How would you answer that question five, ten, or twenty years ago? Has your answer changed? Have your beliefs changed? If so, what prompted the change?

Previous Pharaohs looked favorably on the Israelites because of what Joseph had done for Egypt. However, Joseph meant nothing to this Pharaoh (Exodus 1:8). The king of Egypt was revered as a god, and in his own opinion, there were no other gods besides him; therefore, he wasn't the least bit concerned about the God of the Israelites. A predominant theme seen repeatedly in Exodus is God making Himself known. You may recall the lesson on Exodus 3, where God revealed Himself to Moses as the God who sees and hears. Not only does God see and hear, but He's also a God who wants to be seen, heard, and known. God would soon reveal Himself to the Israelites as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and as their Rescuer and Redeemer. God would also soon reveal Himself to Pharaoh and the polytheistic culture of Egypt as the one true God.

Pharaoh answered Moses truthfully, "I do not know the Lord, and I will not let Israel go." However, this would not remain true for long. Soon, Pharaoh would see and experience the God of the Israelites, and he would indeed let His people go. However, before Israel would leave Egypt, things would get much worse.

DAY TWO

Read Exodus 5:3-18 and consider the following questions.

Instead of letting Israel go, what did Pharaoh do instead?

According to Pharaoh, why were the Israelites crying out (verse 8)?

According to Exodus 2:23, what was the real reason the Israelites were crying out?

Per Pharaoh, the slave drivers ordered the Israelite foreman to gather their straw to make the same amount of bricks, which was impossible to do, resulting in the beatings of the foreman for not meeting the quota. Perplexed, the Israelite foreman appealed to Pharaoh. They thought Pharaoh would understand his men's refusal give them what they needed made it impossible for them to reach the allowance. Undoubtedly, the slave drivers were responsible, not the Israelite foreman. However, the foreman came face to face with what all of us will encounter in one way or another – unfairness, injustice, and cruelty.

Can you relate? Have you been mistreated? Perhaps you have encountered injustice. Do you know what it's like to experience cruelty? Briefly describe your experience. How did it affect your faith in God?

Read Exodus 5:19-21.

Describe what the foreman did after meeting with Pharaoh.

Describe the difference in attitude displayed in verses 20-21 and Exodus 4:29-31.

What changed?

Harsh circumstances sometimes make it difficult to focus on the promises of God. However, we have an advantage the Israelites did not yet have – the written Word of God. Although our circumstances may be difficult, painful, and unfair, we have the promise that God is true to His Word.

Read Numbers 23:19 and note what it says about God.

It's essential for followers of Jesus Christ to familiarize themselves with God's Word. Knowing what He promises and doesn't promise can bring great comfort and peace in times of difficulty.

Read Romans 8:28. What is the promise in this verse?

When you and I love the Lord, we can rest knowing that He will work in all things for the good. That is quite a promise to which we can hold, even when we are on the receiving end of injustice, unfairness, or cruelty.

DAY THREE

Read Exodus 5:22-23.

There has been quite a shift in attitude toward Moses from the end of Exodus 4 to the end of Exodus 5. What happened? Expectations were left unmet, and life became more difficult. Moses enjoyed having a fan-base for a record-breaking short time. There is a fine line between love and hate. The man that once represented freedom now represented slavery with no rescue in sight. Moses left the presence of the angry foreman who blamed him for their worsened state and went to God with his confusion and complaint.

When things go from bad to worse, what is your typical response? Do you tend to blame? How do you address God in your anger?

Never fear to take sincere questions to God. Asking God, "why?" amid pain won't result in angering God. Author C. S. Lewis said, "Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world."¹

God often speaks in our pain; however, if we allow suffering to cause us to run from God instead, we will miss what He wants us to hear.

Moses would soon learn that God is always true to His Word, always in His timing. Just because things had become worse, didn't mean that God had forgotten His promise.

Read God's response to Moses in Exodus 6:1-5.

What did God remind Moses of?

What did God tell Moses He would do?

When things don't go as planned, returning to God's Word for a reminder of who He is, His promises, and what He will do, will help to restore our faith and trust in His plan. God reminded Moses that Pharaoh would indeed let His people go, because of His mighty hand. God also reminded Moses that He made a covenant with Abraham, and He does not break His promises. It's also interesting to note that God told Moses He did not make Himself fully known to Abraham. In other words, Moses and the Israelites were going to learn and experience something new about God previous generations had not known.

God revealed Himself fully in Jesus Christ (all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, Colossians 2:9). There are no "new revelations" of God since Christ. However, as we grow deeper in faith and our study of Scripture, and our relationship with God, we will experience Him more.

Have you learned anything new about God recently? If so, how did it increase your faith? What impact did it have on your relationship?

It's also interesting to note what God repeated in verse 5. God states He heard the groaning of the Israelites because of their slavery, and He remembered His covenant. Pharaoh insisted the Israelites were crying out because they were lazy, but God knew the real reason for their cries – He is the God who hears. Moses doubted there would be a rescue – but God is the God who rescues and keeps His covenant (Exodus 3:8).

DAY FOUR

Read Exodus 6:6-8 and note all of the "I will" statements by God in the space below.

