

EXODUS 6:1-13

INTRODUCTION

Last time we noticed that Moses faced a major disappointment in his life. He personally has been blamed by the people for their increased hardship and they have rejected him as their leader. Moses turned to the Lord in prayer; it was an honest prayer as he poured out his heart to the Lord. Now the Lord responds to that prayer (v 1) by promising Moses that he will not have to wait any longer before he sees what the Lord will do to Pharaoh.

God is ready to intervene, the Israelites will be allowed to go and this will happen because of the Lord's mighty hand. Pharaoh thought that he was sovereign and powerful but now he and all Israel will see that it is the Lord who is sovereign he is the one who is all-powerful.

1. GOD MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN (vs. 2-5).

God reminds Moses who he is; he is the Lord (Yahweh), the one who appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as God almighty. The aspect of God's character revealed to Abraham Isaac and Jacob was his power. The Hebrew term "God almighty" means something like "the Lord who is on high and sees everything" (Genesis 17:1). Now the Lord tells Moses that he will make himself known to the people as "Yahweh" (as he had, to Moses, at the burning bush). For the first time God was going to show the people the full implications of what it meant for the Lord to be Yahweh which means the one who is who always has been and who always will be. The people will discover that their God is the self-existent eternal God. But how was the Lord going to show his people something of this aspect of his character? He would do so by extending his powerful hand to deliver them from the hand of the Egyptians and bring them into the land of Canaan, which is God's Promised Land.

The Lord also reminded Moses that he had made certain promises to the people and he intended to keep them. These promises were a covenant, a solemn agreement in which he promised to give them the land of Canaan as their own homeland. Even though much time had elapsed since that promise was made to Abraham the Lord still intended to keep his covenant and fulfil his promises.

The Lord assures Moses that he has heard the groaning of the Israelites, although they were still slaves and things seemed to be increasingly getting worst for them God had not forgotten them or his covenant. He knew all that was happening to them and he saw all their hardship. He was aware of their exhaustion and agony and he had heard their prayers.

The lesson for us is that just because there is no immediate response to our prayers it does not mean that he has not heard us. We simply must trust him and understand that He is the Lord the great self-existent and eternal God who knows what he is doing. God does hear the prayers of his people and he has the matter in hand, he will reveal his answer all in good time, this world is working to his time clock not ours and he will fulfil his purposes for our lives and for the life of our church but he will do so according to his plans not ours.

Therefore even when we have prayed about something and the situation instead of getting better actually is getting worst we must simply trust in our God. He has made a covenant with his people; he has promised to be our God to be with us and he will do so throughout our difficult circumstances. We are to keep praying to him but we are not to think that he does not hear us or that he does not care because he does not act.

We must not think he is unable to do anything about our circumstances for he is the Lord almighty he is the self-existent and eternal God. Who God is as he has revealed himself to us in the bible and primarily through Christ should encourage us to keep trusting Him and to keep praying.

The Israelites found it really difficult to believe that God had heard their cries for help, and when they looked at Moses who is now 80 years old they refuse to believe that this man could be God's answer to their prayers. Moses had his doubts that he was God's answer his sense of failure had driven him to despair because of his intervention the people were now suffering more than before. Nevertheless the Lord spoke to Moses and told him that he had established his covenant with his people (v 4) and now he had remembered it (v 5).

Now when God remembers his covenant he does not mean that he had forgotten that he had even made it but it means that he is now going to act because of the covenant. It is because God had made a covenant and had promised the people the land of Canaan that he was now going to act to bring about the fulfilment of the promises. He is saying to the people don't panic I am in charge and in control, I have promised certain things and I will deliver on my promises.

There is nothing that can prevent him from fulfilling every one of his promises for he is God almighty and he is Jehovah God the one was and is and ever will be.

2. GOD'S PROMISED BLESSINGS (vs. 6-8)

If you look at these verses closely you will notice that a number of phrases are repeated for emphases. There are seven "I will" and they are both introduced and followed by the words I am the Lord (vs. 6 & 8). The Lord is hammering home his point that he was and is and ever will be the Lord God almighty. Because He is so great, nothing can frustrate or hinder his purposes from being fulfilled. Whatever the Lord plans to do he will do and there is no one or nothing that will stop him.

Whatever he wants to happen will happen because he is the one true and living God (Isaiah 46:8-11). Pharaoh and all the other gods of Egypt might have seemed powerful to the Israelites their circumstances might have led them to believe that the Egyptian gods are actually in charge but God has promised them the land of Canaan and God will deliver. There is no one who can stop him. Pharaoh cannot stop him, the various Egyptian gods cannot stop him, and no one can for he is the great self-existent and eternal God.

In these verses there are seven reassuring promises that the Lord makes to his people. First he promises to bring the people out from the yoke of the Egyptians (v 6). The Lord acknowledged that the people were in dire straits they could not save themselves or else they would have done so, only the Lord had the power to deliver them and he promised he would do so.

