

5

God's Voice

Text: Exodus 5

Key Verse: Exodus 5:2

Next Week: Exodus 6

Encountering God

EXODUS

Finding Freedom

OPEN

How do you respond when faithfully following God's Word makes life harder instead of easier? This week, we turn to Exodus 5 where Moses and Aaron faithfully follow God's Word in going to tell Pharaoh to let God's people go. Pharaoh rejects God's voice (v.2). In hearing their request, Pharaoh not only rejects their message but answers back by making the Israelites' labour 'harder'(v.9). Seeing the trouble Moses' obedience to God's call and God's Word has brought to their situation, it says, the Israelite overseers found Moses and Aaron and cursed and criticized them. Instead of things getting easier, obeying God's Word – for both Moses and the people – at first, it made life harder.

We sometimes see this same pattern in our own lives when we commit ourselves to living faithful to God's Word and call in Christ. In the New Testament, Jesus actually promises us that, "In this world you will have trouble" (Jn. 16:33). How will you respond to trouble? At the end of ch. 5, how does Moses respond? That is what we look at this week.

REFLECT

- Ch. 5 begins by saying, 'Afterward.' After what? On what note does ch. 4 end before this next turn in the story? How can this apply to us?
- In verse 3, Moses and Aaron tell Pharaoh the purpose for which God wants the Israelites to be released. What is that purpose? What is the point behind God wanting the Israelites to be free? For what reason?
- In Pharaoh's angry response, what is his main concern for the Israelites' lives to be focused on? Consider verses 4 and 5.
- In verse 9, Pharaoh – as an anti-God figure in the story – takes two tactics to counter Moses' demand. What are they? Why those two tactics do you think?

DISCUSS

- As we consider Moses' and the Israelites' situation becoming harder instead of easier in being faithful in follow God's Word, has there been a time in your faith journey when trying to faithfully follow God that your life got harder instead of easier? Share.
- Back in ch. 4:21, God tells Moses ahead of time that He will harden Pharaoh's heart and not – at first – let the people go. When Moses complains to God at the end of ch. 5, Moses doesn't mention this. What's your take? Do you think Moses had 'selective' memory about God's promise and Word to him? Do we sometimes have a selective memory about God's promises when the 'heat is on'?
- Look at Jesus' promises in John 16:33. What does Jesus' promise? What does Jesus call us to 'take heart' about? How do you see this verse applying to the way we look at our own situations? Discuss.
- In Exodus, Pharaoh serves as a 'type,' or real-life metaphor for Satan and his tactics. Looking at things from a spiritual lens, when does work, as tactic of the enemy, cross over to becoming 'busyness' – as in a distraction from God? Explain?
- When considering the commands of God's Word (God's voice), what are some of the lies from the devil we can encounter to deter us from doing what God says? What does Eph. 6:10- say how to respond?
- At the end of ch. 5, Moses complains to God. Is that okay?
- When encountering difficulty amidst faithfulness, how does James 1:4 tell us we should respond?

APPLY/PRAY

Take time to pray for one another...especially anyone in the circle who may be feeling discouraged or disillusioned with God because life is hard right now:

1. Take an honest posture before God about what's hard right now.

Moses' prayer in Ex. 5:22-23, as well as many of the psalms, like Psalm 142 of David help us see that God honours our honesty.

2. Ask God for fresh strength and grace to persevere in faithfully living according to God's Word...to keep obeying His voice.

Shape your prayers around 2 Corinthians 12:9 and James 1:2-8.

