

Freedom, Identity & Purpose: The Gospel of Christ in Exodus

Exodus 4:18-31

Pastor Guy Gray ~ River West Church ~ October 22nd



Sermon Notes

Main Points & Verses

Application

Key Themes & Additional Insights

Firstborn son – the extreme nature of the Gospel revealed

In Exodus 4:22-23 a totally new idea is introduced to us. God calls Israel His “firstborn son.” This is a foreign concept to us, but in the ancient world the firstborn son held a very special status in the family. All the wealth, power and influence of the father would pass to the firstborn son. What is amazing about this passage is that the entire nation of Israel, collectively, is given this status by God. This means that Israel as a whole, this nation of slaves in Egypt, was to be a people of divine influence and impact in the world. Of course this is a direct challenge to Pharaoh, for he believes that his son is to be the ruler with all authority in the land. This “conflict of kingdoms” –between Israel and Pharaoh will lead to the death of Pharaoh’s firstborn son in an act of judgment by God. This is an extreme move by God and shows the extreme nature of the spiritual conflict in our world. But even more, it points forward to the extreme nature of the gospel of Christ. As shocking as it is to read that God will kill Pharaoh’s firstborn son as an act of judgment, it is even more astounding to read in the New Testament that God will give His own son, Jesus Christ, on the cross – to take our judgment and reconcile us to God (John 3:16). The gospel is extreme and shows both an extreme spiritual conflict and the extreme love of God displayed in our salvation through Christ.

Obedience - following God on His terms, not yours

Exodus 4:24-26 could be one of the strangest stories in Exodus! Why would God want to come against Moses? And why would the circumcision of his son solve the problem? The answer lies in the covenant God made with Abraham in Genesis. Remember, God said that circumcision was to be the sign of the special relationship God had promised to Abraham and his descendants – which would lead ultimately to the Savior, God’s plan of salvation for all. For some reason Moses had neglected to act on this all important command of God. Moses is following God, but not completely. In a sense Moses is following God, but on his own terms rather than God’s. This will never work! How can Moses lead the people of Israel into a new life with God if he himself is failing to follow God in full obedience? And what about us – do we also pick and choose when it comes to obedience to God? Read John 14:21 and note the critical place of obedience in the life of following Christ!

Worship – what your heart will do if you really believe

Finally, in Exodus 4:29-31 we see that the people actually believe. What an incredible moment! In the midst of all the doubt, hurt, oppression and disappointment they were living in – suddenly they believe, and that transformed their lives. So they worshiped the LORD. Worship is the true response of a believing heart; those who truly believe can’t help it. Are you a worshipper? It is impossible to worship when faith is absent and it is impossible not to worship when faith is present!

Questions for Further Personal Reflection & Group Discussion

Questions

1. Take some time to respond to what you have been learning from Exodus. What is God saying to you?

2. Read Exodus 4:18-23

What further information do we get about God's plans from this passage?

Based on what you have read and heard, why do you think the Lord calls Israel his "firstborn son" in verse 22?

Verse 21 is a tough verse to understand. Explore the idea of God "hardening" Pharaoh's heart. What does this mean and why would God do such a thing? (see Ex 9:15 & 16, and Romans 9:16-21)

3. Put yourself in Aaron's place. You have not been raised with your brother and have not seen him for years.

How would you react to a message from the Lord as in 4:27?

What do you learn about Aaron from this?

4. The idea of obedience runs throughout much of Chapters 3 & 4. Moses is called by the Lord for a great task and asked to obey. God leads Aaron into the desert and Aaron obeys. The Lord's anger burns against Moses because of his reluctant and disobedient heart.

Why is obedience such a crucial element in our Christian faith? Imagine what the alternative might be?

Digging Deeper

How are you doing in the area of obedience right now?

What are the areas where you find it easy to obey Jesus? What about the ones that are not so easy? Do you notice any patterns?

Identify a situation in your life where you are struggling to obey Christ? What is the issue? Spend time conversing with the Lord about this. Remember the patience and grace that the Lord had toward Moses even as he struggled.