

Exodus 5:1-6:27

Confronting Evil

With Chapter 5 the encounters with Pharaoh begin. Three key themes of those encounters are included already in these verses (5:1-14): the demand made by Yahweh, and quoted prophetically by Moses and Aaron, that “my people be allowed to leave Egypt to worship “me” in the wilderness (vv. 1,3); Pharaoh’s resistance, showing no sufficient fear of Yahweh (vv. 2,4); and Pharaoh’s stubbornness, shown in either doing nothing or doing the opposite of what Yahweh demanded (vv. 4-14, in this case resulting in even harsher conditions for the Israelites). These themes, represented in various implicit and explicit ways, and varying degrees of emphasis, persist through chap. 11.

The reader must not lose sight of the identity of the combatants. It is easy to assume that the contest for Israelite deliverance was between Moses and Pharaoh, or between Israel and Pharaoh, or between Israel and Egypt. It was none of these. Rather, it was between Yahweh and Egypt’s gods, the Pharaoh being a devotee of, representative of, and human focal point for those gods.” Stuart

- I. Moses and Aaron are the first in salvation history to be called by God to confront the king of the most powerful nation in the world at that time, Egypt. They didn’t confront him with the threat of going to war to dethrone him or threaten him with tariffs that would take away from his wealth and power. Instead, they came under the authority and with the backing of Almighty God to make him aware that the Israelites were God’s people and not his to do with as he pleased. Pharaoh’s response typifies the mindset of a world opposed to God and His righteous ways. *We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one (1 Jn. 5:19).* The fact that we are the children of God puts us in conflict with the world. Our very nature as representatives of Christ’s righteousness is a confrontation to the godless ways of the world. Jesus made that clear when he said, *“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you” (Jn. 15:18-19).* We feel that acutely at times, yet we must, like Moses and Aaron, be willing to confront its ways and influence knowing that *“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds” (2 Cor. 10:4).*

Ex. 5:1-3

Eph. 2:1-5

Rom. 1:18-19

1 Cor. 1:25-29 *For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.*

- II. Conflict and persecution often result when the light of Christ's righteousness penetrates the darkness of the world's godless ways. We see that when God's moral absolutes take a stand against Satan's ever shifting standard of what the world considers to be right and wrong. It will use whatever it deems effective in suppressing God's truth, often at great cost to those who are willing to take a stand for Christ's righteousness. Satan's primary weapon is fear, be it fear of reprisal, oppression, health dangers, financial security, or loss of freedom and control. Satan knows that fear takes away man's ability to think objectively and clearly toward whatever the threat might be. How the Israelites responded to Pharaoh's cruelty, even though they knew that Almighty God was with them, shows the power that fear and suffering can have in moving believers to doubt that God is for them and not against them. Moses' faith was being tested by the mighty display of Pharaoh's cruelty and the Israelites response to it. Instead of being more determined to think biblically and stand strong for God, he blamed Him out of fear that perhaps Pharaoh was more powerful than God or that He was not acting quick enough to free them. Fortunately, God, in His grace, would show him otherwise. Moses was on the path of learning to trust God just as we are. It's a good path to be on, just make sure you stay on it.

Ex. 5:4-23

Matt. 10:22

Eph. 6:10-12

1 Peter 4:19 *Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.*

- III. The faithfulness of God in keeping His promises to us should never be questioned. In fact, who are we to doubt Him. He's God and we are not. How arrogant it would be for us to think that the problems life throws our way are bigger than God's faithfulness toward us. There is no excuse for believers to think they know better than God, let alone doubt His Word. We've been given the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16), wisdom from the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:12) and the truth of His Word (2 Tim. 3:16) to equip and enable us to take on life's many challenges. How the Israelites responded to God's "I will" statements concerning His covenant promises to them is scary in that it shows us how weak the flesh can be. It shows us how capable we are of doubting Him when discouragement and fear take its toll on our emotional, spiritual and physical wellbeing. Yet, despite those tendencies, He remains faithful toward us. That's why we are told, *"Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you."* So we say with confidence: *"The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"*

Ex. 6:1-27

Heb. 13:5b-6

"Ezekiel 20:5-9 shows why God was so small and Pharaoh was so big in Israel's heart during this time. Ezekiel explained that they trusted the gods of their oppressors, worshipping the gods of the Egyptians. This is why they didn't trust God, and His messenger Moses. The reason why God did not judge Israel at the time was because He didn't want His name profaned among the Gentiles." Guzik