



Crisis 101: Back to the Basics

Sermon 1

Making Sense of Life When Life Doesn't Make Sense

Today, we are beginning a new six part series of messages titled,

"Crisis 101: Making Sense of Life When Life Doesn't Make Sense".

The title comes from the new DVD study many of you will be studying in your small groups. Dr. Robert Morgan, a long time minister in Nashville, Tennessee and bestselling author of more than 30 books is the speaker in the DVD study. Much of the content he covers in the DVD study comes from one of his national best-selling books, [*The Red Sea Rules*](#). It's a book that, I might add, has sold nearly 500,000 copies!

Context of Sermon:

I now invite you to go in your Bibles with me to the Book of Exodus.

Dr. J. Sidlow Baxter, born in Australia and reared in England, was a well renowned theologian and minister in England and Scotland in the last century. In his classic one volume commentary, "Explore The Book" he suggests the Book of Exodus can be easily outlined with three main divisions:

1. The Exodus in chapters 1-18: Reveals the **power** of God
2. The Law in chapters 19-24: Reveals the **holiness** of God
3. The Tabernacle in chapters 25-40: Reveals the **wisdom** of God

Baxter said of the Book of Exodus, *"It is here that we see the outgoing of Israel from Egypt - an entire race of people suddenly and forever flinging away the shackles of a generations-long servitude..."*

Today, we will take a fresh look into an old book - the book of Exodus. As we open this marvelous inspired book, I want us to get the big picture, especially regarding 5 distinct crises that Moses and the Children of Israel faced and the greatness of God who was with them thru this journey. And, I trust as we explore these events and see the difficult and perplexing issues and crises they faced, we will be able to apply the principles these same, immutable concepts during difficult times in our lives.

Sermon Outline:

1. Crisis # 1 - The Burning Bush & God's Presence - Exodus 3:1 - 4:17

A. The Burning Bush vs. 1-10

A revelation to Moses - as the fire engulfed the old, dried up bush out in the desert without burning it to cinders, God will engulf Moses with his presence without consuming him.

1) God's Call to Moses vs. vs. 1-10

2) Moses' 4 Excuses

a. Excuse # 1 who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and demand the release?

In vs. 11 God says, it does not matter who you are, because "I will be with you"

b. Excuse # 2 they will ask what your name is...?

Note: the Egyptians had a name for all their Gods. Evidentially Moses was concerned the children of Israel would want to know the name of the God about whom Moses was speaking.

My NAME- I AM That I AM Hebrew = YHWH; Yahweh - Jehovah in English; a **to be** verb - **the ever present God...** I am the ever present God - the God of your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph vs. 6, 16

c. Excuse # 3 What if they don't believe me - that you have appeared to me? Vs 4:1

i. God does the rod thing with him - cast it on the ground and it becomes a writhing snake. God says to pick it up by the tail.

Note: you NEVER pick a snake up by the tail, because they leaves the business end of the snake open to bite you. However in this case, God was demonstrating to Moses His presence, power and protection.

ii. God does the hand thing to his chest - put it close to chest and it becomes leprous; put it back close to the chest and it becomes perfectly clear and clean.

iii. God says to take some water from the Nile River and pour it on dry ground. It will become blood.

d. Excuse # 4 I cannot speak well, I am slow of speech, I am not eloquent vs 4:10

i. God says he made you and gave you speech - go use it vs 4:11 & 12

ii. Please send someone else to speak vs 4:13

iii. God said to take Aaron to speak for you.... vs 4:14-16

iv. God said go, and do not forget to take the rod with you... vs 4:17

2. Crisis # 2 - The Plagues and God's Preeminence Exodus 7-11

There was a God battle going on in Egypt, for the Egyptians were polytheists. That is, they believed in many Gods. They gave their God's names and worshiped those gods. In this section of Exodus, not only do we see the judgment of God coming down on Pharaoh and the land of Egypt, we see the true God revealing Himself to be preeminent over all the gods of Egypt. In fact, over 17 Egyptian gods were, one by one, systematically destroyed before the Egyptian's eyes when God stepped in with these plagues.

In his wonderful little book, "Moses: God's Man For A Crisis," Dr. Chuck Swindoll suggests the following: *"God predicted the plagues...Pharaoh's nature required the plagues...From even a cursory reading of Exodus 7-10, we can make two general statements regarding the plagues. First, each plague affected all of the Egyptians. God's judgment was thorough. None of the plagues softened Pharaoh's heart..."*

The plagues over Egypt were:

A. Demonstration of God's punishment for disobeying His word -

because Pharaoh would not let the children of Israel leave.

