

HOW MUCH CAN YOU ENDURE?

Exodus 5:15-23

We are happy to be here with you today, welcome and thank you for joining us. We are Heralds of Hope, and our goal is to use media, like radio, internet, and books, to make disciples of Jesus Christ to accomplish the great commission in our lifetime. Think about that, do you think it is possible to accomplish the great commission? Can we go everywhere and teach all nations? Do you think we have the resources necessary to accomplish this? Yes absolutely, planes make it possible to travel anywhere in 1 day, our communication is instant and it's possible to have a conversation with anyone in the world, no matter where they are. Do we have the funds to accomplish this? If God's people will align our hearts with His heart, funding will not be a problem. The hard part is keeping our hearts in line. As followers of Jesus, we must focus on going and teaching. Here at Heralds of Hope we believe it is possible and we plan to do our part as God leads us.

This belief leads us to teach the Bible via radio, like this. If you can, turn with us now to Exodus. We will continue our journey through this Old Testament book with our Bible Teacher J Mark Horst, and here he is to teach us today's lesson.

The burdens of life come from different sources and take different shapes and forms. Do you feel sometimes like you are going to break down under the weight of your burdens? Have you just about exhausted your strength to endure? The title of this message is a question, HOW MUCH CAN YOU ENDURE?

I believe the cruelty some men practice must come straight from the pit of Hell, straight from the devil. We read about some of them in other times, like ancient Sodom and Gomorrah. In more modern times we have the horrors of Stalinist Russia in the 1930 led to nearly 4 million deaths. And not long after that, Nazi Germany, and the Holocaust. Some powerful leaders seem to be motivated by a demonic spirit.

The Scripture for this meditation is Exodus 5:15-23. It is an experience of great suffering that the people of Israel endured many years ago when they were slaves in the land of Egypt. We will find some deep lessons for us.

*15. Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying,
Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants?*

16. *There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick: and, behold, thy servants are beaten; but the fault is in thine own people.*

17. *But he said, Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the LORD.*

18. *Go therefore now, and work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks.*

19. *And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case, after it was said, Ye shall not minish ought from your bricks of your daily task.*

20. *And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh:*

21. *And they said unto them, The LORD look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savor to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.*

22. *And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, LORD, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me?*

23. *For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.*

In this text you can see the RESULTS when people are called to go through great trials. It will help you find answers to my question; how much can you endure? The experiences of the Bible characters are like ours and we can take courage and gather hope from these results.

The first result was

I. The Impossible Demand

I observed something interesting about this experience. The officers of the children of Israel had access to the king's court. They went to make their appeal before the highest person in the land. That is commendable. The people of the land had access to the ruler of the country and these officers went to him to make their appeal.

First, they raised the question "Why do you deal so with your servants?" In other words, "why do you treat us this way?" They tried to impress upon Pharaoh that they were faithful servants. They were

not taking advantage of the king, they were not trying to get out of their work. They were trying to fulfill his demands, but he was making it impossible for them to do.

They continued, "What you have asked is completely impossible. You have made a very unreasonable demand. The requirement we cannot fulfill. You have taken away our resources and then expect us to do the same amount of work. That is impossible for us to do. We cannot continue as we have been because we do not have the materials necessary to do the job."

Then they went on to analyze where the problem lay, "The fault is not with us. The fault is with your own people. They were making demands of us which we cannot fill under the circumstances. This is an impossible demand."

Now let's draw some comfort from this. When there is an impossible demand, let's try to find a way to make an appeal to those who are responsible. That's what the officers of the people of Israel did. They laid their case before the person who was responsible. They told him they wanted to accomplish his goals, but they couldn't do that under the current circumstances.

That appeal showed their courage and should give us some hope.

The second result is

II. The Impatience of Pharaoh

Now even though the officers of Israel had access to the highest person of the land, the King of Egypt, he falsely accused them. He would not consider their case at all. Rather he immediately rendered a judgment that was wrong. He said, "You are idle; you have nothing to do and that is the reason why the situation has developed as it has. That is why you want to go and sacrifice to the LORD because you have not enough to do."

