

Who is the LORD?

	<p>On most Sunday mornings here at Wayside, Pastor Paul Wallace has been leading us verse-by-verse through the Book of Revelation. And last week, after weeks of reviewing bowls of wrath and the just judgement of God, we arrived at Chapter 19, and rejoicing that God was dealing with the final judgement of a sinful world, making everything right, and calling his church to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.</p> <p>And if Pastor Paul were going to continue teaching in Revelation this morning, he would have to shout very loudly, because he and Mariko are on the Big Island of Hawaii for the next few weeks. So, instead, this morning we are going to bookend the story of redemption of the world at the end of the age to a time early in the story of redemption of God's people.</p> <p>If you would, please open your Bibles to Exodus, Chapter 5. We will try to get through Chapters 5 and 6 this morning, and in honor of God's Word, would you please stand with me while we read a portion of today's passage, Exodus 5:1-9</p>
1	<p><i>5¹ Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.'" 2 But Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover, I will not let Israel go." 3 Then they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword." 4 But the king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people away from their work? Get back to your burdens." 5 And Pharaoh said, "Behold, the people of the land are now many, and you make them rest from their burdens!" 6 The same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their foremen, 7 "You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks, as in the past; let them go and gather straw for themselves. 8 But the number of bricks that they made in the past you shall impose on them, you shall by no means reduce it, for they are idle. Therefore, they cry, 'Let us go and offer sacrifice to our God.' 9 Let heavier work be laid on the men that they may labor at it and pay no regard to lying words." This is the Word of the Lord.</i></p>
	<p>This passage begins with the word "Afterward". A word like "Afterward" means that something happened beforehand. By way of establishing context, let's quickly review the events that preceded today's passage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In Genesis, Chapter 17, God made a Covenant with Abraham and promised him that he would be the father of many nations. Abraham believed God, even though he was 99 years old and he and his wife, Sarah were childless. Scripture tells us Abraham's belief was counted to him as righteousness.• Abraham and Sarah gave birth to Isaac, and God repeated the covenant and promise with Isaac. Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau, and the covenant and promise was continued through Jacob.• Jacob had twelve sons, and in a fit of sibling rivalry, eleven of the brothers sold their brother, Joseph, into slavery in Egypt. The Bible tells us that God was with Joseph in Egypt, and through God's providence, Joseph is elevated to one of the most important people in the land.• When a widespread famine overcame the world, Joseph had prepared Egypt to survive it, and he was able to bring his father, brothers and their families into Egypt.• About 70 people in all.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Then 400 years passed by. Scripture tells us that, <i>“The people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them. Now there arose a new king over Egypt who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, “Behold the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.”</i> Exodus 1:7-10
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This new Pharaoh enacted a plan of genocide to control the Hebrew population. He tried to call on the midwives of Israel to perform abortions. A tactic still used today by governments to control populations. But the midwives feared God more than they feared Pharaoh and creatively disobeyed the government. When that plan of Pharaoh failed, he declared an edict that all Hebrew baby boys be drowned in the Nile River. Throw them in the Nile River. • And you remember that there was one male child placed in an ark-like basket and cast into the Nile who did not drown. Instead, his basket floated to the daughter of Pharaoh, who had great compassion on this Hebrew baby. • She “drew him out” of the river. That is the meaning of Moses’ name...it means that he was drawn out of the river and saved. So God would use this decree of genocide by Pharaoh to become the means of God’s deliverance of his people from captivity as slaves in Egypt. • In God’s Providence, Moses grew up in the palace of the Pharaoh, being raised by his own mother as his nursemaid. Scripture tells us he was <i>“Instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.”</i>, and yet his mother could teach him of his Hebrew heritage. • When Moses was 40 years old, he saw an Egyptian slave master beating a Hebrew slave, and without first consulting God, and acting in his own strength and understanding, he killed the slave master. Moses thought he did this without anyone seeing, but when it became apparent that many people knew about it, he fled into the desert of Midian to escape the consequences of his action. • For the next 40 years, Moses lived in the desert of Midian tending the sheep of Jethro. He married one of Jethro’s daughters, Zipporah. They had two sons. • Then one day, God appeared to Moses out of a burning bush in the desert, near Mt. Sinai. And in Exodus Chapters 3 and 4, God reveals himself to Moses. God tells Moses his name is “I AM” (YHWH) and reveals his person and plan for delivering Israel from slavery in Egypt. God calls Moses to become his deliverer to go to Egypt and tell Pharaoh to <i>“Let my people go!”</i> • Moses gave five excuses about why he was inadequate for the task to which God called him, but ultimately, he obeyed and left Midian and started for Egypt, and God sent Moses’ brother, Aaron along with him to overcome the last of the five excuses. • Along the way, God met Moses and saw to it that his firstborn son, Gershom was circumcised in accordance with the sign of the Covenant for Gods chosen people of Israel. We talked about that at length last time we were in Exodus. • So, Moses and Aaron reached Egypt and met with the Elders of Israel, and when the elders had heard all that God had told Moses at the burning bush, and learned of all the signs and wonders God gave Moses to show to Pharaoh, they worshipped.
	<p>That is the beforehand that brings us to our text this morning: Exodus 5:1-2</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>¹ Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, <i>“Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.’”</i> ² But Pharaoh said, <i>“Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover, I will not let Israel go.”</i></p>

