

**[Wednesday, February 24 , 2016] Exodus Series, Exodus chapter 4, versus 18-31  
– Craig Thurman**

**Concerning Joy**

The LORD long suffered Moses' five arguments. Now, Aaron his brother shall come to meet him, and when he sees Moses *he will be glad in his heart.* (4.15) In relation to this *gladness*, שמחה, *samach*, also translated *joy* and *rejoice*, we mentioned that this should have been Moses' joy. And had he served the LORD as he should have it would have been.

Moses could have had a *full joy*. Failing to serve to the fullest extent certainly diminishes the joy that we could experience in the LORD. It is not that Moses hadn't any joy, but that it wasn't what it should have been. What did our Lord Jesus say concerning our joy? He said,

*Joh 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

What He said is, that, not only should His joy continue in us, but that it ought to be full. Greater joy is for those who will enter into greater service. So joy appears to be connected to our devotion to Christ.

**Concerning the 'what ifs'**

Moses expressed in the first verse of chapter 4 that the Hebrews would not believe that the LORD had appeared to him. (Ex.4.1) To this the LORD poses His own *ifs ... if they will not believe ...* he was to do thus and such to help their unbelief. This prepares Moses to withstand the objections and rejections, to stand faithful before the people and Pharaoh. We must be convinced of the truth of the Word of God for ourselves before we can take a stand of faith before others. Our God knows and controls all things. Speaking from man's viewpoint, when He calls us to service He counted us faithful for it, or else He would have never called us to it. We can serve the LORD by the power of Christ who works in us.

**Concerning natural abilities**

Next, Moses' thought that his slow/heavy mouth and tongue were hindrances to the work that God had called him. When the LORD reveals His specific call to

service it is natural and true that we are unworthy for it and unable to do it. However, the Lord supplies our every need in Christ Jesus for every good work.

*Php 4:19 But my God **shall supply all your need** according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

*2Co 9:8 And **God is able to make all grace abound** toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound **to every good work***

...

*He.13.20 Now the **God** of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,*

*21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, **working in you that which is wellpleasing** in his sight, **through Jesus Christ**; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

We can and should move forward into the work that He has appointed for us in spite of both real and perceived insufficiencies. What was it that the apostle Paul said through the Holy Spirit?

*2Co 12:10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities (weaknesses), in reproaches (personal injury), in necessities (dire needs or distresses), in persecutions (the dogged, relentless assaults and pursuits of the wicked), in distresses (anguish) for Christ's sake: (all of this Paul calls his weakness ... these are the things which stand against him [Jacob, Ge.42.36]) for when I am weak, **then** am I strong.*

Finally, the LORD would speak through Moses to Aaron, and He would teach them what they should do.

*Ex.4.15 And thou [Moses] shalt speak unto him [Aaron], and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do.*

*... I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth ...*

The Lord is with His people at all times, but it is especially noticed during their gatherings. He is walking in the midst of the individual churches. One of the greatest evidences of His presence with us is often realized by the union of our assembled fellowship. The whole body has the spirit to participate in the holy and spiritual things of worship, praise, thanksgiving and prayer. How many times the selections of the music by the song leader; the selections made by the congregation; the lessons prepared by the brethren; and the message of the pastor; how each have conspired to evidence the presence of Christ with us. (Re. 1.13; 2.1) Certainly, If the Lord opened our natural eyes we would see Him walking in our midst weaving in and out, back and forth among the congregation, visiting with each saint, instructing our minds with His Word, correcting waywardness, judging sin in our lives; whispering in our ears the very thoughts to think and the very words to say. What does this say? Like Moses to Aaron, He puts words in our mouths and teaches us what to say and what to do.

When the LORD has answered every objection that He will allow to be posed by Moses it is clear that Moses is convinced of his mission and begins making immediate preparation for returning to Egypt.

18 ¶ *And Moses went and returned to Jethro אֶל-יִתְרוֹ his father in law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro יִתְרוֹ said to Moses, Go in peace לְשָׁלוֹם.*

*Let me go, אֶלְכָה, Qal fut., 1ps of יָלַךְ; same root for And ... went; vs. 27, And he went; v. 29, And ... went.*

*I pray thee, נָא, KJV, now, I pray thee, Oh, I beseech thee, go to, I pray.*

We do not know why, but Moses does not reveal to his father-in-law his *primary* purpose for returning to Egypt. (cf. 18.1) It really makes no difference what Jethro thinks regarding Moses Divine commission. At the least, Moses averts unnecessary discussion concerning his return to Egypt.

The reference concerning whether his brethren are yet alive seems to mean that perhaps he hopes his near kinsmen might not have died since he left them forty years earlier. To interpret this to mean that it was possible

that the whole nation has since died away contradicts the whole purpose for which the LORD is sending Moses back to Egypt.

