

Sermon Outline April 28, 2013

"Cows for Christ"

1 Samuel 6:1-14

I. *Our God is involved in our lives –*

1. *The Philistines felt this –*

A. *They felt God's hand upon them –*

... and it will be known to you why His hand is not removed from you." (1 Samuel 6:3 NKJ)

⁶ But the hand of the LORD was heavy on the people of Ashdod, and He ravaged them and struck them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territory.

⁷ And when the men of Ashdod saw how it was, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is harsh toward us and Dagon our god." (1Sa 5:6-7 NKJ)

⁹ So it was, after they had carried it away, that the hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great destruction; and He struck the men of the city, both small and great, and tumors broke out on them. (1Sa 5:9 NKJ)

For there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there. (1Sa 5:11 NKJ)

B. *They knew they were guilty before God, that is why they were ready to return the ark, including with it, a trespass offering –*

^{NKJ} 1 Samuel 6:1 Now the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months. ² And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, "What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us how we should send it to its place."

They knew they were "guilty" in regard to stealing the ark away from Israel, so they devise a plan to send the ark back, not empty -

³ So they said, "If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty; but by all means return it to Him with a trespass offering. Then you will be healed, and it will be known to you why His hand is not removed from you." (1Sa 6:1-3 NKJ)

2. *The Philistines proved this –*

⁷ "Now therefore, make a new cart, take two milk cows which have never been yoked, and hitch the cows to the cart; and take their calves home, away from them. ⁸ "Then take the ark of the LORD and set it on

the cart; and put the articles of gold which you are returning to Him as a trespass offering in a chest by its side. Then send it away, and let it go.

⁹ "And watch: if it goes up the road to its own territory, to Beth Shemesh, then He has done us this great evil. But if not, then we shall know that it is not His hand that struck us-- it happened to us by chance."

¹⁰ Then the men did so; they took two milk cows and hitched them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home. ¹¹ And they set the ark of the LORD on the cart, and the chest with the gold rats and the images of their tumors. ¹² Then the cows headed straight for the road to Beth Shemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and did not turn aside to the right hand or the left. And the lords of the Philistines went after them to the border of Beth Shemesh. (1Sa 6:7-12 NKJ)

A. *The Philistine priests wise in acknowledging God, and in sending Him a valuable trespass offering: golden rats and golden tumors*

B. *They were also clever in the way they send the ark back, pulled by two milk cows, which, if they (the cows) had been driven by nature would have went immediately back to their calves –*

Not many things are as inseparable as a cow and her calf - "a cow and her calf are the most inseparable objects on earth" Dr. Richard D. Philips

C. *God proved Himself active in this situation in that He compel the cows, against nature "lowing as they went" to take the ark back to Israel – "and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and did not turn aside to the right hand or the left." 1 Sa 6:12*

II. *Our God is able to show Himself mighty using even the humblest of creatures –*

1. *Here God uses pagan priests:*

A. *Giving them wisdom in regard to how to escape God's wrath*

B. *Giving them a level of understanding of:*

- *Honor due to God*

- *History of God's works –*

⁶ "Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He did mighty things among them, did they not let the people go, that they might depart? (1Sa 6:6 NKJ)

2. *Yet, more so God even uses cows!*

A. *He could have brought the ark back with cherubim –*

B. *He could have sent in a mighty angel!*

3. *His use of the cows is typical of what we see throughout Scripturally recorded history, God does His work using humble creatures:*

A. *With Jonah He uses "ordains" a worm –*

⁷ **But as morning dawned the next day God prepared a worm, and it so damaged the plant that it withered. (Jon 4:7 NKJ)**

B. *With Balaam He uses a donkey –*

²⁸ **Then the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?" (Num 22:28 NKJ)**

C. *He uses Moses, who is not eloquent –*

¹⁰ **Then Moses said to the LORD, "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." (Exodus 4:10 NKJ)**

D. *He uses a stick, Moses' rod, to defeat Egypt – Exodus 4:1-17*

(1)*The rod became a serpent that gobbled up Pharaoh's serpents –Exodus 7:9-12*

(2)*The rod is used by Moses to turn the waters of the Nile into blood – Exodus 7:14-19*

(3)*The rod is used to bring frogs out of the river, into people's houses – Exodus 8:3*

(4)*The rod is used to change dust into lice – Exodus 8:16-17*

(5)*Moses used the rod of God to bring hail and fire from Heaven, that fell only on the land of the Egyptians – Exodus 9:23*

(6)*Moses used the rod again to bring terrible locusts against Egypt which destroyed their crops – Exodus 10:13-14*

(7)*The rod was used to part the Red Sea – Exodus 14:16*

E. *He even continues using this rod after the people are out of Egypt*

(1)*The rod brings water out of a rock – Exodus 17:5-6*

(2)*The rod is instrumental in Israel's victory over Amalek – Exodus 17:8-16; 20:8-11*

(3)*This same rod blossoms and produces almonds to settle a fierce dispute – Numbers 16-17*

F. *As God used the cows He even uses "us" –*

²⁶ **For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. ²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, ²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence. (1Co 1:26-29 NKJ)**

III. *Our God, Who shows Himself to us in such wonderful ways: deserves our honor and praise and even our self-sacrifice –*

1. *Note where God leads these cows –*

¹⁴ **Then the cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh, and stood there; a large stone was there. So they split the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. (1Sa 6:14 NKJ)**

2. *Our God compels us by His grace to live self-sacrificially for His glory*

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. (Romans 12:1 NKJ)

“Across the will of Nature
Leads on the path of God;
Not where the flesh delighteth
The feet of Jesus trod.
O bliss to leave behind us
The fetters of the slave,
To leave ourselves behind us,
The grave clothes and the grave.

We follow in His footsteps;
What if our feet be torn?
Where He has marked the pathway
All hail the briar and the thorn!
Scarce seen, scarce be heard, unreckoned,
Despised, defamed, unknown
Or heard but by our singing,
On, children, ever on!”

Gerhard Tersteegan

Arnold A. Brevick