

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian Church,
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DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 6

EXODUS

CHAPTER 6

INTRODUCTION

Sometimes in life, events do not happen as we expect. When this happens, we naturally become frustrated and downhearted, especially when God's promises do not seem to come true. This happened to Moses. What do we do in such a situation? Like Moses, we ask God to explain. Does God hear? Does God give us an answer?

There are many things that happen in the world, which we simply cannot understand. If God is sovereign and is still in control over the works of His creation and in the affairs of man, why is the world not in a better shape? Like Moses, many people would place the blame on God.

Moses had put two hard questions to the LORD God — why this evil was happening to the children of Israel, and why God sent him. We will see how God responded to his questions in chapter 6.

OUTLINE

A. GOD REVEALED HIS NAME AND CHARACTER (6:1-8)

1. God replied to Moses that Pharaoh would ultimately let Israel go (v.1)
2. God revealed His Name: "I am Yahweh" (vv.2-3)
3. God revealed His character (vv.3-8)

B. GOD RENEWED HIS CALL TO MOSES TO GO TO ISRAEL AND TO PHARAOH (6:9-27)

1. The children of Israel rejected Moses' call to support him before Pharaoh (v.9)
2. God repeated His charge to Moses to speak to Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go (vv.10-13)
3. The significant place of Moses and Aaron among the children of Israel (vv.14-27)

C. GOD REPEATED HIS ORDER TO MOSES TO SPEAK TO PHARAOH (6:28-7:7)

1. God repeated His call to Moses to speak to Pharaoh (vv.28-29)
2. Moses repeated His objection (v.30)
3. God reassured Moses (7:1-2)
4. God told Moses that Pharaoh would be hardened and He would perform signs and wonders to vindicate His sovereignty (vv.3-5)

5. Moses and Aaron obeyed God
(vv.6-7)

COMMENTARY

We left off in chapter 5 with Moses complaining to God. Events did not happen as Moses expected. His first encounter with Pharaoh had produced negative results. Pharaoh not only stubbornly refused to let Israel go, but he increased the burdens of the children of Israel. The imposition was too much for the slaves. When the children of Israel blamed Moses and Aaron for their present sufferings and afflictions, Moses' only recourse was to turn to the Lord. How did God respond?

Let's Move On

Firstly, God did not reply to Moses' accusations directly. Instead, God accepted Moses' complaints for God knew the weaknesses of man. God responded by not talking about the past. God did not explain to Moses. God simply proceeded to tell Moses what He intended to do to Pharaoh. God would deal with Pharaoh in such a manner that with a strong hand, Pharaoh would drive the children of Israel out of Egypt

Secondly God reminded Moses of who He is and what He planned to do to the children of Israel. God revealed His name to Moses. The patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had known God as the Almighty God (*El Shaddai*).¹

¹ God made known to Abraham that He is the Almighty God --Genesis 17:1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to

Now God self-revealed His personal name to Moses — “I *am* the LORD” (*Ani Yahweh*), translated as Jehovah (v.3). God repeated His name five times in chapter 6 (vv. 2, 6, 7, 8, 29).

What do these two different names of God reveal about Him? *El Shaddai* characterises God as omnipotent and all-powerful who is capable of supplying all the wants of the Patriarchs. By His name *Ani Yahweh* God reveals that He is the ever-present, unchangeable, active, authoritatively real and effective Lord. The full import of this description is given by God here: The LORD is a covenant-keeping God and is concerned about His children; The LORD rescues, redeems, adopts, sustains and gives to His people.

God revealed to Moses seven things that He would do (vv. 6-8)

I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians,

I will rid you out of their bondage, and

I will redeem you,

I will take you to me for a people, and

Abram, and said unto him, I *am* the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

Isaac, in blessing Jacob, used the name of God, *Elohim*—Genesis 28:3 And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people;

Jacob sending his sons to see Joseph in Egypt used the name of God Almighty in blessing his sons—Genesis 43:14 And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved *of my children*, I am bereaved.

*I will be to you a God,
I will bring you in unto the land,
I will give it to you for an heritage:*

that they might know that I AM THE LORD (*Ani Yahweh*).

This historic redemption of Israel from bondage in Egypt dramatically illustrates the redemption of our spiritual life. The same LORD God has brought us out from the bondage of sin and Satan. He has redeemed us with the precious blood of His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He has taken us to be His people and He our God. He has taken us from the kingdom of darkness into the marvellous light of His Kingdom, and we wait joyously for Christ's return and His millennium reign on earth. God has blessed us with spiritual blessings, even life eternal in Heaven! The Lord be praised.

An interesting and significant fact is that each of the verbs of the seven "I will" is in the past (i.e. perfect) tense in the original Hebrew text; not in the future tense. What does that mean? Insofar as God is concerned, they were already accomplished, as having completed — considered done!² This is a great comfort and encouragement to all who love and serve the LORD. God's word is true and sure and it will come to pass according to His timetable. For the present, if they are not yet fulfilled, say, the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, the judgement of all the wicked

² In theological jargon, it is called the Hebrew prophetic past.

people, the resurrection of our bodies, then we must learn to be patient and wait and not to be like Moses who was quite impatient and posed the LORD those hard questions. Live in anticipation of that glorious day when all the things God has promised and decreed will be completely fulfilled and accomplished, just as Paul encouraged the Christians in Corinth (1 Corinthians 15:58),

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

An Unbelieving Heart Is Contagious

After the LORD had spoken those words to Moses, we observe that Moses did not raise any objection or question. He immediately spoke all the words of the LORD to the children of Israel (v.9). Moses was encouraged. But the children of Israel did not listen to him for "anguish of spirit" (literally, shortness of breath).³ The emotional and mental pressure was too much to bear. They showed a broken spirit. They were dejected. A lesson to be learned here is that our spiritual appetite for the Word of God can be adversely affected by the conditions in which we live. The lesson is that we need to be aware of this tendency and prevent ourselves from sliding into such an attitude that

³ The NIV renders a weak translation "their discouragement" (v.9).

deprives us of our spiritual heritage and blessings.

