

October 7/8, 2023

Arrogant Pharaoh, Doubting Leader...Faithful God

Exodus: The God Who Delivers Series

Exodus 5:1-6:30

Pastor Ryan Harmon

That last song that we just sang, that old classic, I think it's such a good reminder for us of what the Christian life is like, isn't it? Such a beautiful song, and here's what I mean by that though. It's such a good description for me and a good reminder to me that so often there are things that I profess to be true, but often as I look at my life I have to ask, "Do I really believe it? Do I live that out? Do I live as if that were so?" Take the very first line of that song, *Come Thou fount of every blessing*. What a beautiful line; do we believe it? God, the source of all blessing, the source of all goodness, if there is blessing that we have in our life, He is the source of it. If there's a blessing we long for in our life, we seek it in Him. Do we believe it? Does our life reflect that we believe it? If we looked at our credit card bill, would we say, "Yes, we believe that God is the source of all blessing." What I'm so thankful for is the very next line, *...tune my heart to sing Thy grace*. Our hearts need re-tuning so often, as the song reflects. We are *prone to wander*, and so we say a confession to the Lord, "Lord, we ask You to tune our hearts, help us live what we profess, help us come to believe that you are the fount of every blessing."

You might disagree with what I'm about to say, but I ask you just to think about it. I want to propose that all of us always live according to what we believe. Everyone in the world lives according to what they believe. Not necessarily what they profess to believe, but what they really believe. What lies down underneath professions and things we think we are supposed to say, we have these deep core beliefs, and we live our life according to them. And that is why one of the most important questions we should ask ourselves is, "What do we really believe?" and even more important, "What do we really believe about God?" Do we believe He's good? Deep down, do we believe He's able? Do we believe He's trustworthy when we're going through hard times? Does our life reflect that we believe He is good? It's the most important thing about us. That very question has been on the pages so far in Exodus as we have been walking through it for these four weeks now. The people of Israel and Moses have encountered this question of, "Do they trust God? Will they believe Him?"

Last week, as we walked through Exodus chapter four, we encountered God's commissioning of Moses and Moses' struggle to believe. "I'm not worthy. I don't know that you can use me," and God saying, "You need to trust Me." As chapter four ends, as Moses and Aaron went to Israel, they said, "Here is what God is about to do," and the end of the chapter erupted really in this statement of belief. Israel believed God and they lifted up praise and worship to Him. They bowed down and worshiped Him. The stage is set for God's deliverance and that's right where we pick it up today. So, turn with me in your Bibles to Exodus, Chapter 5, as we consider these things together. We're going to be moving pretty quickly. We have two chapters to cover, so Exodus chapter 5, verse 1:

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.'" (*NASB, Exodus 5: 1)

Chapter four ended on this high note and chapter five picks up right where chapter four left off. You can see and sense the confidence and boldness, even the swagger of Moses and Aaron as they walked into Pharaoh, the king of the most powerful nation in the world. They walked in and they said, **“Thus says the Lord, ‘Let My people go’”**. This bold declaration feels a little bit like a mic drop, right? I feel like Moses and Aaron are like, “Here’s the statement,” and with boldness and courage, having just come off this high moment, they are ready to announce the words of the Lord to Pharaoh. So, their question is, “How will Pharaoh receive this bold declaration?” Verse 2:

**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.”**

A few times throughout our study in Exodus, we have talked about how anytime you see that word **LORD** in all capitals, it indicates that personal covenanting name of God—Yahweh. And I think when we repeat this verse, and we use that name, it has even more impact. ***“Who is Yahweh that I should obey His voice? I don’t even know Yahweh, and besides, I will not let Israel go.”*** In other words, “Message not received!” If Moses and Aaron’s opening statement kind of expressed this bold confidence, maybe just walking in confidently, declaring the word of the LORD to Pharaoh, his response is equally confident. I would say it borders on absolute arrogance. **Who is Yahweh...who is the LORD?** Moses kind of came in and, in some ways, expressed, “Who is Pharaoh? Do we really need to respect this person?” And Pharaoh responds, **“Who is Yahweh?”** We’ve talked about how Pharaoh considered himself to be a god, and certainly what is made very, very clear here, is that he is not about to submit to another god over whom he clearly thought he was at least an equal, maybe even more important, a superior.

