

Do Not Deal Deceitfully

Exodus 8:25-32, "Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God in the land." And Moses said, "It is not right to do so, for we would be sacrificing the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God. If we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, then will they not stone us? We will go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the Lord our God as He will command us." So Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Intercede for me." Then Moses said, "Indeed I am going out from you, and I will entreat the Lord, that the swarms of flies may depart tomorrow from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. But let Pharaoh not deal deceitfully anymore in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord." So Moses went out from Pharaoh and entreated the Lord. And the Lord did according to the word of Moses; He removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. Not one remained. But Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also; neither would he let the people go."

Let's pray. Lord, we praise You and thank You again for bringing us to Your word, for bringing us together and for giving us these things to learn from. We ask that You would help us to learn the work of Your Spirit through Your word. We ask that You would help us to learn how to better serve You. We pray that You would help us not to be a people like Pharaoh and like the Egyptians, that You would help us to be more like Moses who sought to follow You and what You commanded, not the commands of the world. We ask that You would help us to balance things rightly, that You would help us even to respect those in authority as You have clearly shown through Moses, that You would help us also to serve You as You have called us to. Please guide us through this passage, please give Mr. Horn wisdom and help him to be able to convey to us that things that You would have us to learn today. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

This week we consider Pharaoh's response to the fourth plague, the plague of swarms as it says, the flies are added by the translators. These swarms of biting insects that are either mosquitoes or a mix of different insects as it says in Psalm 48:45, that are devouring Egypt. As he responds, it really struck me that He's responding with deceit. Even as he responds with deceit, he's probably responding with deceit thinking he is telling the truth. I think we should take that as a warning when we think about that is, do we respond where Moses would say, 'You're responding with deceit.' Pharaoh is being bitten by the insects, he is being eaten up by them, his house is filled with them, the ground that he is walking on is covered with them and he is telling Moses that he will let the people go. He might sincerely think that once all the insects are gone that he will let the people go, but Moses says, 'Don't deal with deceit again. Don't say you are going to do something and then turn around and do something else.' We can deal with deceit when we are convinced we are dealing in integrity. We can deal with deceit when we say, 'I'm dealing fairly, I'm making this promise', where if you actually sat back and thought about it you wouldn't do it when the pressure is off. That's what Moses defines as dealing with deceit.

We need to make sure we don't do that, that when we are saying 'yes' to something, that we are actually stepping back and saying, 'Am I going to do this in the future? When the situation changes will I continue to do this?' I was trying to think of an example and one example I have seen is a father says to his child, 'Go do this' and the child says, 'Well, can I have ice cream when I'm done?' and the father says, 'I will think about it', when he has already decided he's not giving the child ice cream. That's deceit, that's dealing with deceit, that's not what we are supposed to do. That's acting like Pharaoh who is a type of Satan. How often do we do things like that? When we put out of our mind the reality of the decision that we will make so that we can walk with integrity, when if we actually thought about it we would realize that's not happening, but we still let people think that it will. That's what Pharaoh does, if he thought about it, Pharaoh would say that as soon as it's over he wasn't going to let them go and Moses says that is dealing with deceit. As a business owner I have trouble with this all the time because people want you to make promises that can't be kept, they want you to have ideas that aren't going to be filled. They want it to be done in a faster timeframe and you know they could never do it in that timeframe. We need to recognize that when we see the example of Moses, don't think this is some example that's far off, this is an example that we have to deal with all the time. Make sure you think about how you deal with it in your life. Do you deal with deceit? It can be hard to discern too because we do deals where I talk to people and I say, 'You're saying this can be done in a year and sure it can be done in a year, but I don't think you will be able to do it in a year.' At what point do you go, 'No', as opposed to going, 'It's possible, but it's unlikely'? We just need to make sure that we're not walking a line where Moses would say and God would say through Moses, 'You're dealing deceitfully.' Just being convinced that it's the right thing or convincing yourself of an unrealistic expectation doesn't mean that you're not dealing deceitfully. So often when we deal deceitfully it's because we have deceived ourselves first, we talk ourselves into something. Pharaoh could stand there and potentially honestly say he would let them go, where if he was undeceiving himself he would go, 'No, I'm not going to let them go.' When we go through Exodus it's important to look at the examples, the good examples we find at times, but also the bad examples. Look and ask how we do the same. In this passage I think we should look at Pharaoh and ask ourselves the question of how we do this, how do we let our yes be no? Because that's being like Satan. Christ said that's from the evil one, that's from Satan when we do that. It's not just going, 'Well, I was sincere at the time and then the situation changed.' Well, if you could anticipate the change of the situation, you have the responsibility to anticipate the change in the situation. As we go through this and we see Pharaoh's actions, let's make sure that we don't do what Pharaoh does.

