

Lesson #3

Praying With Confidence

Main Passage:

Exodus 3:7-10

The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of My people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. ⁸ So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. ⁹ And now the cry of the Israelites has reached Me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. ¹⁰ So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring My people the Israelites out of Egypt."

Big Idea:

Whenever you experience your world crumbling around you, or "feel" that your prayers do not go past the ceiling, God wants to hear from you because He wants to be involved and is working even when you cannot see it.

Outline:

1st Teaching Point: We can pray with confidence because God hears our prayer – God wants to hear from you!

Exodus 3:7

The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of My people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering.

2nd Teaching Point: We can pray with confidence because God responds to our prayer – God wants to be involved in your life!

Exodus 3:8

So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.

3rd Teaching Point: We can pray with confidence because God has a plan in our prayer – God is working even when you do not see it!

Exodus 3:10

So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring My people the Israelites out of Egypt."

Lesson:

Introduction: Prayer is a part of our relationship with God. Not only is it how we can communicate to Him, it also gives us a way to express ourselves to God. During a time of prayer we can become emotional. Emotions during prayer can range from crying in sadness to laughing with joy and every other emotion in between!

Biblical Examples: Crying- Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-46), Prayers of Joy- Psalm 16, 20, 30, 63

For most Christians, they know that they need to pray, and they want to pray, but they fear that somehow when they talk to God they will get it wrong...they worry more about what it sounds like, than what they mean. In other words, they worry more about what they are trying to communicate rather than just focusing on communicating with God personally. So briefly, let's go through 3 thoughts on praying with confidence.

1. God hears our prayer – God wants to hear from you!

Exodus 3:7

The LORD said, “I have indeed seen the misery of My people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering.”

- God sees our suffering: We see in this passage that God has “seen the misery of my people”. No detail in life goes unnoticed by God. Your struggles, your emotions, your situation at work, your struggles at home, all of that stuff is noticed by God. So He sees what is going on in your world, but:

- God waits for you to call out to Him: He also hears you as well...For God says: “*I have heard them crying out because of...*”(v7).
- God does not act until the people call out to Him: God knows His people are suffering, but then it gets so bad that they finally begin to express it. God desires for us to converse with Him. God wants us to express our emotions, our troubles, our desire, and our needs to Him.
- God tells us in scripture to call out to Him: All throughout scripture God tells us that He desires to hear from you...God wants you to talk to Him! He knows what was going on, but it was not until the Israelites called out to God in distress, in trouble, that they had had enough! God was waiting on them to express their need and desire for Him. And God heard them!

1 Peter 5:6-7

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.

Jeremiah 29:12

Then you will call on Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.

Philippians 4:6

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Over and over in the both the Old and New Testaments, God reminds us to call out to Him. Just because you think or feel that your prayers do not rise above the rafters, God hears your

prayers. He knows your situation, He has seen what you have been going through, so you can be confident in knowing that God knows exactly where you are, what is going on, and He is ready to listen to you but you have to call out to Him...

Ephesians 3:12

In Him and through faith in Him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

Ephesians 6:18

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

2. God responds to our prayer – God wants to be involved in your life!

Exodus 3:8

So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.

So we see God's response.

- God is going to do something about it, look at what He says: "**So I have come down** to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians..."

- God is going to get personally involved: God's response to the Israelites' cry means that God is going to personally get involved. He is not going to send an angel; He did not say, I will work things out for you, or manipulate the situation or cause you to wonder if I am around. God states that He has come to deal with the situation. Now Moses, gets to be a part of that, but really this is all about God and His people, and His promise to them. So God gets personal. God's people have a problem, and if God's people have a problem, then it is God's problem.

Psalm 102:17

He will respond to the prayer of the destitute; He will not despise their plea.

- A perfect parent will respond to their children: We are the children of God are we not? Since God is our heavenly father, do not parents get involved in their children's lives? Do parents protect their children, listen to their children and help their children and even come to the rescue of their children at dire times? Any good parent, and any perfect parent will respond to their children when they are called up! Whether it be good or bad, a good parent, a perfect parent will respond!

1 John 3:1

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him.

John 14:16-18

And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you.

¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

***Note: Sometimes that response is either: yes, no, or wait. Despite the answer to the prayer, God responds. ***

- We can be confident that God will respond to our prayers!

Psalm 145:18

The LORD is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth.

Isaiah 65:24

Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.

Hebrews 4:15-16

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet He did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

- God does not react, He responds: God is not caught off guard, rather He is prepared to respond!

3. God has a plan in our prayer – God is working even when you do not see it!

Exodus 3:10

So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring My people the Israelites out of Egypt."

- God was calling Moses while the Israelites were still crying out: Now while the Israelites are still in slavery, it is God and Moses that are having this conversation. So while the Israelites cannot see anything happening at the moment, God is moving and working and setting things in place. God has told Moses – I am sending you, to bring My people out of Egypt.