	<p>And so begins the great confrontation. <i>“In this corner, is the man of God, Moses...and in this corner is the man of the world, Pharaoh”</i>. And they are about to have a mighty clash.</p> <p>What the Man of the World does not understand is that the odds are stacked against him. Because Moses, imperfect, filled with excuses, is the man of God, and the Power of God is going to work through him. But Pharaoh, the Man of the World, does not start with an understanding of YHWH, the one true God. He starts with a really good question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Who Is the LORD?”</i> <p>Pharaoh’s response was quite logical. It was also arrogant, but it was logical.</p> <p>Moses begins with <i>“Thus says LORD”</i>. He specifically uses the name YHWH (all capital letters in your Bible). Legitimately, Pharaoh does not know who YHWH is. And here’s why: The Egyptians considered Pharaoh and his family to be deities, related to the Egyptian sun god, “Ra.”</p> <p>So Pharaoh grew up believing he was a deity. And he knew who “Ra” was. And he knew who “Oserous” was. And he knew who “Hecka” was, and all of the other gods and goddesses of the land. There were so many gods worshipped in pagan Egypt at the time. But Pharaoh has never heard of YHWH. Who is he?</p> <p>So Pharaoh simply asks the question, <i>“Who is the Lord?”</i>, and as we said, that’s a really good question. Pharaoh did not ask the question with the right heart, but he did ask the right question. Do you remember that back in Exodus 3, when Moses met the LORD in the burning bush, Moses asks the question, <i>“Who am I?”...because he saw himself inadequate for the task to which God was calling him</i>. Friends, who you are isn’t really the right question. It’s who the LORD is that is the right question to seek to understand. Pharaoh was asking a better question than Moses asked. So God is going to introduce himself to Pharaoh, through ten plagues. Pharaoh will come to know unmistakably who the LORD is.</p> <p>But not in today’s passage. That will come later. Let’s read on: Exodus 5: 3</p>
<p>3</p>	<p><i>3 Then they said, “The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.”</i></p>
	<p>Notice that it is a direct approach, but it is a “soft” approach. It is an “ask permission” approach. Moses and Aaron say “Please.” You may tend to look at Moses request as a <i>“bait and switch”</i> approach, because they ask to go for three days when their real intention is to leave and never come back. But Moses is not being deceptive. First of all, that is what the LORD told him to ask. Secondly, it is a grace-filled approach. If Pharaoh could allow the nation of Israel to openly worship the LORD instead of all the other Egyptian Gods, it would be an easy request that could allow Egypt to continue to profit from the work of the Israelites. So how does Pharaoh respond? Exodus 5: 4-5</p>
<p>4</p>	<p><i>4 But the king of Egypt said to them, “Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people away from their work? Get back to your burdens.” 5 And Pharaoh said, “Behold, the people of the land are now many, and you make them rest from their burdens!”</i></p>
	<p>By rejecting this “easy” request, Pharaoh starts to harden his heart, and is therefore even more guilty of sin against God’s chosen people. We are beginning to see a process that God said would happen</p>
	<p>In Exodus 4:21, on the way to Egypt, God tells Moses, <i>“When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power, but I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go.”</i></p>
	<p>Why would God say, <i>“Moses, go to Egypt and do what I want you to do...but “I’m going to harden Pharaoh’s heart, so that he will not let you go.”</i> That is a frequently asked question, so let’s take a side road and explore the answer:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hebrew word for “harden” used in Exodus 4:21 is “Chazaq” (pronounced “Hazak”). It means, “to strengthen” or “to fortify”, or “to confirm.” • In this passage (Exodus 5:4) we see Pharaoh begin to harden his own heart. Later, in Chapter 7 of Exodus, scripture specifically tells us that Pharaoh hardened his own heart, and scripture uses a totally different word in Hebrew. It is the word, “Kabad,” which means “heavy” or “insensible.” Pharaoh makes his own heart insensible. • Pharaoh makes his own choice, then God comes along and fortifies the choice he makes. Do you see the difference? <p>In his response to the request from Moses that Pharaoh let God’s people go, Pharaoh responds negatively. He begins to “harden” his heart. He “Kabad”s his heart. Then God will come along and “Chazaq” the choice that Pharaoh has made. God will fortify it. He will strengthen Pharaoh’s choice.</p>
	<p>So now you see, Pharaoh is starting to harden his heart, and God is going to fortify it. He is starting to just dig-in the heels of his sandals and make life harder for the Children of Israel. The way I see it, Pharaoh is a lot like Satan. As soon as Pharaoh sees the people of Israel wanting to get serious about God, and worship God and hold a feast for the LORD, Pharaoh puts his foot down....and makes life harder for them.</p> <p>And that’s a lot like the devil, because you see, whenever a person comes to a place in their life where they say, “<i>You know, I’m curious about the things of God. I’m going to start going to Church, and I’m going to start asking questions, and I’m going to think about my life being changed. I’d don’t want to live this way any longer.</i>”</p> <p>Or, if it’s a Christian, who says, “<i>I really want to give God 100%. I don’t want to give him the leftovers. I really want to live in such a way that he is the Lord of my life.</i>”</p> <p>Do you think, with that decision, that Satan and all of his demons are going to give you a standing ovation for that? Are they going to sit idly by and say, “<i>Oh, that’s a great choice, we agree with you.</i>”</p> <p>No. That’s when they are going to dig their heels in, and often the attacks will come. And people reply, “<i>I don’t get it. Man, I’ve been seeking the Lord more than ever before. And I’ve been more spiritual and more devoted, and yet I see more trials in my life.</i>”</p> <p>And my response is to say, “<i>That’s a good sign.</i>” It’s a good sign. One commentator put it this way: “<i>So long as a person has no desire to follow Christ, the devil will leave him alone. But once the soul is awakened to its need of a savior, and begins to seriously seek Him, Satan will put forth every effort to hinder him.</i>”</p> <p>Satan must submit to God’s power, but he will not go away without a fight.</p> <p>I want you to beware of this now, because you are going to see this analogy of the Devil and Pharaoh grow throughout the book of Exodus. Pharaoh becomes a “type” of the enemy. A “type” of Satan, and we see that response fortified as Pharaoh begins to act in response to the request of Moses to “<i>Let my People Go</i>”. Exodus 5:6-9</p>
<p>5</p>	<p><i>⁶ The same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their foremen, ⁷ “You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks, as in the past; let them go and gather straw for themselves. ⁸ But the number of bricks that they made in the past you shall impose on them, you shall by no means reduce it, for they are idle. Therefore, they cry, ‘Let us go and offer sacrifice to our God.’ ⁹ Let heavier work be laid on the men that they may labor at it and pay no regard to lying words.”</i></p>

