



RED HILL LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

THE WEEKLY BRICK

January 10, 2010.

As you come to him, the living Stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. - 1 Peter 2:4-5

Sermon Series: What God Has FOR YOU!

Week #2: God Has Preparation For You: developing integrity in my life Exodus 4:24-26

1. REALIZE THAT _____ APPLY TO YOU, TOO.

We never have a personal exemption from holiness.

2. THERE IS _____ TO

COMPROMISE YOUR INTEGRITY.

- Circumcision was an Old Testament ritual--a symbol of God's covenant with the people of Israel.
- Circumcision is an outward symbol of an inward truth.

The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live. (Deuteronomy 30:6)

What will it take for you to compromise your integrity?

3. YOUR _____ LIFE MUST MATCH YOUR _____ LIFE.

Many have the "back lot" theory.

4. WHAT DID MOSES DO TO REGAIN HIS INTEGRITY?

Maintaining or regaining your integrity requires that we take a stand on truth and say with determination:

This is it. The buck stops here. I will play by the rules. I will stop making excuses. I will make my private life consistent with my public life.

(answers: 1. All the rules, 2. Never a good excuse, 3. Private life, public life)

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Monday, January 11th Read Exodus 4:18-31--this is all about the fruit of obedience.

God had just met Moses at the burning bush. The great call of Moses had just taken place. God wanted Moses to be His messenger, to go and deliver His people from slavery. But Moses did not want to go. He did not want to live a life of service and witness, a life obligated to God. He wanted to be free to live life like he wanted, to do his own thing. Standing there before God, Moses made up excuse after excuse, arguing against God's call. In fact, he argued so long and so much that he angered God. In righteous anger, God insisted that Moses go. Moses was to be God's messenger. No excuse, no argument was valid. Moses was to surrender to God's call: he was to go and proclaim God's glorious message of deliverance and freedom. What happened? The present passage tells us.

1. Obedience, then God's assurance (v.18-19).
2. Obedience, then God's guidance (v.20-23).
3. Obedience, then God's hand of chastisement was removed (v.24-26).
4. Obedience, then God fulfilled His promise (v.27-31).

1. Read 4:18-19: first, there was obedience, then God's assurance was given.

1. Moses obeyed God, surrendered to God's call (Exodus 4:18). He left the desert and went home to take care of business matters. He began to lay plans to return to Egypt. He had worked for his father-in-law, Jethro, for forty years, so he had to handle whatever business arrangements existed between them. He could not just leave Jethro hanging without making arrangements for a replacement. Moreover, Jethro was the head of the family: the father of Moses' wife and the grandfather of Moses' sons.

The point to note is that Moses was kind and respectful to his wife's father; he did not just pick up and leave. He did not ignore the effect of his leaving upon his wife's family. He asked permission of Jethro; he made arrangements before he left. God's call demands first loyalty, even before family. But we must always be loving, kind, and respectful to our families when we are called to be away from them. And we must help them understand God's call as well as we can.

Matthew 10:37-38 Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Luke 9:23 Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

Note another fact as well: Moses did not boastfully mention God's call. He did not act super-spiritual. Think of the great experience he had just had with God, yet he was ever so quiet and humble about the experience.

Matthew 18:4 Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Romans 12:3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

Philippians 2:3-4 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

2. Once Moses obeyed God, after he had begun to make arrangements to go to Egypt, God gave Moses great assurance. God gave Moses the assurance of safety, security, and protection (Exodus 4:19). God told Moses that the men who had sought to kill him were now dead. The coast was clear. There was no reason to fear. Remember, Moses had been a wanted man in Egypt. He had killed an Egyptian official forty years earlier, and Pharaoh had put the order out: arrest and execute Moses. Just as it would with any of us, fear had arisen within Moses as he went about making arrangements to return to Egypt. But God is faithful: here He was giving assurance to Moses. His dear messenger was surrendering to His God-given call. Despite the execution order that hung over his head, Moses was obeying God. He was surrendering to God's call and going forth to deliver God's people. Thus God met Moses to give him assurance: his enemies were all dead. There was no need to fear; he would be safe as he returned to Egypt.

Note: The first fruit of obedience is God's assurance. When we surrender to God's call, surrender to do His will, it is then that God's assurance sweeps over our souls. God assures us; He will take care of us when we obey Him. He will bless us with great assurance and care.

Tuesday, January 12th Read Exodus 4:20-23

Second, there was obedience, then God's guidance and direction were given.

1. Moses was obedient to God, fully obedient (Exodus 4:20). Note that he set out to make a permanent move to Egypt: he took his family with him which included his wife and two sons. Note also that he took the rod of God just as God had instructed him (cp. Exodus 4:17).

2. Again, Moses' obedience bore fruit. As Moses continued to obey God, God continued to meet his need. God now met a very special need of Moses, the need for guidance and direction (Exodus 4:21-23). He needed to know exactly what to do when he reached Egypt and appeared before Pharaoh. And he needed to know before he reached Egypt so that he would have time to meditate and plan the meeting. This need God now met, and how God's heart must have been flooded with joy. For His servant was now obeying Him, obeying despite all the excuses he had against surrendering and obeying. God's servant was now obedient; therefore, God was now able to meet His dear servant and give him guidance and direction. God told Moses to do three things when he reached Egypt.

a. Moses was to go to Pharaoh and perform all the miracles God had given him the power to do (Exodus 4:21).

b. Moses was, however, to know one thing: God was going to harden Pharaoh's heart so that he would not let

the people go (Exodus 4:21). God was making sure that Moses was not caught by surprise nor discouraged when Pharaoh rejected his message and refused to free God's people

c. Moses was to proclaim the Word of God. He was to declare three points to Pharaoh:

- First, Israel was "God's son, even His firstborn" (Exodus 4:22).
- Second, Pharaoh was to free Israel so that Israel could serve and live for God (Exodus 4:23).
- Third, if Pharaoh refused, God would slay the firstborn son of Pharaoh (Exodus 4:23).

Note: There is a strong lesson for us in this point: if we do not obey and surrender to God's call, then God cannot guide and direct our lives. Why? Because He would be indulging and giving license to disobedience, rebellion, and sin. But when we obey and surrender to God's call, then God can guide and direct our lives. This He promises.

Psalm 25:5 guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.

Psalm 25:9 He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.

John 16:13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

Wednesday, January 13th *Read Exodus 4:24-26*

Third, there was obedience, then God's hand of chastisement was removed. What now happened to Moses stands as a warning to all believers and servants of God who are Lutheran (and others).

1. Moses was obeying God and was on his way to Egypt when God's hand of chastisement fell upon him (Exodus 4:24). Why? **Because he was deliberately disobeying God in a particular area of his life, a critical area.** What happened was this: Moses and his family had stopped and set up camp for the night. Then suddenly Moses became very sick and was about to die. Note what Scripture says was happening: God had met Moses and was about to slay him (Exodus 4:24). This means that God was chastising and correcting Moses, and the chastisement was severe: Moses was about to die. Here he was surrendering to God's call to go and proclaim the glorious message of deliverance, yet God began to severely chastise him. What could Moses be doing that was so bad? What was it that he was not surrendering to God, that he was holding back and refusing to correct? What was Moses doing that displeased God so much that God would stop using Moses and take him on home to heaven?

2. Scripture tells us: Moses' wife had apparently objected to circumcision, bitterly objected to it. She caused so much strife that Moses just gave in to his wife. He put his wife and her objections before God. In order to keep peace in the home, he gave in to his wife. He chose to avoid the fussing and arguing of his wife instead of obeying God. He disobeyed God and did not circumcise his son (Exodus 4:25). Remember three critical facts about circumcision.

First, circumcision was the sign of the covenant between God and man. God had given circumcision to teach His people to have no confidence in the flesh. The cutting away of the flesh was the picture (the symbol and sign) that the true believer was not to place his trust in the flesh. He was to put his trust in God. (Phil. 3:3; Col. 2:11-12). Remember this fact: When God made this covenant with Abraham, he was the least likely to become a father of many nations (Genesis 17:4-6).

Second, circumcision was the sign that a man trusted God, that he was a true follower of God, that he was a true believer in the great promises of God:

⇒ The promise of the promised land

⇒ The promise of the promised seed, including both the seed of a great nation of people and the one particular seed, the Savior and Messiah of the world.

These promises are of critical importance to both God and man. They are the very basis of God's great covenant with man: the promise of heaven and the promise of the Savior, God's very own Son. It is God's Son who makes it possible for man to enter heaven and to live forever with God.

Thursday, January 14th *Read Exodus 4:24-26*

Fourth, God Himself stressed the critical importance of circumcision. Note Genesis 17:10-14 where God commanded Abraham to circumcise every male child on the eighth day after birth. This was to be the sign that the father and his family were true believers and followers of God and His great promises. The critical importance of circumcision is also seen in God's other commandment to Abraham: any uncircumcised male was to be *cut off* and *separated* from the people; he was not a believer and follower of God. He had broken the covenant of God (Genesis 17:10-14).

⇒ How then could Moses lead the people unless he himself obeyed God?

⇒ How could Moses teach the covenant to people if he refused to circumcise his own son?

⇒ How could Moses teach people to love and obey God unless he loved and obeyed God?

⇒ How could Moses teach people to put God first if he put his wife first?

⇒ How could Moses be the servant and messenger of God if he was unwilling to obey God in the very basic sign of God's great covenant?

On and on the questions go, but the point is made: **God had to correct Moses.** God had to chastise Moses so that Moses would do what he needed to do: obey God and circumcise his son. The very man whom God was choosing to be the great lawgiver to the world, Moses himself, had to be corrected by God, severely chastened. He was disobeying God in one of the most basic commandments of God, that of bearing the sign of the covenant, circumcision.

3. Note that Moses' wife circumcised their son, but she apparently did it in anger, disgust, and with a rebellious spirit (Exodus 4:25). She was obviously against circumcision so much that she took the foreskin and threw it at Moses' feet as he lay there in bed dying. She angrily cried out: "You are a husband of blood to me." She was in rebellion against God, bitter rebellion.

4. God then removed His hand of chastisement and saved Moses (Exodus 4:26). Moses recovered his health and resumed his journey to Egypt. Note: Moses apparently sent his wife and children back home after this, back to her father, Jethro.

- Her bitter rebellion against God almost cost Moses his life.
- Her rebellion would have been a devastating hindrance to the purpose of God and to the ministry of Moses.

We must obey God in all areas of our lives. We must not hold anything back; we must surrender everything we are and have to God. If not, then God has no choice: He must correct and chastise us. God must discipline us when we disobey and go astray. God must do all He can to keep us from sin and the terrible results of sin. God must keep us from harming and hurting ourselves, from destroying our lives, our testimony, and our witness for Him. God must chastise us, make us sit up, take notice, and correct ourselves before we go too far.

Friday, January 15th Read Exodus 4:27-31

Fifth, there was obedience, then God fulfilled His promise. While God was calling and dealing with Moses, a wonderful thing was happening to his brother Aaron. God was working in Aaron's heart as well, calling and preparing him to serve right by the side of Moses—all as God had promised Moses.

1. Note Aaron's call and obedience: God called him to go into the wilderness and meet Moses (Exodus 4:27-28). This he did: he met up with Moses at the Mount of God itself, Mt. Sinai. The reunion must have been glorious. They kissed each other and, no doubt, Aaron shared all that had happened to the family during the 40 year absence of Moses. Then Moses shared with Aaron, shared God's call and the power God had given him to work signs and miracles before the people. After the reunion, Moses and Aaron journeyed to Egypt together.

2. When they reached Egypt, they obeyed God: they gathered together all the elders of Israel (Exodus 4:30-31).

- Aaron shared what God had told Moses. Remember: God had appointed him to be the spokesman for Moses (cp. Exodus 4:14-16).
- Moses performed the miracles (cp. Exodus 4:3-9). Remember: God had commissioned Moses to perform the signs. Because of this the personal pronoun "he" should probably be inserted before "did the signs" to indicate that they were performed by Moses and not Aaron.

3. God's wonderful promise to Moses was fulfilled: the people believed and they bowed down, worshipping God (Exodus 4:31). The message that God cared for them and was deeply concerned about their suffering stirred a great hope within the people. Picture the scene:

- There stood Moses, the great former prince of Egypt, who had been in exile for over forty years. And there stood Aaron, his brother, by his side, one of their leaders whom they deeply respected and had known for so many years.
- There was the great message of deliverance that had just been proclaimed to them by Aaron, the message from the LORD God, the Great I AM Himself.
- There were the extraordinary miracles just performed by Moses before their very eyes.

All this aroused within their hearts the deepest emotions imaginable: they were about to be freed, freed by the power of God Himself. Joy, hope, and expectancy flooded their hearts. A deep sense of God's care and love flowed through their bodies. A spirit of thankfulness and praise to God gripped their souls. Thus, they fell to their knees and worshipped God. When we obey God, God fulfills His promises—always. First obedience; then fulfillment. Obedience always bears fruit, the fruit of God's presence, love, and blessing.

John 15:10 *If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.*

John 15:14 *You are my friends if you do what I command.*

John 14:23 *Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."*

