

I Exodus Five left Moses in a difficult position with the Children of Israel. (Moses was, understandably, at a loss for what to say, when the Israelite foremen met him after their meeting with Pharaoh. What do we do, when we don't know what else to do? Moses prayed, as we all should learn to do. Now when we share some secret with someone, and whether or not we tell them to keep the secret is not important here, when we share the secret we say that we confide in them, or we take them into our confidence. This is how God answered Moses' prayer, in Chapter Six. God took Moses into His confidence, which usually only happens with prophets. When we say that someone *has confidence*, that means that he trusts his own abilities; when we say that anyone has someone else's confidence, that means that another person trusts him. We see here that although Moses seems to have a crisis of self-confidence, God trusts him; and God demonstrates His trust in Moses by confiding in him some things He has never confided in anyone else. It was God's way of helping Moses understand his role in these events.)

A Perhaps we should ask ourselves what Moses thought would happen. (Do we suppose that Pharaoh laughed at Moses? Or that Moses was offended by Pharaoh's refusal to obey God's orders? Moses would have known that Pharaoh would not agree to God's Will very soon; but he would not have expected Pharaoh to increase the work load for the Children of Israel or for the Israelite foremen to question his leadership. We may guess that Moses is at a loss for what to say or do now, not because of Pharaoh's hardness of heart—God told him to expect that—but because the people he thought would wait for his cue and then follow him without question are now so discouraged that they don't want to hear anything more from him at all. We seem to have a tendency to imagine how we think things should play out, and sometimes we even anticipate alternative results and make plans to deal with them; but we also frequently discover that *the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry* and we are confused, even frustrated, by the Law of Unintended Consequences. Moses seems to be learning

this lesson, in Exodus Chapter Six.)

B It is perhaps more useful for us, to ask how we would react to such a surprise.

(What should the student do, who studies hard and then fails the test anyway? Or the business that exercises budgetary discipline in order to squeeze out higher profits, only to discover that the cost of materials and labor has increased so much that the best he can now afford is only 68% of production capacity? Or the athletic coach who drills his team in a game-changing strategy only to learn that the opposing team has learned a better way to defend against it? The best answer is, when a trainee-pilot crashes his airplane or when a cowboy gets thrown from his horse, you get him back into another airplane or on the horse again just as soon as his physical injuries are healed. We stipulate *physical* injuries, because the cowboy and the pilot have something significant in common with the businessman with inadequate financing, the student with bad test scores, and with Moses. In such a case, attitude makes all the difference to whether subsequent efforts will succeed. The student might fail again and the cowboy might get thrown again, but if he quits, he will never succeed. God is not willing to let Moses quit; and God will not be happy if we quit, either.)

II Moses did what we must learn to do when we have a problem. (He prayed. When it is my problem or yours, we pray... sometimes. Often, even when we pray fiercely, we still tell God all about what *we* did and what *we* think He should have done, and how *we* think He should change things so that *our* plans will work better. We may even share with God some changes we want to make in our plans, so that they will succeed better, and we pray as if we are the foreman and God is the worker. There is a very large group of Christians that believes we *should pray* in that way, so that God will know precisely what *we* want *Him* to do for *us*. They will tell you that angels are ministering spirits, and that when God answers our prayers it is by angelic agency; therefore we even can (and they try to) command the angels in prayer. Now before we go too far out onto this tangent of heresy, I shall remind you that there is absolutely no basis in scripture for that

doctrine. It comes from the same people who preach the Prosperity Gospel and tell you that your ability to speak in tongues proves that you are spiritual enough to make it work for you. They are categorically wrong. This is the spirit of humanism in the churches, not the Spirit of God; and the Bible has a very different message for believers.)

