

I AM and I Will
(Exodus 5:22- 6:27)

09/23/18

When things are not going as expected, it is natural for us to doubt and question God. Instead of asking why this is happening, may we ask who is in control? What God promises will indeed come to fruition.

INTRODUCTION:

Sometimes, things don't work out the way we hope. As a matter of fact, sometimes we proceed to do exactly what God wanted us to do, but it turns out to be a complete disaster. During the past couple of months, I noticed that my blood pressure has gone up substantially. I am normally of good health and I have excellent blood pressure. I attributed it to stress. There have been several things that have occupied my mind. My brother-in-law came down with cancer and he went home to be with the Lord within a few months. My father's Alzheimers has progressed further whereby he gets angry more consistently over imaginary thoughts. It has been particularly difficult for my mother to handle it. There also have been various challenging issues that I have had to deal with at church. I tried to do the right things, but somehow things are not turning out the way I would hope.

I am sure we all face different kind of stress at home, at work, at school, or at church. You try to do the right thing, but things do not turn out the way you anticipate it to. It is easy to ask why? We worked hard, but it is the one that is lazy that gets the promotion. Why? A mother does everything she can to raise her children right, but her daughter turns away from God and stops coming to church. Why? A brother wants to do something good, but another person misunderstands his intention and thinks he wants to do something negative. Why?

We might blame God, blame others, or even blame ourselves. We doubt what God says and question if He is going to follow through with what He promises. Instead of asking why, we should ask who? Who is in charge? That is the similar situation that Moses faced.

As you recall from last week's message from Exodus 5, Moses was doing all the right things. He obeyed God by going to Pharaoh and asking him on behalf of God to let His people go. He thought that there would be immediate results, that Pharaoh would agree and let God's people go. But the opposite happened. Pharaoh questioned who was this God that Moses believes in? Pharaoh claimed that he himself is god. How dare anyone would challenge him and his authority?

Well, as you recall, the theme of Exodus is "You Shall Know I Am." Before Moses went to see Pharaoh and the Hebrew people, Moses asked God, "Who should I say that sent me?" God quickly replied, "I am who I am." God's name is Yahweh, the all self-existing, powerful God. He is higher and greater than all. In Exodus 5, Pharaoh was challenging God as to who is in charge. Pharaoh flexed his muscle by taking away the straws for the Jews to make bricks. They would have to find their own straw and yet kept the same quota for the number of bricks. It was not humanly possible. As a result, the Egyptians accused the Jews of being lazy and they were beaten. The Jews anticipated a beautiful victory, but it didn't work out as planned. Things went from bad to worse.

A. God assures Moses by reaffirming His promises (5:22- 6:1)

When God first called Moses to lead His people out of Egypt, he resisted. But after much reassurance, he accepted his calling. Now, with the rejection from the Jews, Moses questions his calling. Moses started asking the why question. In 5:22, “O Lord, why have you brought trouble upon this people? Is this why you sent me? 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.”

Moses started to question God and blame God. Moses questions the promise that God had made to rescue His people. Moses was saying, “You have not done anything at all.” He was wondering if God knew what he was doing. He complained about what God was doing as well as what He was not doing. He accused God of being a trouble maker. Moses said, “Why have you brought trouble upon your people? The second thing that he accused of God of is breaking his promises by not rescuing them. The issue is not that God will not rescue, but the timing of the rescue. Things had not gotten better, but worse.

Instead of harboring his frustration and anger, Moses went to the Lord with his concerns. When he was about to give up because of all the complaints he was receiving, he went to the Lord. He felt comfortable enough to go before the Lord. It was an opportunity for him to work through his emotions. This is the proper way of dealing with anger and frustration instead of suppressing it. It is much better to talk with God than to take things into our own hands.

[It is interesting to see how God responded to Moses’ complaints. He answered by pointing to who God is. 1) He is sovereign and in total control. 2) He keeps His covenant with His people.]

One of Moses’ complaints is that God has not done what he promised. God assures Moses by reaffirming His promises. The truth is that God has it all under control. It is encouraging as we read v.1, “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.” God makes himself explicitly clear that He is in charge and He is going to prevail. This demonstrates God’s authority over all human power. Not only would Pharaoh let His people go, but would drive them out. He would be so eager to get rid of them. God is sovereign and is in total control. What surprised Moses about the state of affairs was not a surprise to God. It was all part of His master plan. God would be honored through His confrontation with Pharaoh. It was an opportunity for God to display His power so that both the Israelites & the Egyptians would know the Great I AM.

