



Series: Exodus: Out of Egypt

Date: March 27, 2022

Speaker: Spence Shelton, *Lead Pastor*

Text: Exodus 5:1-23 & 6:1-9

Title: When the Battle Gets Worse

Compassion Celebration & EASTER Plug

EASTER!! It is coming up fast. SO, we are introducing to you the greatest tool known to mankind for inviting people to easter. It's called "The Easter Square." Don't sleep on these things. They are EASY to hand out. And on them they show what we got going on that weekend. So let me tell you:

- Good Friday Worship Night: Services at both campuses. Our worship team is preparing a great night for us. Communion, Prayer, Worship, and I'll give a shorter message on the death of Christ and what it means for us. Setting us up for Resurrection Sunday.
- SATURDAY: EASTER EGG HUNT! A really fun, easy event to bring your family to and your friends. The hunt is for kids elementary and younger. SORRY middle

schoolers you can ask Brett our student director about getting your own hunt. If you want to HELP -

kids@mercycharlotte.com

- SUNDAY: We are going to be adding services to BOTH campuses. MNE will have a 9am AND an 11am service. MPR will have 9 & 11 AND...are you ready... a 7:30am service. Yes, we are going to worship so early we might see Jesus walk out the grave.

For everyone please remember - the whole weekend we are all taking a "next step" in the mission of God together. Maybe your next step is giving up your normal seat. Coming to the 7:30. Maybe your next step is inviting your friend and coming to the 11am with them and then going to lunch. Maybe it's serving on a team. What we gotta be asking each other in community group - is what next step is God calling me to take this easter?

Sermon Intro

OK on to Exodus 5. We've got a lot of ground to cover. We are going to pick up where we left off. Moses is going to finally go talk with Pharaoh. Man, we've been building up to this for a while haven't we! Now it's here. God put Moses on a mission. After some back and forth Moses finally decided he would



trust God. And what we are going to see today is...Moses obeyed God...AND THINGS GOT WORSE.

And I just gotta ask - have you ever said OK yes God, I will trust you and obey you and then...IT GOT WORSE!?

There was this old hymn we used to sing at the church I grew up in. Called "trust and obey." Minister of Music would get up there and say turn in your hymnals to hymn 447. And we'd all sing "Trust & Obey, for there's no other way...To be happy in JESUS.... than to trust and obey."

And it's true but what was missing...at least missing from the chorus that IMPLANTED itself in my brain...Is that when we trust and obey...WE NEED TO EXPECT A BATTLE.

And THAT is what Moses was not ready for. EVEN THOUGH THE LORD TOLD HIM there would be resistance. Moses isn't ready for it. And **because** he isn't expecting some kind of battle when he steps into the mission God puts him on, he wavers and so do the people around him. And thankfully as God is prone to do with his servants...he is patient with Moses and helps him.

YA'll there is a HUGE lesson in this encounter - 3 scenes unfold - Moses & Pharaoh, Moses & Israel, Moses & God. One big idea and I'm going to sum it up this way as the main sermon point from this passage:

Trust and Obey the Lord... and prepare for battle.

When you get off the sidelines and start taking next steps in following Jesus...Expect the enemy to come at you harder than he ever has. Expect your sin nature inside you to resist your pursuit of holiness. Trust him YES. Show you trust him by stepping out in obedience YES. But prepare for battle. Let's get into it and see what unfolds for our guy Moses and what we can learn about getting ready to fight when we follow the Lord.

1 Later, Moses and Aaron went in and said to Pharaoh, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Let my people go, so that..."