Verses 25-27, "Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God in the land." And Moses said, "It is not right to do so, for we would be sacrificing the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God. If we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, then will they not stone us? We will go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the Lord our God as He will command us.'" So it starts with these flying insects, these biting insects that are a swarm that are filling their houses, that are filling the land, that they're all under foot and Pharaoh's response to that is to call Moses and Aaron. He knows exactly who can control it. They were to meet him as he went down to the water in the morning

so he had no doubt the curse had come from them. Aaron stretched forth his hands, but he still knows that they can cause the curse to be removed. He doesn't come when they come and go, 'Well, can you do anything about this?' He says, 'Entreat the Lord for me.' Pharaoh knows, Pharaoh is convinced that God brought the plague and God can remove the plague. This isn't a lack of knowledge that is Pharaoh's problem. This is why when Abraham says if one was sent back from the dead they still wouldn't believe. It's not that they don't know, it's that they don't want to submit. Pharaoh knew who had the power as his country was being destroyed and devoured, the one that he is responsible for, the one he has authority over, the one that gives him his position, he knows exactly what's causing it, but he refuses to do anything, he refuses to submit. He could have stopped it the whole time, all he had to do was say that the people could go. To make sure we understand, that's what rebellion looks like. It's not that they ask if there is a God, it's that they say they don't want that God. It's not lack of knowledge that causes someone to reject God. So often we think if we just tell them who Christ is, that that will cause them to flee to Christ. That's not what causes people to flee to Christ. What caused people to flee to Christ was God taking their heart of stone and making it a heart of flesh. God opens their eyes to their sin. God opens their eyes to the judgement that they deserve. What causes people not to come to Christ, not to put their faith and trust in God is their pride, it's their lack of humility. That's why people can know the Lord like the demons know the Lord. They can tremble before Him like the demons tremble before Him and they can walk away and be just as disobedient as Pharaoh was. Not because they don't know, but because they won't humble themselves. Another thing to notice is that as he sends for them, in all likelihood they are in the land of Goshen. They're where there are no biting insects so why wouldn't Pharaoh meet them where they were. Wouldn't that be the logical thing? If I was being eaten alive by bugs, I would go, 'Why don't we meet where you are, where there are no insects that are biting and swarming around, where there are no mosquitoes filling the houses so they are crawling on the floor?' That's what the land of Goshen was like, but that would require humility. To go is a lot different than sending forth someone. If Pharaoh's heart was really humbled before God, it seems to me that he would have just gone to where Moses and Aaron were. It would be a lot more comfortable there, there's a lot more reasons to go there, but that would require him to humble himself. So even as he calls for Moses and Aaron and sends for them to come, there is an aspect of pride even in his sending for them. As we see here, Pharaoh tries to negotiate with God and this negotiation with God is so different from when Abraham negotiates with God. When Abraham negotiates with God before Sodom and Gomorrah he says in humility, 'If there are fifty righteous, would you save?' He comes in humility and with supplication to God. Pharaoh's coming from a position of pride trying to position himself in the best position for the negotiation. That's not how you negotiate with God, a good way to come before God and make your petition before God. It's in humility which is the opposite of what Pharaoh does. Pharaoh comes to the negotiation positioning himself not humbling himself. "And said, "Go, sacrifice to your God in the land."" Moses had already told Pharaoh they needed to go three days' journey into the wilderness in order to obey the commandment of God. As it says in Exodus 5:3, "So they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to the Lord our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword."" Moses says out of fear of God, 'Let us go three days' journey into the wilderness' so Pharaoh knows God is commanding, but he tries to negotiate. He tries to negotiate the

