



EXODUS SERIES: FREEDOM TO LIVE

#6: AFFLICTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT

August 12, 2018
Pastor Keith Jenkins

BIBLICAL TEXT

*"No matter how dark the night.
No matter how desperate the circumstance.
No matter how exhausted we are,
God will have mercy if we cry out to Him."
—Pastor Keith*

"The Israelite overseers realized they were in trouble when they were told, "You are not to reduce the number of bricks required of you for each day." When they left Pharaoh, they found Moses and Aaron waiting to meet them, and they said, "May the Lord look on you and judge you! You have made us obnoxious to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us."

*Moses returned to the Lord and said, "Why, Lord, why have you brought trouble on this people? Is this why you sent me? Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble on this people, and you have not rescued your people at all."
(Exodus 5:1-23)*

"Then the Lord said to Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: Because of my mighty hand he will let them go; because of my mighty hand he will drive them out of his country."

God also said to Moses, "I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the Lord I did not make myself fully known to them. I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they resided as foreigners. Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant."

"Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the Lord.'"

Moses reported this to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him because of their discouragement and harsh labor.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the Israelites go out of his country."

*But Moses said to the Lord, "If the Israelites will not listen to me, why would Pharaoh listen to me, since I speak with faltering lips?" **(Exodus 6:1-12)***

MESSAGE SUMMARY

In Exodus 5, things are not turning out the way Moses expected. He's been sent by God to set the Israelites free, and instead he ends up angering Pharaoh and earning the Israelites more work. The Israelites even reject Moses because of how things have turned out. In his frustration, Moses turns to God and asks what is going on. In Exodus 6, though God doesn't directly answer the "why" question, He does reassure Moses that He is truly at work. He is fighting on the behalf of the Israelites and He will be faithful, whether they can see it yet or not. Ultimately, it is God who will free his people and fulfill his promises, but in His own time. Though things look bleak, Moses and the people can continue to hope for change because God is working for their good.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage and the speaker's message, helping them understand and apply the teaching.

LEAN IN

These are icebreaker/warm up questions, mostly just to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. What happened this last week that took more time than you expected?
2. What is one thing that you are hopeful for in your life right now?
3. What was your high/low for this past week (or since group last met)?
What was the best thing that happened and the worst thing that happened?

LOOK DOWN

These are questions on the passage and observations about what's been read.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. What words and phrases are repeated in God's speech to Moses in verses 6:1-8?
2. Why do you think these words and phrases are being repeated? What is God trying to say to Moses and the Israelites in these words/phrases?
3. In verse 6:12, Moses is reluctant to do what the Lord says. Why does he feel this way? In your opinion, is he justified in his thinking? Why or why not?

LOOK OUT

These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. In Moses' disappointment, he turned to God instead of turning against the people. Where have you seen people turn in moments of disappointment (for good or for bad)?
2. The Israelites were unable to listen to Moses, not because they didn't believe in God or because they were rebellious, but because they lost hope that things could/would change. Where have you seen this same lack of hope in today's world?
3. In Exodus 6, God speaks to Moses and reassures him that although things don't look the way he might of expected, God is still at work. How does God reassure us of this same thing today?

LOOK IN

These are questions that help you consider personal application.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. What is your default response in moments of disappointment? How does this response affect your relationship with God and your relationships with others?
2. What expectations have you have of God that have not been met? What has been the result of these unmet expectations?
3. How has God reassured you of his goodness and love for you in your life? What methods has he used to comfort you in difficult times?
4. In his message, Pastor Keith suggested that we write personal psalms to God recalling God's faithfulness to us. If you were to write such a Psalm, what parts of your story would you highlight and praise God for? How might these parts of your story give you hope in difficult times?
5. Where does your hope come from? What keeps you from having hope in difficult situations? How might to cultivate more hope in your life?

cont.

**DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS,
CONT.**

LIVE IT OUT

These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life.

Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. What's one thing that this week's passage has shown you needs to change in your attitude toward disappointment and unmet expectations? How can this group support you (whether in prayer or through physical action) in making that change?
2. How could you work to cultivate an attitude of gratitude and thankfulness in your life this week, even in the midst of a hard circumstance?
3. What could you do to remind you to turn to God in the midst of disappointment?
4. How could you reassure someone of God's love this week?
5. What could to you this week to help cultivate hope in the lives of those around you?