

Lesson 2: “Let My People Go” – Facing Conflict in Prayer (5:1-6:13)

Opening Thoughts: *Discuss your experiences with conflict. How do you handle? Why might someone opt for a text or email rather than meeting for a face to face conversation? What tends to happen in such situations? How might this sort of experience also play out in our prayer relationship with God?*

Study: Exodus 5:1-6:13 – (Introductory Notes) Moses enters into a great cosmic conflict with Pharaoh and his spiritual powers (gods). Pharaoh has enslaved God’s people, and the LORD intervenes to rescue them. The story of the Exodus unfolds as Moses performs a series of 10 miracles to demonstrate to Pharaoh that he has no power or standing before the LORD.

1. When Pharaoh says, “I do not know the LORD,” (5:2) it doesn’t mean that he has never heard of Israel’s God. It means that, as king, he refuses to acknowledge the LORD as worthy of recognition before his gods. This marks the beginning of a battle between the LORD and the gods of Egypt. In response to God’s command to “Let my people go,” Pharaoh increases the difficulty and suffering of the Israelites. What does this tell us about prayer and confrontation of spiritual warfare?

2. The Israelites respond to Moses with complaining. Read Moses’ words in 5:22-23. Do you think this is an appropriate prayer for Moses to bring before the LORD? Why? Have you ever known someone with similar questions? How does the Bible address such a dilemma? How does God respond in the following verse (6:1)?

3. 6:2-8 is a summary of the message of Exodus, and, in a sense, the theme of the whole Bible. Can you think of some key words in these verses that highlight the theme of the book of Exodus? How does this section help us as we pray through times of spiritual conflict?

4. God emphasizes that he is making himself known to Israel in a special way that was not the same for Abraham’s life. Four times he repeats this phrase “I am the LORD” in this section. He is showing the special way that He is revealing Himself as the personal “I AM” God of Israel. If God were to speak this same message to today, he would probably say something like, “I am Jesus.” By my name Jesus, I was not known to them, as I am now known to you now.” What would the name of Jesus emphasize that is special about God’s work in our own lives today? Do you think verses 6-7 could still be applied to our own experiences with Jesus today? How does this impact our approach to prayer and spiritual conflict?

5. Moses knows God in a way that Pharaoh does not. To know God is to enter into a face to face relationship with Him and to learn who He really is. In the chapters that follow, the LORD is pictured as a divine warrior, who defeats the gods of Egypt with a mighty and outstretched arm. How does this picture of God help you in your prayer life?

6. In the movie, Saving Private Ryan, there is an ongoing mystery about what the captain's job was before the War. Toward the end of the movie, he reveals he was a High School English Teacher. He tells them, “back home, they said, It figures; but over here, it is a mystery.” It is this vulnerability which actually saves the men from disbanding or killing each other. Jesus is our divine captain who faces the ultimate war against Satan. How does it affect your strategy in the battle against evil, when you learn that the divine warrior who leads you into battle was a humble human carpenter from Nazareth who willingly submitted Himself to the suffering and shame of death on a cross? What does it mean to follow Him into battle?

7. 6:9 - Why does Israel not listen to Moses? Have you ever seen someone unable to listen because they were consumed with the suffering that they were going through? What should we do in such situations? What does the LORD tell Moses to do in the next verse (6:10-11)? What does this response of the LORD tell us about how to deal with situations where our own morale is broken? What does it tell us that God instructed Moses to return 10 more times with great works to demonstrate His right over Pharaoh as King of Israel?

Any Prayer Requests? Final Questions or Comments?

For Next Time, Read Ahead and Reflect on the Questions Below:

3. “Stand Firm and Watch” – Finding Stillness in Prayer (13:17-14:31)

Text Notes: After ten plagues upon Egypt, Pharaoh reluctantly is forced to let the people go. They travel out of Egypt toward the great mountain, the sign where God is going to meet with them. Rather than leading them the shorter route where they would face other battles right away, God led them toward the Red Sea. In his madness, Pharaoh refused to accept defeat, and charged after the Israelites for the final showdown.

Read and Reflect: In times of crisis or danger, human instinct is fight or flight. In the story of the exodus, the Israelites are led by God to a dead end at the Red Sea. The water is on one side, and Pharaoh's army is charging at them from the other side. What are some common human responses to situations where they feel trapped? Different experiences can lead you to process and respond to such situations in different ways? The story of the Red Sea is teaching that no matter the circumstances or how you got there, all situations relate to God and every moment of crisis or despair is meant to draw us closer to God.

Key Verse: Exodus 14:14 “The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be still.”