

Lying Words of the World

Exodus

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Bible Text: Exodus 5:1-23, Exodus 6:1-6
Preached on: Sunday, October 28, 2018

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If you would, please, take your Bibles and let's turn over to the book of Exodus 5. Exodus 5, what I'd like to do is read verses 1 through 9, then I'll ask you to move over to verses 22 and 23 of that same chapter, and then we'll read the first five verses of chapter 6. So Exodus 5:1-9 first,

1 Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.'" 2 But Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover, I will not let Israel go." 3 Then they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword." 4 But the king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people away from their work? Get back to your burdens." 5 And Pharaoh said, "Behold, the people of the land are now many, and you make them rest from their burdens!" 6 The same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their foremen, 7 "You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks, as in the past; let them go and gather straw for themselves. 8 But the number of bricks that they made in the past you shall impose on them, you shall by no means reduce it, for they are idle. Therefore they cry, 'Let us go and offer sacrifice to our God.' 9 Let heavier work be laid on the men that they may labor at it and pay no regard to lying words."

Now verse 22 and 23,

22 Then Moses turned to the LORD and said, "O Lord, why have you done evil to this people? Why did you ever send me? 23 For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and you have not delivered your people at all."

Chapter 6, beginning at verse 1,

1 But the LORD said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will send them out, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land." 2 God spoke to Moses and said to him, "I am the LORD. 3 I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them. 4 I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners. 5 Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant."

Before we pray, you'll see a picture of one of our local congregations here in town and as we pray for ourselves, I want us to pray for our brothers and sisters at Church of the Crossroads, Pastor John Parkey, and I want us to pray in particular there's no doubt in my mind that there are people there who are suffering, God's people who are suffering, like there are people in our congregation who are suffering in various ways in various trials. So let's pray.

Our Father, we want to thank you this morning for your family, a family that you chose. We did not choose the family of God, you choose who will be in that family, and if you chose them, we should love them, we should love one another and so, Lord, we want to pray for our brothers and sisters at Crossroads, for Pastor John. We know that they face various trials, various sufferings as the people at Calvary do, so we lift them up today and pray that in their time of worship that their hope would be renewed, that they would be strengthened in the Lord in the power of his might, and may that be for us as well, and may the beauty of Christ, the saving work of Christ be lifted up mightily as your people worship you today in spirit and in truth. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

William Borden was a man who was an heir to the Borden family fortune, a large fortune. William Borden's path was clear, it was going to be wealth and success. At the age of 16, he graduated and his parents sent him on a year-long cruise around the world. Before he went on that cruise, however, he became a Christian. He began to want to follow Jesus with all of his heart, and so while he was on this cruise, it really moved his heart as he began to see the perils and the tragedies and the sufferings of people in other parts of the world, so William his mom and dad a letter and told them that he now wanted to become a missionary and spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a particular part of the world. He walked away from his family fortune. Most in his family felt like that he was crazy. It must have seemed that way because he went on to prepare for the ministry and after preparation he boarded a ship to China because the people that he wanted to reach were Muslims living in China. That was the particular group that God laid on his heart and so on his journey to China, he stopped in Cairo, Egypt. He wanted to learn Aramaic. He wanted to better understand the religion of Islam. While he was there, he contracted spinal meningitis, less than a month later he died at 25 years of age.

What are we to make of this? What are we to make of a person who puts their hope in Jesus Christ and immediately things go bad? Or they put their hope in Jesus and then immediately goes from bad to worse? What happens when a person puts their hope in

Jesus and things get harder rather than easier? How are we supposed to think, feel or act about someone like Mr. Borden, or the people in Exodus?

We began studying through the book of Exodus just a few weeks ago and what we know so far is the book of Exodus contains the story of the Israelites who have been in Egypt for 400 years, and at the beginning while Joseph was alive, things were relatively good, they were living in prosperity and blessing, but after Joseph died, a new king came along that did not know Jesus and didn't care anything about the legacy of Joseph and things got hard. And then it got worse, and we're told in the book of Exodus that the people of Israel began to cry out because of their oppression and the slavery and the burden that they were under. We're told in the book of Exodus that God heard their cry. He raised up a deliverer in the man named Moses and God promised this people based upon his mercy and grace, he promised them deliverance. He told Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and command him, 'Let my people go.'" And we have that interaction in chapter 5 between Moses and his brother Aaron speaking to Pharaoh, and what I want you to think about with me for just a moment is these Israelites are living in a period of time between the promised deliverance that has been made and the actual fulfillment of that promise.

