

NOBODY'S GOING NOWHERE!

-OR-

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY!

A Study of Exodus 5:1 - 6:12; Mark 4:35-41

INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever had a day that went from bad to worse?

A little boy about 8 years old by the name of Alexander had one of those days. I mean, nothing goes right for poor young Alexander. He has back-to-back disappointments and tragedies like you can't imagine. It's one continuous "downer" of a day; he can't win for losing. He recorded his thoughts in one of my favorite children's stories: "Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day". Join Alexander when he wakes up in the morning:

I went to sleep with gum in my mouth and now there is gum in my hair and when I got out of bed this morning I tripped on the skateboard and by mistake I dropped my sweater in the sink while the water was running and I could tell it was going to be a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.

After a terrible day at school and a horrible visit with the dentist and a no-good stop at the shoe store, Alexander slumps in his chair at the supper table where his problems continue:

There was lima beans for dinner and I hate limas. There was kissing on T.V. and I hate kissing. My bath was too hot, I got soap in my eyes, my marble went down the drain and I had to wear my railroad train pajamas. I hate my railroad train pajamas. When I went to bed, my brother took back the pillow he said I could keep and the Mickey Mouse night light burned out and I bit my tongue.

The cat wants to sleep with my brother and not with me.

It has been a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day!

Small wonder that our little friend sighs at the end of the day and says:

I think I'll move to Australia!

Have you ever had one of the days when you felt like just packing it all in and moving to Australia? That is the kind of day Moses must have been having only in Moses' case "NOBODY'S GOING NOWHERE". It was a case of "THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY!"

Have you ever taken the Holmes Stress Test? Dr. Thomas H. Holmes and his colleagues at the University of Washington have done considerable research in the area of human stress. They measured stress in terms of “life change units.” On their scale the death of a spouse was 100 life-change units. Divorce from one’s mate rated 73 units. Pregnancy rated 40 units; remodeling your home, 25 – that’s something you can remind your wife about next time she wants to remodel. Christmas rated 12 units (which isn’t surprising).

Their conclusion was, from a strictly human point of view, no person in his own strength can handle 300 or more units in a twelve-month period without suffering physically and emotionally within the next two years.

Moses likely would have flunked the Holmes Stress Test.

Moses – Mr. Nobody – knows all about the kind of day Alexander wrote of. In fact, for Moses it was worse than going “from bad to worse” it went from GOOD, TO BAD, TO DOWNRIGHT UGLY!

THE GOOD,... – MOSES APPEALS TO THE ELDERS (Exodus 4:29-31):

Look at Exodus 4:29-31 in your Scripture. Moses and Aaron showed up to tell the Israelites that God was going to deliver them:

²⁹Moses and Aaron brought together all the elders of the Israelites, ³⁰and Aaron told them everything the Lord has said to Moses. He also performed the signs before the people, ³¹and they believed. And when they heard that the Lord was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped.

We are talking a revival broke out. They “bought the whole thing”; they took it “hook, line and sinker”; “they bought the farm”; “they took the whole enchilada”! Can’t you just hear Moses: “Hey Aaron, this is O.K.! Things are going real smooth! I kind of like this leadership business!”

But then the great day starts circling the drain:

^{5:1}Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel says: “Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the desert.”

THE BAD,... – MOSES APPEALS TO PHARAOH (Exodus 5:1-14):

1. Pharaoh’s Response to Moses’ and Aaron’s Appeal:

- a) He ASKS - Who is the Lord that I should obey him (5:2)?
- b) He REFUSES to let Israel go (5:2)
- c) He THINKS the people are lazy (5:8)
- d) He ACCUSES Moses of lying (5:9)

2. The Result:

- a) The PEOPLE had to get their own straw (5:7,11)
- b) The PRODUCTION quota was not reduced (5:8,11)
- c) The PEOPLE were scattered all over Egypt (5:12)
- d) The PRESSURE was increased and the foremen beaten (5:13-14)

JOKE: A guy has just arrived in heaven and he is making conversation with St. Peter. Peter asks: “tell me the scariest thing that ever happened to you.”

The guy thinks for a moment and says, “Well, there was a time when I was driving down the highway and I saw a group of biker guys gathered around this poor girl. They were tormenting her. Infuriated I got out of my car, grabbed a tire iron out of my trunk, and walked straight up to the leader of the gang; a huge guy with a studded leather jacket and a chain running from his nose to his ear. As I went nose to nose with him, the gang formed a circle around me. I took a hold of that chain and pulled his face right over to mine and said: ‘Leave this poor, innocent girl alone or I’ll teach you all a lesson in pain!’”

St. Peter, impressed, says, “Really? When did this all happen?”

“Oh, about two minutes ago.”