requirements. You can do the sacrifices, but you have to do them here rather than doing what God has commanded to be done. This is pretty reasonable if you think of how most people treat their god. The way they treat their god is that god actually needs these things from them, he needs to receive these things to be paid off. This is how Allah is like in Islam, he needs these things from the Muslims. But God never says He needs these things from us. Like in Psalm 50:12-14, "If I were hungry, I would not tell you; For the world is Mine, and all its fullness. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, Or drink the blood of goats? Offer to God thanksgiving, And pay your vows to the Most High." The point isn't that God needs what we have, but Pharaoh thinking God is in desperate need of what He can receive from man, he is saying He will get what He wants, these sacrifices. That's not what God wants, God wants obedience. Psalm 51:15-17, "O Lord, open my lips, And my mouth shall show forth Your praise. For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart— These, O God, You will not despise." This is where we're supposed to be with God. The sacrifices are a sign of a heart, even in the Old Testament and all the sacrificial system, this was supposed to be a demonstration of them being a broken people before their God, a people that were submitting to their God. It wasn't that God needed the sacrifices, it wasn't that God needed the savor of the burning meat. No, what God wanted was contrite hearts, people who would submit to Him. Pharaoh's view of God meant that God just wanted the sacrifice so here or there it doesn't matter, God gets the sacrifice. But what God desires, Samuel says in 1 Samuel 15:22, "So Samuel said: "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams." Understand this is still true today. God doesn't want you to come to church, God wants you to obey Him. God doesn't want you to pray, God wants you to obey Him. Obeying Him isn't separate from coming to church, obeying Him isn't separate from praying. If you come to church because of your parents, don't think that is pleasing to God because what's pleasing to God is obedience to God. If you do it so that people can see you like it says in Matthew 6, when Jesus Christ is rebuking the Pharisees, He goes over and over again that they are doing it to be seen by men. They weren't doing it out of obedience so it wasn't pleasing to God even as they gave alms, even as they prayed. Even as they did all these things, it wasn't pleasing to God because it wasn't about obedience. Moses could have done those offerings in the land and it would not have been pleasing to God because God said to go three days' in the wilderness to do these sacrifices. Israel would have no reason to think they wouldn't be judged by the sword or by pestilence if they did the sacrifices there because they're still not obeying. Half obedience is still disobedience, it's not obedience. God desires us to obey, the sacrifices are just the means by which He tests our willingness to obey. That's true of the sacrifices in Romans 12, where it says we are to be a living sacrifice. There are people that pour out their lives, but they do it for applause and all kinds of reasons and they are that sacrifice, but they're not doing it out of a desire to obey God and it is not pleasing to God. To be a good worker requires it to be in alignment to God's word and to be done for the glory of God, to be done out of obedience to God. So Moses responds to Pharaoh's offer not with the explanation that this is what God requires, but with an explanation that Pharaoh should understand this wouldn't work. If he knew his own people he would say this was a bad idea. His eagerness to suggest a solution that did not require him to accept God caused him to come up with a foolish suggestion because when Moses said this would cause the Egyptians to start stoning us,

Pharaoh doesn't say they wouldn't do that, he just tells him not to go too far. It's pretty clear that Moses' counter argument is not rejected by Pharaoh. Moses says it's not right to do so. He didn't just say it would cause problems, he says it wouldn't be right to do so. It's really interesting because what he says wouldn't be right to do is offensive to the Egyptians because of their idolatry. We should think about that and struggle with that. Why isn't it right for him to offend the Egyptians? It could be because it would not have been protecting the life of the Israelites and as a duty to the Israelites, he had a duty there, but we need to recognize that Moses is saying "It is not right to do so." This would be so offensive to them and it could be that Moses was wrong, that it is proper to offend them. We don't even know for sure, it says "for we would be sacrificing the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God." You look at commentaries and first of all, the words in English, they have some implied understanding to them. It's actually really hard in the Hebrew to know what this means exactly. It could mean that the sacrifice was an abomination to the Egyptians and this is a widely held theory, which very well could be correct. One of the Egyptian gods had the head of a sheep, it was a ram, and so there's a lot of people that say it was an abomination to sacrifice or eat sheep so if they sacrificed sheep and ate them, it would cause the people to be so upset that they would stone them. This could be true, but from some of the hieroglyphics, it's clear that the Egyptians ate sheep and it's clear that the Egyptians sacrificed sheep. The timeline in these stones, they don't have a date, so it could be that they started to sacrifice sheep after this so this could be that this was the abomination, them eating sheep, but the archaeological evidence doesn't necessarily say when they started, but we do know they sacrificed sheep. It could mean that they were sacrificing to the abomination of the Egyptians meaning they were sacrificing to Jehovah in a land where each nation is saying, 'This is our god' and then they are doing sacrifices to a different god in that land where they have their sets of god and all of a sudden the Israelites introduce another God and openly are worshipping Him so the Egyptians would be furious about that. It could mean the abomination is the idol that they considered Jehovah. They're looking at it and saying that's idolatry. It's really easy for us to forget and things like when the persecution was happening in the Roman empire, it happened because the emperor said the people were atheists, they were worshipping an idol instead of the emperor. The death penalty offense was that they wouldn't worship the emperor. So it could be the Egyptians are looking and they're saying Jehovah is an idol so it could be that it would be that offensive because they were sacrificing to the abomination of Egyptians. That's another potential meaning. It could be something that we don't even know about. We know from the story of Joseph making himself known to his brothers that the Egyptians were offended by something about eating with the Hebrews. Genesis 43:22, "And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks." Even though the text reads that this was all the same food. This wasn't the food that was the abomination, in their culture it was just an abomination so them having a feast would have been an abomination to the Egyptians because they were Hebrews having a feast. So there's all these potential reasons, but the bottom line is that no one really knows exactly why it was an abomination so obviously we don't really need to know. What we do need to know is that Moses said it was an abomination and Pharaoh, by silence, agreed with him. So somehow the Egyptians defined something that they were doing as an abomination. "If we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes." If they see them worshipping God or eating mutton, as he commanded them, if they saw them worshipping