The first two verses of chapter five highlight the conflict that is now going to play out in the coming chapters of Exodus. The question: “Who really is God? Who really is in charge? Who will Israel serve? Will they continue to serve Pharaoh, or will they serve the LORD, their God?” As we continue, it almost feels as if Moses and Aaron maybe expected this to go a little smoother than it was going, because you can hear a change in their tone. Verse 3:

Then they 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, otherwise He will fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.” 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 labors!” 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 labor be heavier on the men, and let them work at it so that they will pay no attention to false words.” (Vs. 3-9)

Well, God has told Moses and Aaron, in what previously occurred in chapter four, that God was going to have to *compel* Pharaoh to release His people, but it seems as though this caught them off

guard a little bit, this resistance. It wasn't going smoothly at all. Perhaps deep down they thought this was going to be a cake walk, that they were going to walk in and say, "God says to let my people go," and Pharaoh would say, "I better let them go," but that's not what happened at all. Instead, in a stunning turn, Pharaoh looks at their request, and essentially mocks the God of all creation...mocks Yahweh. "I don't even know Him. I'm not letting them go." Pharaoh essentially is exposed here, and we see what he truly believes.

What did Pharaoh believe about God? Well, he believed that God was someone worthy of being mocked. What did he believe about Moses and Aaron? Well, they're troublemakers, they're liars. He says they're giving false hope to the people of Israel. What did he believe about the people of Israel? First of all, that they were His people. They were His servants. Second of all, they were lazy. What did he believe about himself? Well, he is in charge. He is the king of the world. He is supreme. There's no question.

As we walk through life, as we consider what do we truly believe, there's no question that when we encounter trials, conflicts, and setbacks, what so often happens is that what we truly believe often comes out. It's laid bare. And that's certainly true here of Pharaoh. We see clearly what Pharaoh believed. When a proposition was brought to him that eventually would've cost him, we see him rise up arrogantly and say, "Not going to happen; I'm in charge." He believed he was in charge. Furthermore, in an effort to cause the Hebrew people to turn against Moses and Aaron, he piles upon them more labors. He makes their life incredibly difficult, removes the straw that would've bound bricks together and says, "But, you still have to produce the same number of bricks...same quota." Pharaoh is clearly trying to work against Moses and Aaron, trying to turn the people against Moses and Aaron. Verse 10,

So the taskmasters of the people and their foremen went out and spoke to the people, saying, "Thus says Pharaoh. (It's a minor little note, but notice how when Moses and Aaron came in, they said: Thus says the LORD, and here we see Pharaoh elevated with "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. 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?" (Vs. 10-14)

Without straw, it would have been an absolutely impossible situation. That was a necessary ingredient to making bricks. It was essentially this binding agent that held this clay together, and without the straw, the bricks would essentially melt in the heat. Impossible! It was an impossible task! Given the impossibility of the task, just imagine if you were Israel or if you were the foreman, or if you were a member of the house of Israel at this time! Just how would you respond in this moment? I know what I would want to do. I would want to lash out. I would want to say, "You know precisely why we are not producing the bricks. It's because of what you have told us. You've asked us to do an impossible thing. It's not possible!" What a ridiculous question! They're just rubbing it in.

