

## UNDERSTANDING REJECTION

### Exodus 5

Background:

Do you remember the first time you faced rejection in your walk with Christ? Maybe it was fresh off your conversion, that first time you shared the good news with another. Maybe, after you presented them with God's saving revelation, they not only rejected, but got angry. Does that sound familiar?

Indeed, if you are a child of God, you have been rejected. That reality is nothing new. And, in our study of Exodus, we will observe this same truth, only in a different time and place. Consider Exodus 5. Read it, reflect on it, and ready your heart for the study.

Call to Worship: Psalm 30

Scripture Reading: II Corinthians 4:7-18

Lord's Table: Romans 5:1-10, I Corinthians 11:23-26

Introduction:

Today, we turn to Exodus 5, and consider this thought, that 'no one likes to be rejected'. Rejection is the stuff of pain, humiliation, and unmet expectations. It hurts so much because it is so stark, and so shocking. But we are not speaking of 'possible rejection'. It is not the stuff of 'Let's see how it goes', not that rejection, nor 'I am hoping for the best', and rejection. No. Today we are considering the rejection that follows 'confidence', and 'certainty', when one is 'on a roll', when momentum is certain, AND THEN COMES REJECTION!

It wasn't supposed to go this way. It all made sense. It was a 'no doubter'. I had a plan. We had an offer. It should have been a 'slam dunk'. Everything made sense, and was going so well. But then the person not only 'rejected' you, but turned on you, and even got angry.

How would you react in such a scenario?

One last variable to consider. What about REJECTION that is 'rejection forewarned', that is predicted, foretold, declared? We are not talking about 'human warnings', not talking about a friend's or a relative's warnings. It is not about your friend's warning, as in, 'I'm telling you, they are going to say no.' sort of thing. This is a 'HIGHER FORTELLING'.

In our flesh we want to say 'I told you so!' But this is but 'earthly guessing', having but a 50/50 chance of being right or wrong. And so, we march on.

But, when the ONE who is never wrong predicts, we need to pay attention. And today, WE ARE TALKING ABOUT 'THE ONE' WHO NEVER WRONGLY PREDICTS. The Almighty Sovereign God decrees, foretells, says, what will happen. And He foretold REJECTION. He infallibly declared that God's offer, God's Word, and God Himself, would be 'rejected'. This 'foretold rejection' was the message that all of the prophets received.

The Prophet Isaiah, for example, was 'commissioned', called by God, to 'go and proclaim' to the people. God was sending him, but Isaiah was warned that the people would hear his message, and yet not understand it, and would therefore 'reject' it. Why? Because their hearts are dull, their ears do not hear, and their eyes are blind. I am calling you, I am sending you, but you will be rejected! This was God's message to Isaiah. Looking at this with 'earthly lenses', this sounds like futility.

Isaiah 6:8-10

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?'  
Then I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'  
And He said, 'Go, and tell this people:  
"Keep on listening, but do not perceive;  
Keep on looking, but do not understand."  
Render the hearts of this people insensitive,  
Their ears dull,  
And their eyes dim,  
Lest they see with their eyes,  
Hear with their ears,  
Understand with their hearts,  
And repent and be healed'." (NASB)

The Prophet Jeremiah was also called and commissioned to work on behalf of the Lord. He too was warned that his work/words would be 'rejected'. Though God was calling him, and though God's words were put in his mouth, still the people would 'fight against him'.

Jeremiah 1:7b-10a,17-19

"The LORD said to me...

'Because everywhere I send you, you shall go,  
And all that I command you, you shall speak.  
Do not be afraid of them,  
For I am with you to deliver you,' declares the LORD.  
Then the Lord stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me,  
'Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.  
See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms...'  
'Now gird up your loins, and arise, and speak to them, all which I command you. Do not be dismayed before them, lest I dismay you before them.  
Now behold, I have made you today as a fortified city, and as a pillar of iron and as walls of bronze against the whole land, to the kings of Judah, to its princes, to its priests and to the people of the land,  
And they will fight against you but they will not overcome you, for I am with you to deliver you.' declares the LORD'." (NASB)

The Prophet Ezekiel was also called, commissioned, and warned of the response he would receive. The LORD told Ezekiel, I am sending you to a nation of 'rebels'. Though your reception will be 'frightening', do not be afraid of these rebellious, stubborn and impatient people. Do not not be dismayed by them.

