

January 27, 2013

“A Cry Out For Help”

Ex 2:23-25

In a church one Sunday morning, a preacher said, "Anyone with 'special needs' who wants to be prayed over, please come forward to the front by the altar."

With that, Bill got in line, and when it was his turn, the preacher asked, "Bill, what do you want me to pray about for you?"

Bill replied, "Preacher, I need you to pray for help with my hearing."

The preacher put one finger of one hand in Bill's ear, placed his other hand on top of Bill's head, and then prayed and prayed and prayed, and the whole congregation joined in with great enthusiasm.

After a few minutes, the preacher removed his hands, stood back and asked, "Bill, how is your hearing now?"

Bill answered, "I don't know. It ain't 'til Thursday."

Ex 2:23-25

Years passed, and the king of Egypt died. But the Israelites continued to groan under their burden of slavery. They cried out for help, and their cry rose up to God. God heard their groaning, and he remembered his covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He looked down on the people of Israel and knew it was time to act.

Our text starts out by saying...

Years passed (v23a) about 40 years, according to Stephen in the book of Acts, 40 years of groaning. Have you ever been in prayer for something for 40 years? Some of you may have been or still are. Don't ever give up hope. Keep on praying. I had prayed for a need for 15 years until I got a miracle. I've been in prayer for 30 years and counting for someone to give their life fully to Christ.

You can't make things happen how you want and when you want, you can only pray and trust in God's will to be done, and that's all you need to do. God does not always answer prayer the way we want, we don't always get the miracle we are hoping for, pray anyway. In Psalm 23 David wrote:

Ps 23:4 (NIV)

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me.

David didn't say I will not fear because I know you are going to do a miracle, or because I know you will work out everything just the way I want it to be. David says

though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will not fear because “You are with me.”

Years passed the Israelites groaned, they needed God, they needed God to be with them, and He acted. God had waited long and had been silent, but he had never forgotten nor abandoned His people.

They Cried...

Israelites continued to groan under their burden of slavery (v23b).

Do you know that no matter what we are going through, we can always find someone who is worse off than we are? Moses had to run to Midian, it was humbling and even more humbling that he had to shepherd flocks, a degrading position in those days; but it was better than making bricks in Egypt (which is what he would have been doing if he remained there).

Do you know that God will use what you are going through to build your faith and teach you valuable lessons which will transform your life so you can be better used by Him? That what God did for Moses, his 40 years in Midian prepared him to be used by God to help the Israelites. While you are in those wilderness times trust what God is doing even when you can see it at the moment.

Do you know that sometimes, even though God is working, things get worse before they get better? That's what happened to Moses and the Israelites. Moses and his brother, Aaron went to Pharaoh, just as God instructed them to do, and told him that the Lord says let my people go. Yet, not only did Pharaoh refuse, but that same day Pharaoh said he would no longer provide straw for the bricks the Israelites were making. They would have to get their own straw, yet keep producing the same amount of bricks as when Pharaoh was providing the straw. The people turned on Moses and Aaron...

Exodus 5:22-23

Then Moses went back to the LORD and protested, "Why have you brought all this trouble on your own people, Lord? Why did you send me? Ever since I came to Pharaoh as your spokesman, he has been even more brutal to your people. And you have done nothing to rescue them!"

What is Pharaoh doing? He is intimidating/bullying them to force them into submission. At one point he ever says, "Who is this Lord and why should I listen to Him? Don't let enemy bully you into not trusting the Lord.

Things may get worse before they better. The enemy wants you give up hope because he knows that God's help, God's answer, God's action is just around the corner.

Sometimes things get worse because we have stopped trust God and when we do that we take matters own hands, and things get worse.

The Israelites were slaves, oppressed for 40 years until they finally cried out to God; and we are just like them. As our troubles get worse, and we discover that taking matters into our own hands has not worked, but has only caused things to have gone from bad to worse, THEN may we finally think about our need for God:

They cried out for help (v23c). Finally, they decide to turn from the idols they trusted and call out to God. It is a good sign that God is coming towards us with deliverance when He inclines and enables us to cry to Him for help.

God Heard...

Their cry rose up to God. God heard their groaning (v23-24a).

The groaning and cries of oppressed are loud in the ears of God. God knows your burden and the blessing you seek. Even when you don't have the words to pray and you can only groan, (ever been there, so burdened you couldn't even find the words to pray?); it's then that the Holy Spirit intercedes for you.

Rom 8:26

And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.

Rom 8:26 (THE MESSAGE)

God's Spirit is right alongside helping us along. If we don't know how or what to pray, it doesn't matter. He does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans.

If all we can do is groan our cry will rise up to God and He will hear us.

Has God ever made you a promise? He will keep that promise. Are you willing to trust Him, clinging to faith and hope? Even if it takes 40 years?

and he [God] remembered his covenant (24b). God had promised a land flowing with milk and honey. God remembers His promises, which is a promise to bestow blessing as we believe and obey Him. It was time to show them His mercy and power in fulfilling His promise. This is what it means that God remembered, it was time for His promise to take effect.

God acted...

He looked down on the people of Israel and knew it was time to act (v25).

When Moses looked upon the people of Israel he pitied them, but when God looks upon them He helps them.

It is usually when we are deeply troubled and hurting that we will pray and cry out to God. Humbled by our troubles, we cry out to God, and receive the fruit of His promises.

God is always this way, a very present help in trouble. Take courage then, you who have a heavy burden and need deliverance; take courage you who are conscious of guilt and are looking to Him for deliverance. God in Christ Jesus is also looking upon you.

Matt 11:28

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

Don't focus on your past mistakes—get your eyes off the monsters. God promised to restore to you all the years the cankerworm (locust) has eaten. Encourage yourself with these words and let them become your life and hope: "My God can do anything. He has not forgotten me. No one can change His plans. No matter how bad things look, He has everything under control!" (David Wilkerson)

This is what I want you to know this morning: My God can do anything. He has not forgotten you. No one can change His plans. No matter how bad things look, He has everything under control in your life.

When I came before the Lord this week to pray about this message and asked Him what you needed, He said you needed me to pray with you. May today be the day He looks down on you and knows it is time to act.