19 *And the LORD said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men*

הַמְבַקְשִׁים	אֶת־נַפְשׁוֹ
<i>are dead which sought</i>	<i>thy life.</i>
<i>who were busily and eagerly seeking</i>	

*which sought*, הַמְבַקְשִׁים, Piel (Intensive active) participle, masc., pl. of בָּקַשׁ; In Piel, KJV, *seek, request* (and so desired) ... his death; Piel, cf. 10.11; 33.7; Gesenius' Grammar, p.141, *to busy oneself eagerly*, or the *iterative* (repetitive sense).

The LORD's communication to Moses of more information comforts Moses. It may be that Moses was concerned about this matter. Not only is this particular Pharaoh dead, but all of those involved in avenging the death of the Egyptian have since died as well.

*Ro 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we **through patience and comfort** of the scriptures might have hope.*

20 *And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the rod of God in his hand.*

*and set them*, וַיַּרְכִּבֵם, Hiphil (causative active), 3ps, masc of רָכַב; Hiphil, KJV, *Ge.41.43, made him to ride; Deu.32.13, He made him ride; 1Ki.1.38, caused ... to ride.*

The rod that Moses carried about with him as he shepherded the flock of Jethro, and through which the LORD had done a sign is now called *the rod of God*. What was once his rod is now the LORD's rod. The LORD has commanded him to take this rod with him. (v.17) Some things and some qualities that were once used for our own purposes before Christ *might* be useful in the Lord's service since Christ.

*Mt 13:52 Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.*

None of them constitute a basis for our calling to Christ, but if the LORD ordains it so, they are to be employed in His service. For example, having eloquent speech does not qualify or disqualify a man from the pastoral ministry. Have you ever noticed that the LORD calls both type A & B personalities into service? Both have their places in the service of Christ. The new birth is not a change of personality. It is the birth of a new principal of life which regulates that personality.

*21 And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand:*

*When thou goest, בְּלִכְתּוֹךָ, Qal infin, of יָלַךְ, suff. 2psm; or, by going.*

*which I have put, אֲשַׁר־שָׂמַתִּי, Qal preterite, 1ps, masc of root שָׁם; KJV translates the preterite, make, put, set, lay, brought, done, appoint, turn, ordain; cf. vs.11, who **hath made** man's mouth; 15, **and put** words in his mouth.*

*... which I have put in your hand ...* the LORD appointed to Moses the responsibility and the right to perform these miracles. This is more than a reference to the rod. In the working of these miracles the rod was only used in the first instance when it was changed into a serpent and then back into a rod. Moses had the duty to perform all that the LORD commanded him; no one else. And as usually is the case, there are counterfeiters.

The church is responsible to Christ for all of the things that she does or does not do because He instituted her and gave to her the *right* or *authority* to do His work. (Mt.28.81-20. *All power is given unto me ... Go ye ...*) She should keep the ordinances and all of the commandments of Christ. Her conduct is to be ordered solely by the Word of God. But there are other entities that have taken up this sacred work. This work the LORD did not put in their hand. They are counterfeiters. Knowing and keeping the truth

of God's Word will help us to discern the real work of God from the counterfeits.

- וְאֲנִי אֶמְצֵק -

*but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go.*

*will harden, אֶמְצֵק, Piel (Intensive active) fut., 1ps of אָמַץ; Piel future, 4.21, will harden; 9.12; 11.10; 14.8, and ... hardened; 10.20, But ... hardened; אָמַץ is translated in Exodus as hardened, urgent, caught, hold.*

See the work of God upon the heart of Pharaoh. The Hebrew verb in Piel, intensive active, means that the LORD is actively, busily, eagerly, repeatedly (words which describe this verb in Piel) hardening, making *rigid*, not softening, not making pliable, the heart of Pharaoh so that he will withstand God's command for him to release Israel from Egyptian bondage.

*2Th 1:6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you ...*

If God does not *bestow* grace the hearts of men can only respond according to their nature, with *hardness*. Why? Because the fault lies with God? No. Because men are dead in trespasses and sins. Are we prepared to hear the whole truth of the Word of God, or will we only hear that which we find *naturally* agreeable? The inclination to believe only what we find naturally agreeable is not unique to those who are without Christ. Christians everywhere have to struggle against this natural propensity in them. The greatest difficulty is learning to believe exactly what is written in the Word of God. We all face contradictions and we all face the necessity to have to change our minds because of the truth of God's Word. It is when we come to this place that we will believe the written record that we have begun to be teachable.