So, he refused to diminish their requirements. In fact, he sent them back to work by these words: "Go, therefore, now and work. You shall have nothing, but you shall produce that I have required of you." That must have been very disappointing to these men. Now, they had to go back to their people and tell them what Pharaoh had said. I am sure those men dreaded the idea of having to go back to their people with such unwelcome news.

The officers who had presented their case to Pharaoh concluded that they were in a really serious situation. They were in an evil case, because there was no relaxation by the king of the requirements he had laid upon them. Rather, he expressed great impatience with them that they were not doing their job as they ought and sent them back to their heavy tasks. There would be no relief for them and no relief for those under their oversight. The king's command placed them in an impossible position.

Sometimes we undergo great stress and trouble. We, too, are required to endure the impatience of our superiors, maybe even their verbal and physical abuse. Some of them may never have had any experience in the task that we are called to do. They don't know what it's like to work hard and get their hands dirty. But let's gather some courage and hope so that we do not go down in defeat and despair during times of great distress and demand.

In the New Testament, in the book of First Peter, we read these words; *"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*

So, don't be bitter but cast your anxieties on the Lord. He will sustain you.

I see a third result emerging out of this experience:

III. The Implication of the Officers

When officers left Pharaoh to return to their work, they met Moses and Aaron. Most likely they were waiting for them as they came from the palace. These officers began to judge Moses and Aaron. They laid the blame for their burdens upon them. They said, "The LORD look upon you and judge because since you have come the situation is much more difficult than before you came. You have made us hated before the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants. So, the end result is going to be that we will be killed."

Moses took that immediately to heart. He went to the LORD because the LORD had sent him. He had not come on his own. In his complaint to God, Moses laid it right on the line, as we say. He said, "Here I am. I have come to bring out the people and instead of bringing them out you have dealt badly with them." He reviewed before the LORD what the officers had said to him. Try to imagine the feelings Moses had after this denunciation by his fellow Israelites.

In suffering we also are often beset by such results. In these historical situations we see similarities to the things we face today. Human nature hasn't changed in all these centuries. Men without God are still proud, arrogant, and vengeful in their dealings with others. Those in power still take advantage of the weak and powerless. But know this, my friend, someone is watching.

So, take courage. It may appear at the moment like God has forgotten you. You may go through all these trials and troubles: the impossible demands, the impatience of your superiors, and even the feeling that God may have forgotten you. But He has not. Take courage because God has a way. With Him, you will be able to endure much more than you ever thought possible. He is faithful; trust Him.

Thanks J Mark for teaching us more from Exodus and thank you for being there. If you would like this teaching or if you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to us, I'll give you our contact information shortly.

I love how Exodus teaches us that God is in control and He's at work, He always has been, and He always will be. We can trust Him right now no matter what we are experiencing. We won't always understand Him, but we can trust Him. His timing might be different than ours, think about Moses and He may not do what we think He should be doing, remember what happened to Joseph. However, we have the benefit of looking back at many years of history and we can see God is Sovereign, His purposes will be accomplished. This is His story, and He is the author.

If you are interested, we have a study guide for Exodus available. It is a small booklet designed to help you learn more from each of these lessons. We call it the Hope Herald and if you would like one all you have to do is ask.

Here is how you can connect with us. One of the best ways is via email. Our email is mail@heraldsofhope.org. If you don't have email, you could send us a letter, our address is Hope for Today, Box 3, Breezewood, PA 15533. Or you can connect with us on our website. Our website is Heraldsofhope.org. While you are there, please look around for more teaching like this. On our website you will also find other resources available from Heralds of Hope. Again, the website is www.Heraldsofhope.org.

Thanks again for joining us for today's program. I encourage you to join us again next week as we continue our study in Exodus. We look forward to being with you then and will leave you with a verse from I Corinthians 10, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, Do it all for the glory of God!" Blessings to you as you glorify Him.