Many times, we need assurance from God when things are not going well, that He is there for us and He is sovereign & in total control. We can find peace in Him because He writes the last chapter.

Moses doubted God. In the same way, we also doubt God when we are in the midst of a storm and we cannot see clearly. May we see beyond the clouds to the Sun that shines brightly. God promises that He is sovereign and in total control.

[God also comforts Moses by reminding Moses of His covenant name. READ v.2-4, “God also said to Moses, “I am the LORD. 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. I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they lived as aliens.”]

B. God reminds Moses of His covenant name

God is addressing Himself as “I am Yahweh or I am that I am.” This describes God as the self-existing Eternal One. It represents God as the Absolute. He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. In verse 1, it states what God would do to demonstrate His authority. Here, He gives His name to explain why He has the authority: because He is Yahweh. He is the God of the universe. Back in those days, Pharaoh was acknowledged as their god. Here we see the clash of the gods. Who is going to be in charge? Would the real God stand up? They will duke it out. That is exactly what will take place in the next six chapters. They will go 10 rounds to determine who is the champion.

When God appeared to Abraham, God declared His name to be Almighty God, Elohim, which is a generic name. Here, God revealed to Moses his personal name, Yahweh. God is comforting Moses by revealing who He is. By emphasizing His covenant name, Moses can find security and comfort that God is a personal God that has total authority. Instead of asking why things are not going as planned, we should ask who. Who is God? He is Yahweh; he is a covenant keeping God. He keeps His promises. Although it had not come to pass yet, we can be assured that it will come to pass. His promises are based on His character. God has made promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob through the Abrahamic Covenant.

While the Jews were in Egypt, God had fulfilled two of the three promises from the Abrahamic Covenant as recorded in Genesis 12. The first promise was to have a great seed. God promised Abraham that their descendents will be like the stars in the sky and the sand in the seaside. The second promise is that God would bless His people and they would be a blessing to others. Back in Exodus 1, the Hebrews were growing at an astonishing rate that it threatened Pharaoh. Fearing that they might overtake them, Pharaoh placed them in bondage. God also blessed His people. In Exodus 1:7, it says that the Hebrews were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them. One of the God’s promises was not fulfilled yet that His people would have an everlasting land. God remembers His covenant and is going to use Moses to deliver His people out of Egypt into the Promised Land that he promised to them.

[To reassure Moses, God tells him that He felt the burdens of His people and would deliver them. Let us look at verse 5, “Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant.”]

C. God assures Moses that He felt the burdens of His people and would deliver them

God is a compassionate God, who hears His people’s groaning. It is comforting to know that God hears our groaning. God promised in 1 Peter 5:7, “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” The Lord felt the burden of His people and would deliver them.

ILLUSTRATION: During the past couple of weeks as I was preparing this sermon, I found comfort being reminded that God is sovereign and He is in control, although things might not be going according to my plan. I cried out to the Lord and He comforted me from 1 Peter 5:7. As I cast my anxiety on him, He would take care of me. My heart is

much more at peace. Before I knew it, my blood pressure fell back to my regular levels. Indeed, Phil. 4:6-7, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

APPLICATION: If you are doing all the right things, but things are not going well, turn to the Lord and cry to Him for His assistance. He has promised to be with us even to the ends of the earth as recorded in Mt. 28:20. We all have access to the throne of Grace. May we not take that for granted. Our mediator, Jesus Christ, intercedes for us. He hears our groaning. The Bible says in James 4:2b-3, “You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.” Let us ask God with good motives.

God proceeds in verse 6 to address Himself as the “I am the LORD.” This is again stating his name, Yahweh. He goes on to make seven “I will” statements- reminding His people of what He will do. God is telling Moses to tell the Israelites of all the promises from God. READ vv.6-8, “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. 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. 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.’”

APPLICATION: God said that he will bring them out from under the yoke of the Egyptians and will free them from being slaves. Some of us might be under the bondage of money, where greed has infiltrated into our life. Some of us are under the bondage of pornography, where lust dominates our mind. Some of us are under the bondage of insecurity, where what others think control what we do. God can set us free from all of these bondages. There is nothing too hard for God.