So, this is a big moment. God called him to this, and he struggled with it remember? I'm not sure if I should go after all if I were to go...who do I say sent me? And when I go...how will they know to believe? Moses had some hesitations. BUT, at the end of the day God said Moses...You gotta trust me because...I AM. And we saw that two weeks ago. So now Moses does it. This is a huge moment right! Everybody in his community group is like "YES! WAY TO GO MAN!" Way to step out and trust the Lord and do what he called you to!

before we see Pharaoh's response let me point out something very, very important about your walk with God. See when God



saves them FROM pharaoh, it is for a purpose. So that...can you finish the sentence?

they may hold a festival for me in the wilderness.”

they can go worship him (the festival is a worship festival...which I'm deciding is our new name for our gatherings). - God saves them FROM pharaoh SO THAT they can worship him. The whole idea is that they are saved TO something else. They are rescued for a purpose.

And that's big because sometimes the Christian message can only be: Hey you need saving from your sins. And that's TRUE. BUT - The full message is...YOU NEED SAVING FROM YOUR SIN SO THAT YOU CAN BE RECONCILED TO GOD! So that you can worship him and walk with him. Let me say it this way: **God isn't a transactional God, he's a relational God.** He's not interested in just wiping your record clean & then you go on about your business. He's interested in cleansing your record SO THAT you can worship him and walk with him as you were created to do.

Some of you have been stunted in your faith because you've treated God like he works behind the counter at chipotle. One salvation please...no beans. Jesus is buying.

That's not the gospel. But some of you are stunted because you never got past here. Listen - God made you for so much

more than just getting out of hell.

The gospel is an announcement that you are rescued SO THAT you can be reconciled to God. that is YOUR PURPOSE! YOU were made for it. THAT is your true freedom. And THAT is our whole mission as a church. Our mission is not "GET PEOPLE OUT OF HELL." Though listen - I want to make it really hard to go to hell from Charlotte...not our mission. Mission is make disciples...get involved so you can learn what it's like to walk with God in your freedom. ok I gotta keep rolling here.

2 But Pharaoh responded, "Who is the Lord that I should obey him by letting Israel go? I don't know the Lord, and besides, I will not let Israel go."

- That's Pharaoh's way of saying "That's a nope." After all who is the Lord? Remember you are talking to PHARAOH. He doesn't obey anyone. He's the most powerful man in the world. He's definitely not going to obey "the Lord" whoever that is.

3 They answered, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. (i love this. Gods in that day didn't meet with people. But our God...oh he meets with his people. Told you. Relational God. Walks with us, talks with us, through his spirit he dwells with us...Christianity is just so different in this way. And so good.) Please let us go on a three-day trip into the wilderness so that



we may sacrifice to the Lord our God, or else he may strike us with plague or sword.”⁴ The king of Egypt said to them, “Moses and Aaron, why are you causing the people to neglect their work? Get to your labor!”⁵ Pharaoh also said, “Look, the people of the land are so numerous, and you would stop them from their labor.”

Pharaoh is NOT interested in or concerned by the God of the Hebrews. He doesn't care what is at stake for them. In FACT, since Moses & Aaron got to town the Hebrews have stopped working. This is now a financial nuisance for Pharaoh. So, he says get outta here & get back to work. Not ONLY did pharaoh NOT do what they asked...but in a show-you-who-is-boss moment he makes things WORSE for them.

⁶ That day Pharaoh commanded the overseers of the people as well as their foremen, ⁷ “Don't continue to supply the people with straw for making bricks, as before. They must go and gather straw for themselves. ⁸ But require the same quota of bricks from them as they were making before; do not reduce it. For they are slackers — that is why they are crying out, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to our God.’ ⁹ Impose heavier work on the men. Then they will be occupied with it and not pay attention to deceptive words.”

Pharaoh is angry, and more than that, he's threatened. And when the enemy of God is threatened, He's going to FIGHT BACK. He's going to make things harder than before.