A Moses went back to God and reminded Him what He had said. (There is nothing wrong with reminding God of His promises; but He hasn't forgotten them. As we remind God, we remind ourselves too. God's promises are for us, He promised to take care of us, to be with us even unto the end of the world. But God's promises come with strings attached. That is to say, God requires something of us, too; and if we are willing to do what He tells us to do then He will do what He has promised to do. We ought to remember that the context of *Lo, I am with you always* was Christ's command to the disciples which we know as the Great Commission. Jesus said that God knows what we need even before we ask, but that we should ask anyway. That came in a context framed by *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.* The liberals seek neither the Kingdom of God nor His Righteousness, they seek for the *things* which they think will make their lives easier in this world. Certainly, when we have a problem, we should pray, as Moses did. We should pray about God's promises for us; and we should pray about our sincerity in performing the requirements God insists on as prerequisites for those promises.)

B Let us be sure to understand God correctly. (Do you know any sincere believers who are just too lazy to read the Bible and ask themselves hard questions, about how to apply all of it to *their* lives? We know a lot of them, but they are not likely to confess to laziness. They are a lot more likely to say that they try to read the Bible but that it is too hard to understand, and they try listening to sermons in church but they don't quite get it, and they tried praying but God didn't answer so they stopped; and nevertheless they desperately want to find grace from God. What they really want is for God to smile on them and bless their lives and businesses with prosperity, without requiring them to

repent or forsake any of the worldliness which they want to pay for with their prosperity. They know nothing about God; they think Him to be some *Santa-Claus-in-the-sky* whom they meet in the liberal institutional churches, which depend upon the financial support from their members to pay for opulent buildings and the parties and games with which they attract the big crowds. Let us understand the One True God of the Bible a little better: God is holy; but man is depraved. The soul of humanity is dead in sin and trespass; but God is all about life: the new, spiritual life He intends to put into the soul of any believer who will repent and forsake sin, and be born again by water and spirit. God provided the only way into that life, in the Person of His Son Jesus Christ, and no amount of smoke-and-mirrors church work, or secular entertainment that masquerades as a worship service, or humanistic culture that pretends to be fellowship is going to get anyone into Heaven. None of that should be called evangelism, only preaching the Word of God qualifies as that; and no church worker who cannot preach the Gospel has any business calling himself any other kind of “minister”. So let us pray, and understand the God to Whom we are praying, and speak to Him of His Will, and not of our own.)

C Let us learn to trust God to perform His promises. (This issue seems to be at the center of the crisis for Moses. He was wondering if God was really serious; or if he might have misunderstood what God intended by saying, *Go, and tell Pharaoh to let My people go.* Now to his credit, Moses did not quit on God; but he certainly seems to be worried about the results of his efforts on God’s behalf. So we can think of God as the ultimate psychologist here. God remembered what He had said to Moses, and to the Patriarchs too; and God’s plans were proceeding right on schedule. Moses just doesn’t realize this. So God took Moses into His confidence, and told him a few things He had not told to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is like a father putting his arm around his son’s shoulder and saying, “I know it’s hard to get a job; just keep your spirits up, and I’ll make a few phone calls, and we’ll get things going the right direction.” The son suspects that all job interviews will end in equal, or worse, disappointments; but Dad knows, if

his son does not, that the right recommendation from the right person will get him past the human resources office and into an interview with the person who will hire him. God, as the Father in this analogy, knew what to do to make Pharaoh listen to Moses, even though Moses did not know. God told Moses to go back, to try again, and again and again, until God made things work out right. Let us note here, too, that Moses is a humble man. His pride does not obstruct his obedience to God. In other words, he did not quit on God just because his own authority and leadership were called into question. We must learn to follow this example from Moses: to be humble enough to depend on God and not ourselves, to do what must be done; to make our way around impediments and ignore the people who construct them; to obey the Word and the Will of God thoroughly and precisely. If we understand what God intends to do, and we understand that we are only tools in His Hand, then we can find the courage to confront even the worst enemies of the faith without fearing what might happen after we challenge them. That, however, requires an investment of more diligent Bible study and devout prayer than the average secular humanist is willing to make, because he thinks that he is saved by virtue of his church membership and its ceremonial rituals.)

