

WELCOME 2nd July 2023 – 5th Sunday after Pentecost '23 A

Exodus 7:1-25 & 8:16-19 (series slide with others separately on click)

Welcome! It's great to be together again today! **Bible Study Qs** are there to equip you so God can lead you deeper into His word/work in your life, & so you can share that w/ someone else. We also use them for our **Zoom Bible Study Catch-ups** on Friday @ 1p.m.

(This week's slide – next 3 on top of it) **As we move into this week...**

I couldn't have made it without you. I don't know what I would have done if you hadn't been here. How many times have we been under the pump & someone stepped in & made all the difference...right place right time right amount of help & things changed for the better? We could all tell that story...maybe 100x over.

In the cosmic confrontation between God & all who would seek for themselves God's place in the universe, God always enlists partners in his purpose & promise so the world would see God's greatness goodness & glory.

You know some of the names...Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses & Aaron, kings, prophets, apostles & you & me...called by God to participate in his work & reveal to those around us who he is & how vast is his love for us. God invites you to be partners in the promise as you simply do what he calls you to do in order to reveal the greatness & majesty of his name.

So Moses & Aaron did just as the Lord had commanded them. Moses was eighty years old, & Aaron was eighty-three when they made their demands to Pharaoh.

From Easter on...that's us...

We'll experience & share that today...Let's pray...

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Father you call us as your own & release us into this world for your purposes. Let every thought word & deed be held firm in your grace. Make our worship today & our lives in all things a reflection of your mission to this world & the path ahead for this band of disciple one that invites others into your life & love. Amid challenges & changes equip us by your Spirit for whatever tasks you have set for us. Infuse your wisdom into our hearts so that we discern your will & way in all things for your glory & the widened embrace of your kingdom in this city...through Jesus we pray...Amen.

Let's hear God's word...

(Sue...as per usual)

FAITH CHAT:

- 1. When you think of "power," what are you most likely to be thinking?**
- 2. Who is someone who helps you see God? What is it that they do?**

5 PENTECOST '23 A – A JOURNEY OF PROMISE: PARTNERS IN THE PROMISE

This week again...a bit of a different approach...& you're going to need to have the texts out in front of you...either the service order or your Bibles...**BIBLES** are always better & you ought to be bringing them w/ you...take notes/underline things I mention...

1st...today's theme text...**So** Moses & Aaron did just as the Lord had commanded them. Moses was 80 years old, & Aaron was 83 when they made their demands to Pharaoh. What do you see? Obedient? Age? Together? Confront evil face-to-face? God in charge? Does it matter? Were they necessary? Could God have done the Exodus w/o them?

2nd...**vs 23**...Pharaoh returned to his palace & put the whole thing out of his mind. What has **JUST** happened in Egypt when we read that? Nile to blood. Fish die. River undrinkable. Egyptians are scrabbling all over for H₂O & Pharaoh...does...? How can he do that? He's got wine I imagine & slaves out digging little holes & travelling up into the mountains to bring him water...no skin off his nose...When a leader puts his peoples' misery "out of his mind" what does that suggest to you?

3rd...8:19...*"This is the finger of God!" the magicians exclaimed to Pharaoh. But Pharaoh's heart remained hard. He wouldn't listen to them, just as the Lord had predicted.* Now what do you see? Where is Pharaoh in all this? Remember...“magicians” are part of his cabinet, advisors, wisdom behind the throne. This is the 4th plague: river to blood, frogs, flies, gnats... 1st one they can't replicate. They could “do” all the others but could not “undo” **them**. Evil cannot create it can only corrupt. Jas 1:17 Jn 10:10 Now they're facing something bigger than all their dark arts. Where are the magicians? Where's Pharaoh? At this moment, he still commands the kingdom, but he is all alone.

