

## **Standing Firm to Win the Price**

**(Exo 4:1-9)**

In Gen 15:13, we see how God promised Abraham a great future for his descendants. He had taken him out of an idolatry heritage and promised his descendants the Promised Land in the fourth generation (Gen 15:16). In the course of time however, the children of Israel found themselves under a heavy bondage in Egypt; it was as if God had forgotten all about His covenant.

But God did not forget. Roughly 220 years after Joseph, a new king arose and initiated the oppression of the Israelites. However, the more they were afflicted, the more they multiplied and grew (Exo 1:12). God even showed His righteous rewards by blessing the Egyptian midwives who feared God and refused to kill the baby boys, contrary to Pharaoh's instructions. In the course of time, the children of Israel groaned and cried to God and God acknowledged them (Exo 2:23)

As Christians today, we must know that when we stand firm, we will obtain the promise of God. God knows the secret of our hearts and it is true that nothing is hidden from Him. However, He doesn't force Himself on us; He wants us to draw to Him and rely on Him as our everlasting source of sustenance. The children of Israel were in the midst of idolatry practice in Egypt. For long time, they probably enjoyed what Egypt had to offer (fame, protection through military power, abundance, & goodwill). Perhaps, they believed and practiced the abominations of Egypt. God allowed their afflictions up to a point to draw the distinction, through His mighty wonders, that only He is God and to encourage His chosen people to collectively worship Him (Exo 4:31). Unknown to them, though they were nearing the "yield point" God was already preparing the deliverer. Out of their midst, in the wilderness, God was training Moses for the great assignment ahead (Exo 3:1-2).

There are many challenges that we face today as children of God. We may sometimes be tempted to wonder "where is God?" We must be persuaded that He is always near to us (Mat 28:20) and that He sees and understands our pains (Heb 4:15). He makes His grace to abound for those that will trust in Him and uses every experience in life to call sinners unto repentance and to perfect His purpose for every believer in the Lord, Jesus Christ (Rom 8:28). As the Israelites, did, our response is to know and acknowledge our situation (status) and earnestly desire a change. You cannot experience a breakthrough from a problem without first realizing that you have a problem.

The man, Moses is a great example to illustrate the need to stand firm. God demonstrated two signs to him as a way of introduction. He gave him a third sign which taken with the two would make the children of Israel to believe that God had sent Moses. However, God never told Moses just how many wonders it would take for Pharaoh to yield and let the Israelites go. Think about it, three signs and the magicians of Egypt were able to replicate. By the fourth, tried as they did, they could not bring lice from dust. Thus, God began to differentiate between His unlimited power and the limited ability of man. The magicians warned Pharaoh but He did not yield. Fifth, sixth, he was still defiant. One can only wonder from the perspective of Moses. Seeing the unimaginable wonders and still no resolution, he could have become discouraged doubting if they would ever gain their freedom. But he never wavered; he just kept going back to God to ask for the next step.

It is possible that you have had great testimonies in the past but yet weighed down by present circumstances. You must remember that Jesus never promised us a life completely free from trouble (John 16:33). There is evil in the world; but God's promise is that He will see us through if we trust in Him. In all things Christ must be made manifest. Every experience in life is to draw us closer to God. Do you lack some essentials of life, wait on the Lord for His abundance – don't cut corners. Have you been praying and trusting the Lord for one thing or the other? Begin to minister the grace

of God for patience and perseverance to others. No need can ever be great enough to warrant deviating from the teachings and principles of Jesus Christ. God will not change His standard for anyone. He shows us mercies but he also expects us to acknowledge Him through our obedience.

Talking about obedience, Pharaoh tried several tricks! *“Worship here in the land”*; *“You may go but without the women and the children”*; *“Ok, go but leave behind your herds and flocks.”* Partial obedience will not work. Believers must obey God fully and whole-heartedly (1 Sam 15:22). Exo 9:14-21 finally revealed the purpose of God at that time. He raised up Egypt but Pharaoh refused to give God the glory. This is a great lesson that we must always give God the glory for His blessings over mankind. Whenever I consider the wealth of technological breakthroughs over the years, I am always drawn to pause and thank God for loving us so much to give us such intellects and drive for inventions that have transformed the world. It is extremely dangerous to act in ways that suggest that we don't need God. Almost daily, the Christian foundation for living is being ignored while sinful practices are being embraced. This ought not to be so. As believers, we must hold firm to our faith in Jesus while obeying His command to love God with all our heart and to love others as ourselves.

Ultimately, Pharaoh and his forces had to suffer great wrath of God and under heavy hand, drove the children of Israel out of Egypt and out of bondage forever. In like manners, you and I have been rescued out of the bondage of sin through the atoning death of Jesus Christ on the cross. When He rose the third day, He delivered up the victory that we will never be in bondage again if we remain in faith. He charged us to go out and sow the seed of the gospel so that unbelievers can be won to God. We must be faithful to this calling and be ever ready to share the reasons for our faith without hesitation. While we may all have desires and aspirations that we are trusting God to fulfill, our first duty is to submit to Him. Always recognize that God's promise is yea and amen and though the vision tarries, it will surely come (Hab 2:3). May we all stand firm to the end in Jesus name, amen!