Ezekiel 2:1-6

"THEN He said to me, 'Son of man, stand on your feet that I may speak with you!' And as He spoke to me the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet; and I heard Him speaking to me. Then He said to me, 'Son of man, I am sending you to the sons of Israel, to a rebellious people who have rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day. And I am sending you to them who are stubborn and obstinate children; and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.' As for them, whether they listen or not --- for they are a rebellious house --- they will know that a prophet has been among them. And you, son of man, neither fear them nor fear their words, though thistles and thorns are with you and you sit on scorpions; neither fear their words nor be dismayed at their presence, for they are a rebellious house. But you shall speak My words to them whether they listen or not, for they are rebellious.'" (NASB)

These are major prophets. This is big. They have been called by God Himself, and have been sent by God Himself, and yet STILL they will be 'rejected', each one of them, and not just 'rejected', but 'rejected' with hate and hostility. Jesus Himself, also 'rejected', speaks to this matter of 'rejection' on the last night before His Crucifixion.

John 15:18-19

"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." (NASB)

The Apostle Paul confirms this 'rejection'. The Book of Acts records how Paul is frequently 'rejected' and turned on, even to the point of being stoned, and incarcerated.

Acts 14:19

"But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead." (NASB)

Acts 16:16-24

"And it happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a certain slave girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune telling. Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out saying, 'These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.' And she continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, 'I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!' And it came out at that very moment. But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the authorities, and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, 'These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews, and are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans.' And the crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them and proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely, and he, having received such a command threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks." (NASB)

Acts 21:25-32

"Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself along with them went into the temple, giving notice of the completion of the days of purification, until the sacrifice was offered for each one of them. And when the seven days were almost over, the Jews from Asia, upon seeing him in the temple, began to stir up all the multitude and laid hands on him, crying out, Men of Israel, come to our aid! This is the man who preaches to all men everywhere against our people, and the Law, and this place; and besides he has even brought Greeks into the temple and defiled this holy place.' For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. And all the city was aroused, and the people rushed together; and taking hold of Paul, they dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut. And while they were seeking to kill him, a report came up to the commander of the Roman Cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion. And at once he took along some soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them; and then they saw the commander and the soldier, they stopped beating Paul." (NASB)

Hebrews 11, which presents the 'hall of faith', celebrates the 'triumphs of faith', but also reminds us of the dark suffering that so many have endured by the way.

Hebrews 11:35b-38

"... and others were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others experienced mockings and scourings, yes also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, ill treated (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground." (NASB)

And so, God calls, God gives a message to declare, and with it comes 'rejection', and often rejection with anger. NO CHILD OF GOD IS SPARED FROM THIS MANDATE. Thus we see the same pattern occur in Exodus. God has called Moses to lead this mission, but Moses is warned, given a head's up, about 'rejection'. Part of Moses' final preparation/final equipping, is God letting Moses know what he will be facing. Consider what is to be expected, Moses. Moses, you will go before Pharaoh, and you will request that Pharaoh 'LET GOD'S PEOPLE GO', but it won't happen. Pharaoh will not consider the 'expectations'. No. And God makes this clear to Moses.

Exodus 4:21

"And the LORD said to Moses, 'When you go back to Egypt see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders of which I have put in your power; but I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go.'" (NASB)

Moses is now 'equipped' to be 'rejected', 'rejection' that is certain, 'rejection' that is epic, 'rejection' that is 'divinely' decreed.

Yet for us, there is a struggle. We know that this 'rejection' will happen; still we 'protest'. We don't like 'rejection' one bit, even as a child of God. Today's passage is thereby so informative for us. In this 'first time' encounter with Pharaoh (who was 'the' king of the world, at that time), we will see three theological truths clearly illustrated, which will help us to better understand 'REJECTION'.