III God shared His thoughts with Moses. (God has shared His thoughts with us, too. We have them in a Book called the Bible. We will never understand the infinite mind of God with our finite human intelligence; we will only get a little bit of it, and only if we read the Bible. What if there was no Bible to read? We could understand a little, but far less about God, from nature. It is highly probably that we would *misunderstand* God if we looked only at nature; and it is also probably that we would get even further from Truth if we looked only at nature and only at the parts of the Bible to which we were directed by people with less than pure motives. This is why ancient cultures worshipped nature and why modern people have cults. We might indeed understand that there was a Star-Maker from observing stars; but Chaldeans (where Abram lived), and Egyptians (where Moses lived), saw not one God but many gods; Greeks and Romans the souls of

their dead ancestors among the stars. (Perhaps this explains why God chose to establish His Covenant with Abraham rather than with some other group.) Only Abraham was faithful to God's Covenant, which went back from his ancestors all the way to Noah, and from Noah to Adam and Eve. We say that God has shared His thoughts with us in the Bible. What does the Bible add to the glory of God as It is declared by nature, according to Psalm 19? It adds the message of Redemption. Stars and planets can speak of the existence of an intelligent Creator; if we are sensitive to the message they might also tell us how unreachable He is, from our finite, mortal condition. We are not *alive* with His Spirit, only longing to be so, to have this dry sponge of a human spirit soaked in the Water of Life. Our collective consciousness remembers better times that are now irretrievably lost to us, because of sin by our long-gone ancestors. The Heavens declare the Glory of God, they do not tell us that God gave His only begotten Son to redeem us from sin and give us new, eternal life, by our faith in Him. That is a message we will get only in the Bible, and only if someone who has the Word of Faith preaches it to us; *for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God* (Romans 10:17). The thoughts which God will share with us are thoughts about Himself; of His love for humanity and His Sacrifice of His Son to redeem us; of His passion that we who have the Gospel of Salvation by Grace through faith in Jesus *be* His hands and feet and voice to take His Message to those who do not have it. Our thoughts for ourselves are not godly thoughts, they are selfish; God's thoughts are for our Salvation: *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,* (Ephesians 1:18-20). What is "His power to us-ward who believe"? *...the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God* (I Corinthians 1:18). So the preaching of the

cross is the Power of God; it is to us-ward because it is for our benefit, that is, for our Salvation and edification. The preaching of the cross is the method by which we can exercise the power of God to accomplish the Will of God, Who *is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* (2 Peter 3:18). God is unwaveringly concerned about us; not about making us feel good in spite of our wretched sinful condition, but about saving us from sin —and saving others from sin, too. This is what God shares with us in scripture, about the intimate thoughts of His heart. How careless we are, to be too selfish with our time to read it!

A God reminded Moses Who he was talking to. (*I am God, He said. Moses was not God. God was there to speak to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and establish His covenant with them; Moses was not. God had the ability to intrude into the life of a Midianite shepherd from a bush that would burn but not be consumed; Moses could only listen, and then either obey or disobey. We will recall that God chose Moses because He knew that Moses would not run away in spite of his propensity to do so; and now God tells Moses to go back to Pharaoh and tell him, again, to let the Children of Israel go, in spite of Moses' propensity not to do so. Why not just bypass Moses and go directly to Aaron, since it must be Aaron who speaks anyway? This is another symbol by which God will represent spiritual truth to Moses, Aaron, the Children of Israel, and Pharaoh. God will speak to Moses but not be seen; Moses will be seen but not heard, and speak to Aaron as God. Aaron will be both seen and heard, as a prophet who hears from God (in this case, God's representative, Moses), and then proclaims the Word and Will of God for all to hear. Moses will use Aaron and his rod now as God used Moses and his rod previously. This might represent several things to us. The significant points are that God is still God, even if He invests Moses with some of His Power, and Moses still has the Power of God at His disposal (and uses it to end some of the plagues), even though he invests Aaron with some of it. Aaron would be just another insignificant nobody to Pharaoh and the Children of Israel, without Moses' command, just as Moses would have remained just*

another insignificant shepherd without God's command. What is it, then, that will change Israel from a nomadic tribe of herdsmen into a Kingdom of Priests? It will be the command of God—in their case, 10 of them. And what changes believers from self-conscious sinners who are at best only nominally concerned with better morality into the collective repository of the Grace of God in the temporal world, which we call the Holy Church of God and the Body of Jesus Christ? Again, it is the command of God, in our case, in the form of the Great Commission.)