God, whatever it was, if they saw this, they would be filled with zeal and rage against them. "Then will they not stone us?" Moses is saying this would cause a riot through the nation where they would try to kill the Israelites because it would be so offensive to them. Moses tells Pharaoh this and again, Moses doesn't push back. It's really important for us to understand this because this still happens today and this continues to happen today. You cause someone to recognize an abomination before them and they still want to kill you. We have examples of it from Acts where people touch their idols and you touch their idols and the people fill with rage. Like Acts 19:28-29, "Now when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions." Because they are preaching the gospel, the people get so angry because it's an abomination to them that they respond by trying to destroy them. They respond in rage so that for hours they're screaming in the gathering place, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians!' This is how offensive it can be when you make somebody, when you do something that someone considers an abomination. Acts 7:45 and 58, "Which our fathers, having received it in turn, also brought with Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers until the days of David." "However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says." Stephen said something that they found to be an abomination. Stephen confronted them with the truth that Jesus was the Christ and they found that to be an abomination so they killed Him. Acts 21:27-28, "Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place." The Israelites said this was an abomination so they grab Paul and try to kill him. The reason I list these three passages and read them was because we need to be reminded that this is what happens when you touch someone's idol, this is a normal response. This isn't something that just happened then and it will become more so as you think of the idols that we have in America. Even going to the abortion clinic and you hold up a sign that says abortion is murder and people, like turn and pretend to drive their car towards you. It still causes rage today. When you say that two men can't marry, it still causes rage today. We're not so blinded because we have had the light of the gospel shine that people aren't rising up and they aren't coming up as riots and killing people. Understand, if we don't continue to shine forth the light, that is exactly what we should expect, that's exactly what happens. It's not that these things aren't really offensive, it's just that we live in a more constrained society. We need to be willing to touch those things that are abominable. We need to be willing to say the things that are true because if we don't it will get to the point where we can't say them because if you say them you can have an expectation that you will be stoned in the streets like Stephen was. "We will go three days' journey into the wilderness." Moses' answer is to avoid the situation, that they should go far enough into the wilderness. Remember that wilderness doesn't mean like what we think where there is no water and it's dry. This word actually can mean pasture. What it really means is there is nobody there so Moses says we're going to go three days out where there is nobody around, there's nobody to be offended. They will be upset if we do it here so we will go three days' journey away where there won't be people who will be upset "and sacrifice to the Lord our God." This is what God commanded them to do and Moses is

putting it in a way where this is what's best for Egypt so you're going to lose us anyway because your people would rise up and kill us all, so we will go there and sacrifice to the Lord. Then Moses adds this other line, "as He will command us." Notice the tense of that. It's not, 'as He has commanded us', it's 'as He will command us.' Moses is saying they are coming and they are saying, 'Let My people go', but if God, at some point, said to go now, then they would go now. He's saying there will be a time that comes where God will say to them, 'Go now' and then they will go. So Pharaoh's positioning himself so he can say he doesn't have to submit to Moses, he can puff himself up. Moses is saying on the other hand, God hasn't commanded them to go, they are going to do this, but He hasn't commanded it yet. So he's going, in the end we will submit to God. The reason that they hadn't left yet was because they were supposed to submit to Pharaoh, but if God gave them a commandment to leave, it was time for them to leave.

Verses 28-29, "So Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Intercede for me." Then Moses said, "Indeed I am going out from you, and I will entreat the Lord, that the swarms of flies may depart tomorrow from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. But let Pharaoh not deal deceitfully anymore in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord." Pharaoh responds to Moses' request. Again, the language, he doesn't try to push back on Moses' argument which sure seems he has accepted it, he accepted they had to go out of the province of Egypt. Even sacrificing in the land of Goshen would cause the riots, would cause the nation to rise up and stone them. God had made Goshen a separate land, but there were Egyptians there because they were near to the Israelites; they wouldn't have had the mosquitoes filling their houses. "So Pharaoh said, "I will let you go." Again, he makes a promise to let them go, he makes a promise that says, 'Yes, right now with these bugs here and being eaten up and devoured, I will agree to let the people go' "that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness." He agrees that they will leave, "only you shall not go very far away." At first reading this in English I thought he was trying to negotiate that they wouldn't go the whole three days' journey, but after reading it in Hebrew more, I think what he is actually saying is, 'Don't go more than a three days' journey.' I'm going to agree that you can go, but you can't go further than that distance so he's saying, remember, even Pharaoh's response eighty years ago when these things were happening is that they are going to rise up and get too numerous and they are going to leave. It seems pretty clear going back to Exodus 1, that the Pharaoh's understood there were promises that the Israelites would leave. So he is saying they can go, but they can't go any further than that, which is all that God told Moses to request of Pharaoh. He didn't say, 'and then continue on to Canaan'. He said to go three days' journey into the wilderness so we can worship God and Pharaoh agrees to God's terms. And then Pharaoh says, "Intercede for me." He recognized Moses as the mediator between him and God. We need to remember the types and pictures. This is Moses who is the picture of Christ and he is interceding for Pharaoh, interceding for the sinners with God. Even the picture of him being the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he has an association with Pharaoh just like Christ came and took on flesh so He has an association with us. He could understand Pharaoh's position just like Christ can understand our position, but how much better is the new covenant? How much better is it to have the mediator of Christ than to

