

God's Presence Does Not Guarantee Immediate Results

Exodus 5:10-21

- I. The Israelites are setup to fail.
 - A. The provision of the straw that is necessary to make bricks is eliminated (10)
 - 1. The taskmasters select men from among the Israelite workers as foreman to enforce the new policy.
 - a *"They become an example of the 'opportunity to improve their standard of living' by accepting the system of exploitation" – Pixley, Exodus: A Liberation Perspective*
 - 2. They're attempting to create division among the workers to sabotage any future alliances to improve their situation
 - B. Pharaoh is deliberately setting them up to fail so that they will fear ever making such requests of him again (11)
 - 1. This is textbook bullying designed to create insecurity & tension among the workers.
 - C. The expectations you live with will define the degree of happiness you experience in life.
- II. The Israelites are mercilessly punished for failing to do the impossible.
 - A. The plan to divide them is succeeding as "the people scattered" (12)
 - 1. Brick making is seasonal work that requires dry weather.
 - 2. Straw was available only after harvest time.
 - B. The pressure is intense & designed to erode their morale (13)
 - C. The foremen are cruelly beaten for failing to meet unreasonable demands (14)
- III. The Israelites appeal to their oppressor to save them (15-16)
 - A. *"Rather than praying for God to deliver them, they begged Pharaoh to make their bondage easier to bear."* – Ryken
 - 1. *"The expression 'your servants' occurs 3x, as though it was their intention to emphasize their devotion to him."* – Cassuto
 - a No matter how accommodating you are, nothing that you do will change an emotionally abusive person's behavior
 - 2. They rightly call Pharaoh out, but their submissive attitude towards him reveals their slave mentality.
 - a They are slaves to false peace.
 - b They don't recognize their true identity, or the authority God has given them.
 - c They merely accepted slavery as their lot in life.
 - B. Pharaoh predictably deflects responsibility (17)
 - 1. Blame shifting increases his pride & decreases his capacity for humility
 - 2. *"Pharaoh's response like that of many politicians, is to repeat himself even louder and more abusively."* – Wright, Exodus
 - a The more they point to his fault the more aggressive he will get
- IV. The Israelites give into despair (19)
 - A. Realizing the kind of trouble they are in, discouragement settles in.
 - 1. Discouragement is the opposite of courage.
 - a *"God cherishes hope, as He is the lover of souls. Satan, our enemy, cherishes despair when his way of blind presumption fails."* – Baxter
 - 2. They expected God's way of deliverance to be easy & forgot God's promise to deliver them by hardening Pharaoh.
 - B. When they realize how much they stink before Pharaoh they place the blame on God's minister (20-21)
 - 1. Is it any wonder that people who want nothing to do with God, often find God's people unpleasant company
 - a **2 Corinthians 2:15-16 NASB:** *For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; ¹⁶ to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?*
 - 2. Their support of Moses' leadership falters at the first sign of trouble
 - a Moses refused the privileges of the Egyptian royal house & chose a hard life with God's people.
 - 1) **Hebrews 11:24-25 NASB:** *By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,*
 - b *"Afflictions are God's spade by which he digs into his people's hearts to find out this gold of faith" – Gurnall*
 - 3. We must also be willing to do the ministry God's way and not according to our own desires.
 - a **Luke 9:62 NASB:** *But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."*
 - 1) Plowing is hard work that requires you keep your eyes always looking forward.

- 2) If you're going to give up in discouragement after hitting your first rock in the dirt you might as well save yourself the frustration of ever starting.

V. God's presence does not guarantee immediate results

A. God uses affliction to show us our true colors.

1. Affliction reveals whose side we are really on
 - a *1 John 2:19 NASB: They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.*
2. In the highest-pressure moments, our true colors show
 - a Our immediate reaction to affliction reveals a lot about us; but it usually isn't until the crisis subsides, that we see the truth about ourselves
 - 1) *James 1:2-3 NASB: Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.*
 - b God does not induce anyone to sin (James 1:13); but He does allow us to through trials and temptations.
 - 1) For the purpose of displaying how devoted we are to Him (*See Job*)
 - 2) For the purpose of disciplining us for disobedience (*1 Corinthians 5:5*)
 - 3) For the purpose of spiritual growth which produces godly maturity. (*1 Peter 5:10*)

B. God uses affliction in my life to draw me nearer to Himself

1. God requires our submission in order to overcome affliction.
 - a *James 4:7-8 NASB: Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*
 - 1) It is our submission to God that gives us the fortitude to resist the devil.
 - 2) We submit to God by trusting & obeying the truths in His word.
2. God will deliver you for the sake of His kingdom, power and glory.
 - a *Matthew 6:13 NASB: 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]'*
 - 1) We are praying that God would direct the course of our day away from any situation that would expose the weakness of our flesh

C. The fulfillment of God's ultimate plan of deliverance includes a chain of unpleasant events.

1. "God rules over hateful circumstances in such a way that they regularly lead to a greater deliverance than otherwise possible." – Piper, Providence
2. Jesus is the ultimate example of God's providence in affliction
 - a *Acts 2:23-24 NASB: this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. ²⁴ "But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.*
 - b *Acts 4:27-30 NASB: "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur. ²⁹ "And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence, ³⁰ while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus."*