- When you read the story of God bringing the Israelites out of Egypt, you notice that Moses only said and did what God told him to say and do. Moses was just a mouthpiece. God heard the Israelites prayer. He responded by sending Moses as His mouthpiece, but God had a plan not only to bring them out of Egypt, but to put them in a land flowing with milk and honey. (See Exodus 3-13)

- When God shows up to answer your prayer – the only response we will be able to give is – How awesome are You, my God! He gets all the praise – He gets all the glory!

Look at this verse:

Psalm 65:1-5

Praise awaits You, our God, in Zion; to You our vows will be fulfilled. ² You Who answer prayer, to You all people will come. ³ When we were overwhelmed by sins, You forgave our transgressions. ⁴ Blessed are those You choose and bring near to live in Your courts! We are filled with the good things of Your house, of Your holy temple. ⁵ You answer us with awesome and righteous deeds, God our Savior, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas...

- God is a God that answers when we call out to Him. (v2)
- God only does awesome things. (v5)
- God receives all the glory. (v5)

Small Group Discussion Questions:

1. In Exodus 3:7, God saw what the Israelites were going through, but did not take action until they cried out to Him. Why is it important to God for us to verbalize our situation to Him even though He already knows and sees it?
2. If God desires to be a part of your life in a personal way, then why do we tend to focus on the remedy or comfort of the situation instead of just communicating to God because we love Him? Is God just a genie?
3. Which is more important, God receiving glory or the remedy of your situation? If God receiving glory is more important than your situation, how does that change your prayers to Him?
4. Which do you think is more important to God: what we say in our prayer or how we say our prayer? Why?
5. Is there an example in your life when you had been praying about something and God was already working things out, but you did not find out or figure it out until later? Tell us!
6. APPLICATION: What is one thing you can take away from today's lesson that can be applied this week? Please explain.

Small Group Prayer Suggestions:

1. Be specific when you pray.
2. Tell God everything, emotions, frustrations, the good, the bad and the ugly.
3. Focus on who God is, His characteristics and attributes, not just for Him to "fix" a situation.

Prayer Quotes:

"Prayer should not be regarded as a duty which must be performed, but rather as a privilege to be enjoyed, a rare delight that is always revealing some new beauty."

- E.M. Bounds

"The Christian life is not a constant high. I have my moments of deep discouragement. I have to go to God in prayer with tears in my eyes, and say, 'O God, forgive me,' or 'Help me.'"

- Billy Graham

"True prayer is neither a mere mental exercise nor a vocal performance. It is far deeper than that - it is spiritual transaction with the Creator of Heaven and Earth."

- Charles Spurgeon

"To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing."

- Martin Luther

"The reality is, my prayers don't change God. But, I am convinced prayer changes me. Praying boldly boots me out of that stale place of religious habit into authentic connection with God Himself."

- Lysa TerKeurst

"Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?"

- Corrie ten Boom

Additional Verses:

Mark 11:24; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19; Philippians 4:6-7; James 5:16; 1 John 5:14-15; John 15:7; 1 Timothy 2:5; Matthew 21:21-22; Matthew 6:9-13; James 1:5; Luke 11:9; Matthew 6:7; Luke 18:1-8; Jeremiah 33:3; Psalm 91:1-4; Romans 8:26; 1 John 1:9; Psalm 103:1-5; Luke 11:1; Psalm 141:2; James 5:13-14; James 4:3; Revelation 8:4; 2 Chronicles 7:14; James 5:16-18; Hebrews 4:16; 1 Peter 5:7; Psalm 51:1-4; Psalm 50:15; Matthew 18:19-20; Matthew 26:41

Illustrations:

Ivan endures all the horrors of a Soviet prison camp. One day he is praying with his eyes closed when a fellow prisoner notices him and says with ridicule, "Prayers won't help you get out of here any faster." Opening his eyes, Ivan answers, "I do not pray to get out of prison but to do the will of God."

- Our Daily Bread, December 29, 1993

Dr. Helen Roseveare, missionary to Zaire, told the following story. "A mother at our mission station died after giving birth to a premature baby. We tried to improvise an incubator to keep the infant alive, but the only hot water bottle we had was beyond repair. So we asked the children to pray for the baby and for her sister. One of the girls responded. 'Dear God, please send a hot water bottle today. Tomorrow will be too late because by then the baby will be dead. And dear Lord, send a doll for the sister so she won't feel so lonely.' That afternoon a large package arrived from England. The children watched eagerly as we opened it. Much to their surprise, under some clothing was a hot water bottle! Immediately the girl who had prayed so earnestly started to dig deeper, exclaiming, 'If God sent that, I'm sure He also sent a doll!' And she was right! The heavenly Father knew in advance of that child's sincere requests, and 5 months earlier He had led a ladies' group to include both of those specific articles."

- Source Unknown.

Additional Commentary: Exodus 3:7-10¹

3:7–10 What the reader has already learned from mention of the patriarchal covenant in 2:23–25 (and which was implicit in the reference to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in 3:6) Moses now heard spelled out explicitly: Yahweh cared about his people and planned to deliver them from Egypt to Canaan. In 2:23–25 the exodus was already adumbrated by the reference to remembering the covenant with Abraham and his descendants, the terms of which included both their slavery and their deliverance to Canaan (Gen 15:13–16).

