

Exodus 6:1-12

Moses Receives Some Divine Reassurance

When was the last time you were discouraged?

- What circumstances led you to be discouraged?

Since discouragement is a feeling, nothing can make us discouraged

- That is a choice that we make

Sometimes just the normal activities of life can tempt us to become discouraged

- Other times, it is the abnormal things of life that affect us

I have had my share of discouragement over the years

- But as I look back, most of my discouragement is due to unrealistic expectations on my part

I can share with you that I have become discouraged over ministry at times

- I have been discouraged at my own walk with Christ
- I have been discouraged with others

But I am so grateful that God brings along encouragers

- Some of you have been used of God to encourage me

I want to remind you of a few verses in Romans 15

- Listen to these verses

“For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus; that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom 15:4-6)

- “Whatever was written in earlier times” obviously refers to the Old Testament – the Scriptures

Notice that Paul speaks of how the Scriptures provide encouragement

- This, in turn, leads to hope

Then Paul goes on to speak of God “**who gives perseverance and encouragement**”

This is one of the practical reasons why I read the Bible every day

- Sometimes it is to encourage me (when I am discouraged)
- Sometimes it is preventative medicine (to help me resist discouragement)

In our study of Exodus, Moses is at an important crossroads

- He has done what he was told to do

But from a human standpoint, he hasn't helped any

- As a matter of fact, it seems like things have become worse!

You might say that Moses was discouraged

- Or at least, he was tempted to become discouraged

As chapter 5 ended, Moses had retreated to God in prayer

- He was alone, pouring out his heart to God

Moses was filled with questions

- Why have You brought harm on this people?
- Why did You ever send me?

At the forefront of Moses' mind was this statement, "Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy name, he has done harm to this people; and Thou hast not delivered Thy people at all" (Ex 5:23)

- It just didn't make sense to Moses

How would God reassure His servant, Moses?

- That is what we will study this morning

Let's read Exodus 6:1-12

In these twelve verses, we will focus on three of the Lord's characteristics that He puts on display

- The LORD's sovereignty (6:1)
- The LORD's faithfulness (6:2-5)
- The LORD's patience (6:6-12)

I. The LORD's sovereignty (6:1)

1 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for under compulsion he shall let them go, and under compulsion he shall drive them out of his land."

In many ways, chapter 6 seems like a repetition of what we have seen earlier in Exodus

- In some ways, this is true

There are some differences, however

- Moses is in Egypt, not Midian
- There is no mention of the burning bush here in chapter 6
- There is no demonstration of the supernatural signs as given in earlier chapters

Moses had asked a series of questions at the end of chapter 5

- There was no Divine rebuke

But God doesn't answer Moses' questions directly¹

- The LORD simply reaffirms what He had said earlier

The key word from the LORD to Moses is "now"

- No more delays
- The time for action is "now"

The LORD's words are sobering, "Now you shall see that I will do to Pharaoh"

- God's power would be put on display

¹ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Exodus*, 340.

In modern-day vernacular, God was saying, “Moses, you ain’t seen nothing yet!”

Moses hears once again how the LORD planned to extract His people from Egypt

- Notice the twofold repetition of the phrase, “**under compulsion**”
 - o “**for under compulsion he shall let them go**”
 - o “**and under compulsion he shall drive them out of his land.**”

Actually, the phrase “**under compulsion**” is literally, “with a mighty hand”²

- With anthropomorphic language, God is personified as having a mighty hand
- This indicates His strength and ability

Not only would Pharaoh let Israel go

- God would cause Pharaoh to “**drive them out of his land**”

Again, we know the rest of the story

- The tenth and final plague – the death of the firstborn – would cause Pharaoh to drive Israel out of Egypt

All of this would take place because of what God would do to Pharaoh

- God would get the glory

God was telling Moses that Pharaoh would see the sovereignty of God

- Pharaoh wasn’t as strong as he thought he was

In Exodus 5:2, Pharaoh told Moses, “**Who is the LORD that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and besides, I will not let Israel go.**”

- In the end, Pharaoh would find out who Yahweh was!
- And Pharaoh would let Israel go

Do you believe that the Lord is sovereign?

- Do you believe that He reigns over all?

If not, God may take extreme measures to show you His sovereignty

- Sovereignty over your health
- Sovereignty over your finances
- Sovereignty over your family

God’s very name is Jealous

- He won’t tolerate someone else competing for your love and devotion

Moses needed to be reminded of God’s sovereignty

- And so do we
- **The LORD’s sovereignty (6:1)**

² John L. Mackay, *A Mentor Commentary, Exodus*, 115.