#### **I. REJECTION'S SOURCE: (vv 1-2)**

Exodus 5:1-2

"AND afterward Moses and Aaron came and said to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Let My people go that they may celebrate a feast to Me in the wilderness.'

But Pharaoh said, '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'." (NASB)

After the 'humiliation' of having to flee from Egypt in Chapter 2, after the 'call' by God in Chapter 3, after the 'final preparations' in chapter 4, now in chapter 5 Moses and Aaron have arrived back in Egypt, and are standing before Pharaoh, and are requesting that Pharaoh 'LET MY PEOPLE GO'. This is no small event. Moses was raised, called, prepared, and sent, by God Himself, 'for this moment' in time. Moses has been 'sovereignly', and 'providentially', prepared for this moment. His standing before Pharaoh, asking Pharaoh to 'let the people go', is divinely stamped! Moses is not speaking his own words as he petitions Pharaoh. No. Moses is speaking the words of the Lord.

So, God has spoken, through Moses. And what has God said? Release my people for a wilderness appointment, a feast. We note that Moses has spoken this request from God 'boldly', with a display of confidence, not in self, but in God. Moses assumes that this is all that needs to be done. In other words, God Almighty has spoken, therefore it will happen.

But Pharaoh, is a king, 'the king' of the land, used to saying what will be and what will not be. He is neither impressed or intimidated by Moses' request. Who is the Lord? Who is this 'Lord' that I should obey Him? I do not know Him. And besides, I have no intention of letting Israel go. The words of Pharaoh's response are foundational. They provide the source, and the reason, for Pharaoh's response. "I DO NOT KNOW THE LORD" (vs 2), he declares, and therefore, we should not be surprised at his response.

### **The Source of Rejection:**

#### **1. Natural Reasoning or Sense:**

No one would just jump to the commands of someone that they do not know. This just makes sense.

#### **2. Natural Disability:**

Pharaoh cannot see certain things. He is unable to discern between the natural and the spiritual, therefore he cannot understand. Some things cannot be seen by natural eyes. Having not 'regenerated' eyes, Pharaoh is therefore 'spiritually blind' to 'spiritual' and Godly things, that is, to the things of the Lord.

I Corinthians 2:14

"But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised." (NASB)

Pharaoh is spiritually 'impaired', spiritually 'disabled'. Pharaoh is spiritually 'dead'. He is not 'born again'.

John 3:3

"Jesus answered and said to him (Nicodemus), 'Truly, truly, I say unto you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,'" (NASB)

Ephesians 2:1

"AND you were dead in your trespasses and sins". (NASB)

### 3. God has hardened his heart.

Exodus 4:21

"And the LORD said to Moses, 'When you go back to Egypt see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your power; but I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go.'" (NASB)

God has stated openly that He would be hardening the heart of Pharaoh. Moses, be forewarned, you will be 'rejected' when you bring God's word to Pharaoh.

And we also must be mindful. God, for His own purposes, hardens hearts, and when this happens, they cannot receive the message. This is an obvious fact, one that cannot be dismissed, and therefore we are not to wrestle with this. Christian, you will be 'rejected' when you present God's Word and message, the Gospel. Do not be frustrated by this. Do not fault the person for doing it. They cannot see; they cannot receive the message. They simply lack the spiritual eyes and heart to receive even plain truth. Only by God's mercy and grace does this change. But be careful, Christian. This does not mean that we just sit back or slink back. No. You may ask, 'But why bother to evangelize if we are only to face rejection?' We must do so because God has commanded that we do so. The Sovereignty of God is not about the 'futility' of evangelism. NO. The Sovereignty of God is the 'fuel' of evangelism. It is God who controls hearts. It is not about us. We do not need to be eloquent or clever in our presentation of the Gospel. We need to be nothing but 'FAITHFUL' to proclaim God's Word: 'faithful' to the cause, 'faithful' to the Word, and 'faithful' to the work of God. The book of Acts confirms this. Paul, having been teaching in the Synagogue in Corinth, "devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ." Acts 18:5b (NASB), became exasperated and frustrated when the Jews "resisted" the message and "blasphemed" (Acts 18:6). But God assured him that it was right for him to go proclaiming the Gospel, that he was not to be silent, not to give up.

