

GOD'S PLAN THROUGH PAIN

Exodus 1:1-22

January 4, 2009 Sunday pm.

INTRODUCTION

- A. The witnessing booklet written by Campus Crusade founder, Bill Bright, is called "The Four Spiritual Laws". The first law states: "God has a wonderful plan for your life".
- B. This year's JBS is the book of Exodus.
 - 1. It continues God's plan for the nation of Israel.
 - 2. We can also see God's plan for us in the way he dealt with Israel. What can we see in this passage of how God works?

I. FIRST, GOD'S PLAN IS ROOTED IN THE PAST.

- A. God's plan for Israel in Exodus was tied to the story of Jacob some 400 years earlier—v. 1 "Jacob".
- B. There are two pitfalls we must avoid when considering the past, especially our own past.
 - 1. One pitfall is we must not disregard the past. Why? Because it demonstrates how God often works in the present.
Deuteronomy 7:17-19 ¹⁷ You may say to yourselves, "These nations are stronger than we are. How can we drive them out?" ¹⁸ But do not be afraid of them; remember well what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt. ¹⁹ You saw with your own eyes the great trials, the miraculous signs and wonders, the mighty hand and outstretched arm, with which the LORD your God brought you out. The LORD your God will do the same to all the peoples you now fear.
 - 2. Another pitfall is we must not get stuck in the past.
 - a. The past should be a guidepost to tomorrow, not a hitching post to yesterday.
 - b. When we get too focused on things as they used to be we are unable to see the future God has for us.

II. SECOND, GOD'S PLAN INCLUDES HIS PROVISION.

- A. God's purpose for taking Israel to Egypt was to provide for their needs during a famine—v. 1 "Egypt".
 - 1. Israel thrived in Egypt—v. 7.
 - 2. Israel's mistake was not in going to Egypt, but in staying there instead of returning to the Promised Land.
Genesis 50:24-26 ²⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." ²⁵ And Joseph made the sons of Israel swear an oath and said, "God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place." ²⁶ So Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. And after they embalmed him, he was placed in a coffin in Egypt.
 - 3. God used the pain of captivity to motivate Israel to leave Egypt—v. 11.
- B. Have we become comfortable and complacent and failed to follow God's plan for our lives or our church?

III. THIRD, GOD'S PLAN MAY INCLUDE PAIN.

- A. God used pain to motivate Israel to leave Egypt.
- B. C.S. Lewis in his book, *The Problem with Pain* says...
"Pain plants the flag of reality in the fortress of a rebellious heart. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains" it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.
 - 1. As long as things went well, Israel didn't need God.
 - 2. Is this true for us too?

3. Instead of crying out about the pain or cursing it, perhaps we need to ask what God may be trying to say to us through it.
- C. Israel's two midwives illustrate this truth—vv.15-22.
 1. They could have compromised their faith in the face of fear—v.15-16.
 2. Instead, they remained faithful to God and he blessed them for it—v. 17 & vv. 20-21.
 3. Have we remained faithful to God?

CONCLUSION

- A. God has a plan for each of us.
- B. God has a plan for our church.
- C. Are we following God's plan faithfully so he will not have to use pain to get our attention?