	<p>Do you understand Pharaoh's reasoning? What he is saying is, "If they have so much time on their hands that they think they can take a week off work to go out into the wilderness and worship somebody other than me, then it must mean that they don't have enough work. I'm going to give them more work because they are saying, 'we need a week's vacation.'"</p> <p>Pharaoh's response was punitive.</p> <p>Moses has just revealed God's words to Pharaoh, and look at verse 9 to see how Pharaoh values the inspired word of God: "<i>Pay no attention to lying words.</i>" Did you get that?</p> <p>Pharaoh regards the words that God spoke to Moses, and Moses spoke to Aaron and Aaron spoke to Pharaoh as "<i>lying words.</i>" This shouldn't surprise us.</p> <p>The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 2:14 "<i>The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.</i>" The unbeliever sees the Word of God, the Bible, as pure fiction.</p> <p>Lying words.</p> <p>And in the Garden, before the fall, Satan began his temptation of Adam and Eve by causing them to doubt the Word of God. He continues to use that tactic even today, because it seems to work so effectively.</p> <p>So Pharaoh's response is carried out upon the children of Israel: Exodus 5:10-12</p>
<p>6</p>	<p><i>¹⁰ So the taskmasters and the foremen of the people went out and said to the people, "Thus says Pharaoh, 'I will not give you straw. ¹¹ Go and get your straw yourselves wherever you can find it, but your work will not be reduced in the least.'" ¹² So the people were scattered throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw.</i></p>
	<p>Did you notice how these verses begin?, "Thus says Pharaoh," Moses says, "<i>Thus says the LORD</i>" and the reply is "<i>Thus says Pharaoh</i>". Can't you just imagine Pharaoh's voice dripping with arrogant irony when he makes this decree.</p> <p>The Children of Israel had to gather stubble. They were unable to obtain straw. Stubble is the part of the stalk of the grain that was left over in the field after harvest. And whatever they could get from those empty fields they got. They also collected weeds. Weeds around a field would also be described as "stubble."</p> <p>When slaves made bricks for the Egyptians, (<i>there is a lot of archaeological evidence to support this</i>) they made bricks that we are pretty familiar with here in Arizona.</p> <p>They essentially made Adobe bricks. They were between 14" and 20" long, and were about 7"-9" wide and tall. And they laced the wet clay mud with straw to fortify them, so that they would not crack.</p> <p>I will save you a lengthy description of the interaction of compressive forces and tensile forces in masonry construction I learned in a formal architectural education.</p> <p>Egyptologists studying the archaeology of ancient Egyptian structures, found that the bricks made by the slaves were always stamped (each brick) with the name of the King (Pharaoh).</p> <p>Most Egyptian structures, homes, walls, towers, tombs of lesser officials, were all built with these adobe bricks. Stone was used for the pyramid tombs of greater Pharaohs, but most everything else was adobe brick. So the children of Israel would make these bricks and stamp the King's seal in them.</p> <p>Archaeologists have found bricks with straw in them. Full length straw for reinforcement. And layers above that with stubble in them, and other layers on top of that with nothing but clay in them. No straw or stubble. This is archeological evidence of the truth of scripture.</p> <p>Let's read on. Exodus 5:13-14</p>

