

EXODUS: The Person, Promise, and Power of God

Exodus 5: Bricks Without Straw

Afterward ... How Moses made it back to Egypt:

In obedience to God and on his way to Egypt, God meets Moses and reiterates the centrality of the _____ in the most unforgettable way ... (4:24-26)

God grants to Moses the aid of his brother _____, who accepts Moses' words as God's own. (4:28)

Moses and Aaron are _____ by the Hebrew elders. _____ is restored as they hear the Word of God, and in hearing, they _____ and _____ God in gratitude. (4:29-31)

Moses' Bold Demand ... and Pharaoh's Defiant Response: 5:1-9

5 Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.'"

2 But Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and moreover, I will not let Israel go."

3 Then they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword."

4 But the king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people away from their work? Get back to your burdens." 5 And Pharaoh said, "Behold, the people of the land are now many, and you make them rest from their burdens!"

6 The same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their foremen, 7 "You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks, as in the past; let them go and gather straw for themselves. 8 But the number of bricks that they made in the past you shall impose on them, you shall by no means reduce it, for they are idle. Therefore they cry, 'Let us go and offer sacrifice to our God.' 9 Let heavier work be laid on the men that they may labor at it and pay no regard to lying words."

The positives:

Moses displayed impressive _____.

What gave him such boldness?

- 1) He had _____.
- 2) He was delivering _____.

The purpose of Israel's deliverance is made clear: That they may _____ and _____ God.

The request for 3 days away to worship was a reasonable one – and served to EXPOSE Pharaoh's heart.

God is offering _____ to Pharaoh and Egypt before He brings _____.

The negatives:

Moses _____ to God's words and _____ Him in the details.

"Let my people go" was not what he was commanded to say – yet. (3:18)

God said nothing of 'pestilence' or 'sword'.

Why was only Aaron with him? Where are the 'elders of Israel'? (3:18)

The **result**: Pharaoh's heart is _____, and he refuses Moses (and God)!

Some insight into God's promise, His providence, and why Pharaoh ended up with a "hard heart":

Why did Pharaoh refuse (according to his own words)?

How is Pharaoh a 'type' for all unbelievers?

"Who is the LORD ..."

"... that I should obey him?"

How would God answer?

"The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them." (7:5)

"I am the LORD ..." will appear again and again in Exodus!

Pharaoh considered the Hebrews his _____, and instead of allowing them to _____ God, they would continue to _____ for him. (Hebrew uses same root "abad" for what Moses requested and for what Pharaoh commanded). Pharaoh is pitting himself against the One True God as a 'god' himself.

Thus says Pharaoh ... 5:10-18

¹⁰ So the taskmasters and the foremen of the people went out and said to the people, "Thus says Pharaoh, 'I will not give you straw. ¹¹ Go and get your straw yourselves wherever you can find it, but your work will not be reduced in the least.'"

¹² So the people were scattered throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw.

¹³ The taskmasters were urgent, saying, "Complete your work, your daily task each day, as when there was straw."

¹⁴ And the foremen of the people of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten and were asked, "Why have you not done all your task of making bricks today and yesterday, as in the past?"

¹⁵ Then the foremen of the people of Israel came and cried to Pharaoh, "Why do you treat your servants like this? ¹⁶ No straw is given to your servants, yet they say to us, 'Make bricks!' And behold, your servants are beaten; but the fault is in your own people."

¹⁷ But he said, "You are idle, you are idle; that is why you say, 'Let us go and sacrifice to the Lord.' ¹⁸ Go now and work. No straw will be given you, but you must still deliver the same number of bricks."

Tragically, the people of God – who had once cried out to Him (3:7) – now _____ to Pharaoh for relief instead.

How much difficulty or testing or pain does it take to cause you to seek your deliverance from something or someone other than God?

Their identity was still "Pharaoh's servants" (3x in the passage).

An invaluable lesson for the Hebrews – and for us:

Though God had promised their deliverance, their situation now considerably _____.

Why?

There is no such thing as _____.

In his commentary on Exodus, Alec Moyer reminds us of the following:

When the Lord Jesus listed differing responses to the 'seed' which is the word of God, he included those who, when they hear the word 'at once receive it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, immediately, they quickly fall away' (Mark 4:16–17).

Writing to the Thessalonians, Paul notes two things which to him marked their conversion as genuine: they recognized the word which they had heard as God's word, not man's and their reception of that word was tested by suffering (1 Thess. 2:13–14).

