



2025 Weekly Devotions

Week of: October 20th - 26th

Sermon: October 19th



October 20

Exodus 5:2

Today I'm going to paint with broad strokes that are certainly applicable and biblically sound, yet the lessons are implied more than clearly stated. The chapter begins with Moses and Aaron standing before Pharaoh with their request. It was no small trial of their faith and courage to face the lion in his own den. You recall how Moses tried desperately to get out of this assignment. This was a fine example of God's power to overcome the opposition of the flesh, to impart grace to the trembling heart, and to demonstrate that our strength is made perfect in weakness.

We often struggle with verses in Scripture where it states that God hardened the heart of a person. This causes some to think poorly of God and even question His goodness, or at least his "fairness." I want to point out to you that God is entering upon a controversy with Pharaoh and with Egypt. Please never forget how long God put up with Egypt before He judged them for their sins. He is now going to judge them; and, in order that they may be judged, they must first be revealed to themselves and to all men.

Moses makes a simple request that Pharaoh allow the Israelites to go on a three day journey to sacrifice to the Lord. He doesn't ask that Pharaoh let the people go for good, which was ultimately God's plan. Had they asked to allow the Israelites to depart from Egypt for good, so large a demand might have seemed to others, and certainly would have appeared to the Egyptians themselves, as so unreasonable as to justify their refusal. But no, we see the Pharaoh's heart revealed in this exchange. The character of Egypt's king stood fully revealed: "I do not know the Lord, neither will I let Israel go" (v.2).

"God now commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30); "And this is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ" (1 John 3:3). But the response of the unbelieving and rebellious heart of the natural man is, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?" This speaks of the pride of the man who hardens his neck against God. "I know Him not," said Pharaoh, and "I know Him not" expresses the heart of the sinner today. This is ever the effect of rejecting God's testimony. To resist the light means increased darkness; to turn from the truth is to become more thoroughly under the power of him who is the father of lies. The same sun which melts the wax hardens the clay. Instead of allowing the Hebrews to go and sacrifice to God, Pharaoh orders that their task be made harder. So it is with the sinner who disobeys the Gospel command. The one who refuses to repent becomes more impenitent, more defiant, more lawless, until the Lord abandons him to his own ways and leaves him to suffer the due reward of his sins.

We have seen before in Romans 1 that on three different occasions God "gave the people up to their own reprobate minds" (vv. 24, 26, 28). This simply means that He let them have and pursue exactly what their hearts wanted. Dear ones, there comes a time when God says enough is enough and He will let you go to your own will. Left to ourselves, no one chooses God and will ultimately choose sin expressed from the desires of their own hearts.

October 21

Exodus 2:23, 5:17-18

When the Devil recognizes the first advances of the Holy Spirit toward a poor sinner, he at once puts forth every effort to retain his victims. At no place is the frightful evil of the Fiend more plainly to be seen than here. No pains are spared by him to hinder the deliverance of his slaves. Satan never gives up his prey without a fierce struggle. When a soul is convicted of sin and brought to liberty and peace with God, the Devil will endeavor, just as Pharaoh did with the Israelites, by increased occupation with material things, to expel all such desires from his heart. This is why so many convicted souls find that their case gets worse before it improves. So it was here with the Hebrews. Just as hope was awakened, the opposition against them became stronger; just when deliverance seemed near, their oppression increased.

Friends, I can't tell you how many times I have had experiences in which some person comes to me wanting to get their lives right. They have reached a point of utter frustration and are now ready to "try" Jesus and church. I know that some are just blowing smoke, but I think some are hopeful when they talk to me. The problem is they fail to understand the reality and fierceness of the Evil One who desires to keep them in bondage. As they step towards Jesus, Satan steps toward them and often makes life more difficult, demanding, and discouraging. In disappointment, they often determine it is too hard and retreat back to their bondage where it appears to have been better than Christ. Oh how sad!

It seems absurd to believe that the old life of brokenness, frustration, and heartache could seem better than a new life in Christ. But, when we consider how Satan often works, it makes more sense. Consider the Israelites and the Egyptians in Exodus 5. They are in bondage and are being mistreated according to the book of Exodus. We know how rough it has been as we remember what was written in Exodus 2:23, "...and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help." This was no walk in the park. The challenge that we often face when taking a step of faith is that it may feel like we are "stepping out of the frying pan and into the fire." That is certainly what the Israelites surmised in the first days of deliverance.

