



Series: Exodus Out of Egypt

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Text: Exodus 9 & 10

Title: What Will Keep You from Obeying the God you Believe In?

MPT: God is uniquely powerful, just, and merciful and rightly demands to be worshipped.

MPS: What will keep you from obeying the God you believe in.

Introduction

Allow me to start by sharing a short story. I remember this one time, I was supposed to bring home two cans of shoe polish after school, and all day long, I had this money in my pocket that was screaming at me “spend me,” and I obliged – I spent half the money on candy and snacks but at the end of the school day I had a big problem, I was expected to go home with two cans of shoe polish, and I only had money for one can, so I did what any normal person would do. I decided to shoplift. At the store, I put one can in my backpack, and I held one in my hands and proceeded to the cash register. Unbeknownst to

me, they had someone watching me. They let me pay for the one can, to see if I would pay for the other one, and while I tried walking out of the store, someone grabbed me, and I was led to a back room, where I was exposed.

But that was not the end of it, I knew this would get to my parents, and I would get a whooping, so I ran away and sort refuge at one of my grandmothers' house, and I thought she would smooth things over for me but lo and behold eventually when I returned home, I got what was coming to me and it wasn't a time out. (that's all I'll say about that.) Here is the thing, I believed my parents had some sort of authority over me. I believed they were against stealing. I believed they were against me misusing their resources, but my actions did not show that. Just like me, some of us believe God is real, that he has authority over us, and he is all-powerful, but sometimes there seems to be a disconnect when it comes to living our lives like he is actually real.

As we walk through Exodus 9 and 10, we will see this disconnect amplified – in our text Pharaoh goes as far as stating that Yahweh is God, but his actions say otherwise. And this is huge because one of the main reasons why Egypt was being



attacked by God is simply because Pharaoh refused to obey God. The plagues are a consequence of His continued disobedience to God. His people lost livestock, got afflicted with boils, were swamped by locusts, got hit by a terrible storm, and experienced darkness that lasted three days, all because Pharaoh refused to obey.

Now, I do **not** believe we should obey God **just** so that he doesn't "punish" us. I think we should want to obey God because it's the right thing to do- he is God; after all, we should obey God because Jesus says we should, John 14:15 Jesus said, "if you love me, you shall keep my commandment." And we should obey because honestly, obedience leads to a fulfilled life. I read a quote the other day that I thought captures this so well, "the fruit of the spirit grows only in the garden of obedience," if we want to experience more of the love, joy and a state of shalom-peace with God then we need to agree with God. Really that's what obeying is, I know that the word OBEY might sound like a curse word these days, but it simply means agreeing with what God says about all areas of life.

So, if obeying God is for our ultimate good, what will keep us away from that goal? Our text will help us answer that question; throughout our passage, we will see what kept Pharaoh from obeying, and I believe the Lord has a message for us here, he is using Pharaoh as a sign of what not to do. Today's sermon is titled, **what will keep you from obeying the God you believe in** – if you have your bibles

Exposition

Verse 1 to 7 tells a story of how Moses was sent to Pharaoh once again to tell him to let the people go so, they could worship God, but Pharaoh once again refused to let the people go, and so God brought forth a severe plague that killed all the livestock. In the sixth plague, recorded in verses 8-12, God directed Moses to throw soot toward heaven in front of Pharaoh and his magicians, and Moses did as the Lord directed, and the soot became boils on people and animals, and verse 11 tells us ¹¹ **The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians as well as on all the Egyptians.** The magicians were exposed by God as frauds who did not have real power. They could not replicate this plague or undo it



And what we see here is pharaoh's pride, his audacity to refuse to submit to the God of Moses, who is unlike any other god. This God executes precise judgment in that only the Egyptian livestock died, but the Israelite's animals did not die. Verse 7 tells us that Pharaoh sent messengers to go check it out. His pride would not let him believe that God would do just what he said.