We're all about to start raking leaves here pretty soon, and it would be a little bit like me saying, "Hey, you have to rake your yard. You have to do it as quickly as always, but you have to use a plastic fork. You've got to get it done quickly though or there's going to be a price to pay. And you know what? While you're at it, I want you to mow your lawn, but you have to use a pocketknife and no mowers any longer. It'll take you a thousand hours, but too bad." That's the situation here. Pharaoh is truly being shrewd as this evil, corrupt leader. He is trying to bring about disunity. He's trying to break the spirit of Israel and turn them against these leaders and any vision they had that Moses and Aaron had given them...that God had given them through Moses and Aaron. That is what Pharaoh is clearly trying to do. So, the question is, "Would it work?" Verse 15:

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." But he said, "You are lazy, *very* lazy; therefore you say, 'Let us go *and* sacrifice to the LORD.' So go now *and* work; for you will be given no straw, yet you must deliver the quota of bricks." 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." When they left Pharaoh's presence, they met Moses and Aaron as they were waiting for them. 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."

(Vs. 15-21)

Pharaoh's plan worked like a charm. Exactly what he was aiming at was accomplished. Not only was Israel exacerbated, overwhelmed, knowing they had this impossible task, but they looked for someone to blame. So, Moses and Aaron became the targets of their anger, the targets of their frustration and their angst. They blamed Moses and Aaron.

What an insight this is, I think at just this moment, what we're like as people. You know, whenever we read the Scriptures and whenever we preach, we are always aiming to see what this meant in its original setting, and, therefore, what does it mean for us today? That's always what we aim to do. But, I think it's also appropriate, at times, to allow ourselves to see ourselves in the text a little bit and say, "What would that be like for me?" And I'll tell you that, as I read this text and I read Israel's response, I see my heart laid bare. I see how frustration and disappointment, a plan not going my way, causes me so quickly to lose sight of what I just heard. God has just told them, "I'm going to deliver you. I'm going to bring you out." They gather to praise. They gather together to worship and bow down in reverent, awed worship of God. But here, just a few moments later, they are despondent. They have forgotten it all. When I consider Israel, I see how quick I am to lose sight of God's hand at work all around me.

Just consider Israel's journey, just what we have studied over the course of this study of Exodus these four, five weeks now. From the first moment we met them, they're in Egypt, they're calling out to God, and God heard them cry. They had a Pharaoh that was so evil that he said he was going to put to death every firstborn male child among the Hebrew people. They called out to God and God responds. He sends Moses in, but now here, in this moment, new suffering comes along, a setback comes along. Maybe the deliverance didn't happen as quickly as they wanted, and they're so quick to not only turn on Moses and Aaron, but even to say, "You know, it seems as though we

just became repugnant to Pharaoh.” It’s almost as if they’re saying, “Pharaoh was our friend, and now we’re odious to him because of what you did, Moses and Aaron!” It’s just such a reminder to me. As frail human beings, we are so fickle; we are so quick to lose sight of God’s patient, persistent working out of His plan. We’re so quick to turn to our own devices, to turn to our own strength when we meet setbacks. What do we believe about God? Will we continue to trust Him, even when the answer, the plan, the thing that we hope for, or what God calls us into, doesn’t immediately come our way? Will we trust him?

C.S. Lewis is one of my favorite authors. He had a way of saying things in a way that no one else could say them. Have you ever read C.S. Lewis? I’d encourage you to just pick up one of his books. There’s an essay that he wrote that became quite famous called, *The Weight of Glory*. In the very first pages of that essay, he’s talking about our propensity, our tendencies as human beings, to act out in our frailty, to think too small, to lose sight of what God has for us. Lewis says this in that essay.

“We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.” (Copyright © 1949, C. S. Lewis Pte. Ltd. Copyright renewed © 1976, revised 1980 C. S. Lewis Pte. Ltd. HarperCollins Publishers, New York, N Y.)