And I'm telling you there is a version of Christianity that doesn't go by any label but VERY prominent among educated people that simply does not believe in a real enemy out to destroy your relationship with God. Out to harm you. Because that's too mystical. Too abstract and mythical sounding. If you are honest, you are too rational for such a belief. And yet scripture says

Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour. -- 1 Peter 5:8

Now let me make sure you understand who your enemy is: The devil is, according to scripture, an angel who rebelled against the Lord, so he was cast out along with this legion of angels. He is not like God. He is not all powerful or all knowing. But he is the commander of evil, and he commands an army of demons who do his bidding and can deceive & torment people, even Christians. His sole aim is to sever your



relationship with God here on earth and forever. ¹ He's real and he's powerful and he hates God, and he hates you.

He doesn't want you walking with God. He doesn't want your family walking with God. He doesn't want your friends walking with God. He HATES YOU. He hates God. he hates all of us. And he's not playing games with you so don't play games with him.

But he is not the only thing working against you. Satan is the enemy without. And is what we are preparing for today. There's also the enemy within - and that is the corrupted desires of our hearts that the bible calls our sinful nature. The bible says left to ourselves, we don't choose to follow God. We don't choose his side of the battle. Left to ourselves we choose darkness. Every person does it in different ways, but we are by NATURE...sinners. And I say that because if you think every bad choice you make is the devil's fault...you will never deal honestly with God. "The devil made me do it" is not confession. It's blame shifting. God offers forgiveness from sin (the enemy within) and victory over evil (the enemy without). You ask - ok how do I know the difference? Well, you probably

won't most of the time. But if you prepare for battle, you'll be ready to fight both.

The rational mind is the one that acknowledges and anticipates Satan and his work. The fool ignores his presence to his own peril. And I bring him up because WHEN you try to take a step of obedience in following God...you are taking a step INTO a battle with a very real enemy. And you need to anticipate resistance from him.

Battle prep: anticipate the enemy.

You'd never see a general of an army. Or a captain of a unit - say - Ok guys we are going into battle. We know nothing about the enemy. Some say he's not even out there but eh, let's just casually flippantly walk across this field. "Are there mines?" Eh. I don't know. Is he waiting to ambush us? Eh, we'll see. Do we have weapons or a strategy? No, I'm too busy looking at my phone.

Whether its resistance coming to church, resistance in reading your bible, distraction in prayer, resistance to the gospel when you share it...Look we are praying for & all of us are together

¹ Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28; Revelation 12; Luke 10.18; 2 Peter 2.4; Ephesians 6.12; 2 Corinthians 11.13-14, 12.7; Luke 22.3-4; Matthew 25.41; John 8.44, 10.10.



trying to invite 200 people who don't know Jesus to our Easter Services. I GUARANTEE YOU the enemy is going to put up resistance. Because we are following Jesus right through his gates and trying to rescue 200 people from him. AND HE DOESNT WANT THAT. Period. The western mind doesn't like to believe in this realm because we can't explain it through the scientific method.

When you step out and obey the Lord, EXPECT Resistance from the enemy. And then...when it arrives...you'll actually be able to find some joy in it. I know that sounds a little twisted but listen...soldiers don't put on armor and learn how to fight and carry their weapon so they can sit around idle. They do all of that in preparation for battle. And when they finally encounter the enemy...they kick into gear. Cause This is what we are trained for. We must be in the right spot. We've anticipated him and are ready. Let's keep going. Jump down to verse 19 where the Israelites are told they've got a problem.

19 The Israelite foremen saw that they were in trouble when they were told, "You cannot reduce your daily quota of bricks." 20 When they left Pharaoh, they confronted Moses and Aaron, who stood waiting to meet them. 21 "May the Lord take note of you and judge," they said to them, "because you have made us reek to Pharaoh and his officials — putting a sword in their hand to kill us!"

But look - the Israelite foremen were understandably frustrated. Their first step towards freedom seemed to be BACKWARDS not forwards. But when they met resistance...they identified the WRONG enemy. Moses...this is YOUR fault. They blamed the messenger for their hardship. It's funny just at the end of chapter 4 they were WORSHIPPING at the very news that God had heard their cries. They were celebrating that they were being set free! And now that things are in motion...and getting difficult...they are complaining to and about their own leaders.