B. Demonstration of God's superiority over all the idolatrous gods of Egypt.

Note: Each specific judgment was a direct hit on a specific false god of Egypt.

Plague of Blood – Exodus 7:14-25 - Moses commanded Aaron to raise his staff over the Nile River. The water turned to blood causing the fish to die and fill the land with a terrible smell. To prove his own power, Pharaoh had his sorcerers turn more water into blood. They eventually had to dig wells to get fresh water. The plague lasted a week

Plague of Frogs – Exodus 8:1-15 - Aaron raised his staff over the rivers and streams causing frogs to come out of the river. The frogs overran the country. The Bible says that frogs were in their bedrooms, beds, and kitchens. The Egyptian sorcerers also made more frogs appear.

Pharaoh consented to letting the Israelites go. Moses allowed Pharaoh to choose when he wanted the frogs to disappear. Pharaoh chose the following day. The frogs were gathered and piled up making the land of Egypt stink once again.

Plague of Lice – Exodus 8:16-19 - The next plague was brought on by Aaron striking the dust with his staff. This caused the plague of lice. The Egyptian sorcerers were not able to reproduce this one. It caused them to finally declare that the plagues were brought on by God.

Plague of Flies – Exodus 8:20-32 - We are told in scripture this plague only effected the land of the Egyptians and not the land of Goshen where the Israelites lived (Exodus 8:22).

Pharaoh again offered to let the people of Israel free if the plague was removed. However, when the plague was gone, Pharaoh refused to let them go.

Plague of Pestilence – Exodus 9:1-7 - This plague only effected the Egyptian's cattle. Exodus 9:3 says, the hand of the LORD is upon your cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the donkeys, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very serious pestilence. All the cattle of the Egyptians died, but none of the Israelites' cattle were hurt.

Plague of Boils – Exodus 9:8-12 - This was a skin disease that was brought about when Moses and Aaron spread the ashes from a furnace into the air. Not even the Pharaoh's magicians could come before him because of the boils upon their skin. The Bible says that it was not limited to only the people, but the beasts of Egypt as well.

Plague of Hail – Exodus 9:13-35 - Moses stretched his hands toward the sky and brought on hail. The hail was unlike any they had experienced before. The hail was mixed with fire. The people were not doomed to suffer this plague. It was made clear that anyone outside during the storm would be punished, but if they would go inside and take any animals in with them, then they would be spared the harshness of the storm. The storm destroyed many crops as well as people and animals in the fields. The land of Goshen was again spared the punishment.

Plague of Locusts – Exodus 10:1-20 - Again, Moses came to Pharaoh. Pharaoh did agree to let the men of Israel go, but not the women and children. Moses raised his rod over Egypt and brought on a strong east wind for a day. After the wind came the plague of locusts. We call grasshoppers today which came in and ate the rest of the crops and trees which were not destroyed by the hail in the previous plague.

Plague of Darkness – Exodus 10:21-29 - The plague of darkness was described as being so dark that it could be felt (Exodus 10:21). Three days of darkness hovered of the land. However the Israelites had light in their houses. After a time Pharaoh requested an end to the plague by offering to let the Israel go, but they would have to leave their cattle. Moses refused to accept the offer.

Plague of the Death of the Firstborn – Exodus 11:1-12:36 - The tenth and final plague was the death of the firstborn of all the people and animals. No one would be spared - Egyptians and Israelites alike would be under this judgment if they did not obey God's explicit instructions. The plague consisted of the firstborn being killed on a certain night. To avoid the punishment the people would kill a sacrificial lamb (sheep or goat) and spread the blood of the innocent animal on the door posts of the house. And, this leads us into Crisis # 3.

3. Crisis # 3 - The Death Angel and God's Passover - Exodus 12

When the Lord passed through the land, He would not kill the firstborn of the houses that had shown their faith and accepting God's plan of salvation. Many of the firstborn children in the land were killed, including Pharaoh's firstborn son. Finally, Pharaoh allowed the Israelites to leave the land.

A. The Announcement of Moses vs. 1-27

1. Slay a lamb; roast the meat and eat it with bitter herbs; take a hyssop branch and spread the blood of the lamb on the top of the door post and down each side of the door posts.
2. The Death Angel will pass over the land and if he sees the blood, he will pass over your house and your firstborn will be spared. If he does not see the blood, then the firstborn in your home will die.