These three verses contain a considerable amount of information about the character and heart of God. Today and tomorrow, we will look at the "I will" statements and what they meant for the Israelites and what they mean for Christ-followers today.

I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians, and I will free you from being slaves to them.

God is reiterating His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Israelites had never known freedom because they were born into slavery; however, they would soon experience liberation and freedom.

Read the following verses:

John 8:34 - Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.

Romans 3:23 - For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

John 8:36 - So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

Romans 6:18 - You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

In your own words, describe the parallel between the Old Testament, "I will" promise and the promises in the New Testament.

If you are a believer in Christ, describe your salvation experience.

When God sets us free from the penalty of sin, it doesn't mean we won't struggle with sin ever again. Galatians 5:1 states, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." When we struggle with sin, we find the help we need in Scripture. As Christians, we must confess our sins to God and one another (1 John 1:9, James 5:16), learn to stand firm in the faith (Ephesians 6:10-20) and strive to become mature Christians (1 Peter 2:2).

If you regularly confess your sins to others, how has this practice helped strengthen you and deepen your relationship with God?

Does your prayer life consist of regular confession and repentance?

I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment.

Consider this excerpt from The Bible Reader's Companion regarding the phrase "outstretched arm" and "mighty hand" -

Hebrew is a language of graphic images. Such phrases as "outstretched arm" and "mighty hand" are not used in an anthropomorphic sense, as though God had hands and arms, but to suggest His ability to act powerfully in the physical universe. In the Exodus events, God did display awesome power as well as a loving commitment to His covenant people.²

The Israelites were redeemed from Egyptian slavery by mighty acts of judgment by God on their behalf.

Read the following verses –

Romans 5:8 – But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 3:25 – God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of His blood – to be received by faith.

Consider the following quote from John Piper –

This is the meaning of the word propitiation in Romans 3:25 ("atonement" in the NIV). It refers to the removal of God's wrath by providing a substitute. The substitute is provided by God Himself. The substitute, Jesus Christ, does not just cancel the wrath; He absorbs it and diverts it from us to Himself. God's wrath is just, and it was spent, not withdrawn.³

The guilt of sin was paid for by Jesus Christ's literal outstretched arms on the cross. Because Jesus absorbed this mighty act of judgment against our sin, we have been set free from the bondage of sin.

It takes a conscious and deliberate decision to remember what Jesus did for us on the cross. Every day we should strive to live in remembrance and gratitude. Never grow accustomed to the Gospel. Never tire of thinking about what Jesus did on the cross. Never forget to thank Him for paying the price for your sin and for setting you free.

Take a moment and write a prayer of remembrance and thanksgiving for Christ's sacrifice.

I will take you as my own people, I will be your God.

God's intention for the Israelites was for them to make Him known as the one true God. Consider the following verses from Deuteronomy 7:6-8 –

For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be His people, His treasured possession. The Lord did not set His affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath He swore to your ancestors that He brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Read the following verses –

1 Peter 2:9-10 – But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

How does your new identity as God's special possession makes a difference in your everyday life?

DAY FIVE

To review where we left off yesterday, read Exodus 6:6-8. Today, we will conclude our look at the "I will" statements in this passage.

I will bring you to the land, and I will give it to you as a possession.

The land was "a land flowing with milk and honey – the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites" (Exodus 3:8). God promised this land to Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 13:14-17).

Read the following verses –

Matthew 4:17 – From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

Luke 17:20-21 – Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst."

As believers in Christ Jesus, we are rescued from the dominion of darkness and brought into the kingdom of the Son (Colossians 1:14). The believer's "promised land" is the kingdom of God, which begins when we surrender our lives to Jesus, and it reaches its ultimate fulfillment when He returns.

What are your views of the kingdom of God? Consider doing a word search for the phrase "kingdom of God" or "kingdom of heaven" and study the topic for yourself. You can use the free online source BlueLetterBible.org. You won't be disappointed!

Read Exodus 6:9-12 and consider the following questions.

How did the Israelites respond to Moses when he reminded them of God's promise?

Why didn't they listen?

If we aren't deliberate in our choice to fix our eyes on Jesus and not on our circumstances, we can easily fall in the trap of discouragement. Discouragement has a way of keeping us from seeing God's hand, from trusting His plan, and from having peace that passes understanding.

It is interesting to note that although the people didn't listen to Moses because of their discouragement, God still told Moses to carry on with the plan. God's call on Moses did not depend on whether or not anyone believed him. Many times in our Christian walk, God will call us to obedience, even if no one stands with us.

If you have experienced something similar, describe it below.

Write a prayer asking the Lord to increase your strength and desire to remain obedient to His call on your life, no matter how difficult the circumstances may become.

¹ <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/1180-pain-insists-upon-being-attended-to-god-whispers-to-us>

² Richards, L. O. (1991). *The Bible reader's companion* (electronic ed., p. 57). Wheaton: Victor Books.

³ <https://billygraham.org/decision-magazine/march-2016/the-cross-absorbed-the-wrath-of-god/> by John Piper

GROUP DISCUSSION

Answer the following questions for each day:

What stood out to you the most?

What was your favorite portion of the text and why?

Did you learn anything new about God?

Did you learn anything new about yourself?

Were you challenged? Encouraged?

How can you apply this portion of God's Word to your life?

What questions do you have?