Acts 18:9-10

"And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, 'Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city.'" (NASB)



Go on speaking, Paul. Do not be silent. We are not the ones who win the souls. No. God does that. He reminds us, as He reminded Paul, He has 'many that are His in this city'; heart conversion is 'His' business to do, not ours. It is God who regenerates the heart, not us.

Moses, Paul, Christian: JUST REMAIN FAITHFUL! PROCLAIM THE MESSAGE. Many will reject you, and will reject the message, but we are in a long link of those who have walked before us. It is not a matter of your lack of eloquence. It is a matter of 'their depravity'. Expect it, know it, and respond accordingly, Christian, knowing REJECTION'S SOURCE. Instead of fearing 'rejection', FEAR GOD, and OBEY HIM.

## II. REJECTION'S WEIGHT: (vv 3-14)

Exodus 5:3

"Then they (Moses and Aaron) said, 'The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword'." (NASB)

Note the abrupt shift in focus for Moses and Aaron after Pharaoh's rejection. (And this is also illustrated in our own lives.) In verse one of the chapter, Moses and Aaron speak boldly. 'LET MY PEOPLE GO', they say. Their focus is God, and they present the words of God. Moses is attending to the business of God. But now in verse three, the boldness is gone, and the focus now shifts to Moses and Aaron. At the first hint of rejection, they become shy, and turn the matter so that it is not God's declaration they are boldly stating anymore, but their own. They become 'self obsessed'. They create their own narrative. They are now concerned with 'pestilence and swords'. These were not part of God's directive to them. Rejection occurred, and now their eyes are off of God, and are on the fallibility of man. Woe is me. How can I go on? Not only is this the wrong thing to do, it also adds undue 'weight', unnecessary 'weight' to the call.

Let us be mindful, Christian, TAKING OUR 'EYES OFF OF GOD' and looking at 'fallible man' ADDS UNNECESSARY WEIGHT to the job we were 'called' to do.

Exodus 5:4-5

"But the king of Egypt said to them, 'Moses and Aaron, why do you draw the people away from their work? Get back to your labors!' Again Pharaoh said, 'Look, the people of the land are now many, and you would have them cease from their labours!'" (NASB)

But Pharaoh does not just say a simple 'NO' and 'get out'. What Moses and Aaron have suggested is preposterous, ludicrous, unthinkable to him. That very same day Pharaoh responds to their request. He adds work. He adds difficulty to that work. He adds 'weight' to the people's already difficult work load.

Exodus 5:6-9

"So the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters over the people and their foremen, saying, 'You are no longer to give the people straw to make brick as previously; let them go and gather straw for themselves. But the quota of bricks which they were making previously, you shall impose on them; you are not to reduce any of it. Because they are lazy, therefore they cry out, "Let us go and sacrifice to our God." Let the labour be heavier on the men, and let them work at it that they may pay no attention to false words'." (NASB)

Straw was used in Egypt to make bricks. It was beneficial, making the bricks stronger. But now Pharaoh declares that the straw will no longer be supplied to the Hebrews; they will now have to find their own straw. Their quota of finished bricks will not be lessened. No. Pharaoh has decided, and declared, that the people are 'lazy', and idle obviously, since they have time to think on the Words of their God. Therefore, he demands they work harder so that they have no time to think on such things as 'sacrificing' to their God.

Pharaoh has spoken! He demands the same quota of bricks, but will no longer supply the straw. He has added work. He has added a burden. He has added 'weight'.

Exodus 5:10-14

"So the taskmasters of the people and their foremen went out and spoke to the people, saying, 'Thus says Pharaoh, "I am not going to give you any straw. You go and get straw for yourselves wherever you can find it; but none of your labor will be reduced".' So the people scattered through all the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw. And the taskmasters pressed them, saying, 'Complete your work quota, your daily amount, just as when you had straw.' Moreover, the foremen of the sons of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten and were asked, 'Why have you not completed your required amount either yesterday or today in making brick as previously?'" (NASB)

More work. No straw. Find your own straw. Produce your quota. Hear the whips cracking. And now your own foremen are adding 'weight' also. Hear the cries for 'output!' The 'weight' is growing.