So they're living in that between time and I ask you to think about that because that's exactly where we're at. There's been wonderful promises made to the people of God. I mean, we're promised, right, we're promised a new heaven and a new earth. We're promised a glorified body like that of our Lord, but we do not have those yet. We live in between these wonderful promises of God and the future fulfillment of his promises and that's why that looking at the people of God in the book of Exodus can help us greatly. We're gonna focus on three things today. We're gonna focus first on the fruit of opposition to God; secondly, we'll look for a moment of where to go, where do you go with your questions and your frustrated faith, where do you go with that; and then, thirdly, we're going to see the truth that will undo the lie.

First, let's see the fruit of opposition to God. In verse 1 of chapter 5, Moses and Aaron have gone to Pharaoh, that meeting that's been anticipated is taking place now. They're standing there and they say, "Pharaoh, God has said, 'Let my people go.'" And in verse 2 they get a quick answer, "No. Not gonna happen." You see, the Israelites have been subjected to hard service, they've been assigned various building projects for the Pharaoh and so therefore he is not really interested at all in losing their labor, and so he doubles down. Moses even says, "You know, we're concerned that there's going to be pestilence fall upon us." In other words, God's not gonna take no for an answer, and Pharaoh doesn't blink at all, in fact, in his defiance he turns up the heat. You see, the people have been making bricks and the Egyptian government has been providing straw to make those bricks, but Pharaoh says, "You know, in light of recent events, we're no longer gonna provide straw." They're gonna have to go find their own straw, then make the same quota of bricks that they've always made, and then in verse 9 he says these words, "Let heavier work be laid on the men that they may labor at it and pay no regard to lying words." Now I want you to think about that with me for a moment. Pharaoh has said, "Let's make it tough. I mean, they've had it bad but in light of recent events, in light of this command that I let them go, let's make work harder for them so that they will give no regard for

lying words." That's interesting. That's interesting. You see, Pharaoh is saying, "Look, these people have been distracted by all this promise stuff, all these words of God, all these commands from God, all these messages from heaven. They've been distracted. They've been listening to lying words. So they've been listening to things that shouldn't be taken seriously by anyone with any common sense."

Now I ask you something: where have we heard this before? Where have we heard this accusation that God's word can't be trusted? That his words are lies? Where have we heard that before? All we have to do is go back to Genesis 3. Adam and Eve are living in the garden under the blessing of God, God's good has been showered upon them, and in comes the serpent. God has told Adam and Eve that they must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for if they do, they will surely die, and Satan comes in and says, "You won't die." In fact, it's interesting, we don't see it in our English translations but in the original Hebrew there's kind of a snort in the language where the serpent kind of snorts like, "Hch, hch, did God really say that? Did God really say something so foolish as you will die if you eat of that tree? You'll not die. Those are lying words. You can't take those words seriously." You see, that's the first place, that's the first place in Scripture that we find someone saying what God has said is a lie, and that incident has passed on down and we've seen it echoed again and again. We see it right here in the book of Exodus when the Pharaoh says, "These people don't need to be regarding these lying words," and it's echoed today.

Oh, if you'll listen real closely, from generation to generation to generation we hear this same accusation. "We must not listen to these lying words." One example that comes to my mind is in universities across this great country. There are, it seems, some professors and I certainly would not classify all of them by any means, but there certainly are some professors that feel that it is their obligation to pick the lock, so to speak, and to set their religious students free from lying words. Some of these students have been raised under a godly mom, a godly father, they've been raised in church, they've heard the word of the Lord, they've sat in Sunday school, they've heard the teachings of the Scriptures and there's some professors who feel like that it's their obligation to set these students free, to burst open the boundaries, to let them out of the cage of these lying words of their parents in the church and the Bible.

So, yeah, we hear that, we hear that same echo today. We can even see another argument emerge from what's happening here in chapter 5 and that is this, that Christians who listen to these lying words are actually could be viewed as bad citizens. Look at verse 8, verse 8 says, "But the number of bricks that they made in the past you shall impose on them, you shall by no means reduce it," notice this phrase, "for they are idle." You see, that good argument could be made in the secular society to say, "You know, these Christian people who are listening to these lying words, are listening, they're reading the Bible and they're believing the Bible and they're believing these things and they build their hope on these things, they really can't be good citizens. You might classify them as bad citizens."

You say, "What do you mean?" Well, let me give you one example, okay? There are arguments that are being made in the United States and in Canada over the last few years and some of you are aware of this, that want to make it impossible for Christians to become physicians or medical students if they will not perform abortions, or at least refer the patient for abortion. In other words, if you are a Christian and you have a commitment, your conscience will not allow you to go down that road, then there's an effort to prevent Christians from becoming physicians or medical students unless they will promise right in writing that they will perform abortions if necessary. You see, that weeding out process, you see, that weeding out process of those who believe the word of God, who want to follow the words of Christ, they're somehow seen as bad citizens.