have the mediator of Moses? Hebrews 2:17-18, "Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted." Jesus Christ came and took on flesh so that He could be the mediator, He could understand our temptations, He could understand our sufferings. So Moses is a type, this picture, but how much greater is the fulfillment which is Christ, the One who truly has the standing to intercede with the Father. God is making Pharaoh go through Moses and this picture is there so that we have an understanding that we need to go, even the picture that Pharaoh has to go through Moses. This is the picture we see over and over again. "Then Moses said, "Indeed I am going out from you." He agreed to do what Pharaoh asked, he agreed to intercede with Pharaoh and Pharaoh said they could go as long as they don't go farther than he asked for. Moses says he will go and intercede with God. It's interesting that he says he will go out, he doesn't do it in the presence of Pharaoh. When Moses and Aaron bring the plagues on, frequently they do it in the presence of Pharaoh. They wait until Pharaoh goes down to the Nile to bathe, they know he is going to come in the morning and they do the curses right in front of him. They bring the plagues right in front of him, but it's interesting that they don't do the same thing with the removal of the plagues. When he removes the plague he leaves. He could have interceded, it's not some special place that Moses has to go to to meet with God, but he leaves and it seems to me that the reason he does that is that interceding with God is not for show, not for people to see. This is how prayer should be, when we come Wednesday nights, and I'm not saying to not pray out loud, but it's not for a show. It's to call out to God and you can call out to God in your own room, by yourself. It doesn't require other people to be there. Moses is making it very clear that he's not interceding with God for show, the demonstration of it is that the flies disappear. So he says, "and I will entreat the Lord, that the swarms of flies may depart tomorrow from Pharaoh." It's interesting that with the frogs he said he would show him honor, tell me when you want the frogs to go away and that's when they will go away. Pharaoh said he wanted them to go away tomorrow even though we know from the Psalms that Egypt was being destroyed by the frogs. They weren't some minor thing where they are ribbiting and you can't sleep. This is that the land is destroyed by the frogs and Pharaoh says they can last another day. Now people are being eaten by flying insects and Moses is saying that tomorrow the flies will go away. It seems to me that Pharaoh's pride wanted it to wait another day with the frogs. There is some sense that this is judgement on Pharaoh. If he had humbly said he wanted the frogs to go now, it seems much more likely that Moses would have removed the swarms now. Instead Moses follows Pharaoh's path and says he will remove them tomorrow "from his servants, and from his people." They were filling the houses of the people and again it's hard for us to get a sense of this, but these are thick. That's the word that's used, they are swarms that are thick and filling their houses so much that all these biting insects, all these mosquitoes are covering the ground. Moses says he will remove them tomorrow. But then he gives Pharaoh a warning, "But let Pharaoh not deal deceitfully anymore." As I said in introducing this passage, Pharaoh with the pressure that he was under as he was swarming with the insects and being bitten and they were eating his blood, which is what blood sucking insects do, they're thick in his house, they are covering the floors and he says he will let the people go and worship. He will let them go to make the sacrifices that God is demanding. We shouldn't think Pharaoh is sitting there telling himself that he's not really going to do it, that he's just trying to convince Moses.

Pharaoh in all likelihood, is thinking he is going to have to do this. We should be thinking this because this is how we do it. We should think that Pharaoh is trying to be honest here, he's saying he is really going to do it and he believes it's what he will do, but it's not what he does. Moses says not to deal deceitfully like he did last time with the frogs when he said he would let the people go and then he wouldn't let the people go. So he says not to deal deceitfully "in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord." Pharaoh didn't want them to go, he believed they would use the opportunity to flee and Moses rightfully thought this is what's going to happen and he warned Pharaoh, 'Don't stop the people from going to sacrifice to the Lord.' Moses even knows that Pharaoh is going to stop them because he knows when they will be released. God has already told them that the people will be released, meaning He told Moses and Aaron, that the people would be released after the killing of the firstborn son and this is not the killing of the firstborn son. Moses still goes and entreats.