The 'weight of rejection' is still faced today by God's people. NO, plus anger. NO, followed by insults. No, compounded with constant attacks. It is as though we wear a 'target' on our backs. The 'reality of rejection' for us today exists, and yet, we also have the counsel, the instruction, of the Word of God to help strengthen and help us.

Mark 4:5-6,15-17

"And other seed fell on the rocky ground where it did not have much soil; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of soil. And after the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away."

"And these are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them. And in a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away." (NASB)

So, we see seed that is sown on rocky ground has quick results, the seed grows. Likewise, the Word is received joyously, at first. But when persecution and tribulation come, the joy and growth fall away quickly. Thus can be the reality, 'the falling away', after experiencing rejection and tribulation, 'REJECTION'S WEIGHT', as a new Christian. However, the Word is meant to bring peace, assurance and comfort, even in the times of trouble. We need to remember this. Jesus assures us that He has 'everything' under control.

John 16:33

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage, I have overcome the world." (NASB)

Note the pattern. You will have tribulation. God calls and sends us out, but 'YOU WILL HAVE TRIBULATION', and 'YOU WILL BE REJECTED'. This is confirmed by Peter.

I Peter 4:12

"Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you..." (NASB)

Understanding 'rejection' means that we know it is coming, and are not surprised by it, and are not surprised by the 'weight' and burden that is added by it. 'REJECTION' and the 'weight of rejection' are not easy, but God has foretold it, and has prepared us for it, and has 'equipped' us for it. We must just not forget this, as Moses and Aaron forgot. For God told them, but they lost sight of the whole message once Pharaoh 'rejected' their request as 'impossible'. We must remember that Sovereign God has the matter under control. Our role is to remember this, and be faithful.

Exodus 3:19-20

"But I know that the king of Egypt will not permit you to go, except under compulsion. So I will stretch out My hand, and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it; and after that he will let you go." (NASB)

Israel, keep in mind, this is but a momentary affliction. Keep your eyes on where you are going. God is working out the details. This will last only for a moment in time. Deliverance is ahead. The 'weight' and the increase will last only for a brief time.

And so also is this true for the Church today. God is preparing His people. There is deliverance ahead. Yes there will be 'weight' and affliction, but in the scheme of the big picture, it is only for a moment in time. And it is all for the sake of the 'treasure', the eternal, the glory of Jesus Christ. "Therefore, we do not lose heart." II Corinthians 4:1,16a (NASB) Keep our minds and hearts on this truth! It is not about us, for we are but 'created' earthen vessels. It is He who has the 'power' to bring about change.

II Corinthians 4:7-12

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death works in us, but life in you." (NASB)

II Corinthians 4:13-16

"But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, 'I BELIEVED, THEREFORE I SPOKE,' we also believe therefore also we speak; knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God. Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day." (NASB)

By God's grace and mercy we can endure, and push on, and not be disheartened. While our temporal bodies, the 'earthen vessels', are decaying, and dying, yet the inner man is being renewed, ever prepared for eternity. This short term 'momentary light affliction' is producing for us an 'eternal weight' of glory.

II Corinthians 4:17-18

"For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (NASB)

So, why does this happen? Why do we not lose heart, or tamper with God's Word, even if the Gospel is veiled and people do not understand its message? WE DO NOT PROCLAIM US, NO, WE PROCLAIM CHRIST! It is not about us. It is about Christ.

II Corinthians 4:1-6

"THEREFORE since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus sake. For God, who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." (NASB)

One wonders, how many Israelites stopped on either side of the Red Sea and looked back and said, 'Oh yes, just as God promised. Look at all of this loot, just as He promised.' We don't look back enough while moving forward. We focus on the present, on the current 'rejection', the turmoil we are facing, the affliction we are going through, and fail to ponder the future, God's redemption, and His faithfulness. We drop it all, the good, the promises of God, our hope, and lose ourselves in the momentary. In 2021, we need to remember that 'future glory' awaits us, and we need to nestle into this, remembering what God has promised to us. It is only a light 'momentary affliction' that we are going through. We must not lose sight of the big picture, the 'eternal' unfolding.

