

Lessons in Exodus 4 10-22-00  
Exodus 5 God's "I Will"

As we continue in Lessons in Exodus I hope you are taking something the Holy Spirit is saying to you each week and applying it to your life. Can I challenge you today to listen for God's emphasis – and to jot down what God wants you to focus on? Then make a note of that and stick it somewhere you will be reminded of it. Last week Moses and Aaron met with the elders of Israel and they believed. They worshipped because God saw and was concerned. And now Moses and Aaron go to Pharaoh.

<sup>1</sup> Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the desert.'"<sup>2</sup> Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go."

To really draw the depths of the lessons the Holy Spirit has for us here we must see the analogies. Egypt is the world – not the physical creation but the system of man and the sin nature, the lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh and the pride of life – as John described it. If you look at the history of this period in Egypt our culture has nothing on them as far as appeals to the fleshly nature. Pharaoh is the ruler of the world system – Satan, the Prince of this world. The Children of Israel are God's people in bondage to the world. Moses and Aaron are both a type of the Christ to come – the Deliverer.

Now Moses in obedience to the voice of God tells Pharaoh – Let my people go... Moses is asking for God, and God is calling the Children of Israel, 'my people'. That is a wonderful thing to note – God claims us. He chose us before we chose Him. And He speaks to the power holding us captive and says "Let go". I want them to be free to come and worship me. Now as we mentioned last week, God is asking for a three day weekend, but God knows Pharaoh's heart. Pharaoh will not even allow that. God often seeks for a lesser commitment from us before He asks for the full commitment. His goal is total deliverance but He may begin by asking what we are most likely to be able to yield to. Is the Lord asking you to take a small step today so that He can ask a bigger one in the future? Take that little step or you will never get to the bigger one.

But Pharaoh's response is belligerent pride. Who is the LORD that I should obey him? He readily admits he does not know JHWH. But his emphasis is on being of greater authority than anyone. "I will not!" God has asked for your deliverance and freedom so that you can worship Him. Satan claimed authority over your soul –because the wages of sin is death. But when you accepted Christ's sacrifice in your place – He can no longer say, "I will not". He must bow and release you. But Pharaoh has not been forced yet and so he stands in defiance to God's command. He says his will is more important than the God He doesn't know. And that is the same as my flesh, standing in opposition to the things of the Spirit, to God's command. Has God been leading you in a direction and you responded like Pharaoh, "I will not!" – It is a dangerous place to be because God will make things rougher until you yield. Not because He just insists on his own way, but because He knows what is best for you.

I'm reading the biography of DL Moody. At one point in his ministry he senses the lack of anointing and continually asks for the power of the HS in his service. At the same time he is

fighting the call of the HS to go out and preach in other cities. He can't let go of the work in Chicago. Then the great Chicago fire came. After an all night prayer meeting he heard the HS through a brother and finally surrendered his will. Immediately he had the anointing he had sought. God works with the unsaved and the saved in a similar manner. He helps us take little steps to work us up to the bigger ones. In Pharaoh's case his pride would not allow him to even consider the little one. In DL Moody's case the steps led to greater ones that bore fruit for the Kingdom of God and filled Moody with the very thing his heart longed for.

<sup>3</sup> Then they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Now let us take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God, or he may strike us with plagues or with the sword."<sup>4</sup> But the king of Egypt said, "Moses and Aaron, why are you taking the people away from their labor? Get back to your work!"<sup>5</sup> Then Pharaoh said, "Look, the people of the land are now numerous, and you are stopping them from working."

The world always misunderstands our intentions because they have a different heart. They think our heart is like theirs, and so if I asked for a three day break it must be some thing other than obedience to our God, it must be shirking responsibility. But how can they understand? They are carnally minded. So they relate to it as if it was them. They would ask for the break pretending to do something good with it while it was really for selfish reasons. And so Pharaoh makes a natural assumption for a person living in the flesh, 'religion just keeps us from being productive and is a crutch for our weaknesses'. He's looking at his bottom line, finances and building progress – the temporal. This religion thing is interfering with his progress on his material dreams. How dare they! He doesn't see God's authority at all. His only thought is for himself. That is the very thing that keeps us from the will of God.

