

Have you ever felt like you were losing control? That nothing was going right? In dark times when a struggle or failure is overwhelming you, it has an impact upon your faith life too. What am I doing wrong? Is the LORD angry with me? Am I being left to face the world alone?

This is a terrifying mindset to find oneself in. It's one that can even cause us to think about asking the same thing Moses did, "Why did you ever send me?" But it is not where the LORD leaves us. He does not leave us in despair, not any more than he left Moses in despair. Exodus 5 is one of the low points in Moses' work as a prophet of the LORD, and it happens right at the very beginning of his work.

With firm purpose Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh. In an audience with the king, they gave the word of the LORD, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go!'" It was a bold message given by a prophet unwavering in his purpose. He had come from afar, he had the word of the LORD, he had the response of the elders, and now he had the audience of the king.

But the word of Moses was quickly felt to have no influence at all. Though his word was firm, Pharaoh dismissed it outright as nonsense. "Who is the LORD? I do not know, and I will not obey." But this was worse than a regular rejection. The situation deteriorated for the people of Israel by Pharaoh's decree, and they became angry with Moses and Aaron for it. "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."

Consider how Moses must have felt. It seemed as though Moses had only made matters worse. He had failed in his task to deliver Israel from Egypt. Now Pharaoh wasn't just acting out of fear, but he was also acting out of vengeance, inflicting further pain because of Moses. And rather than worshipping the LORD together with Moses, the Israelites were casting him out, calling on the LORD to judge him. What a terrible start to his calling!

Is this not how the people of God must constantly feel? How often does it not seem that no matter what is said, it only gets worse? Does it not seem that whenever we maintain the Word of God before the public, it is reviled and only brings further hatred upon the followers of Christ? Would it not be better to simply say nothing at all? Our own strength only results in failure. Our word, like Moses, will not accomplish its goal by its own merit.

This passage did not only involve Moses and Aaron speaking, but there was a strong response that had a powerful result. Pharaoh, that wicked king of Egypt, brought about change in a terrible manner. He reacted very negatively to the word that Moses brought.

In the first place, Pharaoh was not willing to let the people of Israel leave Egypt. That is made obvious by his rejection of so simple a request as a few days in the wilderness. This was not a request to leave the land of Egypt, but a request to leave for a few days. If Pharaoh wasn't willing to grant the people of Israel something like that, how much less likely was he to grant them to leave for good? Pharaoh's rejection of this request showed his hardness of heart.

We see the cunning of fallen man and the handiwork of the devil at work. Pharaoh played his cards in a way that turned the people of God upon the prophet of God. By beating the foremen of the people of Israel, he turned the leaders of Israel against Moses and Aaron, so that they despised them. The people of God, rather than being united together in seeking help from the LORD, turned on their own prophet and spoke harshly against him. It is a disheartening thing to see Satan's attacks upon the people of God from within.

Moses was so discouraged by the events that had unfolded that he turned to the LORD in despair. His words had failed to convince Pharaoh to let the people go. Pharaoh had responded with more than just a no, but had increased the torment of the people of Israel. And rather than blaming Pharaoh and the Egyptians, the Israelites blamed Moses for disturbing the peace. Overwhelmed, Moses turns in complaint to the LORD.

And how does the LORD respond? "Now you shall see." With these words the LORD reminds Moses who is sovereign, who is actually in control. The answer given by the King of Kings is short and to the point. There is no reference whatsoever to what has just happened as a failure, but a word for the future. The Lord God Almighty, he would now demonstrate what real power is like.

That Moses had gone before Pharaoh with Aaron with a request, that Pharaoh had responded in petty revenge, that the circumstances of the Israelites seemed to deteriorate, all of this was the will of the LORD. Moses may have felt weak and hopeless, Pharaoh may have felt strong and powerful, but neither mattered in the hands of a sovereign and almighty God.

"Now you shall see what I will do," are powerful words for us to reckon with. They were words that were to teach Moses and the people of Israel that they would not be delivered from the hand of Pharaoh because Moses and Aaron were skilled with their words, or impressive with their tricks. They would not be allowed to leave Egypt because of Pharaoh's generosity or goodwill. They would be delivered by a great and holy God who will bring them out with a strong hand.

What have we seen the LORD do? Not only do we know what happened to Pharaoh and all his hosts, not only do we know that he delivered the people of Israel out from bondage to Egypt by a strong hand, but we also know that he has delivered his chosen people out from bondage to sin by a strong hand! The same LORD God who was mighty to save Israel from Egypt is also mighty to save us from sin.

As great as Moses' despair was at the oppression that Israel experienced, as victorious and unshakeable as Pharaoh was upon his iron throne, as distant as salvation seemed to be for Israel, how much greater was the despair our Saviour experienced upon the cross. How triumphant that great adversary the devil would have felt with the Son of God crucified under Pontius Pilate, and all his disciples scattered, with the very crowds that had escorted him into Jerusalem shouting Hosanna now clamouring "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

But what was the word of the LORD on that day? "It is finished." We do not need to wait and see what the LORD will do. We do not have Pharaoh looming over us, or Pilate's soldiers dividing our LORD's clothes by lot. We are not in darkness and in bondage, because the Word of the God who has the strongest arm of all is, "It is finished!" We may look upon his handiwork, not only how he delivered Israel from Egypt, but especially how he has delivered us from sin. This may give to us the confidence that we need in order to bring a gospel of salvation to the world. His word does not depend on how we present it or how sinful people might respond.

You shall see what the LORD will do! This is an incredible comfort for us in knowing that our own words may fall short. Our own voice will not bring about change. Our words will not cause another to repent, or unite the church, or restore the country to Christian values. But it also means that the words of man will not maintain power over God's earth, will not destroy his church, will not cause even one of his chosen ones to become enslaved to sin and lost to damnation. Look to Christ Jesus, and see what he will do! Thanks for listening