

Leadership Lessons from the Life of Moses
Lesson #13, It May Get Worse Before It Gets Better

Text: Ex.5:10-19

In our last lesson, we noted the very real possibility that efforts to lead others to a better life in and with God may experience “pushback.” In this lesson, we’ll add that “the situation” may even get worse before it gets better despite our efforts to alleviate their suffering. This should come as no surprise, since we know from personal experiences that *physical* treatments of a disease or injury to the body often require a painful procedure or unpleasant prescription to correct. Spiritual leadership and healing is much the same. How so?

- **Others, who previously helped those you’re trying to lead to freedom to be and remain enslaved, will not only abandon them, but will make their efforts to change more difficult, vv.10-11.** The *taskmasters* hitherto *supplied straw* to make the Israelite’s enslavement less burdensome. There are always *enablers* willing to “help” make *servitude to sin* easier. But once a change is even contemplated, they will make life more difficult because they really care nothing for the individual above he provides them, cf. Luke 15:13ff.
- **The pressure will mount to continue to maintain the “status quo,” vv.12-13.** In this series of studies, we have concerned ourselves with *spiritual* leadership- with helping others to see and do what is “right.” In these regards, we’re attempting to *lead* others to or back to God. But there is an adversary, Satan- and he doesn’t like to lose even one adherent. Additionally, Satan has *leaders* in his camp also. So, as efforts commence to gain or regain others through spiritual leadership, opposing camp efforts will be “ramped up” to maintain control over those contemplating abandoning *servitude to* and *in sin* for *fellowship with God*. Simply put: Satan will not lose without a fight; and in that fight he will employ friends, family, work associates, and anyone or anything else to maintain the “status quo,” cf. Luke 21:16-17. Good leaders know this, and prepare and guide those that make and follow a decision to do right through the inevitable “storm of opposition” that follows.
- **Physical hardships may be brought to bare, v.14.** As mentioned in the previous point, Satan will use anyone or *anything* to make it more difficult to do the “right” thing(s). Even *physical* pain, suffering, oppression, and mistreatment are within his purview. The book of *Job* makes this abundantly clear, cf. Job 1:13-20; 2:7-13ff. Yes, it is a *spiritual* battle for the minds, hearts, and eternal destinies of our brethren (in the church and the world), but Satan will use *physical* pain and suffering to achieve his ultimate end of eternal damnation, cp. 2Cor.10:3-6. Good leaders understand the *spiritual* nature of this conflict, and thus duly prepare others for the *physical* ramifications of it.
- **Often, those in a position to help just won’t, vv.15-18.** The Israelite *foremen* went right to *the top* (albeit the wrong *top*) with their complaints, to Pharaoh himself. But in reality, he was actually responsible for their situation, cf. vv.4-9! Two things jump out here in these regards: 1) the *foremen* went to the wrong *person* with their complaint- a corrupt *physical* leader with a *spiritual* problem (not only the wrong *person* because of his own *spiritual* issues, but also because theirs was a *spiritual* problem, albeit one with *physical* hardships attached, cf.vv.2-4,5-9 and cp.1Cor.6:1-4); and, 2) they likely did so because they failed to recognize the *spiritual* cause of their *physical* predicament. Pharaoh said he did “*not know the Lord*”- yes, there were other matters involved as the rest of vv.2ff indicate. But would not these other considerations have evaporated had he truly *known* the Lord? Everything else followed logically from this basic failure. So why go to Pharaoh instead of the Lord, cf. Luke 12:4-5? Most *physical* problems have either a *spiritual cause* or *solution*, or both. Good leaders understand and communicate these things to those they’re trying to help.

Change is hard because doing the “right” thing often has immediate and detrimental consequences, v.19. The *foremen* “*saw that they were in trouble...*” but failed to appreciate either *why* or *what to do*. We often recognize “trouble” because of its obvious signs, but we need good, spiritual leaders to assess its true *cause* and point us in the “right” direction of *what to do*. Admitting we’ve been wrong and need to do better is difficult. Actually changing may be even tougher for the reasons highlighted above. We need good *spiritual* leaders to help us, and we need to be willing to become good *spiritual* leaders to help others also.