<sup>6</sup> That same day Pharaoh gave this order to the slave drivers and foremen in charge of the people:<sup>7</sup> "You are no longer to supply the people with straw for making bricks; let them go and gather their own straw."<sup>8</sup> But require them to make the same number of bricks as before; don't reduce the quota. They are lazy; that is why they are crying out, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.'<sup>9</sup> Make the work harder for the men so that they keep working and pay no attention to lies."

To Pharaoh there is no substance to their demands, just another religious distraction. Religion is for those with too much time on their hands. Make them work harder and they will forget about the religious stuff. Have you ever stepped out in obedience to God and your situation seemed to get worse? That is normal. It tests whether your obedience is for results you want or because the LORD is your God. God doesn't give you instruction for your benefit alone but to bring glory to Himself. Now in the long run that will bless you too. And your part in obedience will bless you too, but the blessing may be a ways off. Chances are it wont come the way you pictured it. What do you think Moses imagined would happen? Certainly not this as we are about to read.

<sup>10</sup> Then the slave drivers and the foremen went out and said to the people, "This is what Pharaoh says: 'I will not give you any more straw.'<sup>11</sup> Go and get your own straw wherever you can find it, but your work will not be reduced at all."

<sup>12</sup> So the people scattered all over Egypt to gather stubble to use for straw.

<sup>13</sup> The slave drivers kept pressing them, saying, "Complete the work required of you for each day, just as when you had straw."

Obedience may seem at first to have caused greater difficulty. I often hear people say, "When I ask God to grow me up, or teach me patience, or change my life, then the trials really pour in until I say – hold off for awhile." When we moved back from Japan we knew without a doubt we were in the center of God's will but we faced some our toughest trials. Yet the results later proved to be wonderful blessings. At the time I thought my quota of bricks was the same but now I had to find the straw on my own too. I went from a great income to next to nothing, personal attacks from my Grandmother, who we were trying to help, cost overruns on spec home project, classes in the day, working at night, and I thought – wait a minute. We stepped out in faith and obeyed God, what is all this? But now I can see God was delivering us. It was just the first step in the process.

<sup>14</sup> The Israelite foremen appointed by Pharaoh's slave drivers were beaten and were asked, "Why didn't you meet your quota of bricks yesterday or today, as before?"<sup>15</sup> Then the Israelite foremen went and appealed to Pharaoh: "Why have you treated your servants this way?"<sup>16</sup> Your servants are given no straw, yet we are told, 'Make bricks!' Your servants are being beaten, but the fault is with your own people."<sup>17</sup> Pharaoh said, "Lazy, that's what you are-- lazy! That is why you keep saying, 'Let us go and sacrifice to the LORD.'<sup>18</sup> Now get to work. You will not be given any straw, yet you must produce your full quota of bricks."<sup>19</sup> The Israelite foremen realized they were in trouble when they were told, "You are not to reduce the number of bricks required of you for each day."

You just got done praising God for seeing your need and caring and now you realize you are in a heap of trouble. By taking your stand and worshipping God, being obedient to Him, it seems the forces of evil are unleashed. But we know from reading Job they are leashed.

When Jesus was on his first missionary journey to non-Jews – the Geresenes, He was asleep in the back of the boat when the wind and the waves threatened to end the mission. On his way to show the Gospel was for the world not just the Jew, his life is threatened and that of his disciples. They wake Him and He rebukes the wind and waves under some ungodly influence as He goes on this important mission. Is that enough – can He now proceed on this mission of his Father's? When He arrives who should come to greet Him? The King of the region, a prince? Or the Prince of Darkness in the man possessed by demons. It seems that in this region part of their demonic worship included sacrificing pigs to demons. So when the legion of demons left the man it is understandable that they fled into the pigs who then destroyed themselves. The town's people finding this invader is a Jewish Rabbi ask him to leave their shores. Walking in obedience is He defeated? No – of all the people healed by Jesus, this one man is sent as missionary. All the others are told to tell no one but this man is given the privilege of telling what great things Jesus did for Him and many were amazed. The ruins a fourth century church stand in this area, testimony to victory in what seemed to be defeat.

