

is hard for the righteous to be saved what will be saved of the ungodly & the same."

Moses and Aaron Before Pharaoh

Exodus 5

Acts 14:22

listen
Icarion
Antioch

"We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God"

I. Worse Before Better

A. Constant need for Patience in the Christian Life

Colossians 1:11 *being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to God the Father*

Hebrews 6:12 *We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.*

James 5:7-11 *Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. 8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. 9 Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! 10 Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.*

Hebrews 12:1 *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.*

Romans 5:3-5 *Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*

Hebrews 10:35-36 *So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. 36 You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.*

God intends to test us through many trials and difficulties to complete His work of sanctification in us

James 1:2-4 *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

So also God tested Israel and Moses early in their battle with Pharaoh... and what the test revealed was ugly!!

God does not do His work with perfect people... but through the work His people become perfected little by little

Illus. Diamonds are forged through extreme pressure and high temperature until the carbon is perfectly pure and perfectly hard

II. Moses and Aaron Confront Pharaoh

Exodus 5:1 *Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the desert.'"*

- Note the incredible courage of Moses and Aaron in facing this vicious tyrant personally in a face to face confrontation! Only the grace of God could give this kind of character
- Question: Why did Moses make a moderate and not the true request? Was it not God's purpose to bring Israel all the way to the Promised Land? Was this not deceptive?

Two answers:

- 1) to reveal the depths of Egypt's injustice!! A mild request is refused
 - 2) to focus on the true nature of the controversy... "That they may serve ME!!" says the Lord. "The people are mine!!" says Pharaoh
- From the start, the issue is that Israel belongs to the Lord... the focus is thus not so much on the Promised Land but on Israel's relationship to God!!
 - Note also that God upholds Pharaoh's role of authority by making a request of him! It's amazing how important delegated authority is to God, and how much He desires His people to submit to it

1 Peter 2:13-15 *Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, 14 or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. 15 For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men.*

Romans 13:1-2 *Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.*

- Note also God's consistency in warning people He's about to judge through preaching

Noah was called a “preacher of righteousness”, and he preached faithfully until the flood came

Jeremiah warned Israel again and again about the impending doom that would come upon them if they refused to repent

Christ warned Israel about the coming destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

vs. 2 Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go."

- This is the key issue! Pharaoh does not know the Lord and therefore he will not obey Him

John 17:25 O righteous Father, the world has not known you...!!!

- Strong chord of defiance... this Jewish god is just another tribal deity to him
- This is also a typical human response to the gospel

Acts 17:30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.

1 John 3:1 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

- Strong relationship between know & obey

1 John 2:3 We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

Offering Sacrifice (vs. 3):

vs. 3 Then they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Now let us take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God, or he may strike us with plagues or with the sword."

- Note the divine vs. human activity...

Exodus 5:1 Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the desert.'"

Now here:

let us take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God

- Focus from the start is on Israel's duties to the Lord, to worship and offer sacrifices to God

Waiting for the Deliverance: (vs. 4-5)

vs. 4-5 *But the king of Egypt said, "Moses and Aaron, why are you taking the people away from their labor? Get back to your work!" 5 Then Pharaoh said, "Look, the people of the land are now numerous, and you are stopping them from working."*

- Notice that the work had already stopped!! The people were underestimating the journey of plagues they would have to travel to leave Egypt!
- Just like the Christians of Thessalonica... waiting idly for the Second Coming

2 Thessalonians 3:6-12 *In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. 9 We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow. 10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." 11 We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. 12 Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat.*

- This reminds me of the people who sold all their possessions and waited on their roof tops for the second coming of the Lord in the 1840's!! [Why sell anyway??]

Bricks Without Straw (vs. 6-9)

vs. 6-9 *That same day Pharaoh gave this order to the slave drivers and foremen in charge of the people: 7 "You are no longer to supply the people with straw for making bricks; let them go and gather their own straw. 8 But require them to make the same number of bricks as before; don't reduce the quota. They are lazy; that is why they are crying out, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.' 9 Make the work harder for the men so that they keep working and pay no attention to lies."*

- Things get much worse before they get better!!

Luke 9:42 Even while the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground in a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father.

- Notice that God has a sanctifying work to do on the people and on Moses and Aaron, too!
- Note Pharaoh's vicious slander: he calls the people LAZY, though on their backs his storage cities have been built
- Note Pharaoh's Unbelief: "pay no attention to lies!!!"
- God's words are "vain words" to unbelievers... but to God they have eternal value

2 Peter 3:3-4 First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. 4 They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."

Acts 17:32 When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject."

Pharaoh's Judgment (vs. 10-14)

10 Then the slave drivers and the foremen went out and said to the people, "This is what Pharaoh says: 'I will not give you any more straw. 11 Go and get your own straw wherever you can find it, but your work will not be reduced at all.'" 12 So the people scattered all over Egypt to gather stubble to use for straw. 13 The slave drivers kept pressing them, saying, "Complete the work required of you for each day, just as when you had straw." 14 The Israelite foremen appointed by Pharaoh's slave drivers were beaten and were asked, "Why didn't you meet your quota of bricks yesterday or today, as before?"

The People Complain TO MAN (vs. 15-16)

15 Then the Israelite foremen went and appealed to Pharaoh: "Why have you treated your servants this way? 16 Your servants are given no straw, yet we are told, 'Make bricks!' Your servants are being beaten, but the fault is with your own people."

- Notice that God's people have not yet learned to cry out to the Lord... when there is a problem, their first response was to cry unto MAN... both to Pharaoh and to Moses

17 Pharaoh said, "Lazy, that's what you are— lazy! That is why you keep saying, 'Let us go and sacrifice to the LORD.' 18 Now get to work. You will not be given any straw, yet you must produce your full quota of bricks." 19 The Israelite foremen realized they were in trouble when they were told, "You are not to reduce the number of bricks required of you for each day."

- Pharaoh, like sin, is an utterly pitiless master... vicious and cruel
- The Israelites get no relief from an appeal to him

Rebuking the Lord's Messengers (vs. 20-21)

20 When they left Pharaoh, they found Moses and Aaron waiting to meet them, 21 and they said, "May the LORD look upon you and judge you! You have made us a stench to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us."

- This is Moses's sternest test... perhaps he was ready for the opposition of Pharaoh, but not for opposition from his own people
- This is always the hardest part
- Later it will be made clear how few of Israel really are Israel!!

Crying Out in Unbelief to the Lord (vs. 22-23)

22 Moses returned to the LORD and said, "O Lord, why have you brought trouble upon this people? Is this why you sent me? 23 Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble upon this people, and you have not rescued your people at all."

- Moses's prayer a display of irreverence and unbelief, but God deals with Him very gently!!
- God's timetable is not our own
- Also notice that Moses had already been told that Pharaoh would not let the people go!
- How weak we are!!

NIV Exodus 6:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: Because of my mighty hand he will let them go; because of my mighty hand he will drive them out of his country."