Verses 30-32, "So Moses went out from Pharaoh and entreated the Lord. And the Lord did according to the word of Moses; He removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. Not one remained. But Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also; neither would he let the people go." So Moses leaves Pharaoh, he cries out to God just as he promised to do. He intercedes for Pharaoh "And the Lord did according to the word of Moses." When we hear how Pharaoh hardened his heart, there's one passage that's coming up where it says Pharaoh hardened his heart and immediately afterwards it says God hardened Pharaoh's heart. We should recognize that there's this idea of duality of wills, that God's will will be done, what He decrees will come to pass. So there's a sense that God is doing it and Pharaoh's doing it, but Pharaoh is willingly choosing to harden his heart. It's really easy for us to look at it in this negative sense of, 'Why won't people come to Christ?' They won't come to Christ because their heart is hard and that means they have real responses to the preaching of the gospel so 'all who seek Him will find Him' can be true at the same time. These aren't contradictory. Here we see it in a positive sense, the Lord is doing according to the word of Moses, the Lord is fulfilling the prayer of Moses, but the reason that He is fulfilling the prayer of Moses is not due to the absence of His will. No, it was His will that Moses pray to Him so He could do what Moses asked. The two wills are not fighting against each other, they're not in contradiction to one another, God's will is done, but Moses is willingly going and He is willingly entreating exactly when God wanted him to petition. We need to understand this is how prayer works, this is how prayer continues to work. Prayer never overrules the sovereignty of God, rather prayer establishes the sovereignty of God because if God is not sovereign, why pray to Him if He can't do anything anyway. It's easy to think of it in the negative, but we should also think of it in the positive in the sense that we do what God asks and He says there will be blessings. It's not that we control God by doing that, it's that we're being controlled by doing that which causes God to do what we ask. So God commands us to pray, but at the same time He is the One who brings conviction in our hearts of what to pray for, He is the One that brings things to mind that we should pray for. He is the One that causes us to pray and then answers that prayer so that He is glorified, so His mercy and righteousness is known. Being commanded to pray and being told that the effect of fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much is not a rejection of God's sovereignty because it's God working in us that causes us to pray that He

then answers. Just like it is with Moses here, God already said what He is going to do, but He does it in response to Moses' prayer, but Moses is praying because of what God is doing so the two are not contradictory to each other. "He removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people." All these heavy, these thick swarms of biting insects, He removed them out of Pharaoh's house, out of his servants house and off the land. In other plagues we find out what happens to them, like the locusts get blown out in the sea, or the frogs just die where they are. Here we aren't told what happens to them, we're just told that "not one remained." Think about that, you're talking about the Nile. The Nile has a lot of marshy areas near it. Do you think there were mosquitoes before all the mosquitoes came out? God actually leaves this better than when the plague starts because there's biting insects. You walk out in the woods here and there are things that bite you and yet God caused not one to remain. Just like the swarms coming upon them is a miracle, we should also look at this, this is a miracle that shows the mercy of God. Not one remained. All these mosquitoes that are covering the ground, then in a moment they are all gone. Not just most of them, but all of them are gone. He's proving that He's sovereign. The magicians, when there were frogs, they could bring up more frogs. When there was blood they could bring up more blood, but they couldn't get rid of the blood or frogs. God shows He is far greater than that, He gets rid of them in a moment. "But Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also." Pharaoh did as he did with the plague of frogs, instead of keeping his vow to God that he would let the people go when God removed the plague, as soon as God removed the plague and the pressure was taken off of him, Pharaoh hardened his heart. He looked at what was done and said that he could see the destruction but because it was over, he could resist the will of God. That's what hardening your heart looks like, it's to say 'I can resist the power of God, I can resist the will of God. I am stronger than God and I can resist Him.' Remember, Pharaoh knew who God was. It's not like he didn't know, Pharaoh knew who God is, Pharaoh knew that God was the One that had to remove all these biting insects. He knew, but that's not enough, he wasn't willing to submit. Belief that causes reaction is different in degree than just believing. Pharaoh believed, but not enough to submit to God. Pharaoh hardened his heart thinking that he could get his way and that God would not get His way. Let's make sure we see the example of Pharaoh and we're not like this. When you read the Scripture and see a commandment and you go, 'God commands us to keep the Sabbath day, but well, God doesn't really mean that.' 'Yeah, I should love my wife as Christ loves the church, but God doesn't really mean that, God won't judge me for not doing that.' Yes He will, it has real consequences. He is God and He is sovereign. We need to make sure we're not thinking like Pharaoh and we might be thinking like Pharaoh even as a Christian when we say we put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ, but whenever we look at a commandment of God and we say it doesn't really matter, we are being like Pharaoh. That's what Pharaoh did, he knew better, but yet he still ignored the commandment of God. The sign of that is that "neither would he let the people go." It was out of the hardness of heart that you see Pharaoh's response, it was about his own belief about who he was compared to God that caused him to not let the people go. He is seeing his land destroyed by frogs and seeing his land devoured by insects, but he still says he can resist God. Make sure you're not like that, no one can resist God's will.