You see, that's the world that we are living in now and oddly enough, it is this fierce opposition to God that has given us the suffering in the world that we have. In other words, what is the fruit of opposing God? What happens when we oppose God's word, we consider his word to be lies? We end up with a disordered world because we have rejected God's order. And here's what's important for us: those of us who trust the Lord and believe his word to be true, inhabit a world that is dominated by those who are in opposition to God's word and will. That's you and I. That's you and I. In other words, what brings about the suffering of this world? We might say, "Well, it's sin." But what fundamentally is sin? It's an opposition to God. "We're gonna go our own way. Your words are lies. We're gonna go our own way." And so we end up having a world of suffering, a world that Paul said is groaning. You see, you don't groan when you're happy, you groan when you're suffering. You groan when there's pain, and this means, this means that believers live in a world of a great deal of suffering and that means that we're going to have questions and often experience frustrated faith, and that's what we see next here.

I want you to think with me for a moment, it's kind of fascinating. The people of Israel have been told deliverance is coming. "God has heard us." Moses said, "I've been talking to God and here's what he said and here's what he's gonna do." So they meet with Pharaoh and he says, "No. Not gonna happen, and furthermore in light of recent events, it's gonna get more difficult for you." Can you imagine being in that situation? It's like, "God's gonna deliver us. Let's all get our bags packed. Let's go!" Then all of a sudden there's this major setback. Their faith, their trust was frustrated. Things aren't turning out the way they expected and, by the way, Moses has done everything that God commanded. "Moses, go. Here's what I need you to do. Go. Go." And he does it, yet things get worse.

Deliverance, this promised deliverance must have seemed further away than ever before. What had begun was so purposeful and now it seems so purposeless. Can't you see this? Can't you imagine that God's ways, God's ways, what's he's doing, has left these people very confused? It's kind of like this, "Is this what we get for believing God's promises? Is this what we get? Is this what William Borden gets when he says, "I want to be a missionary and I want to spread the Gospel," and then he gets spinal meningitis? What do we do with that because that's exactly what's happening here. They are suffering. They're suffering.

Now some of you, some of you know exactly what we're talking about. For some of you maybe depending on your age, you may, you may not, you come into church and think, "Your suffering. Hm, suffering." Maybe it's hard to relate to that when you're 15, 19, in your 20s. So maybe you're here this morning and that seems so distant but suffering will find you. You can change your address, suffering will find you, and not only will it find you, it will barge right into your life like an unwanted stranger. If you live, if you live in this broken world that is groaning, you will experience suffering. It's coming. If it hasn't already barged into your life, it will and when it does for the Christian – now listen – for the Christian, when it does it will be an attack on your very soul. Here's some of the things that'll happen. It will take you all the way to the border of your faith. Really, it is, you know, quite relatively easy to have faith when things are going well, but when suffering comes in, it'll take us all the way to the extreme border of our faith. It will cause you to think in ways that you have never thought. It will reveal what is really inside of you. It'll help you to determine what and who you're really trusting because it will be a struggle of trust. "Will I trust God? Will I trust God when everything seems to be falling apart? Will I really do that?" Suffering will leave you with frustrated faith and questions.

So what are we to do with that? Look at verse 22 with me. In the midst of all of this confusion, "Then Moses turned to the LORD." Now stop there for just a moment. What do you do when your faith is frustrated? You're like, "I thought things were gonna go this way I'd kind of anticipated, I kind of expected but it didn't and it's frustrated my faith. I don't know what to think here." What do you do? That's where Moses was at. What did he do? He turned to the Lord.

But then, that's not all, look what follows, questions. "O Lord, why have you done evil to this people? Why did you ever send me?" Some have said that you should never question God. That doesn't seem quite right. It may sound on the surface, it may sound very pious, we should never never question God, but that doesn't seem quite right in light of the fact that Moses does here. Oh, he does, and I mean, he gets dangerously close to, whoa, saying to God, "Why have you done this evil?" What? I want you to notice something here: God doesn't wipe him out. But he asked God a question. So did Abraham. So did Jeremiah. So did David. John the Baptist had questions. Friends, even Jesus had questions. As he hung on the cross he said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" That's a question. Now granted I think it really matters how we ask the question but it does appear that it's okay to ask God questions. In fact, I think he has so made us in such a way, he's made us with the desire to know and to understand and that's why we ask questions. You see, we do it because God's ways can seem confusing at times. They really can. I mean, we're looking at it right here. This must have seemed incredibly confusing. Deliverance is coming. Boom! Hammer comes down. Things get harder, not better. The way in which God delivers what he's promised can sometimes look to us as if he's breaking his promises or that he's not keeping them at all.

