

Series: Exodus
Title: Lessons for Believers
Text: Ephesians 4: 18-23
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Our subject is “Lessons for Believers.” After God persuaded Moses that he was to be the LORD’s minister, we come to a passage that teaches us several valuable lessons. If we would be Christ’s servants bearing witness of Christ then in all we do and say our goal must be to honor Christ.

DAILY RESPONSIBILITIES

Exodus 4: 18: And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father in law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which *are* in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace.

When God calls us we should be more zealous to honor all our daily responsibilities for the sake of Christ. At this point, God had persuaded Moses in his heart that he was to go to Egypt. But God’s call does not excuse us from our responsibilities in this life. Moses must set his house in order and honoring his responsibilities toward his father-in-law. Jethro had given him his daughter to wife. He had provided Moses with land and a home for 40 years while in exile. Moses was responsible for his flock of sheep. It would not have been becoming to the gospel of Christ if Moses would have simply left. Moses is not asking permission so much as he is showing courtesy to Jethro.

No one was ever called to serve God like our Redeemer and as our Lord Jesus Christ walked this earth, he honored those to whom honor was due: to Mary and Joseph, to rulers, and in all his daily dealings with men. Those who had need, he provided that need. Can you imagine the Lord Jesus working as a carpenter? He was the most faithful employee that ever walked this earth. All this he did as he fulfilled God’s will, preached God’s word, and redeemed God’s people—as he worked out a righteousness for his people! Our Lord Jesus—in every way—is the perfect, faithful, holy and righteous servant of God.

So brethren, God’s power and grace does not excuse us from our responsibilities but his grace gives us a heart to honor them. Christ said, *all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets* “.” (Mt 7:12)

Titus 2: 9: *Exhort* servants to be obedient unto their own masters, *and* to please *them* well in all *things*; not answering again; 10: Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. 11: For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12: Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13: Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14: Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

OUR TIMING AND COMFORT

Exodus 4: 19: And the LORD said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life.

Believers get our timing and comfort only from the LORD. The LORD tells Moses it is now time to go to Egypt.

God's time is the right time. From eternity, our Sovereign God predestinated everything that he brings to pass. So he brings it to pass exactly when it should come to pass.

Galatians 4: 4: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5: To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6: And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

No man could harm Christ because the predestinated hour had not yet come. But

Romans 5:6: For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

Our Savior hung on that cross until the predestinated time—when justice was completely satisfied and the sins of his people were purged away and existed no more before God then he cried, “It is finished!” Three days later when the time appointed came, he came out of the grave and all his people came out in him. Forty days later, the time appointed arrived and he ascended and sat down at God's right hand and we in him.

When the predestinated season came for God to reveal Christ in us, Christ sent his preacher, who

1Timothy 2:6...testified in due time

Then “God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

Ephesians 1: 11: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

Brethren, God's time is the right time. When God calls we are to wait on the Lord but when he says “Go” then we are to go.

Psalms 31: 15: My times *are* in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.

We will always find that not only is the Lord's time the right time, his time is always the best time. He will comfort us in his time. The Lord gave the reason: *for all the men are dead which sought thy life*. We do not know how much time passed between when the LORD began calling Moses to this point. But at this point, all the men had died which sought his life. Here, we see what the Psalmist said

Psalm 27: 14: Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

So we are to look to the LORD alone for our timing and comfort.

NOTHING CAN HAVE OUR HEARTS BUT CHRIST

Exodus 4: 20: And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the rod of God in his hand.

Moses starts out for Egypt with two things: his family and the rod of God in his hand. But God saw to it that Zipporah and the children went back to their father. So Moses goes into Egypt with just Moses and the rod of God. That rod typifies Christ and his gospel. Nothing can have our hearts but Christ and his gospel.

Though we are to love our loved ones and provide for them, nothing can come between God's servant and Christ and the preaching of his gospel. Christ said,

Matthew 10:36: And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household. 37: He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38: And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

The Lord Jesus Christ honored and provided for all God's elect whom he loved. But nothing came between him and God his Father and the work God sent him to do. When Joseph and Mary came looking for him, he was twelve years old in the synagogue preaching to the doctors of religion

Luke 2: 49: And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

Another time Mary came while he was preaching the gospel,

Matthew 12: 47: Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. 48: But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? 49: And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! 50: For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

His disciples came to him one time, and

John 4: 31: prayed him, saying, Master, eat. 32: But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. 33: Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat? 34: Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. 35: Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

Likewise, our Lord demands absolute and universal surrender. He will not allow us to pick and choose what we will give him, what we will do for him, or what we will surrender to him. Brethren, nothing must take preeminence in our hearts at all times except Christ and his cause.

1 Corinthians 7: 29: But this I say, brethren, the time *is* short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; 30: And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; 31: And they that use this world, as not abusing *it*: for the fashion of this world passeth away.

EXPECT REJECTION

Exodus 4: 21: And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go.

We should expect rejection of our witness of Christ. God commanded Moses to see to it, that he did "*all those wonders before Pharaoh.*" Those three wonders typified the preaching of Christ. This is God's word to his preachers, see to it that you preach Christ before all—even great men, like Pharaoh. Yet, God said, "*but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go.*"

Usually, when we think of preaching or bearing witness to someone we think of the happy case of God causing his people to believe. We seldom think of the serious fact that God also hardens the heart of many through the gospel we preach. We should expect it—God said he would do it.

We should know God turns men over to reprobation justly because they first rejected him.

Romans 1: 22: Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23: And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. 24: Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen....28: And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

We should remember as God reprobates men God is working his will for the good of his people through it.

Romans 9: 17a; For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth....23: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

We should remember that the word of God has not been made of none effect by the unbelief and reprobation of some.

Isaiah 55:11: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

PREACH GOD'S WORD

Exodus 4: 22: And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: 23: And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.

God's servants are to preach God's word. We are to preach God's word even though we do not understand and cannot speak of many of the intricate workings of God. As we go through Exodus, we will see God fill in all the intricate details to bring this to pass. But Moses knows none of those at this point.

Still, Moses is to preach what he knows. God gave Moses a message. He was to preach the message of sovereign electing grace — "*Israel is my son!*" Moses was to preach the message of God's judgment — "*I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.*" Moses was to preach the message of redemption — "*I will bring them out of Egypt.*" (4:12). Preach Christ and him crucified and leave the unrevealed things to God.

Deuteronomy 29: 29: The secret *things belong* unto the LORD our God: but those *things which are revealed belong* unto us and to our children for ever, that *we* may do all the words of this law.

Amen!