

## SETBACKS IN SERVICE

Exodus 4:27-6:1

January 18, 2009 pm

### INTRODUCTION

- A. We've all known someone, or been that someone who did the right thing and it only made matters worse (i.e. told the truth, did the honest thing, filled out our income tax papers correctly, etc).
- B. As we will see tonight, Moses did the right thing too, but it only made matters worse for him and the nation of Israel.
  1. In Moses told the people God would deliver them from slavery and the people rejoiced. Things couldn't have gone better to this point--4:27-31.  
**Exodus 4:27-31** <sup>27</sup> The LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the desert to meet Moses." So he met Moses at the mountain of God and kissed him. <sup>28</sup> Then Moses told Aaron everything the LORD had sent him to say, and also about all the miraculous signs he had commanded him to perform. <sup>29</sup> Moses and Aaron brought together all the elders of the Israelites, <sup>30</sup> and Aaron told them everything the LORD had said to Moses. He also performed the signs before the people, <sup>31</sup> and they believed. And when they heard that the LORD was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped.
  2. However, when Moses told Pharaoh the same thing, matters got worse for him and his people—5:1-2, 6-9.  
**Exodus 5:1-2** <sup>1</sup> 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.'" <sup>2</sup> 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."  
**Exodus 5:6-9** <sup>6</sup> That same day Pharaoh gave this order to the slave drivers and foremen in charge of the people: <sup>7</sup> "You are no longer to supply the people with straw for making bricks; let them go and gather their own straw. <sup>8</sup> 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.' <sup>9</sup> Make the work harder for the men so that they keep working and pay no attention to lies."

### I. WHY DO WE SOMETIMES FACE SETBACKS IN LIFE?

- A. Sometimes because of our "selective listening".
  1. God told Moses that Pharaoh wouldn't listen and Aaron told the people everything God told Moses, but they only heard what they wanted to hear—4:21.  
**Exodus 4:21** The LORD said to Moses, "When you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have given you the power to do. But I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go.
  2. We do the same with God and other people today.
  3. We've been told that bad things don't happen to good people, but that's not true.
- B. Sometimes because of our "unrealistic expectations".
  1. It was naive for Moses to assume that Pharaoh would take his word for what God said. Pharaoh would have to learn about God's power for himself.
  2. Its also naive for us to think the world will respect us because they do not know God either.
- C. Sometimes because of our "limited vision".
  1. Moses and Israel responded to their immediate circumstances not God's ultimate plans. God wasn't finished yet.
  2. We must learn to take the long look and not the short look at what happens around us. Give God time to act instead of expecting immediate results.

## II. HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO SETBACKS IN LIFE?

- A. Don't respond like Israel did.
  - 1. They looked to man instead of God for help—5:15-16.  
**Exodus 5:15-16** <sup>15</sup> Then the Israelite foremen went and appealed to Pharaoh: "Why have you treated your servants this way? <sup>16</sup> 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."
  - 2. They blamed other people for their problems—5:20-21.  
**Exodus 5:20-21** <sup>20</sup> When they left Pharaoh, they found Moses and Aaron waiting to meet them, <sup>21</sup> 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."
- B. Do respond like Moses did—at first he too blamed God, but at least he approached God for an answer—5:22-23.  
**Exodus 5:22-23** <sup>22</sup> Moses returned to the LORD and said, "O Lord, why have you brought trouble upon this people? Is this why you sent me? <sup>23</sup> 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."

### CONCLUSION

- A. Its important to remember that when we face setbacks in life that God doesn't owe us an answer. Sometimes he gives us one, but usually he doesn't.
- B. Perhaps the number one reason we face setbacks in life is because God sets the stage for him alone to get the glory.
  - 1. If Moses had been successful on the first try, he would have received the glory from the people.
  - 2. By allowing their setback, though, eventually God received the glory for delivering Israel from Egyptian slavery.