Up to this point, Pharaoh has continued to harden his own heart. He had continued to choose his own way over God's way, but look at verse 12 with me **12 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had told Moses...** I know that this is one of those hard things to understand in the bible, and I have wrestled with it. People will often accuse God of being cruel, arguing that Pharaoh had no choice because it was God who hardened his heart. But here is the thing. God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart was the natural result of Pharaoh rejecting God. Because of Pharaoh's continued pride and rebellion, God gave him exactly what he wanted. He gave him the desires of His heart. God will not force anyone to obey him. He will not force you to obey him, but instead. James 4:8 tells us, if we **draw near to God, he will draw near to us.**

By the time we get to the 7th plague God had some tough words for pharaoh look at verse 14 with me, this is God speaking...**this time I am about to send all my plagues against you, your officials, and your people. Then you will know there is no one like me on the whole earth.** ¹⁵ By now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague, and you would have been obliterated from the earth. Parents, doesn't this feel like when your child talks back at you and you are like, do you know who you are talking back at right now "?" ¹⁶ However, I have let you live for this purpose: to show you my power and to make my name known on the whole earth. I love that even in the middle of this divine scolding, the salvation of all people was on God's mind. God says he was letting pharaoh live so as to show his power and to make his name known on the whole earth. ¹⁷ **You are still acting arrogantly against my people by not letting them go.** – That leads us to our first observation

Pride will keep you from obeying the God you believe in.

This word **Pride** means to have **an improper and excessive self-esteem, also known as**



conceit or arrogance¹ , And that's exactly what God calls out in Pharaoh– He literally says in verse 17 - You are still acting arrogantly. Remember, Pharaoh had been impacted by the display of God's power. His livestock got killed, his people got boils, and the children of Israel did not suffer this same fate. It is prideful of Pharaoh to fail to obey this God who seems to be all-powerful and precise in his judgment. The opposite of pride is Humility, having a reverential fear of God, which leads to obedience. Verse 20 lets us, **20 Those among Pharaoh's officials who feared the Word of the LORD made their servants and livestock flee to shelters;** they did this because they feared the Word of the Lord, they did not want to be caught up in the hail.

It's easy to see Pharaoh's pride and fail to see our own pride, so allow me to point out just three potential symptoms or manifestations of pride in our lives. 1. **Entitlement** if you start believing you deserve the praises of people, you deserve success, you deserve better than you have because, after all, you are you, and pain or discomfort makes you frustrated with God. You

start forgetting that the only thing you and I deserve apart from Christ is death. (Romans 6:23) Another one is **prayerlessness**. God invites us to bring all our burdens to Him in prayer when we conclude that we can do life on our own terms, believe the lie that we are self-reliant and self-sufficient, and refuse to pray or push prayer to the side that might be evidence of pride. The third symptom is **fear**, ultimately, we become prone to fear when we don't have faith in God, like Peter in Matthew 14, who at first humbly followed Jesus's voice and walked on water, but as soon as he started worrying about the circumstances instead of keeping his eyes on the Lord, he began to sink. Fear stems from pride because it's born from our preoccupation with our lack of control over our circumstances instead of humbly resting in God, who is truly in control. When Jesus says to us, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Some of us say no, Jesus, let me sit here and worry about what I cannot fix,

Because of Pharaoh's arrogance, God sent the 7th plague, this time it was a storm that had never

¹ Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, "[Pride](#)," *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1752.



been experienced before in Egypt. Look with me at verse 23 ²³ ... the LORD sent thunder and hail. Lightning struck the land, and the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. ²⁴ The hail, with lightning flashing through it, was so severe that nothing like it had occurred in the land of Egypt since it had become a nation. ²⁵ Throughout the land of Egypt, the hail struck down everything in the field, both people and animals. The hail beat down every plant of the field and shattered every tree in the field. ²⁶ The only place it didn't hail was in the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were. ²⁷ Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron. **"I have sinned this time,"** he said to them. **"The LORD is the righteous one, and I and my people are the guilty ones."** ²⁸ Make an appeal to the LORD. There has been enough of God's thunder and hail. I will let you go; you don't need to stay any longer."