Peter instructs us not to think trials a 'strange' element in normal experience – our calling is to be made like our Saviour in his sufferings (1 Pet. 4:12–13; cf. 1 Pet. 2:20b–25).

James goes even further, urging us to count trials 'pure joy' because they are part and parcel of the way forward to maturity (Jas 1:2–4);

... and Hebrews reminds us that educative discipline is inseparable from being a beloved child of the Father (Heb. 12:7; cf. Deut. 8:5).

Peter also points out that while we indeed 'suffer grief' as a result of 'all kinds of trials', they all have the purpose that our faith 'may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed'. He compares this process of testing to that of gold being refined in the crucible (1 Pet. 1:6–7).

The mocking voice of Satan poured scorn on Job's faith, claiming that the Lord had made life all too easy for him and scoffing that if he were to lose all that made his life pleasant, he would 'curse [God] to his face' (Job 1:10–11). Job's faith, however, was proved true, and he was confident that 'when he has tested me, I shall come forth as gold' (Job 23:10).¹

God clearly had a _____ for their _____.

For His every child, no _____ is _____.

God has now placed Israel in the 'crucible' of _____.

Paul David Tripp writes that our suffering can have these divine purposes behind it:

Suffering has the power to destroy our self-reliance. We weren't created to be self-reliant, so self-reliance never produces good things in us. We were created to be dependent on God and mutually dependent on one another.

Suffering has the power to expose our self-righteousness. We like to tell ourselves that we're spiritually okay, but suffering also exposes the bad things that still live inside us. In our pain we're irritable, envious, demanding, impatient, doubtful, and angry. Suffering doesn't make us this way, but it draws out what's been inside us already.

Suffering has the power to lay waste to our idols. Suffering has a way of exposing what's really dear to us, what we feel we can't live without, and what truly rules our hearts. It's not just that what we're going through is painful, but also that we've lost what was giving us value and worth. Suffering exposes the inadequacy of hooking our hope to the temporary treasures of the created world and positions our heart to hook our hope to the Creator in ways we've never done before. (<https://www.crossway.org/articles/4-reasons-for-hope-in-suffering/>)

¹ Alec Moyer, *The Message of Exodus: The Days of Our Pilgrimage*, 97–98.

Can you see how those purposes fit the Hebrews before, during, and after the Exodus?

Can you see how those purposes fit us? You?

The reaction of the Hebrew foremen: 5:19-21

19 The foremen of the people of Israel saw that they were in trouble when they said, "You shall by no means reduce your number of bricks, your daily task each day."

20 They met Moses and Aaron, who were waiting for them, as they came out from Pharaoh; 21 and they said to them, "The Lord look on you and judge, because you have made us stink in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, and have put a sword in their hand to kill us."

Their _____ was understandable from a _____ perspective. It came from a place of _____. But their response also revealed how _____ was their _____.

Their anger was not justifiable from a _____ perspective. If they had truly _____ to what they were told and _____ it all, then faith – even in the face of hardship – should have been the result.

According to 4:30, Aaron told them everything the Lord had said to Moses, and this would have included at least the words recorded in 3:19 and 4:21:

3:19 But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand.

4:21 And the Lord said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go."

Even Moses was despondent: 5:22-23

22 Then Moses turned to the Lord and said, "O Lord, why have you done evil to this people? Why did you ever send me? 23 For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and you have not delivered your people at all."

While Moses was wrong in the _____ he attributed to God ('evil'), he was right in attributing the _____ to God.

"If we cannot "BLAME God, neither can we TRUST Him." (Motyer)

As to "why" God delayed in His deliverance of Israel, A.W. Pink offers the following:

"There was no need for Jehovah to hurry. His delay in delivering Israel and His permitting them to endure still greater afflictions accomplished many ends. It furnished fuller opportunity for Pharaoh to manifest the desperate wickedness of the human heart. It gave occasion for the Lord to demonstrate how that He "bears with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction". It served to show more clearly how righteous God was in visiting Pharaoh and his subjects with sore judgment. And, too, Israel needed to be humbled: they also were a stiff-necked people, as is clear from the words of their leaders to Moses and Aaron on this occasion. Moreover, the more they were afflicted the more would they appreciate the Lord's deliverance when His time came."

Gleanings in Exodus (Arthur Pink Collection Book 26).

To Moses' credit, he took his complaints to _____ and sought his answers there. And in Chapter 6, God answers.