They've identified the wrong enemy. Moses isn't their enemy. Moses is the one God has called to come be their advocate. They are going to do this SAME thing in a few chapters when they are out IN the wilderness and things get hard again. Why did you bring us out here Moses? It would have been better if we could have just stayed in Egypt. Yeah Moses.

When they heard good news from God, they worshipped. When they encountered resistance from the enemy, they grumbled.

One of the keys to understanding Exodus, I told you in week one is that we will often find our best application when we put ourselves in Israel's shoes. And that's really true here. Israel went from Trusting to Grumbling when life got hard. Ever do



that? Ever complain when you try to follow the Lord and it gets hard? I know I do!! And it is contagious, isn't it?

Because this is what complaining does. It spreads its frustration to everyone it touches. Watch.

22 So Moses went back to the Lord and asked, "Lord, why have you caused trouble for this people? And why did you ever send me? 23 Ever since I went into Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has caused trouble for this people, and you haven't rescued your people at all."

Now Moses is all in his feelings. And asks that question that everyone asks about day 3 on a short-term mission trip. WHY AM I EVEN HERE? WHY DID YOU SEND ME GOD?

I thought I would GET HERE AND THEN IT WOULD HAPPEN. I OBEYED YOU...you mean I gotta WAIT on you? FRUIT DOESN'T GROW INSTANTLY?

We are SO quick to doubt the Lord. William Carey was a missionary to India in 1800. He inspired, in so many ways, the modern missions movement. Adoniram Judson, Hudson Taylor, David Livingstone...and many more were inspired by William Carey's famous life motto - Expect Great Things from God, Attempt Great Things for God.

Listen to me - William Carey went to India because the church sends God's people to all people - and he worked for 7 YEARS before baptizing his first convert. SEVEN YEARS.

Battle Prep: wait on God and pray

Some of you have obeyed God And things have gotten worse lately. Your spouse is STILL COLD to you even after you've tried forgiveness. In fact, they are now skeptical of your motives. Of course, they are. The enemy is threatened. Your children are still running from the Lord, and you've tried everything in the parenting books. Everything the bible says you've tried. Your neighbor is still resistant to the gospel, and you've TRIED everything. And you are right there on the edge of doubting God when you just need to wait on him. And what you need to be reminded of today is that HE DOES hear the prayers of his people.

Prov 15.29 - 29 The Lord is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous. -- Proverbs 15:29

James 5.16 - The prayer of a righteous person has great power

The one concern of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, and prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray. - Samuel Chadwick



OUR PRAYERS ARE POWERFUL AND EFFECTIVE. We sometimes get it reversed. We think our EFFORT is effective and prayer is secondary. It's really the reverse. The power is in our prayer. Think about the book of Acts - the early church prayed for 3 days & peter preached for 10 minutes. 3000 people get saved. We preach for 3 days & pray for 10 minutes and 3 get saved.

We need to reverse that! That's why we are FASTING & PRAYING EVERY TUESDAY. 8 weeks. That's 8 hours per person. X 1000 people who attend mercy. That would be 8000 hours of prayer. Let's just say we hit 25% of that - 2000 hours of prayer. I'm going to preach for 30 minutes on easter. I think the Lord is in that math. Prayer is the expression of faith that unlocks the power of God.

But the answer...that's his timing not ours. And one of the greatest battle tactics you can have as you follow the Lord and things get worse...is patience. Spiritual Patience is something the bible says God's Holy Spirit gives to you as you depend on him. So...The sin nature in us says complain to God & then doubt him. But that is no battle strategy. Instead, wait on God and pray. Tell him what you need.

Maybe what you need to remember is that he LOVES YOU! He is here for you! In fact, that leads right to the most important

battle prep reminder. I want to read you the opening of Chapter 6.