So often when there are setbacks, we settle for far less than what God has called us into. We start to think that we will take things into our own hands and that what we can produce on our own, is better than what God has promised. So often setbacks expose what we truly believe. Trials, conflicts, they expose what we truly believe. But in that truth, there is a blessing, because once we see what we truly believe, we can say, “Oh, Lord, help me trust You. Help me to have an accurate view of who You are. Help me think rightly of You, because You are good; You are able. I can trust You, Lord, help me believe. *Tune my heart to sing Thy grace.*” What an incredible opportunity presented to Israel at this moment...an opportunity to trust God in the midst of devastation. But they fall back. They struggle, and they turn to Moses and Aaron and they blame them. What a turn of events for these two leaders! After being embraced moments ago, raised up, as Israel says, “We believe God, and we trust Moses and Aaron, and we are going to worship together,” now they are calling down curses, essentially, by the hand of Yahweh on Moses and Aaron. Now they are turning against their leaders, so the question is now, “How would Moses and Aaron respond?” Verse 22:

Then Moses returned to the LORD and said, “O Lord, why have You brought harm to this people? Why did You ever send me? Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done harm to this people, and You have not delivered Your people at all.” (Vs. 22-23)

What an incredibly honest moment! I’ll tell you one of the things that I love about Scripture, and what builds up my faith, are prayers like this and conversations with God like this are in it. If you search the world’s other religious texts, you’re not going to find honesty like this. We believe that Moses wrote this text, or if he had a team of writers, he oversaw what was written in this text, and what is here is what God told Moses to put here. This is certainly one of those moments where, if I was Moses, I would say, “Let’s pass over that moment,” and just hurl accusations at God. The people of Israel blame Moses, and Moses turns and blames God. Questions, doubts, wavering

belief in this moment, and there was no doubt, things were going very poorly. The people were suffering more and more. The labor was heavier and heavier, and they weren't going according to plan. In that moment, Moses was ready to blame God, just as the people of Israel were blaming him. That's so often how we respond in the midst of setbacks, in the midst of disappointment. But, how does God respond to Moses? Chapter 6, verse 1:

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for under compulsion he will let them go, and under compulsion he will drive them out of his land.”

God spoke further to Moses and said to him, “I am the LORD; and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but *by My name, LORD*, I did not make Myself known to them. I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they sojourned. Furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, ‘I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you *for a possession*; I am the LORD.’” So Moses spoke thus to the sons of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses on account of *their* despondency and cruel bondage.

Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Go, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the sons of Israel go out of his land.” (Exodus 6:1-11)

If there was any portion of Scripture from these two chapters that would be worthy of meditating... dwelling... reflecting on, it'd be these eleven verses. Just this answer that God gives to Moses, how God responds to Moses, it's important for us to recognize what He did and did not say. He did not respond to all of Moses' charges, did he? We're apt to do that. We're bound to go in and say, “Okay, let's take Moses and all the things he just said to me, and let's correct it and let me answer. ‘This is what I really was doing, Moses. Let Me help you understand this is what I'm doing.’” But that's not what God did. He didn't answer all the charges. He did, however, answer the most important, the most pressing question that was lurking beneath the surface of Moses' questions. He told Moses who He was, and He told Moses again, “This is what I am going to do.” In essence, God's response to Moses focused on whether or not Moses would believe God was who He said He was and would do that which He said He would do. “Moses, what do you really believe about God? Do you trust Him?” He started by reminding Moses of His name, the name Yahweh.

A few weeks ago, Jeff told us about that episode at the burning bush where God first said that name, Yahweh, to Moses. And Jeff told us how that name essentially means: *God is the self-existent One, the constantly active One, the omnipresent One, the most powerful One. “IAM WHO IAM”*. Every time we hear that name Yahweh, it's a harkening back to this is who God is. This is His very character, His very nature, the most powerful, self-existent One. Everything else, everyone else is

dependent, but not God. We all depend on Him. He is self-dependent. It's who He is. That's what His name means.