So what do we do? What do we do? Everyone of us in this room when we face sufferings, there's going to be frustrated faith and we're gonna have questions, what are we to do when this happens? God has given us a model for what to do in the book of

Psalms. There are how many Psalms? 150, 67 of them are what are called Psalms of lament. Psalms of lament. They're not giddy Psalms, you know, like "Whoopie!" They're Psalms of lament and, you know, unfortunately as a church we like songs, we like songs that are up and, you know, want to move and clap, and there's a time for that, but there's also a time for lament when a person comes and they are just barely being able to get by. I talked with a lady this morning right after the 9 AM service, all of her kids are off the rails in the worst kind of way. She wasn't ready to sing no giddy songs. She was brokenhearted and a lot of times, you know, we come to church that way. You see, when I look at you and I say, "How are you doing?" I don't expect you to put on. I don't expect you to go, "Doing great." You know? I don't. Hey, if it's not great, that's okay. You may be lamenting. There's 67 Psalms of lament and do you know what that means? They are cries of suffering, sorrow, pain and questions unto God. They are the people of God long ago who were crying out in their pain and in their sorrow with their questions and saying, "God, where are you? What are you doing?" And God has given voice to that so that we'll know what to do.

What are we to do? Turn to the Lord. Turn to the Lord and here's how important this is: if we don't, if we don't turn to the Lord with our frustrated faith and our questions, the enemy of our soul will sow dangerous seeds in our heart. Here's how it works. In 1 Peter 5, Peter warned the church of this, "Be sober-minded; be watchful." Now why? Why should we be spiritually alert? "Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." Now just stop there for a moment. This imagery of the devil being like a lion, you can kind of relate to that. Let's just use this, for example, let's say this afternoon you get home and the rain stops and you say, "I'm gonna let the kids go out and let them play." And then you get this Facebook alert, you know, "Lion loose in Briarwood subdivision," you know. Your kids are out playing, what do you do? What do you do? Do you go, "So be it," you know. No. No, what do you do? Man, panic runs through you. "What? There's a lion loose and it could devour my kids!" So Peter uses this imagery of the devil like a lion seeking whom he may devour. Now here's the question I want to ask you: how do you think the devil would like to devour you? Someone will say, "Oh, he devoured me the other day, I had a flat tire." Wow. "He devoured me the other day, my washing machine quit." You know? Do you really think that that's all the devil has on his mind? In fact, we know right here what he has on his mind.

"Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world." Now what's going on here? You see, in 1 Peter, Peter is writing to suffering Christians in the first century, and so he's already told them, "Hey, you know, don't be alarmed at these strange fiery trials that you're going through." He's trying to walk them through and help them see, "Look, the people of God will suffer. Christ suffered, his people will suffer." And so here he says knowing that the same kinds of suffering, in other words, he's saying, "I want you to be able to relate to this and here's what we're seeing, we're seeing that the devil, our enemy, wants to devour us in this area of suffering." Here's how it worked, I think, okay? This is one way. You're suffering and all of a sudden you begin to have these thoughts that you haven't had before, "Where's your God now? Where's your God now? Just a couple weeks ago, you were at church and you were singing, 'How great is our God,' where's

your God now? Why has God singled you out? Everybody else at church seems to be doing okay." I mean, I talked to a lady this morning and she even said, she even said, "You know, it just seems like other families are not having the problems that I'm having." And I said, "Oh, my dear, if you just knew. If you just knew."

You see, the devil wants you to think that you've been singled out, you're unique, and that God's got something against you, you see? Or it may sound like this, "It doesn't seem like God's answering your prayers. Better try to figure it out. You'd better try to figure it out. God doesn't seem to be answering your prayers." Or the worse yet, "Maybe God doesn't love you at all. You're so messed up. Maybe God doesn't even love you at all." And you see, that's what Peter is warning against here. He's saying, "Your enemy is like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. He wants to mess with you in such a way to distance you from God, your heavenly Father."

So here's what Peter does, here's how he deals with them. He says, "Now listen, you see, if we don't turn to the Lord and listen to what he has to say, then we will hear from the enemy of our soul." And so Peter says, "Here's what we've gotta do. 1. Look around you," that's what he's saying here, "knowing that the same kinds of suffering, knowing that. Be aware of. Be informed." What he's saying is, "Don't live an individualistic life. Connect yourself with the body of Christ and then you will see that it's not just you suffering. Look around."