The circumstances that they faced without question got worse before they got better. I think it is important for us to recognize this possibility in our lives too. It is foolish for us to believe that Satan is going to sit idly by while our Savior takes his prisoners and sets them free. For the Israelites, their tasks and hardships increased. They were to make the same number of bricks with no straw supplied. The time spent making bricks would now be lessened because they would have to spend enormous amounts of time simply looking for straw. All the while, the quota was not to decrease and if it did, they would be beaten. This does not sound like deliverance, victory, or even improvement. They stepped out of the frying pan into the fire, and they rebelled. All of a sudden, the old bondage didn't seem so bad. Satan is sinister and his ways are deceptive and deadly.

October 22

Romans 6:14-16

Do you ever wonder what a story about making bricks without straw has to do with us in the 21st century? I imagine you probably do. It is quite relevant when you understand that the Bible is practical and it is God's desire to teach us through the historical narratives of His Word about Himself, His plan of redemption, and about ourselves who stand in need of rescue. Exodus is historical and it is history with an agenda. A study of Egyptian history would reveal to the researcher that the historical record defends our biblical faith. Slavery, building structures from bricks, and even evidence of bricks in buildings that were made without straw are captured in the historical records of Egypt for this period of time. John wrote in his gospel, "I write these things so that you may believe..." (John 20:31). God's Word is historical, accurate, biblical, and relevant so that we may believe. It, of course, requires faith but not blind, foolish faith that is not in many ways verifiable.

As you ponder the reality of making bricks without straw and just how terribly hard that would be, consider the relationship between that historical reality and the reality that sin is a harsh taskmaster. The Israelites needed to be delivered from such a harsh and unreasonable taskmaster as we do today from sin. The salvation that the Lord provides is release from captivity, freedom from bondage, and deliverance from oppression. They desperately needed to be saved and so do we today from our harsh, cruel, and unmerciful taskmaster. In Exodus 20:2 it says, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." He must work in our lives in this way too if we are to be saved.

In Romans 6, Paul used language indicative of the bondage of Egypt in reference to our bondage to sin before Jesus set us free. We are told not to let sin reign in our bodies so that we may not obey its passions (v. 12). Earlier in that chapter we are reminded that we were enslaved to sin (v. 6). In verse 16 he wrote, "Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death...." Brothers and sisters, we were no less slaves to sin than the Israelites were slaves to the Egyptians. Their slavery under the taskmasters lead to death just as obedience to sin, because of slavery to it, leads to our death.

Now, we should be able to praise the Lord today for setting us free and serving as our great Deliverer. We were bound in chains to sin, enslaved to sin, and "sold under sin" (Rom. 7:14) until Jesus broke that dominion and brought us out from our own Egypt. I praise God that the dominion of sin over us has been broken (Rom. 6:14), but I also know that there is still work to be done in our lives so that we sin less and continue to overcome the power of sin in our lives on a regular and daily basis.

You might ask how are you slaves to sin? I want you to think a moment today of the times when anger masters you or lust fills your thoughts, and you give in to various temptations. Remember how greed, selfishness, or fear controls you at times. As you remember these realities, determine now to present yourselves to Christ for righteousness and no longer to Satan for sin. You have the power to resist and fight sin because of Christ.

October 23

2 Timothy 2:26, 2 Peter 2:19

When we look for parallels between our lives and the Israelites in bondage in Egypt, it is important that we understand the depth of sin in our lives and the hold that Satan has on people because of sin. Paul wrote to Timothy these words, "...and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will" (2 Tim. 2:26). Friend, when you fall into any sin, I want you to consider the fact that in that moment, Satan has lured you and won. He sets traps and snares to capture and trip us up often. I mentioned yesterday how, even though we may be born again and set free, we still must fight our old sin nature and never fail to remember that the flesh wars against the Spirit.

When the phone rings and that "friend" wants to share some news with you about someone else, don't play games with that. Know that in that moment Satan is trying to tempt you to gossip and thereby ensnaring you in an activity that will not lead to your sanctification nor to God's glory. I wonder if you even feel that those moments are important and that to fail is to step into real, actual, bona fide sin – which is displeasing to God and serves the causes of Satan. We are free, don't fall back into slavery. Peter stated it this way, "For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved." Are you enslaved to anything in this world other than the Lord Jesus?