As we were reading that text, you might have paused for a second because in verse three there is an interesting little piece of information there. In verse three it says, **and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, LORD, I did not make Myself known to them.**

Now perhaps your mind went immediately back to the book of Genesis, and you thought, "No, I think God did reveal His name to Abraham," and you'd be right. So, the question is, "What is God saying here?" I think, as we consider what God is doing on the pages of Exodus, in this event with His people, what is made clear, is God made Himself known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but God was doing something much bigger. He was doing a new thing, a fresh thing. There are facets of God's character that are being revealed in this delivering event that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob caught little glimpses of, but they didn't see it in its fullness. God was revealing Himself in a new, astounding, dramatic, momentous way to His people, Israel. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob knew God, but Israel was going to experience Him firsthand as the most powerful, delivering God on the face of the Earth. He was about to do something absolutely astounding! So, in that sense, there is a new understanding, a new interactive knowledge of God, that Israel is stepping into as they see Him stepping in on their behalf. Consequently, that's exactly when He then turns and says, "This is what I'm going to do." Eight different things God says He is going to do, or basically summed up this way, He says, "I will deliver you. I will make you a people. I will be your God, and I will give you a land. That is what I'm about to do." God is reminding Moses, "This is who I am and this is what I will do."

Now, for the sake of time, I'm going to encourage you to read verses 10 to 30 on your own. You could do that in your Life Group; you could dig deeper into the text. But the summary essentially is this: Some of the themes that we have already seen are repeated. God again sends Moses to Pharaoh. People struggle to believe, and Moses struggles to believe that he is up to the task. But God reminds Moses once again of the most important thing—not that Moses is up to the task—but that God is up to the task! That's the most important thing to remember. "Moses, you can't do it, but God can do it."

What do we believe about God? Do we believe that this is who He is? Do we believe that He is capable of using someone like Moses, yes someone like Moses, or even someone like you? Someone like me? We were reminded last week, we have all been called for a purpose. Do we believe that God can use people like us? Will we trust Him with that? Do we believe that even when things don't go as we'd like them to go—maybe things are unraveling—do we believe that He is able to pull us out? Do we believe that He is trustworthy, that we do not need to lean on our own understanding, but we can continue to cling to Him? What do we believe about God?

Pharaoh's beliefs were made clear. God is someone to be scorned, someone to be mocked. Pharaoh is inferior and Pharaoh himself was the one in charge. Moses, well it seems that Moses struggled to believe that God could use someone like him. That's part of what he wrestled with. The people of Israel? Well, they struggled to believe that God was still with them when they endured hardship. What about you? Whatever you're walking through, what do you believe about God? What do you

believe about Him when things go poorly? The struggle of the Christian life, so often, essentially comes down to, “Do we really believe that God’s way is best, that He brings blessings and goodness into our life? Can we trust Him with that?” We struggle with that. That struggle is on every page of Scripture virtually. The very first act of sin was essentially a question about who God was. Adam and Eve, there in the garden, asked a question, “Did God really say that?” And ultimately what was in their hearts was the question, “Is God a withholder of good?” And they acted on their own when they saw for themselves that which God said, “Do not eat”. But they trusted in their own understanding, rather than trusting in God. We still do that. We still believe, at times, that God withholds good from us. He has not brought us into the place that we want to be, so what do we believe about God? It’s so fundamental to the Christian walk.

Back in August, we walked through a series where we asked the question, “Why does church matter?” And one of the critical reasons it matters is because we struggle sometimes to have an accurate view of God. We can start to believe things that are a little bit off, and over time, that can take us away from God as He truly is. As we gather together as a people, we must remind one another, “This is who God is. This is what He is like. You can trust Him; He is trustworthy. He is good.” I need that as we walk this walk of faith, and Moses certainly needed it. And God, in His patience, came and reminded Moses, “This is who I am.” Very soon Pharaoh is going to encounter that, much against his will, but he is going to see who God is very, very clearly, very, very soon.