7	<p>¹³ The taskmasters were urgent, saying, “<i>Complete your work, your daily task each day, as when there was straw.</i>” ¹⁴ And the foremen of the people of Israel, whom Pharaoh’s taskmasters had set over them, were beaten and were asked, “<i>Why have you not done all your task of making bricks today and yesterday, as in the past?</i>”</p>
	<p>Do you see what’s happening? Moses is obeying God. Moses is saying “exactly” what God wants him to say. And yet, Pharaoh isn’t budging. In fact, Pharaoh is moving in the opposite direction. He is not making life easier for the people of Israel, he is making it harder for them. Moses is feeling the frustration. The children of Israel are more oppressed, suffering more persecution than before Moses came as God’s man to rescue them.</p> <p>Here is the question we should ask at this point: “Is God still sovereign?” Is God still sovereign? At this point, is God still sovereign?</p> <p>Yes. Of course we say “yes” to that because we know the rest of the story.</p> <p>How about in your life... when you pray, and you pray,... and you hold on to God’s promises, and it doesn’t seem to be working. It’s not going the way you thought it would go.</p> <p>Is God still sovereign?</p> <p>I’m bringing this up, folks because, truly; If you can get your heart around the sovereignty of God, your life will be different. If you can look at God’s incredible ability to direct your life from beginning to end, both good and bad, if you can rest in that, it will be for you a soft pillow to for tired heart.</p> <p>I commit to you Job, one of the oldest books in the Bible. You know his story.</p> <p>One day he enjoyed ten children. He loved them. He pampered them. They were God’s gift to him. In one day, Job lost ten children. He lost his health. Unfortunately, he did not lose his friends. They came to him and pestered him. But do you know how he responded when he lost it all? Job 1:20-22</p>
8	<p>²⁰Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. ²¹And he said, “<i>Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.</i>” ²²In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.</p>
	<p>Job got his heart around the sovereignty of God, and it was for him a soft pillow for a tired heart.</p> <p>For me, letting my heart rest on the foundational truth that God is sovereign in all circumstances has helped me get through some of the toughest times a parent can endure.</p> <p>Today, October 13th is not just any day. Our middle son, Philip would be celebrating his 43rd birthday today. But instead, we stopped celebrating his birthdays seven years ago, when he was found dead in his car in downtown Indianapolis on a rainy Monday in March 2017. As I was walking from my office to the location where Phil’s car was parked, and saw the police and emergency vehicles and yellow tape, it was these verses from Job, “<i>The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.</i>” that calmed my soul. When I went back and read the passage, I further saw that in the midst of his sorrow and mourning, Job’s first act was to worship a sovereign God.</p> <p>When we can rest on that foundational truth that God is sovereign in all circumstances, it builds rock-solid faith. Today is “give Sharon a Hug Day.” We still mourn the loss of our son, but we are not without hope. We trust in the goodness and wisdom of an all-knowing, sovereign LORD.</p> <p>It is a soft pillow for a tired heart.</p> <p>Moses hasn’t got his heart around that yet. Oh, he will. Eventually. But not now.</p>
	<p>Let’s read on: Exodus 5: 15-18</p>

8	<p>¹⁵ Then the foremen of the people of Israel came and cried to Pharaoh, <i>“Why do you treat your servants like this? ¹⁶ No straw is given to your servants, yet they say to us, ‘Make bricks!’ And behold, your servants are beaten; but the fault is in your own people.”</i> ¹⁷ But he said, <i>“You are idle, you are idle; that is why you say, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to the LORD.’ ¹⁸ Go now and work. No straw will be given you, but you must still deliver the same number of bricks.”</i></p>
	<p>Did you notice that? Who did the Children of Israel cry out to? They cried out to Pharaoh. Hmm. I see that as a mistake.</p> <p>Why did they not first cry out to God? No. They go to the boss. This is a civil issue. I’m gonna protest. I’m gonna go to the government with this one. I’m going to change the laws in Egypt. They didn’t pray first. They complained to the Pharaoh. Here they are in brutal slavery under subjugation to Pharaoh, and what is their response?</p> <p><i>“OK, Moses went to Pharaoh and screwed everything up. Let’s go reason with Pharaoh. He’s a reasonable man. Maybe he’ll back off of this oppression. We’ll explain to Pharaoh that you can’t ask us to gather our own straw and expect the same results. It’s just not reasonable. We’ll plead our case to Pharaoh.”</i></p> <p>It’s a human response. It is familiar to us. When the Children of Israel were in trouble with the King that enslaved them: They did not turn to Moses. They did not turn to the Lord. Who did they turn to for relief? They turned to their slave master: Pharaoh himself.</p> <p>Don’t we wish we would have read in verse 15 <i>“They cried out unto the LORD!”</i>?</p> <p>But they did not. Nor did they appeal to Moses.</p> <p>Instead, they went to their own slave master and hoped to find some sympathy, some solace, some help from the one that enslaved them. And you know it went nowhere.</p> <p>What was Pharaoh’s response? (verse 17) <i>“You’re Idle! You’re Idle”</i></p> <p>Why did they do that? Did they just love their slavery?</p> <p>No. They hated it. Exodus 2:23: <i>During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God.</i></p> <p>They hated their bondage, but at the same time, their trust in God was not fully developed to the point that they would turn first to Him in their time of need. Instead, they turned to their own slave taskmaster.</p> <p>Think about it in our own lives. Think about the person who is addicted to a substance or addicted to a behavior. There is some kind of substance abuse going on.</p> <p>You can fill in the blank. It doesn’t really matter what it is, but let’s just say, they are addicted to some sort of substance, and they are in slavery to it. The slavery that person endures is not any less than the slavery that Israel endured under the hand of Pharaoh.</p> <p>And then, a glimmer of light comes in. God starts to move. A “Moses” so to speak, is sent into that life, and he cries out to the substance, “Let my people go!”</p> <p>There is a promise of freedom. There is going to be liberty here.</p> <p>It is almost as if that substance answers back, and says, “No way!” “I am not letting go!”</p> <p>Then, what so often happens with that poor individual? Instead of turning for help to the LORD, they turn back to the very thing that enslaves them to look for help: <i>“Oh, substance that I’m in slavery to...Won’t you help me? Won’t you calm my nerves? Won’t you help my soul at this period?”</i></p> <p>Brothers and Sisters, there is no help there.</p>

