

The High Price of Self-Will
Exodus 11:1-10

It is good to have you join us for today's teaching from Exodus. We hope our study in Exodus will remind you that there is no God like our God.

Let's go with Bible teacher J. Mark to Exodus for today's teaching.

In the beginning of the Creation, God made Adam with a will. He was given the ability and the freedom to choose. From the very beginning, man was able to exercise that will. God knew when He made man with a free will that man would be able to exercise that will against his Creator. But because mankind was made in the image of God, he had to be able to have the capacity to choose, to make moral distinctions. He was not a preprogrammed robot.

To be a creature of choice is a wonderful privilege because we have the whole area of good from which we can choose. It is beautiful. There is so much in our world that is good and beautiful, so much that is fulfilling and satisfying. God has created so much for our enjoyment and for our blessing.

But we can also choose evil. We can choose to serve ourselves and our desires. That's what makes the exercise of our will so very, very serious.

I have regrets about the times I have made wrong choices: times when I allowed my desires to control me instead of my will. Times when I was selfish instead of serving others. Times when I was harsh and unloving. When I think back on those experiences, I feel sorry, and I have regrets. I am so grateful for God's willingness to forgive me and to restore my joy.

But I also have joyful moments when I think of my good choices. I chose the right way, and those right choices still bring me joy today. I hope you have joy in your choices too.

Self-will is the result of the abuse of freedom of choice. Self-will is when you and I set up our own will against the will of God. THE HIGH-PRICE OF SELF-WILL stands out clearly when we do not choose right. In Exodus 11:1-10 this high price of self-will is clearly shown.

1. And the LORD said unto Moses, yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether.

2. *Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbor, and every woman of her neighbor, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold.*

3. *And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people.*

4. *And Moses said, thus saith the LORD, about midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt:*

5. *And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sits upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts.*

6. *And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it anymore.*

7. *But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.*

8. *And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, get thee out, and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out. And he went out from Pharaoh in great anger.*

9. *And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you; that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.*

10. *And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh: and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land.*

In these verses from Exodus, I bring you three EVIDENCES of that high price of self-will.

The first evidence is:

The Last Plague.

God said, "This is the last time I am going to deal with Pharaoh. I will come once more. Just one more plague upon Pharaoh. That's all. It will be the last time that I deal this way with him." I am thinking what a tremendous price that was to Pharaoh. Moses was instructed by the LORD to tell the people of Israel to ask of their neighbors for silver and gold. This was a part of the last plague, the last time God would deal with Pharaoh.

I notice also that God's man, Moses, stood very high in the eyes of the Egyptians. This is not at all surprising. Think of all that Moses did in the eyes of the people as God instructed him. Through all these judgments, God showed He was superior to the pagan gods of the Egyptians. And so, when the people of God asked their Egyptian neighbors for their gold and silver, they readily gave it to them.

But self-will must meet its decisive moment. There is a time when the battle is finally joined between God's will and self-will. Try to grasp the awfulness of this word from God: "Yet will I bring one more plague upon Pharaoh." Think of what it means to come to the end of dealing with God. When it is all over, what is the cost? That is the high price of self-will, the last plague, the last word from God.

There is a second evidence of the high price of self-will:

The First-Born.

Moses went on to tell Pharaoh how this last plague was going to happen. It would be aimed at the first-born. All other judgments had dealt with things: the cattle, the elements, the vegetation. There were boils, lice, flies, the water turned to blood, sickness upon the cattle, hail, and darkness. This one was to be different. This one was to affect the first-born of every Egyptian household, from Pharaoh upon the throne to the maid servant behind the mill. And Moses further added, it also would affect the beasts of the field.

This was a very extensive judgment. There was no mercy. All would be affected. I learn a rather striking lesson from this. Self-will leads to decisions that affect our most treasured possessions. And the consequences of our choices are not restricted to us personally. Once our choices are made and the consequences set in motion, they cannot be changed.

Pharaoh insisted upon having his own way, and it led to the destruction of his most treasured possession—his first-born son. This was his heir, the one who was to follow him on the throne of Egypt. But his self-will affected his entire country, all of his people. Do you follow me? Evidence of the high price of self-will is found in that God leveled His judgment against the first-born of man and beast. This man on the throne, Pharaoh, was responsible for judgment throughout his kingdom by his self-will. Those under your authority will be affected by your choices – for good or for ill.

The third evidence of the high price of self-will is:

The Final Difference.

Moses said that the children of Israel would not be affected by this last plague. He said not so much as the tongue of a dog would be moved against them and their cattle. In other words, not even a

dog would bark against the children of Israel. In previous occasions, God protected and preserved His people at the time of these plagues. But this one Moses said would be final, "That you may know how that the LORD has put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel."

This difference had nothing to do with the ethnic background of the people. It wasn't because some were Egyptians, and some were Israelites. God is the Creator of all, and He shows no partiality based on nationality or ethnicity. He loves all people equally.

The difference was that the Israelites worshipped the true God, and the Egyptians worshipped idols. This would be a great humbling of the Egyptians and their gods because God would magnify His name in all the earth by these acts. We are told that the wonders of God would be multiplied in the land of Egypt. God did all this to vindicate His High and Holy Name.

But there was a real difference between Israel and Egypt. The reason why this difference was so sharp and so broad was that the Egyptians refused to hear God, especially Pharaoh, their king. They would not listen to the voice of the LORD as it came from the prophet Moses. And now they would suffer the consequences of not listening to God.

God has made us free moral agents. We can make our own choices. We have both the ability and the privilege. But He has also made us that we must live with the consequences of those choices, and that's where the price often becomes rather high. That's what happened with Pharaoh. He made his own choice, but he paid the high price of living with the consequences he had not figured on. He didn't think carefully enough about the consequences of his choices. And there are many people just like him today. I hope you are not one of them.

Here are the evidences which we gather from Pharaoh to show how high a price one pays for self-will: the last plague showed that God was not going to deal with this man again in any measure of mercy. Pharaoh had made his choices, and now there was no turning away from the consequences of those choices.

Then, the first-born of every family all across the land would be slain. From the first-born of the king to the first-born of the slave, to the first-born of the cattle and other beasts. And that final difference between the Egyptians and the Israelites could never be erased. Those who reject God will face His divine wrath.

My friend, I want you to consider where you are. Turn to God, the God who holds your life and breath in His hands. Don't hold out against Him, or you will learn to your regret, the high price of self-will.

Thank you, J. Mark, for this teaching from Exodus, and we thank you for joining us. As Christians, it is a privilege to serve and trust our God. Our God who is above every nation. As His people, it is good for us to remember the important principle in Daniel 4:17. It says, “that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdoms of men, and gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men.” This verse teaches our sovereign God is over the kingdoms on earth. What happens here among our leaders is known and directed by Him.

Our leaders may be powerful and important or minor and less known, but it is our God who has placed them there, and our God is using them to accomplish His will. I admit we don’t always know how this can be, and when I don’t, I usually tell God I don’t know what this happening or why you are allowing this, but I trust you and pray that your people stay faithful. Be encouraged from this story from Exodus, that our God was in control, and the same God who was in control back then is still in control now.

Do you have any thoughts from today’s teaching? If you want to share them with us, here are a few ways you can contact us. One of the best ways is via email. Our email is hope@heraldsofhope.org. If you don’t have email, no problem, 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 check out the listen tab and listen to other teaching. Again, the website is www.heraldsofhope.org.

This brings us to the end of today’s program. Thanks again for being there. Please join us next week for another lesson from Exodus. Go with God this week and know that He is big enough for your circumstance. Trust Him because “The Most High rules in the kingdoms of men.”