What do we believe about God? Through the pages of Exodus, Israel encountered this new, mighty act of God. They learned the depths of all that it means: that He is a deliverer, that He is a Savior, that He is a Way Maker, that He is a Promise Keeper. They were given a fresh glimpse of His extravagant goodness to them and His grace. They didn’t do anything worthy of being saved, and yet God saved. God showed them His glory. What about us? Well, I think we stand in a place where that’s true of us as well. Israel got to see a new glimpse of God’s action, of God’s grace being poured out upon them. But we, now as people on this side of the cross, when we look upon what God did with Israel, we say, “Look how gracious He is. Look how merciful He is. Look how He delivered them without them doing anything to earn it.” And as we stand on this side of the cross, we can glory in that reality of who He is all the more, because what He did for Israel in the book of Exodus, what He did in delivering them from the hand of Pharaoh, He did ultimately through His son Jesus Christ, the ultimate deliverer.

We get to see God in His delivering character, in all His glory, as we look to His Son. So, the question is, “If we struggle with that, what do we do?” The simple answer is, “We look to Jesus. We look to Jesus, the One who said in the New Testament, **‘If you have seen me, you have seen the Father.’**” Who Jesus is, is a perfect representation of who God is, because He is God Himself. Colossians tells us, **In Him the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.** So, as we struggle, as we struggle to believe that God is who He says He is, let us respond by running towards Jesus, running towards Him, that we might know Him more and, as we know Him more, we will come to believe that He is good, that He is able, and that no matter what we are walking through, we can trust in Him.

Our Father, we are thankful. We are thankful that even in the midst of our wavering belief, even when we struggle to believe that You are good, You have constantly shown Yourself to be so patient. As Moses struggled, You were so patient, and as we struggle, You are so patient with us. And so we thank You for that. We praise You for Your lovingkindness to us. Jesus, we thank You that You are our Savior. You're our ultimate deliverer, and we look to You. We look to You and we ask that You help us to believe that which is true about You, about Your Father, about the Spirit, that we may be aligned with the truth and that we may walk in the freedom that that brings. We pray these things in Your precious name, Amen.

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Lincoln Berean Church, 6400 S. 70th, Lincoln, NE 68516 (402) 483-6512
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FALL 2023 // WEEK 5

Life Group Questions

Exodus- The God Who Delivers // October 7 – 8, 2023

Arrogant Pharaoh, Doubting Leader...Faithful God // Exodus 5:1 – 6:30

Introduction

Exodus 5 and 6 are the beginnings of Moses and Aaron's leadership journey. A new dialogue turns familiar as Moses and Aaron approach Pharaoh with a message from Yahweh, *Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel*. Yet when a step of faith doesn't turn out as expected, Moses retreats to the familiar patterns of self-doubt. It is in this relatable space of inadequacy that the LORD graciously reveals his unwavering faithfulness and trustworthy character.

To think through the main ideas in the sermon and prepare for your discussion together, we invite you to look over all the questions on the following pages and write your thoughts down before you meet with your group. Due to preferences over a wide range of groups, we do not expect you will cover every question each week.

Warm Up *(Suggested time: 30 min)*

- 1) If you could do something dangerous just once with no risk, what would you do and why?

- 2) What one fear would you like to conquer. How would overcoming this fear make your life better?

Getting Started

Transition into group discussion.

- 1) Open group discussion with prayer. Here are a few potential prayer items:
 - a. For the Spirit of God to lead you in truth
 - b. For the fruit of the Spirit to be cultivated in your lives
 - c. For grace to hear and apply what the Spirit says to you
- 2) Choose someone to read the passage aloud for the group.

