When Obedience Guarantees Failure

**Read:** Exodus 3:15-21

**Texts:** Acts 20:22-23 “And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.”

Matthew 24:9 “Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.”

**Introduction:** I once read a story about WWII in which volunteers were requested for an assignment where there was little chance of success and they were not expected to come back alive. I could not imagine volunteering for such an assignment. Throughout the scriptures we can see times where God calls people to situations where they are promised a negative outcome.

**Moses** – Called to lead COI out of Egypt. Pharaoh didn’t want to lose his slave labor. God sends Moses with a promise that no matter how he presents his message Pharaoh will not let them go. SO WHY GO? Why should you or I volunteer for a task that will not promise great results? As we read this account and then read how Moses tells the Israelites: “…all that words that the LORD had spoken…” doesn’t it make you wonder why they were so upset when Pharaoh refused to let them go? Do you think that perhaps they got so excited about the promise of deliverance that they forgot about the rest of what God had said? Far too many Christians have decided to pick and choose what part of the scripture they will focus on and what they will ignore.

It took 10 plagues and the drowning of Pharaoh’s army for Egypt to understand that God was indeed on Israel’s side.

**Noah** – Called to build and ark. He preached repentance for 120 years. How many converts did his anointed preaching convince? Zero! He actually only convinced his three sons and each of their wives. Even the arrival of thousands of animal kinds did nothing to convince the folks that Noah was telling the truth. When the ark door swung closed and the rain began to fall then the world knew that Noah had really heard from God.

**Joseph** – Fathers favorite son, he had a beautiful coat, he had jealous brothers and he had his dreams. Oh did he ever have dreams and they were from God too. God showed him that his brothers would bow to him. God showed him that other nations would bow to him. He would be someone important someday.

One day he finds himself stripped of his coat and thrown into a pit. He begs for his life. Do you remember when his brothers later said: “…We *are* verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear…”

Where is the promise of God now? Did he misunderstand? Maybe his dreams were not from God…maybe he was just dreaming. His hope is renewed when he arrives at Potiphar’s house and is soon running the place. Then a wicked woman enters the scene and soon he is back in the pit. He soon rises as much as he can in prison and is running the place (sort of). It is years before God brings him to the leadership position that he dreamed of as a teenager.

**Conclude:** So what do you do when the promises of God seem like

they are sarcasm? What do you do when you are faithful to the

heavenly vision and keep getting slapped in the face and thrown into a

pit? What do you do when your patience with God Himself is running

out? You stand fast on the promises of God. You can say as Paul did

when he was in prison: “Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not dis-

obedient unto the heavenly vision…” You stand strong on the prom-

ises of God. You believe what He said more than you believe your

circumstances. You remember that when you are obeying God you are

a success even when the results look like a failure.

Luke 12:37 “Blessed *are* those servants, whom the lord when he com-

eth shall find watching…” John 9:4 “I must work the works of him

that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can

work.”