Applications:

1. Examine your conversation. Are you dealing deceitfully? Maybe you don't think you are, and that's why I am saying to examine your conversation. Think about the way you deal with your children, think about the ways you deal with work. We can deceive ourselves about dealing deceitfully. Are you really walking in the light? Are you really being honest and straightforward? If you put yourself beyond the current situation, will you continue to do what you say you're going to do? When we remember the example of Pharaoh, this is not supposed to be our example, this is a warning. We have all been in situations like this where there is pressure on us and we agree to do something that we don't intend to do. Make sure you don't follow Pharaoh's example. We're to remember the example of Christ. Isaiah 53:9, "And they made His grave with the wicked— But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth." Examine your words to see if there is deceit in your mouth.
2. We need to understand that fighting against God can make us quite foolish. Pharaoh suggests something that when Moses says there will be people rioting in the street and people killing them, Pharaoh says it's right, but because of his rebellion to God, because he was in this fight against God that he was losing, he said something very stupid and very foolish. Again, we need to recognize this happens every day. The only reason that anybody tries to argue that Darwinian evolution is true is because they say there is no God. There's no other reason, it is a dumb theory, a really stupid theory. The basis of the theory is that out of chaos will come order. That is the dumbest idea and if you look at the world, everyone knows this isn't true or everyone would want a fifty year old car instead of a new car. The reality is that everything falls apart, everything goes from order to chaos. That is the effect of sin in the world and everybody can see it and everybody knows it. If you don't mow your lawn it doesn't get nicer, it gets worse. The theory of Darwinian evolution is insane so why do people embrace it? Why do people who pretend like they are so intelligent, so knowledgeable, why do they say this is true? It is because when you fight with God, you become a fool. How about the current thing that's going on, that there's boys born in girls' bodies. Think about that, that is so stupid! That is idiotic! God is mocking these intellectuals by saying it, that's what happens when you fight against God, God mocks you. This is where we are as a nation, this is absurd this idea. There are XY chromosomes, we have known this for a long time, there has never been a boy born in a girl's body or a girl born in a boy's body, it doesn't happen, it's not possible. All these scientists know it but then they turn around and say it's not true. This is what happens when you fight against God, you lose and what you lose first is usually your mind and your ability to reason because you have to reject reality to fight against God. That's what Pharaoh is doing, rejecting reality. Submitting to God is about humbling yourself. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Recognizing who God is is how you turn from foolishness. All the intellectuals in the world say these things that make them to be fools because they won't start with what's required, which is fear of God. Pharaoh, even though he has fear of God because he knows where the insects came from, still has foolishness, still suggests things that would be worse for Egypt because he is blinded. If you want to know true wisdom, submit yourself to God.

3. We should recognize the abominations in our culture and the things that our culture finds abominable because it's changing quickly. We should recognize as we go to knock down those idols, which we have a responsibility to do, they've been appointed for destruction the Bible says. Even in our lukewarm culture, we should recognize that people will become filled with rage. When Christians have been martyred in the history of the church, it's almost never for what they practice, it's for what they refuse to accept. The Christian martyrs at the time of the Roman empire, it's because they wouldn't say the emperor was a god. The killing time in Scotland where they killed 18,000, it was because they would not bend their knee and say God's body and blood was physically present in the elements and that caused a nation to be filled with rage so they killed 18,000 people. Understand, this is what people die for when we talk about being martyred for the Christian faith, it's not accepting the abominations that are around you. As our culture, it's getting more and more violent and more and more angry. If you say sexual perversity is sexual perversity, this is one of the things that our society is saying is an abomination, saying it's an abomination to say two people shouldn't marry. Sacrificing your children to the god of prosperity, that's an abomination. We're a 50/50 nation, but the people who will be filled with rage, they're the ones that say, 'How dare you say I'm not allowed to murder my child. Who do you think you are?' They're the ones who show up at the abortion clinic holding foolish signs because they're filled with rage at the idea that you're speaking about something that they believe is an abomination to say that, it's an abomination to say it's wrong to murder your child. It's always the one that justifies the wicked and condemns the just, that's what they want to do, justify the wicked and condemn the just. When you refuse to do that, when you condemn the wicked and try to justify the righteous, there will be people that get angry at you. I'm not saying we avoid saying these things, what I'm saying is we should understand what our society considers to be abominations so we know when we are flipping over idols because we should be prepared for the rage that will follow. They did it in Ephesus, they did it in Jerusalem, they said they would do it in Egypt. This is what people are like, we need to recognize the power of emotions. Right now people aren't physically trying to kill them, but think of the baker in Colorado that simply refused to bake a cake for a sodomite wedding and they tried to destroy him financially and in every way they could. It will get worse unless we shine forth the light because darkness flees from the light, but it will get worse. We should recognize the rage that people have when you do something or you say something that they consider to be an abomination.
4. Society has picked abominations. Things that are not abominations in the Bible, like slavery, as a nation we have said that slavery is an abomination. Which since Christ is the biggest slaveholder, they are calling Him an abomination because He owns all people and He is a slaveholder. We need to recognize that societies say it's an abomination and they take things that aren't true. Because we are in a society that has chosen things as abominations, we need to recognize this is what it looks like to renew your mind. It's not just to accept what the society says as evil and good. Renewing your mind has to be where you look at something and say it's evil, but then look and see that God's word says it's not. I remember when I was teaching some years ago in an SLBC class and we were on the degrees of consanguinity, how close of people you are

