

March 1, 2021

Read Exodus 5

Key verse: Exodus 5:22

Then Moses turned again to the Lord and said, 'O Lord, why have you mistreated this people? Why did you ever send me?'

Setbacks

There are those who claim that faithfulness to God will result in nothing but blessings. Try telling that to Moses! God had expressed to Moses his compassion for the Israelites, and his intention to bring them out of bondage in Egypt, and Moses had gone to Pharaoh and told him exactly what God had told him to say. So why did everything backfire? Rather than bringing the Israelites closer to freedom, Moses' action brought them even greater suffering. It also brought Moses' own credibility into question; was he really going to help the Israelites or was he going to do more harm than good?

I'm reminded of Isaac Newton's Third Law of Motion: For every action there is an equal *but opposite* reaction. The forces of evil are not simply swept away when confronted with righteousness. Instead those forces push back against righteousness in order to maintain their grip on power. They push back in a way that is intended to discourage any further resistance from those they oppress. Their intent is to extinguish hope among those who are enslaved.

But the Holy Spirit is not so easily tamed; in fact it is indomitable, and that indomitable Spirit resides in us! We *know* deep down that God rules over all creation, regardless of what any Pharaoh or king or dictator or emperor would have us believe. Their delusion of grandeur only betrays their own insecurity which results from living a life in defiance of the one true God. They can muster all of their armies against the forces of God – which work toward the liberation and 'dignification' of all people – but their attempts to supplant the will of God are futile.

Jesus met seemingly overwhelming resistance to his message of God's imminent kingdom. He was mocked, brutalized, and murdered by those who believed they, not God, were in charge of this world. But the resurrection proved them wrong. During Lent we should meditate upon the struggles that we all face in our efforts to share the good news of God's kingdom, and we should recognize that whatever trials and tribulations we suffer in our endeavor to serve God, HIS kingdom will ultimately prevail.

Prayer: God of Liberation, you know the challenges we face when we work to bring your kingdom of justice and peace to this world. Help us not to give up the struggle. Remind those of us in places of comfort that there are many in our midst who are oppressed. Help us to help them, and remind us of your victory over sin and death through your Son Jesus Christ. Amen.