I worry that sometimes we get so used to sinning that we don't even see our slavery to it. Would it not be terrible to live in such a way that you feel no conviction when you are greedy or selfish? Can you imagine sleeping soundly when you have allowed your flesh to rule over you? I wonder how many of us can act hatefully towards others, show complete impatience in the checkout line or in traffic and not even blink. Does losing your temper and allowing your anger to control you even bother you? Does lust in your heart for another person or for material possessions dominate you and not cause you consternation over your weaknesses? I could go on and on, but dear ones I am asking if sin has taken you captive and do you even know it? If you are enslaved to any of these fleshly passions, you must rise up and do battle against these things. This is an indication that Satan is holding sway over you and unacceptable and harmful ways.

Let me remind you in closing today of another theological principle we can take from Exodus 5 for our own lives. It will be true until Christ reigns that sin will continue to demand more and more of you and give less and less. Here is what I mean – Pharaoh, representing the evil one and slavery to him representing sin's control in our lives, increased the demand for bricks and took away the provision of straw. The perceived benefits of sin will continue to decrease but Satan's demands on our lives will increase. Our own flesh will demand more and more satisfaction while giving us less and less enjoyment in the sin. Think about something like pornography. I understand that after a while, the simple pictures aren't enough. It has to be more and more and more and all the while the satisfaction in the sin diminishes. Sin will demand the same quota but will require more of you to achieve the goal.

October 24

1 Peter 5:8-10

The narratives found in the book of Exodus are rich with analogies that pertain to our own personal walk with the Lord and our battle against Satan, sin, and the flesh. Today I want us to consider the decisions the foremen made in response to the decision by Pharaoh to maintain the same quota for brick production while eliminating the provision of the necessary straw for the bricks.

We can all surely understand the dilemma they were facing and even their shock over the terrible turn of events that had taken place. It was with great excitement and hope that the Israelites listened to Moses and Aaron. They were thrilled that finally they would be delivered, and their horrible slavery would end. God had chosen Moses, Moses had revealed God's plan to them, and they were worshipping God for His mercy and grace. Then it all changed on a dime. Pharaoh did not respond favorably to Moses and Aaron and in fact, made their circumstances far worse than before. Their exhilaration quickly turned to anger, disappointment, and resentment.

We find in Exodus 5:15-16 that the foremen, who by the way were Israelites, went to Pharaoh for a resolution. I find it interesting that far too often we tend to run to the world for solutions to problems that the world is causing. Beloved, it is foolish to think that we are going to find answers to our "slavery" from the world that is contributing to it. I realize there is some merit to them going to Pharaoh on behalf of the people, but from a theological and spiritual standpoint, we must not look to the world when we should be looking to God instead.

I find it sad as well that they referred to themselves and the other Israelites as "your servants" when speaking to Pharaoh. Is this how they saw themselves? Friend, do you see yourself as a slave to sin and to a "this is just the way it is" attitude? Do you believe that you are stuck in this world and are a servant to it and that is all you are? Think with me for a moment. They go to the Pharaoh to ask if he will make their bondage easier. At this point, they are not looking to get out of bondage; they are looking to live more comfortably in it. I can't help but think of all the people in our society today who are looking for and would be fine simply with answers that will help them live "okay" in their slavery to sin and other forms of captivity.

Notice how Pharaoh answered them in verses 17 and 18. He literally mocked the Israeli foremen. Dear ones, you will never get mercy from Satan. How foolish of us to think we can go to the world and find mercy as children of God. Satan, Pharaoh in Exodus 5, is the problem not the solution. We need not try to figure out how to cut a deal with evil. We should never be okay with a little comfort in slavery. Jesus came to save us and to deliver us from the slavery of sin not to help us find a way to compromise with Satan while he maintains control over our lives. We are told to resist him and to stand firm in our faith knowing that after a little while the God of all grace will deliver us (1 Peter 5:8-10). Don't make deals or ever compromise with the devil or with sin.

October 25

1 Peter 4:12

Yesterday, we looked at the mistake the foremen made in going to Pharaoh for mercy. Keep in mind that he is a shadow of how Satan works in our lives, and that we must never think that we can reason with evil or expect any genuine “good” from our adversary. The foremen went to Pharaoh for help and then turned on Moses and Aaron. In Exodus 5:21 it says, “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.” They are angry and resentful towards their “deliverers,” and what was jubilation and a willingness to obey (Ex. 4:31) has quickly turned to unbelief and zero confidence. They didn’t know 1 Peter 4:12.

