



As we continued our series in Exodus this Sunday, we noted that this sequence of real life events, as Moses narrates it, follows a typical narrative arc:

### Part 1: Moses before Pharaoh – a story of despair (4v18-5v23)

Cliffhanger: We began with a cliffhanger. God's anger had burned against Moses at the burning bush in 4v14, as he had five times questioned God's commission.

Exposition: Fortunately, Moses finally obeyed (4v18). Aaron came to join him (4v27-28), and they headed back to Egypt, where they spoke to the elders of the Israelites, who believed the LORD's message (4v29-31).

Conflict: They likely entered Pharaoh's presence (5v1) feeling a sense of trepidation, but also of confidence and confirmation that this was God's plan!

But this is where things began to unravel. Pharaoh very much was *not* willing to listen to their command (5v2, 4-5). He decided to teach them a lesson by making their work much harder – demanding the same number of bricks to be made, but removing the straw they used to make them (5v7-9). The narrative recounts in some detail how difficult this made life for the Israelite slaves.

In v15-16 they cried out to Pharaoh for clemency, but to no avail, and so in v20-21 they called down God's judgment on Moses and Aaron for all that had happened.

Climax: And Moses was not immune from his people's suffering, crying out to the LORD: "Why, Lord, why have you brought trouble on this people? Is this why you sent me?" (5v22-23).

### Part 2: Moses before God – a story of deliverance (6v1-7v7)

Resolution: In Moses' doubt and despair, he returned to God and God reminded Moses of who he is (Yahweh – "the LORD") and repeated his promises to him in a greater way than Moses or anyone had ever heard before (6v1-8).

The Israelites would know him now not simply as God, or God Almighty, but as Yahweh – the one who was rescuing a people for himself and giving them a land. They could be certain that he would rescue them.

We then step outside the narrative briefly with a genealogy (6v14-25) reminding us of the simple humanity of Moses and Aaron – it is God who is the hero here.

Our passage finishes with an instruction to Moses and Aaron go to Pharaoh again, and a reminder that it would not be easy – for Pharaoh would not listen.

And doesn't this story – this narrative arc – remind us of Jesus' plight? Isn't Jesus the archetypal one who, *though he obeyed God fully*, knew great suffering. And yet Jesus did not cry out in rebellion or anger, he did not give up on God. He did not open his mouth, Isaiah tells us, as he faced the most awful of oppression. In Moses' example, and in Jesus' too, we can see a pattern for what to do when we suffer not because of our disobedience but despite our obedience. We are to cry out to God who will show us who he is and comfort us with his certain promises. Even now, God is preparing a place for us, a whole new creation, for his precious people.

Here are a few questions you might want to use with your group...

1. Does this story of obeying God resulting in suffering resonate with your experience?
2. How do you think Moses must have felt to watch his people undergo such great suffering as a result of his actions? How might the devil have tempted him?
3. How does God answer Moses' desperate cry at the end of chapter 5? How does that answer help and satisfy Moses?
4. How does Moses point to Jesus in these chapters?
5. What encouragement can we take from this prelude to the plagues?