B. The people of Israel obeyed Moses vs. 28 (Note) See Hebrews 11:28: This was An Act of Faith!

4. Crisis # 4 - The Red Sea - God's Power - Exodus 14

Note: At this point, scholars have suggested that the children of Israel consisted of between one and two million people! As the chapter unfolds notice these interesting facts:

- A. God's Plan** - after Pharaoh agreed to let them go, God led right into the middle of a very difficult situation - some would call in a serious crisis.

The direction God told Moses to lead the children of Israel would put them just west of the Red Sea, just east of an approaching Egyptian army, just south of several Egyptian fortresses and just north of a wickedly hot and barren dessert. In essence, they were led by God right into a very serious crisis, or as some would say, they were now between a rock and a hard place!!

- B. God's Power** - now the children of Israel were once again in a place to see the Biblical principle that is recorded in 2 Corinthians 12:9 - *"My grace is sufficient for you; for my strength is made perfect in your weakness."*

1. The Campaigning Army - vs. 9
2. The Complaining Congregation vs. 10 - 12
3. The Courageous Leader vs. 13 & 14

Note vs. 15 - Moses had a doubting moment too, and he cried out to God

Then God told Moses to raise his hand (the rod in his hand) over the sea and it opened up and they marched thru on dry land. And, when Pharaoh's army came into the miracle that was provided for God's people, Moses raised his hand over the sea again and it closed up on that massive army of 600 chariots and many foot soldiers and drowned them all.

5. Crisis # 5 - Needs in the Wilderness - God's Provision Exodus 15:22 - 16:1-36

A. Water is needed - Exodus 15:22-27

1. Just 3 days removed from one of the greatest miracles recorded in God's Word, the parting of the Red Sea and slaying Pharaoh's army, the children of Israel were complaining again -- we need water!
2. God directed Moses and He gave them water

B. Food is needed - Exodus 16:1-36

1. Just 45 days removed from the parting of the Red Sea and 42 day removed from God giving them water, the children of Israel were complaining yet again -- we need food!!!
2. God directed Moses again and He gave them food.

Conclusion:

Since the fall of Adam and Eve, the human race has been encountering one crisis after another.

Crisis comes into our lives for some of the follow reasons:

- Sometimes the crisis is the direct result of our failures and we are experiencing the consequences of those poor choices.
- Sometimes we are thrust into a crisis due to no fault of our own, but because we're are closely linked to someone who is going thru a crisis, we experience the crisis as well.
- And, as we have seen in this message, sometimes God leads us into a path that will bring crisis, and He does so to show us our utter need and dependence on Him and also to reveal to us His might power and working in our lives, to give us an opportunity to give God the glory and praise that is due Him.
- Please remember this basic principles as you face either your current crisis or future crisis:
 1. It is always good to be patient and give God time to work. Oftentimes we are tempted to "help God" with the dilemma we are facing. His timing and plan are always better than ours. And remember, God always gives the best to those who leave the results and timing up to Him.
 2. After we have prayed, have sought God and His will in our situation, sometimes we then need to make a decision. If we are somewhat unsure of the direction to take, then we must take the next logical step by faith. And remember, faith is not blind, but rather it is simply trusting God at His Word. We have prayed about the situation; we have been patient and waited on God; and now we must make a decision. We then step out in faith, trusting Him to direct your path. Ask Him to open the door or close the door according to His will.

3. As we make the decision to move forward, by faith we trust God to move in His way, not our way. Sometimes God will provide or direct our path in ways that are unexpected. We should be open and flexible to God. Allow Him to have the final say in how the situation develops and how it concludes.
4. We should also remember that our current crisis or situation will probably not be the final trial we will face. In fact, as we walk in faith and in obedience to God, we should expect trials and crisis experiences (1 Peter 1:6, 7; 4:12, 13). Allow the present situation and God's faithfulness to deepen your love affair for Jesus and allow God to strengthen you for the future.
5. And finally, PRAISE HIM!! PRAISE HIM!! PRAISE HIM!! It matters not how our difficulties turn out, He is worthy of our praise. (Philippians 4:4). Praise is a choice; let's develop a mindset that we will adopt the "Choice to Rejoice" attitude, whatever the outcome of our crisis may be. Remember, it is easy to lift our hearts, voices and hands to Him in praise when things are going well. As we grow deeper in our relationship with Him, we can develop an attitude of gratitude and praise in all things!



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