II. The LORD's faithfulness (6:2-5)

2 God spoke further to Moses and said to him, "I am the LORD:

Four times in this morning's preaching text, we encounter the phrase, "I am the LORD"³

- 6:2, "God spoke further to Moses and said to him, 'I am the LORD'"
- 6:6, "Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, 'I am the LORD'"
- 6:7, "you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians"
- 6:8, "And I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you *for* a possession; I am the LORD."

These four repetitions are significant when we think about the purposes of God⁴

- To identify Himself
- To reaffirm His promise to redeem
- To stress His intention to adopt Israel as the covenant people of God
- To conclude the message that He is giving to Moses

It is significant that when God speaks to Moses, He begins and ends the conversation with this phrase, "I am the LORD"

- This needed to echo in the mind of Moses

God was telling Moses, "All you really need to know is that I AM."

- I AM the answer to every problem you have⁵

3 and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, LORD, I did not make Myself known to them.

This verse has caused some level of concern and confusion over the years

- But it need not be the case

Moses was not insinuating that the patriarchs didn't know the name Yahweh

- He wasn't insinuating that they didn't know God as Yahweh

Moses was simply saying that the patriarchs didn't understand the full intent and meaning of the name Yahweh

- They hadn't been told what that name meant

Exodus 3:14 was the first time that the Lord had actually given any description of definition of what His name, Yahweh, meant

- That was knowledge that the patriarchs didn't have

"Abraham knew God as a promise-maker

- Moses came to know him as a promise-keeper"⁶

³ Ronald F. Youngblood, *Everyman's Bible Commentary, Exodus*, 41.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁵ Philip Graham Ryken, *Preaching the Word, Exodus*, 172.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 169.

Moses mentions the name “**God Almighty**”

- This is the Hebrew word Shaddai
- It stresses God’s power, majesty, and might

The word is only used 48 times in the OT

- 31 of the 48 occur in Job!
- That’s 65% of the occurrences!

Genesis has 6 occasions for this word (17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; 49:25)

- Exodus only has one reference
- The one here in 6:3

There are only 48 uses of Shaddai in the OT

- What a contrast with the 6828 uses of Yahweh in the OT!
 - o 165 in Genesis
 - o 398 in Exodus

As far back as Genesis 2:4, we see the use of Yahweh

- “**This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made earth and heaven**” (Gen 2:4)
- “**To Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then *men* began to call upon the name of the LORD**” (Gen 4:26)

Those who deny Mosaic authorship will take this as a clear sign that different authors pieced together the book of Exodus as we have it

- But the book of Exodus is written entirely by one human author, Moses
- It is one literary unit (Genesis-Deuteronomy)

We have to look at the end of verse 3 carefully, “**by My name, LORD, I did not make Myself known to them**”

- This is the intimate knowledge that is oftentimes used of a husband and wife

In other words, the patriarchs knew the term Yahweh

- They used the term Yahweh
- But they didn’t have the intimate knowledge of what that term meant

“Yahweh is the God who would personally, dynamically, and faithfully *be present* to fulfill the covenant he had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The patriarchs had only the promises, not *the things* promised.”⁷

4 And I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they sojourned.

The God who was about to redeem Israel was the same God who had entered into a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

- El Shaddai was Yahweh!

A central part of the Abrahamic Covenant was the land of Canaan

- Promised way back in Genesis 12

⁷ Kaiser, 341.

That would be a significant reminder to Israel at this time in their history

- They had been in Egypt for over 400 years
- Egypt was not Canaan!

5 And furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage; and I have remembered My covenant.

Verse 5 must have been extremely refreshing to Moses

- God had not been deaf to the groanings of His people!

Back in Exodus 2, we read, “Now it came about in *the course of* those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of *their* bondage rose up to God. So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

And God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice *of them.*” (2:23-25)

God is intimately aware of what goes on in the lives of His people

- Nothing slips His notice!
- He sees everything!

This should be a reminder and encouragement to us as well

- When it seems like God isn't listening, He is
- When it seems like God doesn't care, He does
- When it seems like God won't act, He will

Once again, we encounter the fact that God “remembered” His covenant

- But did this mean that He had forgotten it?
- Certainly not⁸

For God to remember His covenant is to remind the reader that He is about to take action toward that goal

- The Exodus is a major event on the radar of God's timetable

I am so grateful that God is faithful

- He can be counted on!
- His promises are sure!

- **The LORD's sovereignty (6:1)**
- **The LORD's faithfulness (6:2-5)**

III. The LORD's patience (6:6-12)

6 Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, 'I am the LORD,

Moses was commanded what to say to the children of Israel

- He would not go with his own message
- He would go with the message from God Himself

⁸ R. Alan Cole, *Tyndale OT Commentaries, Exodus*, 85.