Are Moses and Aaron defeated? No, we've just begun what will end in a great victory. Because it is not about Moses and Aaron it is about the awesome God they serve. When you are walking in your call it is not about you but the might God you serve. Even when it looks like things are fruitless, if you are walking in obedience there will be fruit!

<sup>20</sup> When they left Pharaoh, they found Moses and Aaron waiting to meet them,  
<sup>21</sup> and they said, "May the LORD look upon you and judge you! You have made us a stench to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us."

Did the very people who Moses and Aaron risk their lives for appreciate their sacrifice? All they could see was how it affected them personally, temporarily. They are so blinded by their own fears and lack of faith that they tell Moses and Aaron, "May the Lord look on you and judge you!" That is no problem for Moses and Aaron for they are merely instruments of God. If God looks on them and judges them it will be a judgement of blessing. But what stings is the very people you are trying to help hate you, have no idea of your personal sacrifice and question your hearing from God. These are the same people that worshipped God when they displayed the signs. But their focus is the immediate. If you are going to obey God be prepared to be misunderstood. It goes with the territory.

<sup>22</sup> Moses returned to the LORD and said, "O Lord, why have you brought trouble upon this people? Is this why you sent me?"<sup>23</sup> Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble upon this people, and you have not rescued your people at all." The complaining of the people causes Moses to question his call and what God has told Him will happen.

<sup>6:1</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: Because of my mighty hand he will let them go; because of my mighty hand he will drive them out of his country."<sup>2</sup> God also said to Moses, "I am the LORD.<sup>3</sup> I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them.<sup>4</sup> I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they lived as aliens.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant.<sup>6</sup> "Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment.<sup>7</sup> I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.<sup>8</sup> And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.'"<sup>9</sup> Moses reported this to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him because of their discouragement and cruel bondage.

This is God's answer to Moses' doubts and discouragement. "I am the LORD!" Who are you listening to?.. people or the eternal all knowing LORD of heaven and earth? Pharaoh has said "I will not..." But God responds, "I will." Which should you listen to? Which is more powerful? Which has the capacity to keep what He promises? Have you heard the voice of the world say, "I will not!?" - It doesn't matter what it says if there is God's "I will". Has your stubborn nature said to God, "I will not!?" God will be sovereign whether you submit or not. Submitting is a whole lot more enjoyable and fulfilling. Surrender to his call of love and truth.

Moses tries to encourage the people with God's response but the people do not have an ear toward God. This is why God set up eldership and not congregational churches. The majority is always wrong. The majority listen to the world, not God. Nor does the majority readily listen to his servants. The world always has a way that seems more logical, more in keeping with observation. But God's ways are the ways of the unseen, a walk of faith. His word upholds everything and his 'I WILL' is more powerful than every 'I WILL NOT!' of every man who ever lifted up his voice against God put together.

You may look at your flesh and think "I am never going to be free of my bondage to the world, my flesh won't let me go" but God says, **I will** finish what I started. The One who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it. That's God's "I Will" to you! <sup>10</sup> So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. **I will** strengthen you and help you; **I will** uphold you with my righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10 (NIV)

We ended our passage on a note of discouragement – if my own people won't listen to me why should Pharaoh – I'm such a poor speaker? Has Moses not yet learned it isn't about his ability – it's about God's? Have you learned it is not about your ability but God's. Go where He directs, do what He calls you to do and trust Him for the results. Don't worry about what men say, be concerned about being obedient whether you see the results or not. Believe God's "I will"!