Study Questions *(Suggested time: 40 min)*

- 1) Our passage this week begins with a continuation phrase, *And afterward*. **What are some important details from Exodus 3 and 4 that you can recall? How are these details significant in discerning the next part of the Exodus narrative?**

- 2) In Exodus 5, the topic of authority becomes central in the dialogue. **Under what authority does Moses ask Pharaoh to allow the Israelites to go to worship their God? What does Pharaoh's response to Moses' request reveal about Pharaoh's character?**

Moses' appeal to Pharaoh produces a conflict of authority leading to a disastrous result: the intensification of Israel's hardship and affliction. **What did God tell Moses in Exodus 3:19 that should have prepared him for Pharaoh's answer? What part of God's character is being revealed to Moses in this interaction? How would you describe Moses' view of God?**

- 3) Our responses amidst conflict and struggle can be telling of our view of God. **Take note of some of the responses we read in chapter 5. How did the following people respond to God's authority? What part of God's character are they not fully trusting?**
 - a. Moses

 - b. Pharaoh

 - c. Taskmasters and foremen

 - d. Israelites

Which of the responses above is most relatable to you and why? Share of a time when you walked through a period of conflict. What authority were you living under during this time? How was it easy or hard to fully trust God?

- 4) Both chapters 5 and 6 end with questions in a moment of vulnerability between Moses and God. **What are Moses' concerns? In the questioning, what is Moses revealing about his view of self? What is he revealing about his relationship with God?**

Notice how God responds to Moses' questions and concerns. **What does this tell us about God and our questions?**

Questioning God is a special part of our relationship with Him. How you approach God in your questions can be a catalyst for further spiritual growth and faithfulness. **In your moments of vulnerability with God, what are some of the questions you are asking Him lately? How has God revealed Himself to you in a way that causes you to trust Him?**

- 5) Yahweh addresses the uncertainty by reaffirming the character in His very name and reminding Moses what Yahweh has done throughout generations to redeem His people. Count how many times the word "I" appears in Exodus 6:1-8. **How does Yahweh describe Himself? What are some covenants He has made? What significance might these names hold, and how can understanding them deepen our relationship with God?**

Consider the LORD's unfolding plan of redemption from Genesis to this point in Exodus. We have a summarized version here in Exodus 6:1 – 27. **How is Yahweh's plan of redeeming Israel a picture of our own redemption through Jesus Christ?**

What is a redemption story in your life? Or, how is God currently redeeming you? Is there a particular situation when you have experienced His deliverance first-hand?

Personal Spiritual Exercises

Just like physical exercises help strengthen and stretch our bodies for healthy living, these spiritual exercises are meant to move us spiritually in ways that may be new so we might experience inner growth. Since God longs for us to experience Him with our whole selves—mind, body, spirit—we invite you along each week to strengthen your souls with suggestions and prompts. **Next week in Life Group, take a few moments to share how the Lord may have used this exercise in your life.**

Scripture Focus: Are you fascinated by genealogies in the Bible? When you come across a genealogy one of many useful tools is to draw a family tree. YES, draw one! It may get messy, but you will eventually see something different about the family, clans or people groups.

Take time this week to map out the family line of Moses and Aaron found in Exodus 6:14-27. Include the following details in your tree.

- names, clan, or people group
- Birth ages (if provided)
- Age (if provided)
- Death age (if provided)

If you want to take your drawing a step further, use BibleHub to search the names listed. All you have to do is type the name of the family member, clan, or people group in the search tool to discover places in the Bible where they are also mentioned. This will help with getting a better understanding of who they are and how they play a role in Scripture.

Prayer Focus: Recall a time when you noticed God teaching you something specific about His character. Take time to journal the details of that moment, and also remember how God revealed Himself to you little by little. Next, journal a prayer back to God as you meditate on His character. It is a way for you to acknowledge how He has been faithful to you in all things.

Prayer *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

A significant part of “coming together” is being open and honest with our lives. Sitting in a group of people for prayer may be new or it may be familiar to you. If you would rather not pray aloud when it is your turn, feel free to pray silently and then say “Amen” aloud signaling the next person in the group to pray. Whether or not you choose to verbalize your prayer, everyone is a participant in sharing this time before God together.

Take a few moments to prepare a prayer request. What did the message, working through the above questions or the discussion cause you to notice about your own relationship with Jesus? Would you be willing to share your prayer request with the group?