

## **Week 3: In weakness the LORD is strong**

### **Exodus 4:18-7:7**

*Aim: To see that we need to appreciate our weakness in order to embrace the LORD in all his strength. Humanly Pharoah was unable to be moved by Moses, let alone defeated. But the mighty strength and merciful redemption of the LORD's mighty hand will prevail. It did then, and through Jesus it has again but now over the devil, the world and the flesh. What is weak in the world's eyes in his is strong!*

### **Getting Started:**

Share examples of something we usually view as strong.

**Pray** for understanding as we read God's word.

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### **What is God saying?**

#### **Read Exodus 4:21-23**

What plan does the LORD tell Moses?

*Moses is instructed to perform the signs of ch 4. The LORD will harden Pharoah's heart so Pharoah doesn't obey him or let the people go, then Moses will announce the Lord's judgement for disobeying him*

#### **Read Exodus 5:1-6:5**

**(Leaders note - why not read to 6:9 as on Sunday)**

How does Moses first visit to Pharoah play out and what is the effect?

*Pharoah laughs in Moses' and his 'LORD's' face.*

*Then he doubles down on all the Israelites, to crush any hope of them influencing Pharoah other than in receiving punishment, and to turn them against Moses and any leadership he might offer the Israelites*

How strong is Moses shown to be in the face of Pharoah's strength?

*In himself, not at all, look at the backward step in Israel's experience of heightened oppression*

How do the Israelites respond?

*v20-21 also 6:9 - Just as Pharoah expected via his doubling down – by turning in despair against Moses and Aaron for the position they're all now in*

How does Moses?

*V22-23 - He asks the LORD 'Why?' Why has the LORD told him one thing and seemingly done another. Why has a rescue become greater suffering? Why was the message not powerful like the God who gave it? Why have you put me in this unpleasant position – with both Pharoah and Israel?*

And the LORD?

*6v1-8 – As the LORD of:*

*the past vv2-4, of the fathers and the covenant with which he bound himself by promises to this people;*

*the present v5 where he 'remembers', that is, he acts now to keep them (he didn't forget them!);*

*and the future v1 and v6-7 where he will most definitely keep his promises, redeeming his people, so they will know v7 the LORD*

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**Why is God saying this?**

**Divide up in your group one of each of these reading Mark 8:31-33, 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, Philippians 2:5-11.**

How does Moses' and the Israelites' experience foreshadow Jesus own experience?

*It doesn't seem at all possible. It appears to be an impossible promise to keep, with overwhelming opposition, against all odds, as unfolds in the progress of Jesus' ministry, and as he tells his disciples he will suffer and die to enter his kingdom – who ever heard of that as a plan before!*

What expectations then should we have, united with Christ?

*The LORD's plans, wisdom and word for us seems to have overwhelming opposition, often doesn't seem attractive or to make sense to us – who ever ran toward hardship or pain(?). But as his disciples we may both struggle as Moses did with the divide between what we'd do if we were God and depend on him to do what he promises.*

*Think of some concrete examples in our everyday lives - eg – to withdraw to protect ourselves from conflict at work/study, or in our homes, over acting in line with being a disciple rather than 'what works' in the eyes of the world; feeling like God isn't getting on with it fast enough when we're facing the consequences of sin in the world...*

How might our 'emptiness' apart from the LORD's 'fullness' shape how we live as disciples of Christ each day?

*The more clear we are that by ourselves we don't know and can't control the world around us, and won't be able to pull off our plans or desires, the better we can turn to the LORD in dependence in his mighty strength and merciful redemption*

### **Prayer Starters**

- Thank the LORD for his power shown in 'weakness'

- Ask God by his Spirit to deepen us in our appreciation of Jesus' humiliation, suffering, and vindication
- Ask that we may be enabled to endure through hardship in faithfulness through the power of God at work in us

### **Growing Growth Group Suggestion**

Why not plan a catch up with one another over a meal for some time this term. When will it be, and what arrangements need to be made?

**Are there any people I should follow up this week?**