	<p>There might be a momentary “papering over” of the most severe difficulties, but listen; There is no real help.</p> <p>Because that substance that you are in bondage to...that unforgiveness...that bitterness...whatever it is....That thing that holds you in bondage...it hates you.</p> <p>It is not your friend.</p> <p>For you to go to that, even though it is familiar...For you to go to that for release or liberty... It’s just wrong. You’ve got to turn to the LORD. The Lord is the source of your liberty.</p> <p>Instead, what did Pharaoh reply? “<i>You’re Idle!, You’re Idle</i>” (v.17). That response was absolutely unsympathetic and cruel. He believed that the children of Israel were lazy. More work, harder work would cure them of it.</p> <p>Understand this: Pharaoh hated Israel, and Pharaoh wanted the children of Israel in perpetual bondage to him. Whatever it is that is holding you in bondage this morning, It’s as if it is staring you right in the eye right now, and saying I want you forever. That’s how I want you: forever.</p> <p>So, back to our text. Let’s see what happens next: Exodus 5:19-21</p>
<p>9</p>	<p><i>¹⁹ The foremen of the people of Israel saw that they were in trouble when they said, “You shall by no means reduce your number of bricks, your daily task each day.” ²⁰ They met Moses and Aaron, who were waiting for them, as they came out from Pharaoh; ²¹ and they said to them, “The LORD look on you and judge, because you have made us stink in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.”</i></p>
	<p>You can just imagine: The officers of the Children of Israel go to meet with Pharaoh and try to reason with him. They get nowhere. Pharaoh just dressed them down. He just got in their faces in the strongest and most offensive way possible.</p> <p>And so, they leave Pharaoh’s presence with their tails between their legs and step out of the palace to meet Moses and Aaron who were waiting for them. Can you picture that scene? Do they seek comfort from Moses? No. They attack.</p> <p>v. 21: <i>And they said to them, “The LORD look on you and judge, because you have made us stink in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.”</i></p> <p>So, as the leaders of the children of Israel came forth from the royal court of Pharaoh, they were not happy when they met Moses and Aaron. As a matter of fact, they felt righteously indignant, saying <i>“Let the LORD look on you and judge.”</i> The officers of Israel were <u>certain</u> that God was on their side. They thought anything that made the immediate condition of Israel worse could not be of the LORD.</p> <p>Now they were wrong in that. God looking down from heaven, would say this: <i>“Everything is proceeding according to plan.”</i></p> <p>The Children of Israel would ask, <i>“then why are things getting worse?”</i></p> <p>God would reply, <i>“Everything is proceeding according to plan.”</i></p> <p>I wonder if that is not the word of the Lord to some people here. I look out at your faces, and think of the problems people in this congregation have experienced (list). You may wonder where is the LORD in the midst of this? <i>“I gave it to you, and immediately it seemed to get worse, not better.”</i></p> <p>Can I say you are in the same place as the Children of Israel were in this passage?</p> <p>Would you please understand that God looks down on your situation and says, <i>“Everything is proceeding according to plan.” “You are going to see my glory.” “You are going to see my victory.” “You are going to see me set you free from this bondage.” “You need to trust me in the midst of this.”</i> Don’t despair because it seems everything has gotten worse.</p>