B Moses knew more about God than the Patriarchs had known. (We may suppose that Noah knew God better than anyone had known Him since the deaths of Adam and Eve; and that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob knew Him better than Noah had known Him. The Patriarchs had received God's Promise about inheriting the Land of Canaan, and, we suppose, kept the Messianic Promise alive too, since God kept telling them that He would establish His Covenant with them. Now Moses was going to see a demonstration of the Power of God that others before him could have only guessed at. God will intrude into human affairs to influence human decisions and it will be obvious to everyone that God is in charge. We shall revisit this point in later messages; here we shall say simply that Aaron's actions started plagues, Moses' actions ended them, and then God sent a new one just to make sure they got the point. Each of the Ten Plagues will demonstrate the impotency of an important Egyptian deity, and God will show His Power to be absolute over even the most important Egyptian god, Pharaoh himself.)

C If we do our parts, God will do the rest. (God took Moses into His confidence and told him some things that not even the Patriarchs had known. Moses will be the agent of Divine intervention, and no one will question whether God was at work, and thus God finished counseling Moses. What could Moses have thought, as He concluded his prayer? God had not given him any new miracles, nor left him with any wiggle-room (i.e., God did not say, Well, O.K. if you really feel that way then I guess I'll have to find someone else... would you ask Aaron to come in, please?) Only liberals think that God

works that way. No, it was more like, “O.K. Moses, here’s the plan, again. You and Aaron go to Pharaoh, and give him my message. Now get back in there and get to work.” Could Moses have walked away, even then? Surely, but God knew that he would not. So what happens when you or I pray about our failures in doing God’s Will? God will not change the Bible to accommodate our laziness, and He will not modify its message to make it more acceptable by our secular neighbors or more palatable to our humanistic preferences. No, God will counsel us as He did Moses: “O.K., here’s the plan, again. Read my Book, again. Now get back out there and get to work, again!” So let us do as Moses did; if we preach the Gospel, the Spirit of God will convict men of sin; those who realize their utter depravity will turn to the only Christ Who can save them, and the Kingdom of God will be richer by one more soul.)

IV God told Moses to go to Pharaoh, again. (Did you notice that God did not specify a stopping point? In much the same way, God tells us what we, as believers, must do; He does not tell us when we may quit. In fact, the Gospel message has a somewhat more urgent impetus: in John 9:4 Jesus said, *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: for the night cometh, when no man can work.* So must we all.)

A Good trainers do not allow trainees to quit after failing. (We ought not to leave this point of psychology too quickly or too lightly. God, as the ultimate psychologist, counsels persistence, and Moses, the humble servant, patiently follows orders. We might note how persistent Satan is in tempting us with discouragements, and how much patience cult workers seem to have as they try to recruit new members. Then, perhaps, we may learn a little more patience with ourselves, when we think we have failed, and with our brothers and sisters in the Family of God when we think one of them has slighted us. Now let us ask whether there is some persistence-and-patience training available, that we might undergo it and become better Christians. There is; it is in the Bible. Romans 5:3-5 tells us: *tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed*

*abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.* God is a good trainer. He trained Moses well. He will train you and me well too, if we don't get frustrated and quit on Him. Moses' job is simple: tell Pharaoh to let the Children of Israel go. God will do the rest. Our job is simple too: go to the world and preach the Gospel. God will do the rest. We may not see the results we hope to see immediately; it was the same with Moses. But he did what God told Him to do and God used Moses to do His Will. He could try again because he trusted God to do His part. We may fail to see the results for which we hope, for many reasons, yet there is only *one* reason for total and final failure. We will see our victory over sin and death, and hell and the grave, if we remain faithful to Christ until the end; we will see others share in that victory too, if we don't sit down and quit just because evangelizing unbelievers is such a hard thing to do.)