He is the Lord (v 6) therefore he will deliver them. Slavery was something which most of them experienced for all their lives they did not know what it was like to be free. As slaves they were owned by their masters they had no freedom to choose anything one of their deepest longings must have been to be free. They will be free because their God is the Lord the self-existent and eternal God who is almighty. Next he promises to redeem them.

He will do this with his outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgement. When anyone or anything was redeemed it was bought back, a price was paid and the property was set free. God was promising to purchase them and set them free from their bondage he was going to reveal his power in rescuing them while at the same time show his power to the Egyptians in judgment.

Next the Lord is going to take the people as his own people (v 7). Even though they treated the Lord shamefully, he was not ashamed to own them as his people. He will be their God, he was not

just going to rescue his people from slavery and then leave them to their own devices No! He was their God he was committed to them and he was going to be with them always through the good and bad times. He was going to fulfil his purposes in them and through them. He promises that he will bring them to the Promised Land the land that he had promised to their forefathers.

They had heard about the Promised Land for many years perhaps they had thought about what it would be like. But they were in slavery and it must have seemed as if that promise was never going to be fulfilled but now the Lord says I will bring you to this land, you will see me fulfil my promises. God's final promise is that he will give this land to them as a possession. The Lord never charges for his blessings they come from his good hand and are given to us by his grace and out of his mercy towards us.

Now all of these promises have one main theme that is redemption. They apply to us by taking us to the New Testament and pointing us to the cross of the Lord Jesus and his work of redemption for his own people. We are also slaves not to some powerful king or nation but slaves to sin. But it was Christ who rescued and freed us from our slavery by his powerful work of redemption. He did all this out of his grace there was nothing that we could pay or contribute to our salvation it was paid fully by Jesus Christ.

When he redeems us he takes us to be his own possession he does not leave us or forsake us but is with us always and he is taking us to be with himself in heaven. Those who are redeemed today by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus are his people and we should be looking forward to our heavenly home. In heaven there will be no more tears or distress, no death or mourning or crying for the old order of things will have passed away (Revelation 21:4). That home is absolutely assured because the Lord is the self existent, eternal and almighty God.

3. THE LORD DOES NOT GIVE UP ON THE PEOPLE (vs. 9-13)

Moses reported this wonderful message to the people but the people did not listen to him because of their bondage and because they were so discouraged (v 9). They found it difficult to believe that they could be freed, bondage was their life, and it was all they knew. All they could think of was the difficulties and hardship that surrounded them the idea of redemption was just a pipe dream for them. However their refusal to listen did not put the Lord off, he did not turn away from them, He was committed to them and he was going to fulfil his covenant promises.

The Lord understands his people he knows that we can be fickle and feeble but in spite of that he remains faithful to us, even when we like the Israelites treat him and his word with great contempt. The Lord's reaction to the people's refusal to listen was to instruct Moses to go back to Pharaoh and demand that he let the Israelites go. But poor Moses is very uncertain if the Israelites will not even listen to him why would someone as powerful as Pharaoh listen to him. Moses is lacking in self-confidence and self-assurance and once again he raises his speech problem with the Lord (v 12 & v 30).

We are then told that the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron to bring the Israelites out of Egypt (v 13) God had not turned his back on Moses. The people had done so but the Lord was committed to him, he was God's man for the task and Moses was not going to wriggle out of it and the people were not going to get rid of him either. God was going to fulfil his purposes and it was his power that mattered at the end of the day.

Moses did not need the people to listen to him in order for Pharaoh to listen for when the Lord comes in power upon Pharaoh then he is like clay in the hands of God. Moses and the people needed to learn that God's redemption of his people is about God's power to save and not about man's ability or co-operation. God is saving his people, and yes he uses us as his instruments even though we may be reluctant ones at times.

But we never save anyone or release anyone from their slavery only God can and does do that. That is a lesson that we need to learn time and time again. I have heard it said 'they will never change; it's pointless talking to them.' I have heard people say 'I will never change my religion you will never convert me.' What are we to do in those situations? Agree yes that person will never change so give up talking to them about Jesus. What we need to remember time and time again is that redemption is of the Lord it is his power that changes the hearts of people not our ability to convince or persuade people to trust in Christ.

Yes without God's power people will not listen to us they will never change but God is the self-existent eternal and almighty God and if he has purposes to save then nothing can stop him from saving that person who seems so hard that we conclude they will never change.

The conclusion that we come to is that no one can hinder the Lord's purposes not even a powerful ruler like Pharaoh. The Lord works his purposes out for his own glory, and he uses whomever he pleases to carry out those purposes. Those purposes are purposes to save his people and to take them to their heavenly home. If you are saved then be absolutely sure that heaven is your home.

But if you are not saved then you ought to cry out to God and plead for his mercy so that he will come in power and change your hard heart and bring you to a real and living relationship with God through His Son Jesus Christ.

Let's pray.