	<p>There is no such thing as an untested faith.</p> <p><i>Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.</i> James 1:2-4</p>
	<p>Look what it says in v.21 <i>“you have made us stink in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants</i> That’s what they criticized Moses for. <i>“Pharaoh doesn’t like us anymore!”</i></p> <p>Isn’t that almost funny? You see, when the Children of Israel were subservient boot-lickers to Pharaoh, he thought they were pretty keen. But now that they stand up to Pharaoh and say <i>“its wrong,”</i> We belong to the LORD God. Moses said, <i>“Let my People Go.”</i> We don’t belong to you, Pharaoh, we belong to the LORD. Suddenly Pharaoh doesn’t like them very much anymore. They thought that what Moses did was wrong.</p> <p>Brothers and Sisters, Satan sometimes seems friendly to us when we accept his Lordship, but when we start to be free in Jesus, he will often try to make life difficult for us.</p> <p>Think what a contrast this is for the children of Israel. When Moses first came to the elders of Israel and said <i>“I have God’s plan to rescue you....Exodus 4:31 And the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshiped.</i> That was their first reaction, before Moses ever went into Pharaoh. They are like: <i>“Yes, we worship the Lord!, Moses, you da man!”</i> Now that they are in the midst of the difficulty, they say, <i>“Moses, you have made us stink in the sight of Pharaoh?”</i> After Pharaoh acts, all of the worship of the Children of Israel goes away pretty quickly.</p> <p>All I can tell you is this as you draw analogies to your own life: God allowed all of this difficulty to happen, you could say he designed it to happen. Hypothetically speaking, is it not possible God could have avoided all this trouble and set the Children of Israel free as soon as Moses showed up? He surely could have. God could have freed Israel from slavery in Egypt without a struggle with Pharaoh. Yet God knew that it was not good or best for the Children of Israel to do that. For them to make the transition from being a people in bondage and slavery to become a people free to serve the living God, there needed to be some testing. Some trusting. Some character-building that was absolutely necessary. And that is what God may be doing in your life. It’s not just a matter of setting you free. That’s a big part of it, but the freedom is just the beginning. God wants to make you a person who is fit for his service in his promised land. That requires a transformation. That means allowing some measure of struggle. Some measure of difficulty. So how does Moses respond to the anger of the Children of Israel? Exodus 5:22</p>
10	<p>²² Then Moses turned to the LORD....</p>
	<p>This is a good sign. Somebody who is frustrated and disappointed turns to the LORD...Even if he is going to complain, at least he turns to the LORD. And, believe me, he is going to complain. Exodus 5:22-23</p>
11	<p>²² Then Moses turned to the LORD and said, “O Lord, why have <u>you</u> done <u>evil</u> to this people? Why did <u>you</u> ever send me? ²³ For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and <u>you have not delivered</u> your people at all.”</p>
	<p>Moses has two questions for God:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why did you hurt your people? 2. Why did you pick me to help you hurt your people.

	Moses said, <i>“I don’t like this job. This is a crummy job description.”</i> Now, as we start to unpack this dialogue between Moses and God, we should start by asking the question, <i>“What basis does Moses have for his anger?”</i> Let’s start by looking at the instruction God gave Moses at his commissioning during his encounter at the burning bush. Exodus 3:18-20
12	¹⁸ and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.’ ¹⁹ But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. ²⁰ So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go. Exodus 3:18-20
	And let’s compare that to what Moses actually did and said when he confronted Pharaoh:
13	<p>³ ¹⁸ and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.’ ¹⁹ But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. ²⁰ So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go. Exodus 3:18-20</p> <p>⁵ ¹ Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, <i>“Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.’”</i> ² But Pharaoh said, <i>“Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover, I will not let Israel go.”</i> Exodus 5:1-2</p>
	<p>First of all, do you notice that at the burning bush, God told Moses to go to Pharaoh with the Elders of Israel – and that instead, Moses and Aaron went alone? Now Pharaoh has successfully pitted the labor foremen of Israel against Moses and Aaron...when instead they could have been a united front.</p> <p>Secondly, God told Moses to refer to him as <i>“The LORD, the God of the Hebrews”</i>, but Moses said, <i>“Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel.”</i> The Hebrews are a people group. Israel would become a nation. Words matter in international diplomacy.</p> <p>Thirdly, God told Moses to ask for a “three-days journey” into the wilderness. Moses made the full demand: <i>“Let my people go.”</i></p> <p>And here is the really big part Moses seemed to have missed: <i>“But I know the king of Egypt will not let you go.”</i> God told Moses straight up that there would be a struggle with Pharaoh. In essence, God says, <i>“Moses, you are going to go and talk to Pharaoh. He is not going to listen to you. Your cool little speech won’t work at first. He is going to harden his heart, and I am going to confirm his decision for him. Then, through you, I am going to do miraculous signs and wonders and then, after that, he will let my people go.”</i></p> <p>Moses did not remember that part of the conversation with the Lord at the burning bush. He seemed to possess a “listening deficiency” that seems to be common with every human being born with a “Y” chromosome. Some of us have an innate talent for selective hearing.</p> <p>May I suggest to you that when you read your Bible, read the fine print. Read for depth, not for distance. Read every word. Understand the tenses of the verbs. Read in 20/20 context. (read the 20 verses before and after a particular verse for better understanding of the context).</p> <p>Understand exactly what God says when he makes a promise in scripture, and how he says it, and for whom he says it.</p>
	So maybe Moses did not have a good basis for being angry at God. He did wrong in forgetting what God had said. Despite what God had said, something inside of Moses presumed it would be easy. That’s so human.

