

February 5, 2006
Patchogue Church of the Nazarene
“One Another” Series
“Pray For One Another” part II
Ex 5 -6:1 NLT

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Before I read today’s Scripture I want to tell you what prompted me to speak from this Scripture today. Just prior to reading this chapter of Exodus, which was the OT reading a couple of weeks ago, and since reading it, I have had people both men and women, but mostly men, tell me a similar scenario of their life. It goes something like this...it may sound familiar to you too.

“Whenever someone leaves the company I work for, either because they have retired, quit, or got fired, they are not replaced. Instead, the company adds the work they were doing to the remaining employees. We don’t get any more money, even though we have more work to do; It is difficult to get all the work done and when you put in the extra hours to get it done it’s not appreciated; You are expected to get just as much done or more, even though you have more responsibility, and so when it is time for a review you receive an unfavorable report because you have not been as productive as you were in the past. How can I be involved in the church? Even coming on Sundays is difficult. I’m always working or exhausted from working and sometimes I even have to work on Sundays.” That’s basically how the scenario goes.

Perhaps you read an article in last weeks Newsday that said, “The pressure to meet unrealistic business goals and deadlines is the No. 1 cause of unethical corporate behavior, according to a new survey...Reasons No. 2 and No. 3 for (ethical) lapses were ‘the desire to further one’s career’ and the ‘desire to protect one’s livelihood.’ The latest data help put a statistical imprint on a problem that experts said continues to plague American businesses, which increasingly are asking a shrinking workforce to take on greater workloads.” And I thought...There’s pressure on the job, to get a greater workload done with less people, there’s pressure to further one’s career or pressure to not loose your job, therefore we don’t have time for God, ...well, it’s no wonder there’s unethical behavior. Have you noticed that more and more things are being done on Sunday. Even schools have activities on Sunday to keep you, your kids, and school employees busy.

Have you notice these new banks going up that are open 7 days a week? My parents have lived in Valley Stream for over 50 years. There was a building on the corner of Central Ave. and Merrick Rd. that has been there at least that long, but probably longer. I try to visit my parents pretty regularly. Well, I was out in Valley Stream this week for a business meeting and that building on the corner is not only gone but one of these new, open 7 days a week, banks is already there and open for business. It went up in a very short period of time. Seems like banks have less problems getting through the town’s building or planning board than churches do. It is testimony to the priority of the new

worship centers (banks) that house the god of this world (money!). Do you think churches or this bank does a better business on Sunday? Hmm. Now let me read to you a similar situation that occurred over 3000 years ago.

Ex 5:

After this presentation to Israel's leaders, Moses and Aaron went to see Pharaoh. They told him, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Let my people go, for they must go out into the wilderness to hold a religious festival in my honor.' "

[Moses and Aaron said, "The LORD has spoken to us saying give my people time to worship and serve Me."]

2 "Is that so?" retorted Pharaoh. "And who is the LORD that I should listen to him and let Israel go? I don't know the LORD, and I will not let Israel go."

3 But Aaron and Moses persisted. "The God of the Hebrews has met with us," they declared. "Let us take a three-day trip into the wilderness so we can offer sacrifices to the LORD our God. If we don't, we will surely die by disease or the sword."

[Isn't that interesting, the curse for a people who do not take time to worship God is disease or war!]

4 "Who do you think you are," Pharaoh shouted, "distracting the people from their tasks? Get back to work! 5 Look, there are many people here in Egypt, and you are stopping them from doing their work."

6 That same day Pharaoh sent this order to the slave drivers and foremen he had set over the people of Israel: 7 "Do not supply the people with any more straw for making bricks. Let them get it themselves! 8 But don't reduce their production quotas by a single brick. ***[Sound familiar?]***

They obviously don't have enough to do. If they did, they wouldn't be talking about going into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to their God. 9 Load them down with more work. Make them sweat! That will teach them to listen to these liars!"

[Their spiritual leaders, in this case, Moses and Aaron are the "liars"]

10 So the slave drivers and foremen informed the people: "Pharaoh has ordered us not to provide straw for you. 11 Go and get it yourselves. Find it wherever you can. But you must produce just as many bricks as before!" 12 So the people scattered throughout the land in search of straw.

13 The slave drivers were brutal. "Meet your daily quota of bricks, just as you did before!" they demanded.

[Remember the scenario I mentioned earlier/ "You are expected to get just as much done or more, even though you have more responsibility, and so when it is time for a review you receive an unfavorable report because you have not been as productive as you were in the past.]

14 Then they whipped the Israelite foremen in charge of the work crews. "Why haven't you met your quotas either yesterday or today?" they demanded.

15 So the Israelite foremen went to Pharaoh and pleaded with him. "Please don't treat us like this," they begged. 16 "We are given no straw, but we are still told to make as many bricks as before. We are beaten for something that isn't our fault! It is the fault of your slave drivers for making such unreasonable demands."

17 But Pharaoh replied, "You're just lazy! You obviously don't have enough to do. If you did, you wouldn't be saying, 'Let us go, so we can offer sacrifices to the LORD.'"

[if you have time to go to church on Sunday, then the world must not be giving you enough to do.]