This spirit of the children of Israel affected even Moses who was encouraged by the words of the LORD. Moses began to feel once again his own inadequacy and despondency. When the LORD reaffirmed the call and commanded Moses “Go in, speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land” (v.10), Moses once more raised an objection. Moses argued that if he could not impress upon his own fellow brethren, it would even be worse before Pharaoh. He raised again the objection which he had brought up earlier to the LORD that he was “not eloquent”, “slow of speech, and of a slow tongue”. This time he did not use the same words. He described figuratively that he was of “uncircumcised lips”. Circumcision is an act of purifying or making good. The process of circumcision of any part of the body makes it good.⁴ Unbelief in the midst of God’s people is contagious. It affects others and it spreads, even Moses. Check our unbelieving heart.

Judicial Hardening of the Heart

The LORD reiterated His command to Moses to speak to Pharaoh all that He had told him (v.29). Moses raised the issue of his speech impediment and the excuse that Pharaoh would not listen to him (v.30). The LORD did not respond to his objection for He had answered him earlier already (4:10, 11).

⁴ George Bush, *Exodus*, 86.

Moses’ first encounter with Pharaoh met with failure. Pharaoh was defiant, stubborn, arrogant, self-centred and conceited. The circumstances had changed and God responded by making it clearer to Moses what He intended to do. First, the LORD made Moses to be “God to Pharaoh” and Aaron his brother his prophet or spokesman (7:1). Moses is not God, but God used him so that when he was before Pharaoh, Moses’ words would be God’s word. God Himself was present and active whenever Moses spoke to Pharaoh.⁵

This time, there were no more surprises for Moses. In simple and clear terms, God told Moses what he ought to say to Pharaoh and what He intended to do to Pharaoh. God would harden Pharaoh’s heart (7:3). The purpose for hardening Pharaoh’s heart was that the LORD intended “to multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt” so that ultimately, Pharaoh would let the children of Israel go, and at the same time, the Egyptians would know that “I am the LORD” (7:3-5).

God foresaw that Pharaoh would finally let the children of Israel go. In order to establish the fact that the LORD is God and is supreme, God delayed Pharaoh in releasing His people. This delay serves a dual purpose. God would vindicate His faithfulness to His covenant promises to His people as embodied in the name *Ani Yahweh*. At the same time, Pharaoh and the Egyptians would experientially know that

⁵ Terence E. Fretheim, 90.

the God of the Hebrews is more superior and powerful than the gods of Egypt. The hardening of the heart of Pharaoh does not mean that Pharaoh repented in the process. Later, we learn that Pharaoh reluctantly had to let Israel go because of the plagues, which God inflicted upon the Egyptians. But no sooner were the Israelites gone than he mustered all his special force of chariots and personally led the pursuit of the Israelites (14:5-8).

Living Faith

We learn in His dealings with Moses, God is patient, longsuffering, gentle and kind. He accepts His people as they are. This is a great comfort and encouragement in our walk with the LORD. If we cannot understand or explain the failures and disappointments in life, and we feel dejected and despondent, keep trusting the LORD. He sees, He knows and He will act.

We learn also that we should not dwell on our past experiences, whether good or bad. Just as the LORD looks ahead and told Moses what He intended to do, we ought to have that attitude in life. Stop complaining or resting on the laurels of the past, but start thinking and planning what to do next. Move on.

The hardening of Pharaoh's heart presents a very sobering lesson to all of us. Do not harden our own hearts when God speaks to us. Do not resist him because of our pride and self-conceitedness. If we keep on hardening our hearts against God's pleading, God will give us over to our own reprobate

mind and heart, and judicially hardens our heart beyond the point of no return. Today if we hear His voice, harden not our hearts. Don't be like Pharaoh.

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**DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS**

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Exodus 6:1-8; Colossians 1:9-29

TUESDAY: Exodus 6:9-13; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:7

WEDNESDAY: Exodus 6:14-27; Hebrews 3:1-15

THURSDAY: Exodus 6:28-7:2; 1 Peter 4:7-11

FRIDAY: Exodus 7:3-7; Romans 9:13-26

Discussion Questions

1. How did the Lord respond to Moses' complaints?

2. What do the names of God — *EI Shaddai* (God Almighty) and *Ani Yahweh* (I, LORD, Jehovah) — signify?

3. What is important in verses 6-8? What response should it elicit from us?

4. Moses spoke the words of the LORD to the children of Israel. What was their response then compared with their earlier response (4:31)? Why was it different?

5. How did the response of the children of Israel affect Moses?

8. Did God choose Moses because of his qualities and position? What does it tell us about God?

6. What did the LORD say to Moses?

9. Why do you think God did not respond to Moses' objection as He did previously?

7. What honour did the LORD God bestow on the descendants of Levi?

10. What did God reveal to Moses about the way by which He would free the children of Israel?

11. What was God's purpose of hardening Pharaoh's heart?

12. Give a title to this chapter.