### III. REJECTION'S HOPE: (vv 15-23)

Exodus 5:15-16

"Then the foremen of the sons of Israel came and cried out to Pharaoh, saying, 'Why do you deal this way with your servants? There is no straw given to your servants, yet they keep saying to us, Make bricks!' And behold, your servants are being beaten; but it is the fault of your own people." (NASB)

And so, having been beaten, and treated ever more harshly, the Israeli foremen approach Pharaoh directly, and calling out to him, they question why they are being treated so severely, so hard-heartedly?

HOPELESSNESS ALWAYS PRODUCES RECKLESS ABANDONMENT.

Is it wise of these foremen to approach Pharaoh in this way? No, it is not wise. It is a 'wreckless' response to a bad situation, a 'reckless response' to their facing 'rejection'. What difference can it make, they say? But it is a response that puts them into further danger. They are calling out Pharaoh, daring to be critical towards the king of the land. It is only by the Sovereign Hand of God being on them that saved them, for Pharaoh was not impressed.

Left to our own devices, do we want to 'reject' the Sovereign Hand of God, and be like these foremen, do what they did? NO! We do not want to respond as they did. We need to want to 'yield' to God's Providence.

Exodus 5:17-19

"But he (Pharaoh) said, 'You are lazy, very lazy; therefore you say, 'Let us go and sacrifice to the LORD. So go now and work; for you shall be given no straw, yet must deliver the

quota of bricks.' And the foremen of the sons of Israel saw that they were in trouble because they were told, 'You must not reduce your daily amount of bricks'." (NASB)

Pharaoh basically tells them to 'stop stalling' and get back to work. You are idle. You are lazy. You are thinking of things other than what you are supposed to be doing, therefore you have time on your hands. We will fix that problem. And so, in the end their approaching Pharaoh only draws further negative attention unto them, and only makes matters worse. Not willing to accept their culpability, they choose to 'blame' Moses and Aaron. 'You made us stink' to Pharaoh.' You made us look bad. You've spoiled everything.

Exodus 5: 20-21

"When they left Pharaoh's presence, they met Moses and Aaron as they were waiting for them. And they said to them, 'May the LORD look upon you and judge you, for you have made us odious in Pharaoh's sight and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us.'" (NASB)

HOPELESSNESS AND RECKLESS ABANDONMENT ALWAYS CAUSES BLAME.

The foremen 'curse' their brethren. They recognize the bad situation they are in, even worse than before. They require a 'scapegoat', and Moses and Aaron are there, standing before them, and they came representing God, came as God's messengers', and so they are given the blame.

Oh, the fickleness of God's people! The people had heard the message from God, and they had believed, and had even rejoiced that God was about to do something, and was about to help them. Yet how quickly they have forgotten! God had told Moses to tell them this message at the end of chapter four, and now, at the end of chapter five, they have become unfocused and hopeless, reckless and blaming.

Exodus 4:29-31

"Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the sons of Israel; and Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses, He then performed the signs in the sight of the people. 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." (NASB)

So, what has happened? What has made these Israelites change loyalty? It is like us, changing from being one way at the beginning of Sunday, to another way on Monday. J.A. Motyer describes it this way:

"Many Christians are given the opportunity in Sunday worship to affirm this, 'I believe in God the Father Almighty.' This is all well and good but we do not actually know that we truly believe in such a God, until Monday faces us with experiences that suggest that He is far from almighty and He is actually pretty unfatherly."

Monday mornings often expose our distance from God, our actual 'unbelief'. Mondays show us how 'distant' we are from what we say and do on Sunday. Too often Mondays expose the unbelief at work in our hearts. No matter how uplifting Sunday was, now we find ourselves grumbling. It is a 'pattern' that becomes Israel's trademark, and a 'pattern' which also exposes 'our' unbelief at work.

