

Exodus: The Way Out of Procrastination

Welcome/Prayer

Foreword

We've been looking at this sermon series, "The Way Out," as it pertains to the book of Exodus and discovering that God can and will provide us a way out of all places and situations that hold us captive. For this lesson, we're going to look at one particular plague—the plague of frogs—that fell upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians who were enslaving the Israelites.

Introduction

God, through his servant, Moses, had demanded of Pharaoh to release His people from captivity. When Pharaoh steadfastly refused to free the Israelites from slavery, the Lord sent a series of plagues upon the land of Egypt. The second of them, the plague of frogs, led to a rather perplexing conversation between Moses and the Egyptian leader, Pharaoh. Frogs were essentially suffocating the people, and there was no relief in sight; the land was infested with frogs. Yet, when Moses offered to rid Egypt of the frogs, Pharaoh decided to "sleep on it" and wait another day before making a decision.

1. Describe your experience with an infestation? What "critters" were involved? How did you respond and/or remedy the situation?
2. What are some things you "sleep on" or put off doing?

Preparation

Read the following text related to today's message:

Exodus 8:1-10 (NLT)

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go back to Pharaoh and announce to him, 'This is what the Lord says: Let my people go, so they can worship me. ² If you refuse to let them go, I will send a plague of frogs across your entire land. ³ The Nile River will swarm with frogs. They will come up out of the river and into your palace, even into your bedroom and onto your bed! They will enter the houses of your officials and your people. They will even jump into your ovens and your kneading bowls. ⁴ Frogs will jump on you, your people, and all your officials.'"

⁵ Then the Lord said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, 'Raise the staff in your hand over all the rivers, canals, and ponds of Egypt, and bring up frogs over all the land.'" ⁶ So Aaron raised his hand over the waters of Egypt, and frogs came up and covered the whole land! ⁷ But the magicians were able to do the same thing with their magic. They, too, caused frogs to come up on the land of Egypt.

⁸ Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and begged, "Plead with the Lord to take the frogs away from me and my people. I will let your people go, so they can offer sacrifices to the Lord."

⁹ "You set the time!" Moses replied. "Tell me when you want me to pray for you, your officials, and your people. Then you and your houses will be rid of the frogs. They will remain only in the Nile River."

¹⁰ "Do it tomorrow," Pharaoh said.

"All right," Moses replied, "it will be as you have said. Then you will know that there is no one like the Lord our God.

Break it Down

Tomorrow? Why would Pharaoh wait another day? This act of procrastination, or putting off/delaying an action to a later time, is something many of us can attest to doing. Yet, procrastinating becomes detrimental and even dangerous when applied to our relationship with the Lord. The frogs that infested Egypt represent what the Apostle Paul calls "strongholds" in our lives (ref. 2 Corinthians 10). Despite the invitation of Jesus for us to be healed, delivered, and set free, we often resist His call; we think, "Not today, Lord. Maybe next week." This spiritual procrastination keeps us in bondage, and we continue to live with our "frogs." The first step toward freedom means recognizing why we procrastinate and understanding the pitfalls of that course of action.

We procrastinate because our “frogs” provide us with a sense of security.

Many of us have grown so familiar with our “frogs” that we wouldn’t know what to do if they were gone. We’ve allowed them to define us, but, in reality, they’ve given us a false sense of security. It is by holding on to our fears, worries, guilt, and resentment that we close the very doors that provide us the way out. It is scary to step out in faith and ask God to remove the “frogs;” however, waiting another day before we allow God to eliminate what infests our lives, will only hold us captive from experiencing real life in Him.

1. What “frogs” infest your life, and how do you cope with them?
2. What are some “security blankets” people hold on to that are really detrimental to their health or well-being?
3. Identify some ways in which people's afflictions and burdens give them a sense of security.
4. What's the scariest thing you've ever had to do in your relationship with Christ?

We procrastinate because living with “frogs” becomes comfortable, and almost enjoyable, once you get used to them.

In the false sense of security we get from our “frogs,” so, too, do we become comfortable with having them in our lives. Our familiarity with them brings us comfort and even enjoyment. Yet, there’s a big difference between “comfort” and “wellness.” At the risk of a little pain and discomfort, we delay in taking our burdens to the Lord, and our condition only worsens; we miss the opportunity to be made whole and well. We cannot allow ourselves to become comfortable with the frogs that weigh us down and keep us from living the life God planned for us. We have to ask Him today to rid those pesky frogs from our lives.

1. Have you ever had an ailment (physical, spiritual, or emotional) that ultimately became status quo for you? Describe what it was like and how it happened.
2. What are some situations you've encountered that at first seemed awkward, but later became "normal" for you?
3. Describe some ways in which Christians become "comfortable" in a lifestyle that may prevent them from enjoying the fullness of God's grace.
4. When have you put off a spiritual decision because you knew it might be a painful process? How did your procrastination help or hinder you in your pursuit of wellness?

We procrastinate because we think there will be another, more appropriate, time to get rid of our “frogs.”

We hear God’s offer to show us the way out, but His timing is not convenient for us; another time would fit better into our busy schedules. This approach is rather presumptuous on our part. Considering the words of James (4:14 TLB), “How do you know what is going to happen tomorrow? For the length of your life is as uncertain as the morning fog—now you see it, soon it is gone.” Life comes with no guarantees; there may not be a tomorrow, and consequently, no opportunity to receive God’s gracious offer of deliverance.

1. What are some dangerous "frogs" we are tempted to play around with in today's culture?
2. Describe an event that made you realize that life does not come with any guarantees about tomorrow.
3. What decisions have you put off for a “more appropriate” time and later regretted doing so?

Conclusion

Get rid of your frogs today, and don’t let spiritual procrastination keep you from seeing “the way out” that God is providing. In the words of the Apostle Paul, “Right now God is ready to welcome you. Today he is ready to save you.” (2 Corinthians 6:2b TLB)

1. How have you experienced procrastination in your spiritual life?
2. What "frogs" do you need to ask God to remove from your life today?
3. Don't delay, give God your burdens and concerns and receive His freedom from all that holds you captive.

Close in Prayer