*Ps 119:97 MEM. O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.*

*Ps 119:133 Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.*

*Ps 119:140 Thy word is very pure: therefore **thy servant loveth it.***

*Ps 119:161 SCHIN. Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but **my heart standeth in awe of thy word.***

*162 **I rejoice at thy word,** as one that findeth great spoil.*

Of this text, the very first thing that we do is *believe* what is written. It is absolutely correct to read that this hardening of Pharaoh's heart was the work of the Lord. 11 times in the Hebrew (קָטַף) this hardening refers to the LORD's work upon Pharaoh's heart. (cf. Ex.4.21; 7.13; 7.22; 8.19; 9.12; 9.35; 10.20, 27; 11.10; 14.4, 8; the result of the objective witness of God working against Pharaoh's heart to harden it.)

The theme of Scripture found to be associated with the number 11 is many times *judgment or discernment.*

Upon the 11<sup>th</sup> generation came the Noahic flood (the generation of Shem, Ham, & Japheth; Ge.5.32); Joseph was the 11<sup>th</sup> son of Jacob (Ge.30.24); In the 11<sup>th</sup> year of Joseph's exile in Egypt he interpreted the dreams of the butler and baker. (Ge.41.1)

Sold into slavery at 17 years of age (Ge.37.2); stood before Pharaoh at 30 years of age (Ge.41.46) The dreams had occurred two years earlier. (Ge.41.1) Put the event in the 11<sup>th</sup> years of Joseph's exile.

There were 11 wonder or miracles performed in Egypt

**1.** Rod into a serpent, Ex.7.10; **2.** Water of the rivers turned into blood, 7.17; **3.** Frogs, 8.2; **4.** Dust into lice, 8.16; **5.** Swarms of flies, 8.21; **6.** Grievous murrain upon all livestock, 9.3; **7.** Boils with blains upon man and

beasts, 9.9; **8.** Hail, 9.18; **9.** Locusts, 10.4; **10.** Darkness, 10.21; **11.** Death of the firstborn, 11.5.

Or, you can say that there were 11 judgments upon Egypt:

The blood; frogs, lice, flies, murrain, boils and blains, hail, locusts, darkness, death of firstborn, and overthrow at the Red Sea.

Paul is referred to as a *prisoner* a total of 11 times. (Acts 23.18; 25.27; Acts 27.1, 42; 28.16; 28.17; Eph.3.1; 4.1; 2Ti.1.8; Phlm.1.1, 9)

There were 11 things that the apostle John saw in connection with the JUDGMENT at the great white throne.

A great white throne; Him that sat upon the throne; the dead, small and great, stand before God; the books were opened; another book; the dead judged out of the things written in the books; the sea gave up its dead; death and hell delivered up their dead; these were judged, every man, according to their works; he saw death and hell being cast into the lake of fire, and he saw those cast into the lake of fire whose names were not found written in the book of life. (Re.20.11-15) cf. *That Ye May Marvel*, G. E. Jones, p.47

Of this hardening the LXX has the Gr. *σκληρύνειν*, from which we have our English word *sclerosis*.

And again, there is yet another Hebrew word which gives us another sense of hardening. Not only is the LORD attributed with hardening Pharaoh's heart in this way, but Pharaoh is said to have hardened his heart against the LORD. The Hebrew word is **קָבַד**, *kabed*. This means that Pharaoh's heart became *slow, thick, dense, or heavy* like Moses' mouth was said to be in Ge. 4.10. (cf. Ex. 7.14; 8.15; 10.1, the LORD) By comparing Scripture we can



readily see that as a result of the LORD making Pharaoh's heart hard, schlerosis, Pharaoh's heart became *dense* or *heavy* against the LORD.

*Ex 7:13 And he hardened (קָשָׁה) Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.*

*14 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened (קָשָׁה), he refuseth to let the people go.*

*Ex.10.1 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened (קָשָׁה, kated) his heart, and the heart of his servants, **that** I might shew these my signs before him:*

*2 And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I am the LORD.*

The first hardening is a result of the objective work of the LORD. All that God does *grits* against the unregenerate nature of man. By these things men's heart are hardened. But this, קָשָׁה, kated, thickening, slow, heaviness of heart is the inward working of the LORD. God simply takes them as they are and uses them according to His own purpose. Six times the Hebrew, קָשָׁה, kated, for *slow, thick, heavy*, and is also translated *hardened* with reference to Pharaoh's heart.

Ex.7.14; 8.15, 32; 9.7, 34; 10.1; the result of the subjective work of the LORD upon Pharaoh's heart.

LXX has the Gr. βαρέισθαι, at Ex. 7.14; and βαρύνειν, at all others. Both the noun and verb forms for βαρός and βαρέω, meaning *heavy, burdened, weighted*

How do we explain this? If we do not abide by the truth of God's Word our only recourse is to explain it all away with what we think and how we feel. What does the Scripture tell us?

*Ro 9:15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.*

*Ro 9:17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.*

*18 Therefore **hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.***

Be sure to read this just as the Lord has it for us in the Bible. He has mercy on *whom* (not *what*, but *whom*, that is, upon a person) He will have mercy. Upon men in their natural state, God has no obligation to do anything. He is not motivated to do anything based upon the actions of the creature.

