

Redefining Compromise

Welcome/Prayer

Foreword

In our studies on the book of Exodus, we've seen how God can and will provide us a way out of all places and situations that hold us captive. The message related to this discussion guide explains that the word, "compromise," is not necessarily bad except when we compromise our relationship with God. This is precisely what Pharaoh was demanding that the Israelites do. By looking at their example, we'll see the need to redefine compromise in order to find the way out toward a better relationship with God.

Introduction

Time and again, Pharaoh steadfastly refused to release the Israelites from captivity. The compromises that Pharaoh tried to impose on the Israelites were less than what God demanded from His people, so the Israelites rejected them. While compromise is an essential component of peaceful existence, it can also have negative effects, especially when we settle for something short of full obedience to God's will.

1. Describe a time that someone tried to impose a compromise on you. How did that compromise affect your relationship with the person who imposed it?
2. When have you been reluctant to compromise? How might that be a roadblock in your relationships with others or with God?

Preparation

Read the following text related to today's message:

Exodus 8:25-28 (NIV 1984)

²⁵ Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God here in the land." ²⁶ But Moses said, "That would not be right. The sacrifices we offer the LORD our God would be detestable to the Egyptians. And if we offer sacrifices that are detestable in their eyes, will they not stone us? ²⁷ We must take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God, as he commands us." ²⁸ Pharaoh said, "I will let you go to offer sacrifices to the LORD your God in the desert, but you must not go very far. Now pray for me."

Exodus 10:8-11 (NIV 1984)

⁸ Then Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. "Go, worship the LORD your God," he said. "But just who will be going?" ⁹ Moses answered, "We will go with our young and old, with our sons and daughters, and with our flocks and herds, because we are to celebrate a festival to the LORD." ¹⁰ Pharaoh said, "The LORD be with you--if I let you go, along with your women and children! Clearly you are bent on evil. ¹¹ No! Have only the men go; and worship the LORD, since that's what you have been asking for." Then Moses and Aaron were driven out of Pharaoh's presence.

Exodus 10:24 (NIV 1984)

Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and said, "Go, worship the LORD. Even your women and children may go with you; only leave your flocks and herds behind."

Break it Down

Compromise without limitations. (Exodus 8:25-28)

Although Pharaoh may have been trying to convince the Israelites that he was providing for their needs, the compromise he demanded of them (ref. vv. 25b, 28c) was not what God wanted from them. Pharaoh was imposing limitations on their worship, so the Israelites refused to compromise. In our culture today, this compromise would be similar to our saying, “I don’t need to go to church; I can worship God anywhere.” Instead, when it comes to our relationship with God, we should be quick to compromise *without* limitations and to give Him all that He wants from us; then, we will experience the real joy and blessings of the Christian faith.

1. What are some reasons we might put limitations or conditions on a compromise?
2. How is making a concession different from compromising without limitations?

Compromise without fear. (Exodus 10:8-11)

Pharaoh didn’t like the answer Moses gave him when he asked who would be going off to worship the Lord. In fact, we might detect a bit of fear beneath Pharaoh’s sarcasm (ref. v.11). Consider what might’ve happened if Pharaoh had allowed *all* of the Israelites to leave—they might not return! Even worse, their numbers could multiply and overtake his kingdom. When we allow fear to dictate the compromises we make in our relationship with the Lord, we are not giving Him our whole hearts. Accordingly, to compromise *without* fear demonstrates our obedience and faithfulness to God and His kingdom.

1. Describe a time that you’ve used fear (or someone has used your fear) to compromise a situation.
2. When have you allowed fear to interfere in your relationship with God?

Compromise with faith. (Exodus 10:24)

The absurdity of Pharaoh’s suggestion to the Israelites to leave behind all of their possessions is one that likely resonates with us. Financial uncertainty is a real and present circumstance for many of us, so to compromise anything related thereto is not likely a consideration. However, when we put our trust in the Lord and respond in faith and obedience to His call, we move into God’s supernatural realm of finances. It is when we compromise with faith that we demonstrate our confidence in His ability to provide and take care of our material needs.

1. What is the greatest challenge you face regarding faith in financial compromise?
2. Think about your material possessions. What would be the ultimate deal-breaker for you to surrender to God? Why?

Conclusion

Compromise doesn’t have to be a word that evokes a battle ground. If we look at compromise as a win/lose decision, we’re likely to develop bitterness or resentment in the relationships that are affected by it. When we consider our relationship with God, it’s all or nothing. The way out is redefining compromise—surrender to God.

1. Share about a time you felt as though you settled for less?
2. What compromise will you make—without limitations, without fear, and with faith—for your relationship with God?

Close in Prayer