B Moses was to challenge Pharaoh; God would make him obey. (Moses and Aaron were only tools in God's Hand, as hammers and nails are tools in ours. We can use our hammers and nails to accomplish our will, that is, to hold two boards together, as God used Moses and Aaron to accomplish His Will, which was the Exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt. Yet it is not the hammer and nail that hold the wood together, it is a property called friction, which is created by the combination of the hammer, nail, wood, and energy of the hammer-er, who by his intelligence combines these elements properly to finish the job. In exactly the same way, Moses and Aaron are the tools— i.e. the hammer and nail, by which God, by His Infinite Wisdom, finished the job and nailed Pharaoh to his fate. Moses did his job, Aaron did his job, God did His part, and the work was done. The part of this that is so important to us is that we also are supposed to be tools in the hands of God, the instruments by which He accomplishes His Will, in our lives and in the lives of people whom we must challenge with the Gospel Message. We must learn to do the challenging and to leave the results to God, if we are to serve Him instead of serving our own or someone else's ecclesiastical agendas.)

C We are to challenge unbelievers with the Gospel; God does the rest. (We say

again, this study of Exodus would be little more than an exercise in historical inquiry if we could not see symbolic applications that are relevant to us. Instructions from God are as clear for us as they were for Moses. We also have the advantage of reading the entire Bible; he did not. Just as Moses understood God and His purposes a lot better than the Patriarchs did, so we understand the mind of God much more clearly than Moses did.

Let us re-read the Apostle Paul's explanation of God's logic: *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!* (Romans 10:14-15).

We need to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to unbelievers, not entertain them with worldly music and secular amusements and coddle their humanistic vanity with some warm-and-fluffy feel-good message that gives them a false sense of security in their misunderstanding of the Grace of God. Saints of God will enter Heaven and sinners will burn forever in the fires of Hell, there is no way around that truth; and the only way unbelievers will hear that truth is when godly evangelists gives them the Word of God: and that is our job, my friends!)

V Moses seems to have no confidence in his ability to serve God. (How could he have, when his first effort in God's service was met with rejection and criticism? Now do you know anyone who should be serving God better but has no confidence to do so? Or, do you know someone who has a little too much confidence in his own ability to be of any service to the Kingdom of God? We probably know both; but the latter is not likely to confess his vanity even to God, much less to us. Moses did what we all should do when circumstances shake our foundations; he went back to God in humble prayer. Now can we remember the Words of Christ (Luke 14:11): *whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* Then can we dispense with our efforts to persuade God to join His Spirit to our efforts so that we may succeed at doing

as we please? Since God has taken us into His confidence and shared His Will with us, let us surrender our wills to His Will and simply follow His Word, trusting Him to make things come out right.)

A Like Moses, we fear to fail, and more importantly, we fear to keep repeating the failure. (This is a little like allowing the devil to beat us around the bush about some problem that Christ has already solved; we should stop, pull up the bush, and beat the devil over the head with it. We don't; we fear that our faith is too weak, or too small, or that our resolve will crumble under the next temptation, so we behave as if we are the defeated party. We need to receive God's Counsel, as Moses did, and pick ourselves up and go at it again. It really will not matter if we need victory over a bad habit in our personal lives or if we need to inspire someone else to seek victory in theirs; our part is to use the Word of God to challenge people to repent and forsake sin, even if the sinner is you or me. The Spirit of God assures our victory, by the Resurrection of Jesus. Jesus Christ was victorious over sin, death, hell, and the grave, and in Him we are too!)

B Like Moses, we should follow God's Word and let God do the rest. (Neither the Israelite foremen nor Pharaoh himself could prevent the Will of God from coming to pass. It was God's choice to use Moses to make that happen, as it is His choice to use us, either as individuals or as a church body, to do His Will in our lives and in the lives of those whom we meet day by day. The devil can rant and rave all he wants, but he will only frighten his own slaves, not the Child of God, who is redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb of God, by his faith in the Grace of God. Let us take our problems to God in prayer, and seek for His solutions. We will find them where they have always been, safely stored away in His Holy Word. Now, if God trusts us enough to take us into His confidence and share His thoughts with us, should we not trust Him enough to follow His plans, as laid out in His Word? We should; we don't, but we should. Then let us seek God, in prayerful meditation in His Word, until we can.)