It has always **been**...rebellion isolates **---** disobedience distances **■** sin separates. Just as surely as evil can only corrupt & not create **THAT** is also true. Pharaoh may still be calling the shots in his kingdom but he is all alone. His power to command & kill is still his...no one's challenged that portion of his power but he is alone & the most power-less man in his reign. Rebellion, disobedience, & sin always set you outside the community where hope wholeness healing wisdom take place... Rebellion, disobedience, sin always wall you into your own private kingdom. There is not **A** thing Pharaoh can do at this moment to lighten the burden he has brought on his own people because he won't do the **ONLY** thing that would - stop playing **God** *Pharaoh's heart remained hard. He wouldn't listen...just as the Lord had predicted.* He could repent but he will not...no surprise there. It has always been that way as well. Which is what Paul says to the church in Rome... *Rom 1:18ff*

For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth & sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power &

divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. They began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their **minds became dark & confused**. Claiming to be wise they instead **became utter fools**. Instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people & birds & animals & reptiles. self as God

So **God abandoned them** to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired...They traded the truth of God for a lie. So they worshiped & served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise!...That is why **God abandoned them** to their shameful desires...Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, **he abandoned them** to their foolish thinking & let them do things that should never be done.

We know this...sin separates you from God & alienates you from others & the farther you chase your “idols”...whatever you think is going to make your life the bestest it can be...the farther down that slippery slope you go the harder it is to even hear what God is saying any more. Pharaoh is so far down that rabbit hole he's not getting out. Pharaoh has 9 opportunities to turn this around & 10 times he digs the hole he's in deeper. You know what's sad...I know folks just like that.

Now I know sin lives here & we all admitted last week we are each our own Pharaoh...but I know folks who flat won't give up digging & they just get deeper...keep chasing the same illusions of health wealth wholeness healing happiness keeping-the-peace not forcing anything on any one...waiting until...So God gives us that to which we cling the tightest...we claim has greatest power...offers the most hope...or highest joy or utmost promise...as empty fleeting futile failing fake as it may be... When God hands you over to your god & you double-down on that false hope your heart gets harder. God doesn't have to make your situation worse...Lk 16 Rich man & Lazarus...in anguish alone vs comforted in the company of Abraham/saints – Prodigal Son

The contrast couldn't be clearer...*Pharaoh's heart remained hard. He wouldn't listen.* Pharaoh may still be calling the shots in his kingdom but he is all alone. He's in the prime of his life & the seat of power in his kingdom but he is absolutely alone & completely power-less in his test of will & strength against God. **But...** *Moses & Aaron did just as the Lord had commanded them. Moses was 80 years old, & Aaron was 83 when they made their demands to Pharaoh.* Whatever else we say about Moses & Aaron, the key point to note is “**and**”...It's always Moses **AND** Aaron. Even when they get stuff wrong...God has yoked himself, his promises, & his purpose to Moses **AND** Aaron. **God** always enlists partners in his purpose & promise so the world would see God's greatness goodness & glory. Just like this...

Afterward Jesus went up on a mountain & called out the ones he wanted to go with him. When they came to him, he appointed twelve of them & called them his apostles. They were

to accompany him, & he would send them out to preach, giving them authority to cast out demons. – Mk 3:13-15 God always enlists partners in his purpose & promise so the world would see God's greatness goodness & glory...*The Lord now chose seventy-two other disciples & sent them ahead in pairs to all the towns & places he planned to visit.* – Lk 10:1 God always enlists partners in his purpose & promise so the world would see God's greatness goodness & glory...like this: *You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.* – 2 Tim 2:2 God always enlists partners in his purpose & promise so the world would see God's greatness goodness & glory...

We could do this for hours...but notice, just as surely as God partners w/ us we are partnered w/ other faithful people. It's always Moses **AND** Aaron. The 12. 2 x 2. Paul **AND** his travelling companions enlisting others so that they are never alone. We have looked in some depth at the "one anothers" of the NT...nearly 60 commands about how our being united w/ & in Christ calls forth certain ways of living that bless, care for, strengthen, encourage, challenge, forgive...one another. *Heb 10:23-25 - Let us hold tightly w/ no wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. Let us think of ways to spur one another on to acts of love & good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.*

All that so that together we help others see who God is in his all his greatness goodness & glory. Just like all those & the many many faith ancestors before them, you & I are called by God to participate in his work & reveal to those around us who he is & how vast is his love for us **AND** what a difference his love power provision protection makes in our lives. God invites you to be partners in the promise as you simply do what he calls you to do in order to reveal the greatness & majesty of his name.

TAKE IT HOME –

How will you help people see God this week?

Who will be your "partner" in that effort?

Let's pray with that in mind...

"Lord, do whatever you need to do **IN** us, so you can do whatever you want to do **THROUGH** us so that all whom we know in this city & beyond might be called into the embrace of your love your power & your purpose...through Jesus Christ...Amen.