*Ro 9:16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.*

God, the Sovereign God, may take men as they are, if He so chooses to do nothing else, and they will manifest the darkness of their human hearts. God's mercy alone is the cause for every heart which responds in faith to Christ. Without mercy everything that God does hardens the heart in its already unbelieving state.

*Ro 9:23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the **vessels of mercy**, which he had afore prepared unto glory ... (A vessel of mercy is a vessel that the Lord has dedicated for the reception of mercy.)*

*Eph.2.4 ¶ But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,*

*5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*

*1Ti 1:13 Paul, Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because (ὄτι, for that, probably is most helpful in understanding the idea.) I did it ignorantly in unbelief. (Paul isn't saying that He obtained mercy from the Lord because he sinned in ignorance and unbelief. All men should receive mercy if that were the truth. No, rather Paul showed his present state and the sudden change, of which can only be attributed to God's showing*

to Him mercy. Paul, before Christ, was totally unaware of his need for mercy.)

*Tit 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

*22 And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn:*

*firstborn, בְּכֹרִי, noun, masc, sing w/suff. 1ps of root בָּכַר, KJV, of the verb, make ... firstborn, shall bring forth new fruit, should be ... firstling, as her that bringeth forth her first child; the noun is בְּכוֹר, KJV, firstborn, elder, eldest, firstling.*

Israel is the LORD's firstling of all of the nations of the earth. No other nation had this standing before the Lord.

*Ex 19:6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.*

And so, if Egypt does not release the LORD's firstborn, he will kill the firstborn of Egypt.

*23 And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to*  
in Piel

*let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.*

*Let my people go, שְׁלַח, Piel (Intensive Active) infin. or imperative sing. masc.; the imperative is translated Let ... go (13); Cast (2)*

*that he may serve me, וַיַּעֲבֹדֵנִי, Qal (causative active) fut, w/suff 1ps, masc of עָבַד, to serve; KJV, to till, to serve, to labor.*

*and if thou refuse, וְתִמָּאֵן, Piel (intensive active) fut, 2psm or rpsf of מָאָן, always translated with the English refuse; Davidson's Hebrew*

Lexicon, defines it as *unwilling*. The Piel meaning to be actively, eagerly, and iteratively unwilling.

*will slay*, גִּהַר, Qal part (Poel, **expresses aim or endeavor to perform the action**, Gesenius' Grammar, p.152), act., sing, masc of גִּהַר; KJV, *to slay, kill, or destroy*.

The purpose or aim of the Lord is that while He will kill Egypt's firstborn and bring destruction to that nation He will save His own people. In both His name becomes declared throughout the earth.

*Ro 9:17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and **that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.***

Judgment is preceded by warning. It was so for the eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Ge.2.17) It preceded Cain's murder of Abel, (Ge.4.7 ); the destruction of the flood in Noah's day, (Ge.6.3); for shedding of blood, (Ge.9.5); the judgments for murmuring, (Ex.15.26); and markedly, at the giving of the law (Ex.19.12; 20.5, 6; Ja.2.10).

There are some instances where there is no apparent revelation preceding judgment of a particular sin. In such cases the judgment, though not expressed, it must have been thoroughly comprehended by the individual or the society so that when it came, in one sense of the word, it was not some random act. (Ro.2.5, 9; He.10.27) For example, the judgment of the descendants of Cainan for his father's (Ham) offense against Noah. (Ge.10.25) The judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah for their sin. (Ge.18.21-33, Though this text might indicate a previous revelation of coming judgment ... *I will go down and see whether ...*)

The LORD reveals to Pharaoh that certain shall fall upon his house, should he reject the LORD's commandment to release the children of Israel so that they might come and serve Him. In a sense, humanly speaking, it could be said that Pharaoh was given space, *time*, χρόνος, for repentance, which *space* the truth of God's righteous judgment was proved to be true concerning them in the end.

*Re 2:21 And I gave her space (time, χρόνος) to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.*

*22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.*

*23 And I will kill her children with death; **and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts:** and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.*

We should not ignore the four century's old prophecy of Egypt's destruction. (Ge.15.13, 14) Is this, and all prophecy of God a special revelation of possibilities; that if this or that would change it could be otherwise? That cannot be true. But every judgment, every word of God is true and righteous altogether.

*Ps 19:9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: **the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.***

*Ps 119:89 LAMED. For ever, O LORD, **thy word is settled** in heaven.*

*Ps 119:160 Thy word is **true from the beginning:** and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.*

*Mt 5:18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*

And since the Word of the LORD concerning Pharaoh and his judgment is true, isn't this Word as true for all of those who stand in a similar position before the LORD today? Except the LORD grant mercy, hardness of heart, unbelief that Christ is the gift of God's love for sinners proves the coming of judgment.