The very first thing that God tells Moses to tell Israel is, “I am the LORD”

- As we mentioned earlier, this is a constant repetition throughout Exodus 6

The manner in which the LORD reassures his servant is through a series of seven “I will” statements

- All of these are stated in our English translations as future tense, “I will”

But in the Hebrew, they are in the past tense⁹

- In the mind of God, these were as certain as if they had already taken place!

and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.

Verse 6 has the first three “I will” statements

This is the language of redemption

- It is the language of rescue!

For over 400 years, Israel had suffered under the cruel bondage of Egypt

- But not for much longer

God was about to take action

- He would bring them out from under the bondage and burdens of the Egyptians
- What seemed to be a dire situation would soon be a place of deliverance

Have you ever gone camping where you had to carry all of your stuff in a backpack?

- Starting out, it seems fairly light
- But over time, it seems heavier and heavier

What joy there is when you can arrive at the campsite and put down the backpack

- You can take off your burden!

God was promising to take the burden of bondage from the Israelites

- They wouldn't have to suffer like this any longer

Second, the LORD says, “I will deliver you from their bondage”

- This second verb builds on the first one
 - o Not only would God “bring you out”
 - o He would also “deliver you”

Third, the LORD says, “I will also redeem you”

- This is the language of purchasing slaves
- God was promising to purchase Israel to be His own people

The Hebrew word for “redeem” is the word for kinsman-redeemer

- Most likely, the book of Ruth comes to mind
- Boaz was the kinsman-redeemer who stepped in and redeemed Ruth

⁹ Kaiser, 341.

This kinsman-redeemer was responsible for protecting the rights and property of his family¹⁰

- At times, he had to take deliberate action in regaining those rights and property

But here, Boaz isn't in focus

- Yahweh Himself will redeem Israel!

Back in Exodus 4:22, God had said, "Israel is My son, My first-born"

7 Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God:

Here are the fourth and fifth "I will" statements

- "Then I will take you for My people"
- "I will be your God"

These are the language of adoption

- God would not only rescue and redeem His people
- He would then adopt them as His very own!

Isn't it amazing that God isn't ashamed to call us His people?¹¹

- We who are so sinful are still His people

As a matter of fact, we are His precious possession!

- It seems almost too good to be true
- But it is true, regardless of how we feel

and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

When Israel was redeemed and adopted, then they would "know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians"

There would be no doubt as to Who rescued them

- Not Moses
- Not the elders of Israel

But the LORD Himself!

- Yahweh!

When would this be?

- I think God is looking forward to Mt. Sinai where the covenant would be ratified with Israel

God is already seeing beyond the Exodus¹²

- God is anticipating the giving of the Law

¹⁰ Nahum M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary, Exodus*, 32.

¹¹ Michael Bentley, *Travelling Homeward*, 96.

¹² Douglas K. Stuart, *NAC, Exodus*, 172.

8 And I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession; I am the LORD.”

Verse 8 has the last two “I will” statements

- These two have the land in focus

The land of Canaan would be given to Israel as a gift

- The same land that was promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

Many generations had been born and died in Egypt

- Without so much as a single glimpse of Canaan

But one day in the near future, Israel would not only see Canaan

- They would possess it!

What would be the guarantee that Israel would possess the land?

- Our English text speaks of what God “swore to give to Abraham”

The literal Hebrew is “with lifted hand”¹³

- Does that image sound familiar?

To this day, before someone testifies in court, what must they do?

- Raise their right hand and swear that they will tell the truth

Here is Yahweh telling Israel, “I raise My hand and swear to you that I will give you the land!”

- How amazing is this!

Moses must have been on a spiritual high once again

- God has just reassured him of many truths

But how would the people respond?

- Before, they believed

Look back with me at Exodus 4:31 to hear their first reaction to Moses’ leadership, “So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD was concerned about the sons of Israel and that He had seen their affliction, then they bowed low and worshiped”

- They believed
- They bowed low
- They worshiped

9 So Moses spoke thus to the sons of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses on account of their despondency and cruel bondage.

What a difference between the first and second encounters with Moses!

- Belief to disbelief
- Hope to despair

¹³ Mackay, 122.

God had just issued forth seven “I will” statements

- But Israel responds with a “I won’t”¹⁴

What a sad commentary on the state of Israel at this time!

- They were in bondage, but didn’t want to be redeemed
- They were enslaved, but didn’t want freedom

Why would they possibly not listen to Moses?

- “on account of *their despondency and cruel bondage*”

Literally, the Israelites were “short of breath”

- The outward pressure of the bondage had caused an inward pressure

What kept Israel in bondage was the very bondage itself!¹⁵

Have you ever been so emotional or tired that you couldn’t catch your breath?