Let us consider this 'pattern', that becomes 'Israel's trademark', step by step:

1. Belief is claimed with vigorous head nodding. 'Yes, God, we believe.' And with continued head nodding, 'Yes, God, we will obey!'
2. Trial ensues to test that claim. Examples: No straw in Egypt. Shortage of food in the wilderness.
3. The people grumble, and even curse God. 'Unbelief' is exposed.
4. All turn away, except one. Praise God.

So, while the people 'turn away', their 'unbelief' now exposed, yet Moses, the one, TURNS TO GOD.

Exodus 5:22-23

"Then Moses returned to the LORD and said, O Lord, why hast Thou brought harm to this people? Why didst Thou ever send me? 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." (NASB)

Wow, Moses! Don't do this, Moses! This is not the correct thing to do, Moses.



We need to be clear about two things.

### **1. THE NEGATIVE:**

Nothing in the text condones Moses's response here.

Moses is questioning God. Moses is blaming God. Moses is accusing God. This is never okay. A child of God does not do this! This is a 'pity party' ensuing. Moses is whining. Why did you ever send 'me' to do this job? And Moses 'emphatically' states, 'You have not delivered Your people, "AT ALL".' This is negative. This is being critical. Do not do this.

### **2. THE POSITIVE:**

Everyone turns away, except Moses. As they face their affliction with Pharaoh, everyone turns away from God 'EXCEPT MOSES'. Moses is the only one who 'turns to the Lord'. This happens often in the story. Often, only Moses turns to the Lord, while the people turn to other things. The pattern shows that God's people turn to curses, to calves, to dreams of Egypt, but Moses turns to God. Why so? Ultimately, it was a matter of faith.

Hebrews 11:26-28

"... considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen. By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the first born might not touch them." (NASB)

1. Moses, by faith, was looking up, looking ahead, looking for 'the reward'. The reward meant more than the things of earth, and therefore he was looking ahead, and looking up.
2. Moses, by faith, left Egypt, and by faith kept the Passover. Moses had faith which was the assurance of his hope. All he could see was rejection around him, so where should he turn? He turns to God. This is Moses' hope. And this is the 'only hope' in rejection.

Hebrews 11:1

"NOW faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (NASB)

If you are a God fearer, that is, for God's people, THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE IN REJECTION! Our 'hope' was secured in rejection.

He came to His own people and they failed to receive Him.

John 1:11

"He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him." (NASB)

He was rejected by His own relatives and by His hometown.

Mark 6:4

"And Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his home town and among his own relatives and in his own household.'" (NASB)

He was rejected in life and in ministry by His 'Chosen People'.

Matthew 21:33-39

"Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT AND DUG A WINE PRESS IN IT, AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to vine-growers to receive his produce. And went on a journey. And when the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce. And the vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, stoned a third. Again he sent another group of slaves larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them. But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come let us kill him, and seize his inheritance.' And they took him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him." (NASB)

And He was rejected, even in death. They would choose a criminal over Him, and cried out for His crucifixion.

Matthew 27:20-22

"But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitudes to ask for Barabbas, and to put Jesus to death. But the governor answered and said to them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?' And they said, 'Barabbas'. Pilate said to them, 'What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said, 'Let Him be crucified!' " (NASB)

HE IS OUR HOPE, yet we 'reject Him'.

His rejection is not a surprise. It was 'foretold'.

Psalm 118:22

"The stone which the builders rejected  
Has become the chief corner stone." (NASB)

But Christ being 'rejected' was the LORD's doing. It was not plan B. It was 'rejection' that leads to THE PLAN. It was 'rejection' that leads to 'deliverance', both for Israel, and for the Church. To understand 'rejection' is to know our God. WE KNOW HIM, unlike Pharaoh. WE ARE HIS PEOPLE, chosen, delivered, and loved by Him.

Let us 'TURN TO HIM' and pray, for indeed, how great is His love for us, that He would embrace us, and act, even in 'rejection'. Let us see Christ in our own 'rejection'. May He grant power that we might have eyes to see Him, not just today, but everyday. Amen.

Benediction:

Psalm 118:23-24

"This is the LORD'S doing;  
It is marvelous in our eyes.  
This is the day which the LORD has made,  
Let us rejoice and be glad in it." (NASB)