Series: Surrender to Freedom

May 6, 2018

Message Four:

*Guests - Growth Track - Handout designed with you in mind - Info and notes especially for you - won’t call or visit -*

*Generosity - Notes on Handout and in YouVersion App*

**The Together Requirement**

Exodus 18

Quick review of story…

* Nation of Israel slaves in Egypt -
* God sent Moses to tell the Pharaoh to release them
* Pharaoh refused so God sent a series of terrible plagues on the Egyptians -
* With each successive plague, Pharaoh refused to let the slaves go until God sent a plague of death on Egypt for every firstborn in the land.
* God provided a way of escape from the judgment of death through the blood of the Lamb - Passover
* Pharaoh relented - released the slaves - but as the Israelites began to journey through the desert - came to the Red Sea - Pharaoh decided to get them back -
* Mountains on either side - Red Sea in front - Egyptian army coming back … God came and pushed back the waters of the Red Sea so the Israelites escaped - the army followed and God brought the Sea back over the Egyptians -
* The Israelites are now on their way to God’s promise for them!

What we’ve learned from this:

* Resistance to God is Futile!
* Our response should be to surrender to Him!
* God wants to take us from places of panic, to places of provision, protection and praise!

Exodus 18:1-12 - Moses’ father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, heard about everything God had done for Moses and his people, the Israelites. He heard especially about how the Lord had rescued them from Egypt.

Earlier, Moses had sent his wife, Zipporah, and his two sons back to Jethro, who had taken them in... Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, now came to visit Moses in the wilderness. He brought Moses’ wife and two sons with him, and they arrived while Moses and the people were camped near the mountain of God. Jethro had sent a message to Moses, saying, “I, Jethro, your father-in-law, am coming to see you with your wife and your two sons.”

So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law. He bowed low and kissed him. They asked about each other’s welfare and then went into Moses’ tent. Moses told his father-in-law everything the Lord had done to Pharaoh and Egypt on behalf of Israel. He also told about all the hardships they had experienced along the way and how the Lord had rescued his people from all their troubles. Jethro was delighted when he heard about all the good things the Lord had done for Israel as he rescued them from the hand of the Egyptians.

“Praise the Lord,” Jethro said, “for he has rescued you from the Egyptians and from Pharaoh. Yes, he has rescued Israel from the powerful hand of Egypt! I know now that the Lord is greater than all other gods, because he rescued his people from the oppression of the proud Egyptians.”

Then Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God. Aaron and all the elders of Israel came out and joined him in a sacrificial meal in God’s presence.

Isn’t it great to celebrate what God has done?

What God has done for us …

Recent wins...

# commitments this year -

# Completed GT & making their Next Steps -

**Wins from just this week:**

* Last Sunday two more made commitments to Jesus!
* We are developing a tremendous team with Pastor Seth & Pastor Dean!
* Caleb & Shelby - completed Growth Track - now serving with our Student Ministry Team
* Ryan & Tara - completed Growth Track - ready to use their gifts - soon to be married!
* House Church -
* Building Teams -
* More people are coming together each Sunday to worship and hear the Word!
* Upward - one of the best years we’ve ever had!
* Small Groups - several New this summer...

Just like for the Israelites, God has done much for us! We come together to celebrate the good things He has done!

**Big Idea: The best results come with unified participation.**

Exodus 18:13-14 - The next day, Moses took his seat to hear the people’s disputes against each other. They waited before him from morning till evening.

When Moses’ father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he asked, ***“What are you really accomplishing here? Why are you trying to do all this alone*** while everyone stands around you from morning till evening?”

**> What is the goal?**

What is the goal? What are we trying to accomplish?

We are trying to help people -

* **Know God**
* **Find Freedom**
* **Discover Purpose**
* **Make a Difference**

How are we trying to do this?

* **Know God - Sunday Services**
* **Find Freedom - Small Groups**
* **Discover Purpose - Growth Track**
* **Make a Difference - Dream Teams**

**Carl Brocks** - get picture...



Can any one of us do this by ourselves? No.

If we try, what happens? We die.

Who has a part to play in this? You do! All of us!

If you don’t Know God - your Next Step is to come to know God today!

If you know God, but you haven’t found freedom from your past - your Next Step is to get in a small group with life-giving relationships!

We need each other! ….. pray together …

If you Know God - and are connected to others in life-giving relationship - have you discovered your gifts yet?

Can you tell me right now what your spiritual gifts are? Do you know how God has wired you? Do you know how He has made you?

Do you know why you are here?

What is the goal? Helping people come to know God - God has given you gifts so that you can help others come to know Him! You may not always be the one who directly leads people to the Lord - but you are somewhere along their path!

John 4:35-36 - You know the saying, ‘Four months between planting and harvest.’ But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe

for harvest. The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike!”

All the gifts point to this - Every gift is a part of the result!

If you don’t know what your gift is and if you don’t know that you are using that gift to make a difference in other people’s live - your next step is the Growth Track! We will help you find out how God has wired you - we will help you discover what your gifts are -

We want to do what Moses did - not for our own sake - but for your sake!