Notice Pharaoh actually said, **"The LORD (YAHWEH) is the righteous one, and I and my people are the guilty ones."** It sounds like pharaoh just said the prayer, he walked the aisle, he got saved, but

did he? He correctly identified that the God of Moses was the true God and that he and his people were guilty before this God, but here is the thing, just mouthing off religious words is not sufficient for salvation.² Pharaoh says all the right things, but his heart has not been transformed. His words are not evidence of true repentance. We know this because verse 34 tells us, as soon as the hail and thunder ceased, he refused to let God's people go. God will always hear and answer the genuine prayer of repentance, but He can see through false repentance. Repentance produces change, while remorse produces sorrow with no change. Here is the point³

Unbelief will keep you from obeying the God you "believe in."

Some of you believe that the God of the Bible is the true God; you believe that you are guilty before this God and that Jesus lived a sinless life, was crucified on the cross on your behalf, and on the third day, He rose up from the grave, and if you repent and believe in Jesus alone, your sins will be

1. ² Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in Exodus* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), Ex 9:13–10:29.

2. ³ Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in Exodus* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), Ex 9:13–10:29.



forgiven, and you will be reconciled to God, and you will get to enjoy an abundant life starting from right now and lasting forever in the presence of God. You agree with those facts, but you are yet to place your faith in God.

Let me try to illustrate this when you entered this room, or your living room, you knew factually that the seat you are now sitting on could hold you up. You believed that, but when you sat down, you exercised faith, and now you are experiencing the fruit of your faith because the chair is holding you up. Don't just believe he is Jesus real; place your faith in him, surrender to His lordship!

Chapter 9 ends in an all-familiar way, Pharaoh's heart was hard, and he did not let the Israelites go. And like we have seen the cycle, in came another plague. This time around, God sends locusts. Look with me at chapter 10, verse 1 **Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his officials so that I may do these miraculous signs of mine among them, ²and so that you may tell your son and grandson how severely I dealt with the Egyptians and performed miraculous signs among them, and you will know that I am the LORD."**

As much as God wants Pharaoh to know that He alone is God, he also wants Moses and the people of God to tell their children and their grandchildren the story of God and how they fit into that story. We are part of this story of God redeeming people. And he wants us to tell the next generation; that's why we take our kids and students ministry seriously, and we want to partner with parents to disciple the next generation, but parents, you are your children's primary spiritual guides. God is using you so that the next generation might know him. (shameless plug for camp)

Look with me at verse 8. This is after Moses had delivered God's message and pharaoh's own people had begged him to let the Israelites go; this is Pharaoh speaking ⁸... **"Go, worship the LORD your God,"** Pharaoh said. **"But exactly who will be going?"** ⁹Moses replied, **"We will go with our young and with our old; we will go with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds because we must hold the LORD's festival."** ¹⁰He said to them, **"The LORD would have to be with you if I would ever let you and your families go! Look out—you're heading for trouble. ¹¹No, go—just able-bodied men—worship the LORD, since that's what you want."**



This is what is going on, Pharaoh has what we can call, Halfhearted Obedience. He is bargaining with God trying to manipulate God. But partial obedience is disobedience.⁴ Parents, you know this, when you tell your kids it's time for bed and they drag their feet and brush their teeth one brush a minute, even though they are doing what you asked, the delayed, halfhearted, bargaining obedience is not obedience. That leads us to our third point.

Partial obedience will keep you from obeying the God you believe in.

Throughout this text, we see Pharaoh minimizing and qualifying his total disregard of God's instructions with statements like I've sinned "this time," "this time pharaoh," but you said that last time. His obedience only lasts as long as the consequences. As soon as Moses intercedes for him, he goes back to his old unrepentant self. Do you ever find yourself bargaining with God, like I will give you my Sunday, but the rest is mine, I will make sure I avoid the big sins, but it's not that bad if I gossip or harbor bitterness against that brother or sister? ... I think the greatest danger of partial

obedience is how it slowly erodes our fear of God and erodes our view of the holiness of God, and soon He becomes a god made in our own image. If it starts to feel like God always agrees with you, it could be that you are partially obeying him.

