

March 3, 2018

Reflections

ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ

“Then the foremen of the sons of Israel came and cried out to Pharaoh, saying, “Why do you deal this way with your servants?” Exodus 5:15 (NASB)

Serving What Is Comfortable

In Exodus 5, we find four questions. The first question, a question which was asked again and again of God’s people throughout the book of Exodus, is “Who will Israel serve?” The answer to that question depends on which verse you are reading. In verses 1 and 3, Moses implies that Israel serves the Lord. But in verses 15-17, it becomes clear that the answer, apparently, is Pharaoh.

The other three questions all have the same answer. In verse 2, Pharaoh asks, “Who is YHWH?” In verse 21, Moses essentially asks the question, “Who am I?” And, in verse 22, Moses asks, “Where is God?” The answer to all three of those questions is, “Just you wait and see.” Pharaoh would soon discover who God is. Moses would soon discover who God intended him to be. And everyone would know what God was up to as He acted to force Pharaoh to let His people go so that they might serve the Lord alone.

But the central question in this chapter is “Who will Israel serve?” It was God’s intention that they would serve Him, and that they would do so boldly. But as we saw in verses 15-17, Israel’s answer in that moment was “Pharaoh.” They answered that way because Pharaoh had made their lives miserable. They were not happy as slaves in Egypt, but they were comfortable. And they would remind Moses of that periodically even after they left Egypt, when they remembered eating leeks and onions by the Nile, or when there wasn’t enough water, or when they were threatened by their enemies. So, it turns out that what the Israelites served, and often what we find ourselves serving, is what is comfortable.

The Israelites had to choose. They could continue serving Pharaoh. That was costly, though. It meant they would remain in slavery. Or they could serve the Lord. That was costly too, as they learned when they were forced to gather their own straw to make bricks. Clearly serving God is costly. So, the Israelites chose what was comfortable; they chose to serve the devil they knew rather than serve the God they did not know.

Those God has called always face that choice. Whom will we serve? I think most of us would say that we serve God. But I know for myself that, like the Israelites, often what I am really serving is what is comfortable. I don’t like change. I don’t like challenges. I don’t like taking up my cross. I like comfort. I want my faith to be an easy-chair, because I want to be comfortable. The problem, unfortunately, is that in seeking comfort, in sticking with what I know, I end up in slavery. Comfort, it turns out, is costly.

I know that God is at work in our midst, but I don’t know just where He is leading us. That makes me uncomfortable. But I am confident in this, that wherever God leads, it will be to greater freedom and to greater grace, because we are led by His Son, Jesus, who died for us, so that we might serve God.

*Pray for our church plant
in Clifton Park, NY.*

Pray With Us

Teresa Zema: Her sister Peggy had some tests done and she is cleared to have surgery on March 30th, to have her colon re-connected. Thank you all for prayers for Peggy.

Ellen Olson: Melinda took a civil service exam today (Saturday); pray that she did well.

Matt Olson: Donna Avery will be starting a round of chemotherapy, pray that she is able to finish this round and healing will continue. Pray for both Donna and Russ.

Damian Greene: Her folks Ed and Dorothy are coming home from Florida soon. Pray for safe travel. Her brother Dan is experiencing a change of heart. Pray that God works on Dan's heart and Damian has encouraging words for him.

Jennifer Bonesteel: She fell and is sore but nothing was broken, and Madelyn is okay. Thankful her sister Christie was not affected by the flooding that took place in Boston. Pray for those who were. Rich her brother-in-law is trying to sell the house in the Berkshires, pray that a buyer is found soon so that Rich can be with his family in Boston.

Bob Michaels: Continue to pray for Frank's sister Linda and their family as Linda is coming to the end of her time here on earth. May God's peace and comfort be with them all.

Jon Greene: Please continue to pray for his co-worker Jason and Jason's wife Tiffany that God leads them to a church that will nurture them. Keep their son Ryder in prayer that he has a changed heart and knows God loves him.

Stacey Sicko: Her friend Betty Ann is still working and keeping the family farm going as her husband recuperates. Pray for her to have strength and endurance and for her husband to be healed soon.

Berlin Youth Fellowship,

*Monday, 6:30-8:00 pm
(grades K-12)*

Weekly Events

Women's Bible Study, Evening study Tuesdays, 7 pm in the church library.
Daytime study Wednesdays at 10 am in the church library.

Bennington YF, Wednesdays, 6 pm, at the Bennington Rec Center.

Men's Bible Study, Thursdays, 7 pm in the church library. (next mtg. 3/15/18)

Upcoming Events

Advisory Board Meeting, Thursday, March 8, 6:30 pm.

Fellowship Meal, Saturday, March 15, 1 pm.