Secondly, your suffering has nothing to do with God singling you out. Why? Because the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. You're not unique. Your kids going off the rail, that's not unique. In other words, for every generation our brothers and sisters around the world are suffering as well. So we must, we must turn to the Lord in our times of questions, in our times of frustrated faith, and if we do, we will hear the truth that will undo the lie.

Let's look at that for just a moment. Again, keep in mind here that the people of Israel have got to be at an all-time low. They were expecting deliverance and it hasn't come and things have gotten worse rather than better. And even Moses, Moses, "What's going on here? God, what are you doing?" And then in chapter 6 God gives the truth that will undo the lie. Notice Pharaoh has called the people of God's hope a lie. Back in chapter 5, "They've been listening to lying words. You put your hope in lying words." But isn't it interesting, actually that's the lie. The lie is Pharaoh saying that God's words are a lie. That's the real lie.

So we've got to see that, we've gotta see who is really telling the lie here and then we've gotta ask what is the truth and we find it in the first five verses of chapter 6. Notice God takes Moses back to the covenant relationship he established with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. You see that in verse 3, "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty." You see, he's taking him back to a time before Moses is even born, he's taking back to a time and God's saying, "I've been around for a while, okay? I've been making promises and fulfilling promises for a while, Moses. I've got this down." In fact, in verse 1 of chapter 6 he says, "But the LORD said to Moses, 'Now you shall see what I

will do to Pharaoh." And I think what you can find in that word "now" is, "Okay, now that we've gotten over that hump." It's almost like this hump had a divine purpose. It's not like God said, "Wow, didn't see that coming. Didn't see that coming. I didn't see Pharaoh doing it." No, he already knew. Remember last week? God told Moses, "He's not gonna let you go." Why? Because he knows the future. He said, "But now, now you're gonna see a different Pharaoh."

You see, God takes Moses back to the promises he made to the people and reaffirms his intentions toward his people, and despite appearances and it must have appeared to be otherwise, it must have, despite the delay, it was certainly a delay, God reaffirms that he is still on the move. That's what he tells Moses. "I've been around a while. I've met with your forefathers. I made promises. I'm gonna keep those promises." Nothing is gonna stop me, even – listen – nothing is gonna stop God even the frustrated faith of his followers. It will not stop God, and this is where we plant our hope.

Brothers and sisters, let me bring this to a close. This is where we plant our hope. This is really God saying to Moses and to say to the people, "Look, get your hope reestablished in me and my promises." You see, we don't have hope because "maybe our suffering will end." It might not. It might not. We certainly don't have hope because we know things will get better. They might not. Oh, we certainly pray that they will, we pray for one another, but our hope is not some certainty that things will get better. We certainly don't have hope that if we just have enough faith then God will fix your problems. We certainly don't have hope in that. No, hope is found by running into the arms of the one who is the truth, by running into the arms of the one who offers us his presence, his power and his promises.

William Borden before he died at 25, he made some notations, I'm told, in his Bible. When he first committed his life to Christ, he wrote in his Bible, "No reserves," meaning no reservations. "I'm not holding back. I'm going all for Jesus. Later, later in his walk with the Lord he wrote, "No retreats. I'm in this thing and I'm not going back." But as he was dying with spinal meningitis he wrote, "No regrets." Wow. How do you do that? How do you do that when you walked away from your family fortune, a life of ease, a life of wealth and prosperity, turned your back on that and said, "No, I want to be a missionary. I want to spend my life for Christ. And in order to reach these special people, these Muslims in China, I need to go and learn their language. I need to go learn their culture." And so he stops off to do that and when he stops off, he contracts spinal meningitis and as life is ebbing away from him day by day, he writes, "No regrets." How do you do that? How do you do that? And I think the only way that a follower of the Lord Jesus can do such a thing is because God remembered his covenant in Jesus Christ.

You see, this is what God is saying to Moses. "Look, I'm a covenant-keeping God. I keep my word. I keep my agreements. You may fail," and you will, but God says, "I will keep my covenant." And God remembered his covenant in Jesus Christ on Christmas morning. When Jesus was born, he was born to keep the covenant that we fail to keep. On Good Friday, he hung on a cross and suffered the covenant curses against our sin so that we could be forgiven. On Resurrection Sunday the Scripture said through the blood of the

eternal covenant, God brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ. And then finally on Judgment Day and, friend, there will be a Judgment Day, for all those that stand in Jesus Christ, our sins will be forgiven by his covenant mercy. So maybe cherishing that in our hearts, we can also say, "No reserves. No retreats. No regrets."