18 Now, get back to work! No straw will be given to you, but you must still deliver the regular quota of bricks."

19 Since Pharaoh would not let up on his demands, the Israelite foremen could see that they were in serious trouble. 20 As they left Pharaoh's court, they met Moses and Aaron, who were waiting outside for them. 21 The foremen said to them, "May the LORD judge you for getting us into this terrible situation with Pharaoh and his officials. You have given them an excuse to kill us!"

[Who is blamed? The world and being squeezed into it's mold or the church who says you must make time for God? Moses and Aaron are blamed for simply relaying God's commands. I'm sure Moses is concerned about any burden he may be putting on the people...]

22 So Moses went back to the LORD and protested, ***[and here is his prayer to the Lord]*** "Why have you mistreated your own people like this, Lord? Why did you send me? 23 Since I gave Pharaoh your message, he has been even more brutal to your people. You have not even begun to rescue them!"

[Moses is praying, "Oh, God, I am saying what you want me to say, the people must make You and the worship of You a priority, but it may mean sacrifice, and they are being treated badly because of that sacrifice...and you have not even begun to rescue them! But then the Lord responds and here is what He says.]

Exodus 6:1

"Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh," the LORD told Moses. "When he feels my powerful hand upon him, he will let the people go. In fact, he will be so anxious to get rid of them that he will force them to leave his land!"

[The Lord says, "If you will trust Me, obey Me, and put Me first in your life; if you will make time for me and make sacrifices by giving Me what I ask of you; if you pray and believe 'you will see what I will do...!'"]

2 Thess 3:2 – 5 NLT

Pray, too, that we will be saved from wicked and evil people, for not everyone believes in the Lord. [2 Thess 3:2 AMP: And (pray) that we may be delivered from perverse (improper, unrighteous) and wicked (actively malicious) men, for not everybody has faith and is held by it.] But the Lord is faithful; he will make you strong and guard you from the evil one. And we are confident in the Lord that you are practicing the things we commanded you, and that you always will. May the Lord bring you into an ever deeper understanding of the love of God and the endurance that comes from Christ.

You must pray, trust God, boldly and courageously obey God in His command to ***make the Lord your priority then you will see what He will do.*** God will meet all your needs...now, I did not say all your wants, but all your needs ...when you stand up for what you believe and make time to worship and serve God. Don't say you can't give God your time, talents or tithe. Trust God obey God and you will see how He will meet your needs.

Remember the widow at Zarephath? (1 Kings 17:8-16)

There was a famine in the land but the LORD promised to take care of Elijah, the Lord told him, "Go and live in the village of Zarephath. There is a widow there who will feed you." So he went to Zarephath. As he arrived at the gates of the village, he saw a widow gathering sticks, and he asked her, "Would you please bring me a cup of water?" As she was going to get it, he called to her, "Bring me a bite of bread, too."

But she said, "I don't have a single piece of bread in the house. And I have only a handful of flour left in the jar and a little cooking oil in the bottom of the jug. I was just gathering a few sticks to cook this last meal, and then my son and I will die."

But Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid! Go ahead and cook that 'last meal,' but bake me a little loaf of bread first. Afterward there will still be enough food for you and your son. For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: There will always be plenty of flour and oil left in your containers until the time when the LORD sends rain and the crops grow again!"

So she did as Elijah said, and she and Elijah and her son continued to eat from her supply of flour and oil for many days. For no matter how much they used, there was always enough left in the containers, just as the LORD had promised through Elijah.

I mentioned last week that we are in a battle, we need to ***pray on the full armor of God.*** We must pray for ourselves and we must pray for one another. Remember Martha and Mary. Martha was so busy she didn't make time to do what her sister Mary was doing...Mary was with Jesus, listening to Him. Martha complained and Jesus told her to stop worrying and do as Mary did for that would be to her advantage.

Just before Jesus was arrested to be crucified He said to Peter (Matt 26:41 NLT) "Keep alert and pray. Otherwise temptation will overpower you. For though the spirit is willing enough, the body is weak!"

Jesus asked His followers to pray, but instead He found them asleep, and said to Peter, "What? Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation." (NKJV)

Jesus had told them to stay and keep watch. But instead of showing support for Jesus by remaining awake with Him and praying for strength, they had fallen asleep because they were exhausted. Jesus was not only asking that they pray for Him, but also that they pray

for themselves. Jesus knew that these men would need extra strength to face the temptations ahead - temptations to run away or to deny their relationship with Him. Jesus wanted them to pray that their faith would not collapse.

While their spirit might be willing, their flesh would be weak. Their inner desires and intentions would be to never deny Jesus. Their relationship with Jesus had made the disciples eager to serve Him in any way possible. Yet their human inadequacies, with all their fears and failures, would make it difficult to carry out those good intentions. ***A willing spirit needs the Holy Spirit to empower it and help it do God's will.***

Remember my example last week from Acts 4. Peter and John knew they had to obey God rather than the command that they stop worshipping and teaching about Jesus. So they called a prayer meeting. They prayed for courage and boldness and God filled them with His Holy Spirit and the Spirit empowered them to boldly speak of and to live out their faith. As it says in Ps 51:12 (NLT) "Restore to me again the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you." We must pray that God's spirit will empower us.

(Rom 12:1-2 THE MESSAGE) So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life — your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life — and place it before God as an offering... Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

Do you know the rest of the story in Exodus? Their boss begged them to go and worship their God. Pray, trust God, take the right steps in obeying God and just watch what He will do.