The biggest bondage we are under is the bondage of sin. The Bible says that the wages of sin is death. Either we have to pay that penalty or we accept Jesus’ payment of our sin as He died on the cross for our sins. As we place our faith in the death and resurrection of Christ, then we are saved. We are set free from the condemnation of sin because Jesus has redeemed us. God will recognize us as His own people and He will be our God. He will stand by our side.

Wow, these were comforting words from God. Moses is armed with encouragement as he takes this word of promises from God to the Israelites. It is exciting to see what is going to happen. It will be a shootout between God and Pharaoh. Who will come out victoriously? In the next several chapters of Exodus, we see how God will have an overwhelming victory over Pharaoh through the 10 plagues.

With God’s outstretched arm and with God’s mighty acts of judgment, He would break the most powerful ruler of the world. Pharaoh does not stand a chance against God. It is comforting that God is on our side. What He promises, He will deliver. God wants to be honored and glorified. He desires to have the opportunity to display His power.

ILLUSTRATION: There was a little boy being picked on at school. The next day, His dad, who is a football player that stood 6’8” and weighed 325 lbs, came to school with his son. The bully looked at the father and he ran away in fear. We need to remember that we have our Heavenly Father, who will defend us. It might not be according to our timing, but He is there to deliver us. May we put our trust in Him.

God is a sovereign God, God is a covenant-keeping God, and God is a compassionate God. When we are in trouble, may we not ask why, but ask who? Who is God? When we take it to heart that he is sovereign and is in total control, we will go to Him, who can do something about our trouble. God is a covenant-keeping God. We can find assurance that God will keep His promises. Although we do not know the future, we know who holds the future and He holds our hands. And lastly, we know that God is a compassionate God that hears our groaning and will help deliver us. May we not try to use more of our will power, but seek to know God more so that we can transfer our trust from ourselves to God, who loves us because we are His people.

D. God commands Moses to speak to Pharaoh again

Although Moses was discouraged initially from the response from both the Israelites and Pharaoh, He was encouraged again as God reassured him of His promises. He was reminded of God’s covenant name. He was assured that God felt the burden of His people and promised to deliver them. He recognizes his calling and proceeded to go to tell the Hebrews people.

Although Moses told the Israelites of all that God promised to them, they did not listen to him because they were so discouraged. In verse 9-10, “Moses reported this to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him because of their discouragement and cruel bondage. Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the Israelites go out of his country.” God commands Moses to speak to Pharaoh again. That is God’s calling for Moses to represent Him. The Lord sends Moses back to Pharaoh to tell him to let the Israelites go. God helped Moses to stay on track based on God’s calling for him.

APPLICATION: What has God called you to do? He has given you unique gifts, passion and personality to fulfill your calling. When we carry out our calling, then we will be most fulfilled. God has given Jamie, one of our recent graduates a beautiful voice and she used it for God. God has given Phong, who loves to work behind the scenes. Whether you serve best visibly or behind the scenes, God has a calling for you. Find what it is and be available for God to use you.

Moses in verse 12 came back with a sense of defeat. Although Moses was discouraged again questioning his ability to communicate, God still believed in Him. It is not his ability that would make a difference, but Moses’ availability. God would only use him as an instrument for His glory. [From vv13-27, it records Moses and Aaron’s family record. This is important because it shows that God had prepared Moses and Aaron for their ministry in Egypt.]

E. God had prepared Moses and Aaron for their ministry in Egypt

Moses and Aaron come from the tribe of Levi. Later, we will see that this tribe is especially appointed to serve the Lord in the temple and in the priestly functions. The

genealogy focuses on Moses and Aaron's pedigree and thus their authority to lead the people. God has a special calling for them. In verse 26-27, it says, "It was this same Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said, "Bring the Israelites out of Egypt by their divisions. They were the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt about bringing the Israelites out of Egypt. It was the same Moses and Aaron." Moses now embarked on the mission he was created for.

CONCLUSION: In conclusion, when things are not going as expected, it is natural for us to doubt and question God. Instead of asking why this is happening, may we ask who is in control? God is Yahweh. He is the sovereign God, who is in total control. God is the covenant-keeping God that keeps His promises. God is the compassionate God that hears our groaning and will deliver us. What God promises will indeed come to fruition. May we seek what God has called us to do. May we make ourselves available for God to do great things through us.