	<p>We do the same thing. There is a promise we believe, a truth to which we hold and claim from scripture – And then we <u>add to it</u> a way that we believe God ought to do what he has promised to do.</p> <p>And then God does not do what we presumed God ought to do, and then two things happen:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We get angry. We shake our fists at God because he didn't do what we thought he ought to do. 2. We act as though God has forgotten how to take care of his business. <p>It's one thing for us to be upset because we had an expectation, and things didn't happen the way we expected them to. It's another thing to accuse God of being wrong, of not keeping his promises...which is essentially what Moses did. Let's look again at how God responded to him:</p>
	Exodus 6:1
14	<p>¹ But the LORD said to Moses, “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will send them out, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land.”</p>
	<p>That's amazing. And that's grace, and that's kindness, and it's mercy.</p> <p>If I had talked to my Daddy the way Moses talked to God, I probably wouldn't be here to share this message with you this morning. I would have received the justice I deserved.</p> <p>I couldn't imagine having the audacity, the unmitigated gall to say what Moses says to God at the end of Chapter 5. And Chapter 6 begins, and God does not strike him dead. God doesn't strike Moses with leprosy or whatever. God doesn't even come at Moses like he did in Chapter 4, the circumcision passage, where at an inn along the way, God sought to kill “him.”</p> <p>But in Chapter 6, that does not happen. Instead, God overlooks Moses' anger and moves right along to make a statement. This verse 1 is the prologue to the statement. And the prologue is: “Moses, you think I didn't deal properly with Pharaoh, but you are about to see what I am going to to Pharaoh.” Then God makes a statement, in Exodus 6:2-5:</p>
15	<p>² God spoke to Moses and said to him, “I am the LORD. ³ 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. ⁴I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners. ⁵ Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant.</p>
	<p>First, God declares who he is. <i>God spoke to Moses and said to him, “I am the LORD”</i> Did you notice in your Bible that the word “LORD” appears in all capital letters?</p> <p>When you read the word LORD in all capital letters, the translators are telling you the word written is the covenant name of God. You also may have heard it pronounced “Yahweh.” Theologians call it the “Tetragrammaton”. It consists of four letters in the Hebrew alphabet: “Yodh”, “He”, “Waw” & ”He”. You may also see it translated as the letters “YHWH”. It has no vowels in it, and is generally regarded as so holy by Rabbinic Scholars as to be unpronounceable. Some scholars have inserted the vowels from another name for God, “Adoni” to come up with the name “Yahweh”, which also mean “I AM that I AM,” as God declared to Moses from the burning bush.</p> <p>So, in this passage, why does God tell Moses his name again? Do you think Moses forgot God's name? Is God reintroducing himself to Moses? No.</p> <p>God is saying “<i>I am going to fulfill the promise that I made, and the promise that I made is based upon my character, and my omnipotent ability.</i>” I AM....I AM that I AM....I AM the becoming one I AM the eternal one – from beginning to end. What I am going to do is based upon my name (my character), so I give you my name. My name is my word and my word is my bond.</p>

Then God continues on: Exodus 6: 3-5 *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, the land in which they lived as sojourners. Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant.*

In verse three, God differentiates between two of the hundreds of names by which he is known in scripture. He tells Moses that he will know God as YHWH. He also tells Moses that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob knew God by another name, El Shaddai, "The Almighty"

This is an important statement. It is also a complicated statement. Let's try to understand it.

When God declares that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did not know God as YHWH, it did not mean they had never heard the name. In fact, the name "YHWH" is used a hundred times in the book of Genesis. In Genesis 15, God says, "I AM YHWH" to Abraham. When the Bible talks about a "name" is speaking about the qualities and character that name represents. The name by which God is known is also indicative of the relationship a person has with God.

When God established his covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17), God says, "*I am Almighty God (El Shaddai), walk before me and be blameless.*" What God is saying is that the relationship he had with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is based on the name (character) "El Shaddai" Almighty God.

Now the covenant promise of redemption that God says "*I will keep through Moses*" to my chosen people is based on my name "YHWH", which among other things, means that God keeps his promises, particularly his promise of redemption. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were not yet in positions that needed to know God's redemption, so they did not know God at that level.

Think of it like this: It's sort of like a child who grows up in a Christian home. A child grows up in a Christian home, and they hear the name "Jesus". And they grow up in this home and they are read to from the Bible. And they go to church, and they hear songs about Jesus. Jesus this, and Jesus that. And they come to like the name Jesus, and love the name Jesus. "*Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.*" And they sing those songs *about* Jesus, and they learn those truths *about* Jesus.

And yet, one day...Their faith is no longer borrowed. Their faith is no longer second hand. Their faith is no longer their parent's faith. But their faith is their own. And they come to **know** Jesus, and not just know "*about*" Jesus.

His name shall be called "Jesus"... Why? Because he will save his people. It's not until you become one of his saved people that you really understand his name.

And basically, what God is saying is, "*Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, compared to what I have revealed to you, Moses, and will continue to reveal to you, they are children who grew up in a house saying a name that they did not comprehend.*" However, when I do what I am going to do, in, with through and for Israel, You will know and understand my name in a way they never could have understood. That's what he means. They used the name YHWH, but Moses, you **know** the name YHWH.

So, when God speaks to Moses, he uses the name, YHWH. Three times in Exodus 6:2-9, God says, 'I AM YHWH.' First, in verse 2, before his statement to Moses, God say, "I AM YHWH.", And secondly, before the statement the Moses is supposed to make to Israel, he says, "I AM YHWH", and at the end of that statement, he says, "I AM YHWH". Three times he says it. That's significant. He is saying "*Put your trust in me, because of who I AM.*" "*Put your trust in me, because I AM the God who fulfills his promises.*" Never early. Never Late. Always on time, even if it is not the time you imagined, or the way you thought it should happen. I AM God, Moses. You are not God. I AM. I AM that I AM. I AM YHWH.