You were created to make a difference in this world - not just a small difference - a huge difference! You were created to help other people come to know God - find freedom - discover their purpose and make a difference - so first you have to come to Know God - Find Freedom - Discover Purpose and Make a Difference yourself!

You will make a difference! God has gifted you!

Jethro: “What are you trying to accomplish?” - this is what we are trying to accomplish -

Can I do it myself? No!

Can I do it just with the staff? No.

Can I do it just with the deacons? No.

It goes beyond this! To make the biggest difference it takes all of us.

If you are just coming, attending -

And by the way … if you are just coming when you can - when something else is not happening -

Check your attendance record - I dare you! Are you scared to? Are you scared to really see what it is?

Can I tell you what one of the biggest weaknesses is in this family? Jethro pointed out a weakness for Moses - will you stone me if I point out a weakness?

Inconsistency.

For a lot of our church family - this is their church family … when something else is not happening. Many people come 1 in 3 Sundays … many come 1 in 6 Sundays - some even less -

Now - for many of those they are not involved in ministry at all - for some - they are involved in ministry - but being together with the family is not a priority. It’s simply not - that’s a weakness here!

Hebrews 10:24-25 - Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

Just being honest and real here - this is a weakness among us.

We are commissioned to help more people come to Know God - and if we ourselves can’t even be consistent in our gathering together - can’t even be consistent in giving of ourselves in ministry - then the bottom line is some people will go to hell because of our inconsistency.

I know - that’s sober - I try to be positive - but every once in a while we’ve got to get real.

What are you trying to accomplish here?

* **Know God - Sunday Services**
* **Find Freedom - Small Groups**
* **Discover Purpose - Growth Track**
* **Make a Difference - Dream Teams**

**> It takes all of us.**

Exodus 18:15-23 - Moses replied, “Because the people come to me to get a ruling from God. When a dispute arises, they come to me, and I am the one who settles the case between the quarreling parties. I inform the people of God’s decrees and give them his instructions.”

***“This is not good!”*** Moses’ father-in-law exclaimed. ***“You’re going to wear yourself out—and the people, too. This job is too heavy a burden for you to handle all by yourself.***Now listen to me, and let me give you a word of advice, and may God be with you. You should continue to be the people’s representative before God, bringing their disputes to him.

***Teach them*** God’s decrees, and give them his instructions. Show them how to conduct their lives.

But ***select from all the people some capable, honest men who fear God and hate bribes. Appoint them as leaders*** over groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten. They should always be available to solve the people’s common disputes, but have them bring the major cases to you. Let the leaders decide the smaller matters themselves. They will help you carry the load, making the task easier for you. ***If you follow this advice, and if God commands you to do so, then you will be able to endure the pressures, and all these people will go home in peace.”***

One man was trying to do it alone - not good.

One was carrying the heaviness of the burden alone - not good.

Teach them -

Ephesians 4:11-13 - Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

This is what I am supposed to teach.

* **Equip God’s people to do his work**
* **Build up the church**
* **Continue until unity comes**
* **Then we will be mature**

We won’t be mature until this is done. We won’t be mature until the people know what their gifts are - and we are serving in unity -

Are we mature? This is an ongoing process - but are you contributing to our march toward unity & maturity - or are you in the same place you’ve been for a long time!

If you feel like spiritually you are in the same place you’ve been in a long time - you don’t need a better worship service - you don’t need an emotional experience - you need ministry.

If you’re in ministry and you’re on the edge of burnout - you need to get your friends, your brothers and sisters to come alongside you - you need to be like Moses - quit doing it all yourself.

But there was only one Moses and there were millions of people not doing anything.

There may be a few of us who are doing a lot - but there are a number of us who are in the same place, because all we do is come every once in a while, but it’s not a priority - and we’re not really connected in family or ministry - if that stays the same - then you will stay the same - stagnant without spiritual growth - and stagnation leads to death.

I don’t want you to die! Evaluate yourself! If you’ve been in the same spiritual place for a long time - don’t blame it on the lack of some kind of cultural experience when we are together - find out what your gift is and get involved!

Ministry makes such a huge difference! Giving of yourself to others brings growth and maturity!

Romans 12:6-8 - In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

These are just some of the gifts - they are by no means all.

We have identified 30-something gifts mentioned in both Old & New Testaments -

You have at least one of them - almost everyone has more than one!

Do you know what your gift is?

It’s clear from Exodus 18, Ephesians 4, Romans 12 - we are to be using our gifts together!

1st Corinthians 12:4-7 -There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.

A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.

Isn’t this what Jethro is telling Moses?

Moses is teaching them how to Know God - they have found freedom from Egypt - now they need to discover what God wants them to do.

We are on the same track!

***>* Will we listen?**

Exodus 18:24-27 - ***Moses listened*** to his father-in-law’s advice and followed his suggestions. He chose capable men from all over Israel and appointed them as leaders over the people. He put them in charge of groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten. These men were always available to solve the people’s common disputes. They brought the major cases to Moses, but they took care of the smaller matters themselves.

Soon after this, Moses said good-bye to his father-in-law, who returned to his own land.

Simple question - Moses listened - will we?

**Invitation** - if watching by video pray with us.

Connection Card - if watching on video - let me know via email.

**Blessing**