I want you to see the response of Moses and Aaron to the criticism and harsh words of the foremen. We see in Exodus 5:22-23 that Moses and Aaron went straight to God. They pour their hearts out, their concerns, and their questions to the Lord. This is a great example that we should emulate when we are confused, frustrated, or fearful. Rather than running to Pharaoh or deliberating with the people, they simply run to God. This is precisely a habit that we should practice and develop in our own lives.

Dear ones, so much of the lesson that we should take from this chapter of Exodus is that as we step out in obedience to the will of God, we should not for a minute think that we will not face opposition, hardships, setbacks, and even worse conditions for a while. If you keep in mind the flow of Exodus so far, you will remember that brother Daniel preached from chapter 3 about the call on the life of Moses to go to Egypt to deliver God’s people. Pastor Aaron followed that up in chapter 4 with a sermon about the need to obey God regardless of our perceived obstacles and even unwillingness to do so. You might recall that pastor Aaron encouraged us to step out in faith and obey like Moses ultimately did in view of God’s will.

Now, as we step into chapter 5, we discover that Moses and Aaron are absolutely being faithful and obedient to God’s will (v.1). You would think that everything would go smoothly since this is what God wants. What we find is the polar opposite, at least on the surface and for the moment. The people are not wrong to tell Moses that he has made their situation worse. They are not wrong to wonder why he even came. Moses is not wrong to ask God what happened. They are all wrong in that they failed to understand God has a timetable for His will and thousands of other desires of His are being put in order as well.

Friends, we must accept the fact that God is working out countless details at the same time and our part in the grand scheme is only one part of many. God was going to demonstrate His justice in judging Egypt, His power in delivering Israel, and His divine provision for His chosen people all along the way. This could not happen all at once and accomplish all that needed to happen in preparing people for judgment and deliverance. Our part today is to know this and not to make the same mistakes when we wonder why God is not moving at a pace that pleases us. He is a promise-keeping God and all-wise. We must learn to trust Him and know that when He has spoken, all of His purposes will come to pass (Isa. 46:10).

October 26

Luke 9:23, 14:28-33; Romans 8:18

When you consider the reality that sometimes things get worse before they get better when you decide to pursue Christ, look no further than the life of Moses and our Lord Jesus as examples of this truth and God's faithfulness in and through it. I dare say that Moses lived a rather tranquil and quiet life for forty years in Midian. Can you imagine how many times under pressure in Egypt and facing the pain of being ridiculed by his own people and threatened by Pharaoh did his mind go to the peaceful and pleasant days of Midian – life before he answered God's call to go to Egypt?

Consider our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. First, He left the glory and splendor of heaven to come to earth as a man to face hardship, persecution, and ultimately death at the hands of His own creation. But even beyond that and in an area that may make more sense to us, think about His joy of working alongside His earthly father Joseph and learning the art of carpentry. It is safe to assume that there were many days when Jesus enjoyed making tables and other items with His hands and delivering His craft to local homes and shops. It is so easy for my mind to see Him loving and enjoying His life for some 3 decades, and then it was time!

When it was time for Moses to leave Midian and Jesus to walk away from the carpentry shop, everything changed and, in many ways, life got so much harder. Dear ones, answering God's call to serve Him, represent Him, and to push back against sin and darkness is an invitation to heartache, opposition, misunderstanding, isolation, and so many other challenges that will often cause a person to look back and long for the days before the call came. Jesus was not joking when He said, "If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me" (Luke 9:23). He also taught us that if we are going to follow Him as Lord, we need to first count the cost (Luke 14:28-33). This certainly implies that a cost will be imposed and only the strong in faith and courage should take that step of commitment.

Christian, when the Lord calls you to follow Him, by all means do so. The joy, the benefits, the gains, the fruit of the Spirit, and all that accompanies faithfulness to our great God is worth so much more than what it may cost. Paul wrote to the believers in Rome these words, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). He even told the Corinthians that in comparison to all that God has in store for those who follow Him as Lord the "momentary and light afflictions" are nothing (2 Cor. 4:17). Please never doubt that following Jesus is worth everything. There is no price too high, and you will gain true life even as you sacrifice yours in this life.

Come to Jesus and know that as you do, Satan may try to throw you down (Luke 9:42), but He cannot have you and God will give us all the grace we need for every step of the way in surrender and obedience to His wonderful plan for our lives and His overall purposes for His creation. Remember, don't run to the world for answers. The woman in Mark 5 did and her condition worsened. Jesus took care of her. Don't turn back my friend.