- Perhaps after crying
- Perhaps after running

The pressure of the ongoing bondage to Egypt had made a huge impact on Israel

- They were so worn out that they didn’t even want to listen to Moses!

10 Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 11 “Go, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the sons of Israel go out of his land.”

The LORD speaks directly to Moses once again

- And He tells Moses to approach Pharaoh yet again

Verse 11 opens with two commands, back-to-back

- “Go”
- “Tell”

In the light of Israel’s failure to trust God, Moses didn’t need to follow suit

- Moses needed to be reminded that he was under Divine command

Notice there is no “please”

- The almighty God, Yahweh, is telling Pharaoh to let Israel go!

The time for redemption is NOW

- Pharaoh has been a cruel leader for too long

The refusal of Israel to accept the Good News didn’t stop God from proceeding!

- God’s plan of redemption wasn’t contingent upon Israel’s obedience
- God’s plan of redemption was contingent upon God Himself!

¹⁴ Ryken, 176.

¹⁵ Ibid., 176.

12 But Moses spoke before the LORD, saying, “Behold, the sons of Israel have not listened to me; how then will Pharaoh listen to me, for I am unskilled in speech?”

It’s not a good sign when verse 12 begins with “but”

- God tells Moses, “Go, tell...”
- Moses says, “But...”

Moses yet again reverts back to his previous excuses about being used of God

- He looks at his circumstances and doesn’t see how he can be effective
- After all, if Israel won’t listen to Moses, *how in the world will Pharaoh?*

Moses doesn’t trust God

- He has too much trust in himself

Moses has allowed the discouragement of the Israelites to affect him

- Their disbelief is rubbing off on him!

Moses looks at himself and says that he is “unskilled in speech”

- He is not capable of speaking for the Lord¹⁶
- He is focusing too much on his own inadequacy instead of looking to the Lord

But God wouldn’t accept this excuse

- Not the first time
- And not this time, either

Moses has been commanded to go and speak to Pharaoh

- And that is exactly what will happen

Have you ever thought what would have happened if Moses’ first interaction with Pharaoh had been effective?¹⁷

- What if Pharaoh had repented and allowed Israel to leave Egypt?

The credit and glory would have gone to Moses, right?

- Look how great a leader Moses is!
- Look how skilled he was in handling the king of Egypt!

But God intentionally allowed Pharaoh to resist Moses’ request

- I think part of this was to show that only God could bring about the Exodus

The first visit of Moses to Pharaoh was simply to show Moses that he himself could not be the deliverer

- He was not strong enough
- He was not eloquent enough
- He was not competent enough

In order for God to redeem Israel, two things had to take place¹⁸

- Egypt’s hold on Israel needed to be loosened
- Pharaoh’s heart needed to be gradually hardened

¹⁶ Mackay, 124.

¹⁷ Ryken, 172.

¹⁸ F.B. Meyer, *Devotional Commentary on Exodus*, 106.

In the end, how did God reassure Moses?

- By reminded him of what he had already been told earlier

I find that when I choose to become discouraged, it is due to a lack of deliberate meditation upon the Word of God and the character of God

- When I don't persevere, I become discouraged
- When I forget hope, I become discouraged

Yet as we saw in the Romans 15 passage earlier, the Scriptures are the very tool that God uses to infuse into us

- Perseverance
- Encouragement
- Hope!

Are you discouraged this morning?

- If so, what is tempting you toward discouragement?

If you are like me, oftentimes, it is an unrealistic expectation that I have placed upon any given situation that leads me toward discouragement

- Someone didn't act the way that I wanted them to act
- Someone said something that I didn't expect
- God didn't do something that I anticipated
- God did something that was totally unexpected

We all need to be reassured this morning

- By being reminded of what God's Word has said

Are you reading the Bible every day?

- Are you immersing yourself into the Scriptures every day?

Don't say, "Oh, Kevin, I have read the Bible before. I don't need to read it every day!"

If you are thinking that, let me ask you a question

- When it is time to eat breakfast, lunch, dinner, or a snack, do you say, "I don't need to eat; I have eaten before"?

Of course not!

- You eat because you need the nourishment that food provides!
- If you don't eat, you will become physically malnourished!

Could it be that part of the reason that you are here discouraged, frustrated, and angry is due to a spiritual malnourishment?

- Eat the Word every day!
- Drink from the Word every day!

Perhaps you are here in unbelief

- You don't have a personal relationship with the God of the Bible

You may know something about God

- But that isn't the same as knowing God

The sad reality is that you can't escape the bondage of sin on your own

- God must do that for you!

So ask Him to change your life

- Ask Him to forgive your sins
- Ask Him to give you hope!