	And because I AM God, Moses, here is what I want you to tell my people Exodus 6: 6-8
16	⁶ Say therefore to the people of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. ⁷ I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. ⁸ I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.”
	Along with the I AM statement, God makes seven “I WILL” Statements. 1. I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and 2. I will deliver you from slavery to them, and 3. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. ⁷ 4. I will take you to be my people, and 5. I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. ⁸ 6. I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. 7. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.
	God says, “When I do it, you will know I did it. I am not just going to bring you out. I am going to bring you in. I am going to take you as my own. I am going to be your God. Uniquely. Specifically. I am going to bring you into the land that I promised you.” And how does he end it? “I AM YHWH”.
	And how do the chosen people of God respond? Exodus 6:9
17	⁹ Moses spoke thus to the people of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses, because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery.
	More Doubt. Doubt “because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery”. If you are here this morning, and a broken spirit or slavery to sin resonate with you, then you need to listen to what God is saying in this passage. Why do we doubt? We doubt because we forget who God is. ▪ Because if we remembered who God is, there would be no room for doubt. We doubt because we forget what God has done. ▪ Because if we remembered what God has done. If we remembered God’s redemption. Again, where would there be room for doubt? We doubt because we forget what God has promised. ▪ We forget that God is not done with us. ▪ We forget that Jesus said, “I go to prepare a place for you.” ▪ There is more ahead. ▪ We forget that he is coming again, to judge the living and dead, and that he will make all things right.
	When Moses had a spiritual meltdown, God told him who he was. Exodus 6:2
18	² God spoke to Moses and said to him, “I am the LORD
	My prayer for you, for me, for all of us is that as we walk through the difficulties of our lives, and our lives will be fraught with difficulties, that as we face each one of them, we will ask ourselves, Who is God? What has he done? What has he promised?
19	Who is God? What has He done? What has he promised?

	<i>"I'm struggling with something right now. It's hurting me. What do I do? Ask yourself: Who is God? What has he done? What has he promised?"</i>
	<i>"I've received some news that overwhelms me. How do I face it? Ask yourself: Who is God? What has he done? What has he promised?"</i>
	<i>"I have a task in front of me, and I have no idea how it can be accomplished. What do I do? Ask yourself: Who is God? What has he done? What has he promised?"</i>
	And what happens when that does not work? Wash, Rinse, Repeat.
	<p>It's real easy to get caught up in this idea that Christianity makes us invincible. It's real easy to get caught up in this kind of Christianity that never has a bad day, or at least never admits it. It's really easy to put on a front that says "I'm blessed and Highly favored!" when anyone asks how you are, and never answering the question with "Man, I'm struggling today."</p> <p>The problem of getting caught up in that myth of Christianity is that it leaves you nowhere to go in your dark days, except to your darkness. You can't admit that you are struggling, You can't ask for help when you are struggling, And you can't get yourself out of your struggle, because all you have is your struggle...and the idea that there is something wrong with you because you're a Christian who is in the midst of a struggle.</p> <p>Let that go. Rejoice in the fact that God has given you this one day in seven, that he has given you his very word in your Bible, that he has given you your brothers and sisters in Christ, and so much more in order to remind you, again and again and again and again.</p> <p>Why? Because we need it. We need it.</p> <p>We need to be reminded Christ died once for sin. The Just for the unjust, in order that he might bring us back to God. We need to be reminded of that.</p> <p>We need to be reminded that because we have come to him in repentance and faith, that we are part of the covenant people of God. That we are saved, and that we are in the process of being sanctified, and that we will one day be glorified.</p> <p>We need to be reminded that Christ will do what he promised. He who began a good work in you is able and faithful to see it through to completion.</p> <p>We need to be reminded of that, Brothers and Sisters.</p> <p>And if you are not a Christian, you need to be reminded of that.</p> <p>Because if you are not a Christian, then that means you are trusting in something other than the completed work of Christ, and you are failing, and its failing...and its not enough for you to just fail. You need to be reminded over and over and over again why you are failing. Because Christ is your only real hope.</p> <p>Run to him. Cling to him, trust in him, and nothing else. And don't leave here another week without embracing and walking in that reality.</p>

Benediction:

*Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or imagine,
 according to the power at work within us,
 to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations,
 forever and ever. Amen.*

Ephesians 3:20

Bulletin Questions

1. Exodus 5:1 begins with the word, "Afterward" What is the "Beforehand" that set the stage for the "Afterward?"
2. What did Moses and Aaron request of Pharaoh?
3. What Question did Pharaoh ask Moses and Aaron in reply to their request?
4. How did Pharaoh act in response to the request?
5. What did Pharaoh call the Word of the Lord?
6. What is the relationship between Pharaoh hardening his heart and God hardening Pharaoh's heart?
7. How did Pharaoh increase the difficulty placed upon the children of Israel?
8. How did the children of Israel respond to the increased difficulty?
9. How did Moses respond to the failure of his demands upon Pharaoh?
10. How did God respond to the disappointment of the children of Israel and of Moses?