

Sermon Notes Exodus 5 Listening-obeying 7/3/21

Introduction. Chapter 4 ends with Moses and Aaron bringing all the elders of Israel together and telling them everything that the Lord had said to Moses. Moses performed all the signs that the Lord had instructed him to do and the Israelite people believed him.

5:1-6. Moses confronts Pharaoh

Moses has a message from God for Pharaoh, but Moses is warned that Pharaoh will not, at least initially (3:18-19), let the Israelites go. Moses failed to listen carefully and so he failed to act obediently. Firstly, Moses fails to take the Elders (3:18) with him as a delegation to Pharaoh, he only takes Aaron. The weight of a delegation with the elders is lost. Secondly, Moses modifies God's words from 'the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met us. Let us take a three-day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the Lord our God' (3:18) to 'this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: let my people go so they can hold a feast for me in the wilderness' (5:1).

Moses' language is less clear, more confronting and goes beyond God's instructions. 'Hebrew' is the name the Pharaoh would recognise, not 'Israel', and the phrase 'met with God' would have been a familiar way of describing a manifestation of God. Moses' claim that God says, 'Let my people go' (5:1) goes beyond God's instruction and is taken by Pharaoh as an absolute request for freedom (5:2). Pharaoh reveals the hardness of his heart as God predicted and warned Moses, but his response is in part a reaction to Moses' embellishing of God's words. Finally, Moses adds a threat (5:3b) from God to the Hebrews which God did not make!

5:7-17. Pharaoh responds by ordering greater hardship on the Hebrews. Both slave drivers (Egyptians) and overseers (Hebrews) are required to enforce Pharaoh's harsher work conditions. **The slave drivers and overseers enact Pharaoh's harsh orders**, but the overseers are 'beaten' because the Hebrew slaves are not able, without straw, to make as many bricks. **The Israelite overseers ask Pharaoh why he has ordered harsher conditions.** Pharaoh claims the Hebrew slaves are lazy. **The Israelite overseers blame Moses and Aaron** for Pharaoh's cruelty.

5:22-23. Moses blames God for all the troubles without a rescue.

Reflection/Response. How does the Spirit help us listen carefully to God's word and empower us to respond in obedience? (See 2 Tim. 3:10-17; Jn. 16:5-15).