Two great challenges to Moses' faith appear here implicitly, at either end of these verses. The first (v. 7) is a challenge shared by all believers: to trust that God has always and continues to be concerned about their suffering since in the present fallen world, God allows suffering. That the Israelites had been suffering oppression such a long time without rescue begs the question of God, "If you are willing to help now, why didn't you help earlier?" The Bible provides clear answers in principle to such a question,³⁰ but individuals or groups cannot normally know why their particular suffering is so severe or has gone on as long as it has.³¹ The second challenge (v. 10) involves Moses' past: how could one who tried and failed to help his fellow Israelites on an individual scale forty years before (2:11–14) now, in his late years, be God's choice as deliverer of the whole nation?

Verse 7 summarizes the plight of the Israelites in their forced labor with four terms: "misery ... crying out ... slave drivers ... suffering."³² With three verbs God announced his compassion: "I have indeed seen ... I have heard them ... I am concerned."³³ The first of these, "I have indeed seen" (*rā'ōh rā'itī*) involves the Hebrew infinitive absolute construction, which connotes the sense "I have carefully watched" or "I have paid very close attention to," thus by itself indicating the intensity of God's interest in the misery of his people. Note also that God called Israel "my people," echoing but also more grandly superseding Moses' reference to "his own people" in 2:11.

Verse 8 declares God's rescue plan. The wording "I have come down [descended]" is characteristic of many biblical passages related to theophany and divine rescue of humans³⁴ and should not be understood as suggesting a primitive view of God within a three-tiered

¹ Taken from: Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, vol. 2, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 116–118.

³⁰ E.g., Rom 5:3; 8:17; Phil 1:29; 2 Thess 1:5; 1 Pet 1:6; 3:17; 4:19.

³¹ Thus the model of Job, who was not allowed to be aware that his suffering greatly honored God and humiliated Satan, as the suffering of the righteous invariably does whether or not they are aware of it.

³² All four terms (עני, "misery"; צעקה, "crying out"; נגש, "slave driver"; מכאב, "suffering") are used here in Exodus for the first time, even though Israel's suffering has already been referred to in various ways in chaps. 1–2, suggesting that this verse is programmatic for many following references to Israel's suffering under Egyptian bondage.

³³ In contrast to the nouns cited above, the three verbs are all resumptive of vocabulary used in 2:24–25.

³⁴ E.g., Gen 11:5; Exod 19:20; 34:5; Num 11:25; 12:5; Neh 9:13; Ps 18:9; Isa 64:3; Luke 3:22; John 6:41, 51; Eph 4:9; cf. Kuntz, *The Self-Revelation of God*, 42; Niehaus, *God at Sinai*, 187.

universe. He promised to bring them to a place ample in both size³⁵ and nourishment³⁶ for them. By mentioning the six (or seven) Canaanite-Amorite groups,³⁷ God both clarified for Moses exactly which territories he planned to give his people and proleptically identified the future enemies in the war of conquest fought by Joshua.

Verse 9 reiterates both 3:7 and 2:23–25, providing yet another occasion to remind the reader, and in this case Moses in the situation of his call, that God had not forgotten his people, was deeply concerned for them, and would act on their behalf. Nevertheless, as the ensuing portions of the narrative make clear, it was not easy for Moses to hear the command of v. 10, with its demand that he *go* as God’s prophet (“I am sending you”³⁸) to Pharaoh to *bring* Israel out of Egypt. Not only was Moses to be involved in the exodus but he was to lead it, in defiance of the greatest potentate on earth, the Egyptian Pharaoh.

³⁵ On the term “spacious land” cf. Judg 18:10; 2 Sam 18:20/Ps 18:19; 1 Chr 4:40; Neh 9:35.

³⁶ The term “flowing with milk and honey,” grammatically unusual because it involves a participle constructed to a compound noun, became nevertheless the standard term for describing the goodness of God’s provision for his people in Canaan (cf. 3:17; 13:5). The expression is apt for the land of promise, where flocks thrived and where honeybees were abundant but where some other types of agriculture, such as vegetable cultivation (note the wistful reference in Num 11:5), were more difficult.

³⁷ On the identity of these groups, sometimes listed in the OT in a group of six or seven (and not always with the same names or order whether six or seven), all of which can be generally summarized with the term “Canaanites,” see H. A. Hoffner, “The Hittites and Hurrians”; M. Liverani, “The Amorites”; A. R. Millard, “The Canaanites”; and D. J. Wiseman, “Introduction,” in *Peoples of Old Testament Times* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 29–52. Note especially that the biblical “Hittites” were not the great nation of ancient Anatolia (which would be indicated by *hatti* rather than *hitti* in the OT) but a local Palestinian group possibly related in some way to the Hurrians.

³⁸ On *sending* as a concept identifying prophets, cf., e.g., Judg 6:8; 2 Chr 24:19; Jer 7:25; 14:15; 23:21; Zech 7:12; Mal 4:5; Matt 23:37 and par; Acts 7:37.