AND THE UGLY! – THE FOREMEN APPEAL TO PHARAOH (Exodus 5:15-21):

1. Pharaoh’s Response to the Foremen’s Appeal:

- a) The PEOPLE are lazy (5:17)
- b) The FOREMEN are told to get back to work (5:18a)
- c) The PHARAOH remains unmoved (5:18b)

2. The Result:

- a) They REALIZED they were in trouble (5:19)
- b) They FOUND Moses and Aaron (5:20)
- c) They CONDEMNED Moses and Aaron (5:21)

Were not Moses and Aaron just doing what they were supposed to be doing?

Weren’t they obeying what God told them to do?

What happened to the “I will be with you” promise (Exodus 3:12)?

What happened to the “I have promised to bring you up out of your misery in Egypt” promise (Exodus 3:17)?

What happened to the “I will make the Egyptians favorably disposed” promise (Exodus 3:21)?

Where are you God? Why is this happening? Don’t you care about me?

THE END! – MOSES APPEALS TO GOD (Exodus 5:22-6:8)

1. God's response to Moses:
 - a) He gives Moses His WORD ("I will" appears 8 times in 8 verses - 6:1-8).
 - b) He gives Moses His NAME ("I am" and "Lord" appears 9 times in 8 verses - 6:1-8). They are synonymous as we learned in 3:14
 - c) He gives Moses His ORDER (6:11)
2. The result: The miracles of the Exodus. If Moses had given up when things went from Good to Bad to Ugly, he would not have seen the miraculous glory of God.

Moses' situation reminds me of a dozen stories in Scripture . . . all with the same lesson. Remember with me one in particular. Let's move about 1300 years from Moses to the time of Jesus. We could call this story: "The Perfect Storm" – starring George Clooney.

Illustration: "The Perfect Storm" – starring George Clooney

No, not George Clooney . . . actually it starred not George Clooney, but rather Jesus Christ and it was the perfect storm.

Different time and location, but the basic ingredients were the same as Moses' situation and the same as the kind of situations we still face today.

The story is found in Mark 4:35-41. The disciples were just following Jesus' orders. It was Jesus who said: "Let us go over to the other side" (Mark 4:35). They weren't doing anything wrong. They hadn't made a dumb mistake and got themselves in a mess. They hadn't committed any terrible sin that they were suffering the consequences for.

On this ordinary day, suddenly "A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped" (Mark 4:37).

Don't forget, many of Jesus' disciples were seasoned fishermen. They had been in many, many storms and they had survived every one of them. No problem . . . they are pulling down the sails, they are bailing out the water, they are maneuvering and steering and yelling commands and they are all working furiously to save their lives. They are at the point of exhaustion . . . they are up to their waists in water and the water is still pouring in; one more wave and the boat is going down. They struggle to the stern where Jesus is asleep and over the roar of the wind and the waves they are shaking him and yelling at him: "Jesus, Jesus" "What???" . . . "Don't you care if we drown" (Mark 4:38)?

"What? I can't hear you? What?" Can't you see him? He was sound asleep. . . . have you ever got up from a deep power nap and you've got the drool running down the cheek, the serious case of bed-head, the sheet wrinkles??? That's the kind of power nap Jesus was having!

"What are you saying?" Oh just a second . . . *"Quiet! Be still (Mark 4:39)"*

They are all standing their, up to their chests in water, in shock.

“Now, what was that you were belling about?”

“Well uh, we were uh, I mean, that is....”

“Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith” (Mark 4:40)?

Did you forget who was in the boat with you?

Did you forget what I can do? With just a word I quiet the wind, I still the waves . . . just a word!

He was saying to the Disciples: “1300 years have gone by since the lesson the I AM taught you through Moses. 1300 years, generation after generation of my faithfulness.

Why are you still afraid? Do you still have no faith?

APPLICATION:

Now 3300 years have gone by. He speaks to us again today; but now it is 3300 years of God’s faithfulness to His people. . . 3300 years of watching over generation after generation! And today, you might be saying: Jesus, Jesus . . . **Don’t you care if we drown?”** and he responds: *Do you not yet know my mercies are new every morning...*

600 years after Moses, the Israelites still didn’t get it and so through Isaiah, in 742 BC God says:

Why do you say, O Jacob [put your own name in their]

Why do you complain, O Israel [again, your own name]

“My way is hidden from the Lord; my cause is disregarded by my God”?

Do you not KNOW? [you have his promises, His Word, His Name on it!!]

Have you not HEARD? [your hearing it again today!]

The Lord is the everlasting God, The Creator of the ends of the earth.

He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.

Even youths grow tired and weary,

And young men stumble and fall;

But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles;

They will run and not grow weary,

They will walk and not be faint.

(Isaiah 40:27-31)

Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?

Did you forget who is in the boat with you?

Did you forget what He can do?

CLOSE WITH “GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS”