



Scotts Hill Baptist Church

GOD'S EXIT PLAN • WHEN PLANS DISAPPOINT • EXODUS 5:1-23 • 2/16/2025

MAIN POINT

Obediently following God's calling is not always an easy, trouble-free path. When God begins to work, circumstances may initially deteriorate. However, that doesn't mean God's sovereignty is compromised in any way.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

If you could go back in time and change one thing to avoid a past disappointment, what would it be?

Have you ever been disappointed by someone you looked up to? Describe that situation.

Moses encountered rejection as the harshness of the Egyptian oppression increased. Because this occurred as a result of Moses' faithfulness, Moses experienced a significant crisis of faith in his own right. Examining the passage carefully is corrective to many tendencies to believe that faithfulness to God, particularly in difficult circumstances, results in a supernatural smoothing of opposition. Moses' experience did not remotely reflect such a skewed view of following God. Instead, Moses' faithfulness immediately resulted in greater opposition.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EXODUS 5:1-14.

After an unspecified amount of time, Moses and Aaron went to see Pharaoh. Pharaoh's response indicated that he did not know who Yahweh was. The verbiage Moses and Aaron used made it clear that the intent was for Israel to leave and not come back. Pharaoh, then, logically utilized the tactic that had kept Israel in check for decades—harsh labor. If oppressive labor was enough to keep them quiet for the generations prior, increasing the oppression would restore the peace and squash the apparent civil disobedience.

How do you reconcile your faithful following of God with the occasional rejection or mockery that it brings with it? Give an example.

Who in your life regularly encourages you to live faithfully, particularly when there is a negative or antagonistic reaction to your faith? How do they encourage you most effectively?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EXODUS 5:15-18.

The situation for Israel had deteriorated at a lightning pace from hopefulness at the arrival of Moses to unspeakable desperation immediately after the first encounter with Pharaoh. The second visit to Pharaoh was made by the foremen, not by Moses and Aaron. Pharaoh made it clear to the foremen why they were being punished. Their worship of Yahweh was the cause of this new persecution.

What would you say is the most difficult part of trusting God when situations in your life reach a point that there is no discernible source of help? Why do you think so?

How do you discern when someone is attacking you because of your faith versus simply being a vicious person in general? What traits help you to discern the difference?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EXODUS 5:19-23.

Fresh off of their traumatizing encounter with Pharaoh, the foremen venomously launched into an attack against Moses. Reading the words carefully, the reader notices that the foremen essentially asked for God to condemn Moses. Marking a pattern that would characterize his ministry going forward, Moses did not respond to his accusers. Instead, he took the complaint of his plight to the Lord. Moses was wondering if this had all been for nothing, as the people of God were no better off than they were when he met with God at the burning bush.

When the foremen came out from their meeting with Moses, they blamed him for their troubles. Why do you think the human inclination to blame others is so strong? Was Moses really the one to blame?

How do you typically respond when someone's actions have caused you undeserved distress? Does it change anything when you remember that God is sovereignly working in your life in the midst of it all?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Who are you actively encouraging toward faithfulness in responding to God's leading? How can you be a voice of encouragement to them this week? (It could be a friend trying to be a gospel influence at the workplace, a parent of a child that is struggling with understanding God, or a family member that is struggling with habitual sin. The possibilities are limitless.)

Describe a time when God did not move as quickly as you thought He would. How did that impact your spiritual life then? How do you think God wants to use your testimony of that for the benefit of others?

Where do you see God most actively challenging you during this season of life? What is He calling you to do that seems overwhelming, or even risky?

How do the previous opportunities in your journey to be faithful in difficult seasons help you say "yes" to God now?

PRAYER

Pray that God will fortify the members of your group for those seasons in which following Him is difficult. Pray that they will trust God, even when the ways in which He works are not easily detected.

COMMENTARY

| EXODUS 5:1-23

5:1. Subservient groups in Egypt were allowed time off to worship their gods, but the way that Moses and Aaron spoke for the Lord told their hearers that this message was a

command from Pharaoh's superior.

5:2. Pharaoh intended his question as an insult, not as a request for information (like the question asked about Moses' identity and authority in 2:14). Proverbs 30:9 describes the question, "Who is the Lord?" as that of a self-satisfied person who is denying God's providence. Pharaoh's assertion I do not know anything about Yahweh continues the insult and makes no admission of ignorance. Pharaoh would have believed the answer to his rhetorical question to be "Yahweh is certainly no one that I need to recognize or obey." Pharaoh was rejecting Yahweh's position of superiority. A right knowledge of and respect for the identity of the Lord is central to the issue of whether or not to obey Him (cp. Jn 8:48-55); the events recorded in the book of Exodus answer Pharaoh's question about who the Lord is for the benefit of the Israelites (Ex 6:7), the Egyptians (7:5), onlookers (18:11; Jos 2:8-11; Jdg 2:2-11; 1Sam 4:7-8; 6:6), and subsequent readers (Ps 105; Isa 63:7-14), providing ample grounds for obedience.

5:3. Concern over consequences for failure to obey the Lord gave Pharaoh another indication that He was someone to be reckoned with and that Israelite allegiance must ultimately be to Him rather than to Pharaoh (Isa 8:11-13; Jer 1:17). The Lord had authority to command and power to enforce that Pharaoh did not have.

5:19. Repeated mention of the daily quota (lit "the requirement/amount of a day in its day") from 5:13 helps convey the oppressiveness of the situation: the Egyptians made demands and kept account of what the Israelites did every day.

5:20. The sight of Moses and Aaron standing on the outside, waiting to hear what had happened, only to be scolded by the foremen, further shows them as having little or no power.

5:21. Earlier when Moses intervened in a fight between Israelites, one of them challenged his right to act as a judge and accused Moses of intending to kill him (2:14). Now the foremen called on the Lord to judge Moses. They were not expecting freedom at this point. Their hopes for restoring the status quo had just been crushed, so much so that they considered Moses responsible for their impending death. They believed Moses had made the Israelites so offensive to the Egyptians (you have made us reek) that they would want to kill the Israelites. Their comment also shows that the Israelite foremen already knew that the Lord had the right and the ability to act as the ultimate Judge in the situation.

5:22-23. The foremen hoped to gain favor with Pharaoh by blaming others for the trouble. They still saw their welfare as under his control. When he spoke to the Lord, Moses boldly blamed both the Lord and Pharaoh (You caused trouble and he has caused trouble) for worsening conditions and asserted that the Lord had done nothing to rescue His people. Obedience of the Lord's commands by Moses and Aaron and the elders had led to trouble rather than immediate ease.