allowed to marry and I said, 'God says it's not an abomination to marry your cousin.' People got really really upset at that idea, that marrying your cousin was fine. But I'm like, 'God said it was fine. The fact that you think it's wrong God says it's ok, who's right? God is.' Our society has chosen that to be an abomination because they decide they should be holier than God. God has said you can't marry your sister, your uncle's wife, and all sorts of degrees that you can't marry, but cousin isn't one of them. You can marry your cousin. Yet, we want to say we've come up with that as an abomination when it's not. A few trips ago in Nigeria, I ate dog. Why did I eat dog? I didn't have this great desire to eat dogs, but the reality is that there's nothing wrong with eating dog. That's what the Bible says. Even though our culture says that's an abomination, it's not! God said it's not and we need to accept God's definition of what an abomination is rather than our definition. We all come from a culture that has chosen things and said it's an abomination, but if we don't say what actually is an abomination, we'll end up chasing things that are hated by the society that God says are fine. It's fine to marry your cousin, it's evil for a man to marry another man. Society will turn abominations so they can call things that are abominations in the sight of God, fine because every society has to have it's abominations. The question is, are we being renewed in what we think are our abominations? Are we taking the word of God and saying, 'God said to Peter kill and eat, there's nothing wrong with eating dog.' That's what God said to Peter, we have it clearly from God. There's nothing wrong with eating dog. We need to make sure we are looking and saying we don't consider things abominations that God does or we will start to say things that God considers abominations are not. Lying lips are an abomination before God, but we will say eating dog is worse than lying. Let's renew our minds and let's make sure we're not substituting what God says are abominations for what man says are abominations.

5. Let your yes be yes and your no be no. That's what it means to deal deceitfully, you don't have your yes be yes and your no be no. It's easy when we say something so say we didn't consider that, the situation has changed, all the insects and mosquitoes are gone so now I'm not going to let the people go. That's dealing deceitfully. When we say circumstances change that we should have predicted and known would change and we say that means our position changes, no, that's dealing deceitfully. That's letting your yes be no. If you could have thought about it and realized that it wasn't true, you had a duty to not commit to it. Paul says when he's talking to the church in Corinth, here's why I didn't come to you, 2 Corinthians 1:17-18, "Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly? Or the things I plan, do I plan according to the flesh, that with me there should be Yes, Yes, and No, No? But as God is faithful, our word to you was not Yes and No." Things came up that Paul could not have predicted so he couldn't meet his commitments because God stopped him. He said he considered everything he thought he could know so he said he could do it. We have a duty when we say yes to something, when we make a commitment to consider if we will carry it out. Not just pleasant thoughts to carry it out right now. I know I've done this and we need to get the right definition that this is dealing deceitfully and this is not what Christ does. No deceit was found in Christ's mouth. Let's make sure our yes is yes and our no is no and we're not

just doing things lightly. Paul says he didn't do it lightly, when he said these words he said it was an important thing.

6. Knowing God is not enough, you have to submit to Him as Lord. That's the outworking of faith that He gives as a gift. Pharaoh knew that God was Lord, but that didn't make him right with God. It's submitting to God that's required. Are you submitting to God as your Lord? Are you saying you're not going to accept the abominations of America, instead I am going to say what God says? I'm not going to accept the abominations that God says are abominations. That's the great commission, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and to teach them all the things I have commanded you. That is the great commission, it's not just to say you're going to submit to God. It's to say that you're going to figure out what God says is true and you're going to renew your mind so you're going to think the way God thinks. Are you submitting to God? Are you desiring your thoughts to be? Are you like it talks about in 2 Peter, where Peter says, 'Do you desire the word like a newborn babe desires it's mother's milk?' It's because they are renewing their mind and that's what we should be like, not desiring to continue in the old ways, but recognizing we need to learn what's an abomination in God's sight and not just in the sight of America or wherever else we are from.

Let me close us in prayer. Oh Lord God, we do thank You for Your word. We do pray that You warn us and You open our eyes to where we are like Pharaoh, where we are dealing deceitfully. Show us where we're looking at things and considering them abominations when the reality is that You say they're not abominations or where we're not looking at things that are abominations according to Your word and we say it's not that bad. Lord, change us and let us as we see this passage and hear these things, let us be changed so that we think and act not like Pharaoh, but in righteousness. We ask this in Your Son's name, amen.