God sent in the locusts, and like clockwork, pharaoh came back and asked Moses to intercede for him and his people, and I just love what the Lord does. Look at verse 18 **18 Moses left Pharaoh's presence and appealed to the LORD. 19 Then the LORD changed the wind to a strong west wind, and it carried off the locusts and blew them into the Red Sea. Not a single locust was left in all the territory of Egypt.** WHAT!!!! The God of the Bible is unlike any other God. His power is so precise and so unique. When I read this, it reminded me of the story of Jesus in Mark 4 when the disciples were worried because of the storm, and Jesus spoke to the storm, and it ceased, and they were all shocked and asked each other who then is this. This is God! After this, you would think pharaoh would give in; he would recognize that this God is different; he is not an idol. He is the all-powerful God. But oh no, pharaoh's pride runs deep

⁴ Tony Evans, [The Tony Evans Study Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible, 2019), 78.



He continued to harden his heart and refused to set God's people free, so God sent the 9th plague. This time around, a darkness that could be felt. For three days, the Egyptians did not move from where they were. Yet all the Israelites had light where they lived. You know there is no greater picture of judgment than darkness. Jesus says in Matthew 8 that those who refuse the good news will be thrown into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." But the Goodnews is Ps. 139:12 tells us that darkness is not dark to God; in fact, darkness is as light with him. When we experience darkness, we must remember that we serve a God who is light itself. Jesus says this much in John 8:12 "I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life."

Upon Pharaoh being warned about this coming darkness, Pharaoh isolated himself, he chased Moses away, and even threatened Moses. Look at verse 28, Pharaoh said to him, "Leave me! Make sure you never see my face again, for on the day you see my face, you will die." ²⁹ "As you have

said," Moses replied, "I will never see your face again." ⁵

The last thing that will make you disobey the God you believe in is isolation.

Isolation will keep you from obeying the God you believe in

Pushing the Word of God away, pushing truth away, pushing community away, refusing to be held accountable will eventually lead you towards disobeying the God you believe in. Moses was delivering God's message to Pharaoh. If Pharaoh had heeded this message, he and his people would have been saved. I know this because when the king of (Ninawa)Nineveh heeded the message delivered by Jonah, thousands of people were saved from the wrath of God. That king welcomed Godly counsel, but Pharaoh driven by pride, kicked Moses out, isolated himself, and refused to obey God's word.

The writer of Hebrews reminds us to ²⁴ ...consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging

⁵ [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Ex 9:1–10:29.



each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching.⁶ You cannot be provoked into love and good works by fellow Christian brothers and sisters if you push them away whenever their godly counsel messes up with your pride. That seemingly painful accountability is helping you obey the God you believe in.

Conclusion.

As we conclude, what I don't want you to hear me say is to try harder be perfect. As Christians, we should walk in a manner worthy of the calling we have been called, but we do not do it in our strength. We actively rely on God. He is the one who started this good work in us, and he will see it to completion. He is the one who works in us to will and to work for his own good pleasure. So be encouraged because

Christ obeyed perfectly

Romans 5:19 tells us, "For just as through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so also through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous."

Jesus Christ being fully man and fully God, fulfilled God's law, he was tempted by sin but did

not sin, and even at his death, he lived to fulfill the father's will. What the law of God demands from every human was fulfilled by Jesus on the cross. This is Goodnews. It means there is now no hostility between God and those who accept salvation, by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone – (2cor 5:17) if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come! In verse 20, it says, "He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." that means,

Obedience is possible

Because we are now united with Christ, his righteousness has become our righteousness. His perfection has become our perfection, not because of anything we do but because of all that he did, and because we have the gift of the Holy Spirit living and active in us, and because we have God's word, which is the truth, we will increasingly have an appetite for that which pleases God and a growing distaste for that which does not please him. So, my encouragement to you is "present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your

⁶ [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Heb 10:24–25.



true worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God." And when you fall short, and you will remember

There is grace for those who repent

1 John 1:8-9 8 If we say, "We have no sin," we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Did you notice that every time Pharaoh asked Moses to intercede for him and pretended to repent God relented, Christian how much more will he forgive us who are in him, come to him His mercy is more, stronger than darkness and new every morning? If you haven't accepted salvation, please do not harden your heart this morning if the Holy Spirit is stirring your heart unto salvation. Jesus went to the cross and he paid for all of your sins, past, present and future, he took your place, if you confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord you will be saved.