But the Lord replied to Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: because of a strong hand he will let them go, and because of a strong hand he will drive them from his land."

6 "Therefore tell the Israelites: I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from the forced labor of the Egyptians and rescue you from slavery to them. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and great acts of judgment. 7 I will take you as my people, and I will be your God. You will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from the forced labor of the Egyptians. 8 I will bring you to the land that I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you as a possession. I am the Lord."

God's response to Moses is full of first-person singular responses. God says "I AM...remember back to the name of God? I AM...so I will." Verse 1 of chapter 6 he says now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh. And then everything I just read you is the battle plan. God will do it. Not you. God.

Battle Prep: hold fast to the gospel



See the people of Israel heard it. BUT when the battle heated up...when resistance set in...they didn't want to hear about hope.

9 Moses told this to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him because of their broken spirit and hard labor.

It's understandable...but it's also a warning to us. It is SO EASY for suffering to close our ears to hope. You know it and I know it. In times of suffering, we are often prone to think God is silent. But God isn't silent, we just don't want to hear him. Don't tell me it's gonna be ok. Don't tell me God's got a plan. Don't tell me he's working things for good. I trusted him and THINGS GOT WORSE! Don't talk to me about God. And I believe the exodus is here to pry your hands off your ears because your HEART needs to hear God has not forgotten you just because things got worse. In fact, what he's saying in chapter 6 verse 1 is that he's working in the worse.

Don't close your ears to him. See in the exodus he reminds them of what he's GOING to do. He's GOING to redeem them. Going to bring them out. Going to be their God. Going to fulfill his word to give them the promised land. And they can trust him because he's the same God who protected and provided for Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob.

Ya'll when we prepare for battle...we have the hope of what God is going to do - namely bring us to the true promised land of heaven one day. And we ALSO have the HOPE of what he has done!

The Gospel plants our FEET in the PAST victory of Christ over sin in his death and resurrection and in the FUTURE victory of the kingdom of God for all eternity. In Christ you are walking FROM victory and TOWARDS victory. Which is why you are more than a conqueror through him who raised Christ Jesus from the dead.

that unchanging truth - man that's ARMOR against the enemy. That he rose from the grave...THAT'S ARMOR. And the apostle Paul believed in a real battle against a real enemy so much he put battle armor language on the gospel

13 For this reason take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand. 14 Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist,

- That's the gospel - That you were loved with a love so deep and so powerful that nothing could ever separate you from it. WRAP yourself in that. It will hold everything else.

righteousness like armor on your chest,



- Chest armor protects the vital organs. Put on God's righteousness. The gospel will change your heart and you will start to love what God loves. And

15 and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace.

- Readiness - BEEPER. "On call." Readiness to go to the ends of the earth, readiness to go to your neighbors.

16 In every situation take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

- Shield of faith guards you against Satan's flaming arrows. What are they? LIES. What protects you? The gospel. The TRUTH of the gospel and FAITH in it is YOUR SHIELD. Which is why we tell you to rehearse the gospel & abide in Christ EVERY DAY.

17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit — which is the word of God.

- Keep your helmet on. Meditate on the gospel always.
- Sword - offensive weapon. Jesus in the wilderness - responds "it is written." I don't need your bread. I don't need your kingdom...because it is WRITTEN.
- When boys were 6 & 7 - sword story.

- Ben - I'll get biggest bible and hit Satan in the face.
- Like trying to extinguish a fire with a hose by slapping the fire with the hose. Turn on the hose & let the water do its thing! OPEN THE BIBLE & LET IT DO ITS THING!
- EVERY DAY.

18 Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints -- Ephesians 6:13-18

Ya'll Pharaoh was a real enemy. And he had real power. And there is only one hope for Moses - that God really will do what he said he would do. The same is true for us. We really only have one hope. It's the hope of Christ we can stand firm in. TWO FEET FIRMLY PLANTED IN THE RESURRECTION AND THE HOPE OF GLORY.