

**Date** : 7 May 2023

**Theme** : Understanding the journey of faith in Exodus

**Topic** : Moses – 5 wrong expectations that affect our covenant partnership with God.

**Passage** : Exodus 4:27 – 7:6

**Key verse** : Exodus 7:6 – Then Moses and Aaron did so; just as the LORD commanded them...

### **Introduction:**

The story of Genesis ended with 70 people in Jacob's household being saved from famine and settling in Egypt (when Joseph was Second in Command in Egypt. He died 1805 BC). The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would bless them in Egypt then bring them back when the sin of Amorite was complete (*Genesis 15:16*). God had covenanted with Abraham that He would bring them back to the promised land after 400 years. (*Genesis 15:13*)

The events of Exodus started around 1450 BC where Pharaoh had put the Israelites into forced labour. There the Lord God visited His people and heard their groanings, and would bring them out from slavery in Egypt and bring them into the promised land. God needed a covenant partner to represent Him before Pharaoh and He chose Moses.

Moses had initial success when he started out. He spoke to the elders of the Israelites, performed the signs that God had given him, and they believed what he said. They even bowed and worshipped before the Lord.

However after Moses went to see Pharaoh, things got worse and he returned to the Lord saying "Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people, why is it You have sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all." (*Exodus 5:22*)

From Moses' reactions, we can identify 5 wrong expectations he had that we also hold. These wrong expectations can affect our covenantal partnership with God to fulfil God's mission to save the lost.

### **1. Wrongly expect that the enemy will give in easily without a fight.**

- Moses obeyed the Lord's instruction to see Pharaoh to let the Israelites go because the Lord God of the Israelites had said so. (*Exodus 5:1*)
- But Moses did not expect that Pharaoh would reject his request. Pharaoh said "Who is the Lord that I should obey?" He said that he did not know the Lord and neither would he let the Israelites go. (*Exodus 5:2*)
- Moses wrongly expected that Pharaoh would let the Israelites go easily. He forgot that the Lord had already told him that Pharaoh would not. (*Exodus 4:21*)
- When we share the gospel to the unsaved, do we wrongly expect the devil to let them go easily without a fight?
  - Saving the lost is a spiritual warfare, we need to exercise faith and persevere in fighting spiritual battles through prayer and witnessing.

### **2. Wrongly expect that everything will be smooth sailing**

- Moses took on Pharaoh as the Lord instructed but things naturally got worse. Not only that Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go, he even imposed heavier burdens on them. (*Exodus 5*)
  - The Israelites were no longer provided straws to make bricks. They would have to find their own straws. The Israelites were still required to produce the same quota of bricks.
  - Instead of straw, the Israelites could only gather stubble which made it harder to make bricks. The Israelites were given more work and were made to labour. Resulting them unable to meet the daily quota and the officers of the Israelites got beaten up.
  - They petitioned to Pharaoh but were harshly criticised and dismissed to deliver the work regardless.
- The Israelites angrily blamed Moses for all the trouble, accused Moses' intention to cause them further harm and called to God to judge Moses for causing their affliction. (*Exodus 5:21*)
- Moses' response to the Lord showed that he wasn't happy at all. He certainly didn't expect things to become so bad.
- We can expect that things can get worse before it gets better.
  - Have faith in God when facing rejection from those we are trying to help.

### 3. **Wrongly expect that the Lord will bring deliverance immediately.**

- Moses complained against the Lord “neither have You delivered Your people at all” (Exodus 5:23)
- Moses wrongly expected that the Lord would deliver them just simply after he spoke to Pharaoh
- He forgot that the Lord already told him He would perform His signs and wonders. (Exodus 4:21)
- As God’s covenant partner, we need to remember He will do what it takes to gain victory. But we must pay attention to God and not the enemy. (*Exodus 7:1-5*)
  - “You shall speak all that I command you.” (Exodus 7:2)
  - “I will bring my people out of the land of Egypt by great judgements.” (Exodus 7:4)
- We need to expect that the Lord has His timing and His ways.

### 4. **Wrongly expect that people will always listen to you and support you.**

- After that, the Lord declared his judgement on Pharaoh, and repeated that as the Lord God of the fathers of the Israelites, He would fulfil His covenant to rescue the Israelites from slavery and bring them into the promised land. Then He instructed Moses to tell these to the Israelites. (Exodus 6:1-8)
- However the Israelites refused to listen to Moses because they were in anguish due to the harsh slavery (Exodus 6:9)
- When the Lord instructed Moses to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go, Moses was so discouraged that he replied “The children of Israel have not heeded me”. (Exodus 6:12)
- He had wrongly expected that the Israelites would listen to him just because the Lord had spoken through him.
- We must stay focus on God and what He has to say, rather than what others say.

### 5. **Wrongly expect that success is only based on one skill.**

- Even though God instructed Moses to speak to Pharaoh again, Moses refused saying that he could not speak well so Pharaoh also would not listen to him. (Exodus 6:30)
- Moses had wrongly expected that success was dependent only on how well he spoke.
- The Lord had to remind Moses the plan He had mentioned in the beginning. (Exodus 4:15-23 | 7:1-5)
  - God had given Moses His authority (to represent him as God). (Exodus 4:16 | 7:1)
  - Moses must speak everything God commanded (Exodus 4:15 | 7:2)
  - Aaron, his brother, would help him to speak. (Exodus 4:16 | 7:2)
  - Moses was to do all the signs and wonders. (Exodus 4:21 | 7:3)
  - God would harden Pharaoh’s heart yet Pharaoh would not listen. (Exodus 4:21 | 7:3)
  - So that God would perform his final judgement to kill Pharaoh’s firstborn. (4:23 | 7:4)
- Moses had wrongly paid more attention to the circumstances than what God said.
- We can expect success when we collaborate with God and fellow travellers.
  - Collaboration involves each person to contribute their skills, gifts and talents.
  - Greater impact and success if we practice and train up our skill level.

Wrong expectations happen when we fail to listen carefully and it will impact the success of our covenantal partnership with God. This time, Moses listened carefully to God. This enabled him to correct his wrong expectations, disappointments, and focus, “Then Moses and Aaron did so; just as the Lord commanded them, so they did”. (Exodus 7:6)

From this point onwards, every one of the 10 signs and wonders happened because the Lord commanded and they did so. (Only the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, it wasn’t recorded because God himself performed it the next day).

#### **Application:**

1. Evaluate whether I have any of the 5 wrong expectations and how to correct it.
2. Attend Saturday’s training to increase my skill to share the gospel more effectively.