

# God, the Gospel and Radical Obedience

An exposition of Exodus 6:1-13  
at West Hills San Jose on March 24, 2019

**INTRODUCTION:** When I was in college, I had a roommate that decided he really wanted to go Sky-diving. Josh do you want to go? Sure! Three weeks later, without having thought too much about it, I'm in his car on the way to go skydiving. Once we got there, fear and doubt started to creep into my mind. We weren't at some world class, parachute training center. We arrived at a partially functioning municipal airstrip outside of Fresno in this tiny town called Madera. 30 minute class explaining what's going to happen. I get strapped to a guy I've never met and climb into the plane. As the plane starts climbing higher and higher into the sky I start thinking, what am I about to do? I don't know anything about this company, if they are legit. I don't know anything about skydiving, like how many people die a year doing this? But the biggest thing is I don't know anything about, is this guy I'm strapped to. Is this his first time doing this? His second time? What are his credentials? I am about to put my life in the hands of someone I know literally nothing about and as my mind is starts swirling and theorizing how likely it is that I'm about to die I look over at the cockpit and there stuck on the cabin door is a large white sticker that stated in bold black letters....and just when I thought I couldn't be anymore afraid...they opened the door...and the icy wind filled the cabin. And the guy threw my legs out over the edge of threshold...and he yelled in my ear...when you are ready JUMP! And the thought that came into my head at that moment was...why would I jump...I can't fly!?

**PROBLEM:** Have you ever been in a situation where someone was calling you to take a radical step of obedience but you were scared, unsure of yourself, and unconvinced that doing so would lead to anything good? Part of what made the prospect of jumping out of the plane (which I eventually did and it was fine by the way) so scary...besides the height...was I knew nothing about the guy I was going with. Imagine how different that story might have been if instead of meeting with a couple of strangers at some small out of the way air strip in Madera, I was meeting a close family friend at a sight I was familiar with. And that close family friend was a military trained jump instructor with 20 years of experience who had been training paratroopers for decades with a sterling performance record. I have no doubt it would still have been nerve wracking when they opened the door of the plane at 12,000 feet, but probably much less so because I KNEW the person I was with. Because I KNOW who He is and what He has done...I am strengthened to make a radical decision. Now imagine if God the author of gravity said... "jump out of the plane, I will catch you and guide you safely down". And in this imaginary scenario I could know for sure it was him. Then how would I feel? I suppose the answer to that is...it depends on how well you know God. Now skydiving is an extreme example, most of us aren't going to be jumping out of an airplane anytime soon. However, all of us are called to make radical choices in obedience to God all the time. I feel a very scaled down version of those same plane jumping nerves every time I try to initiate a conversation about Jesus Christ with a stranger. I feel a scaled down version of those same nerves, when I ask my wife, what are areas of my life where you think I need to grow in my walk with Jesus? That's not as scary as jumping out of a plane...but I feel a smaller version of those same nerves and fears. I don't know what

I'm jumping out into. You all probably have things that are just like this. Areas of obedience that every time you take them, it feels like a scaled down version of jumping out of a plane, trusting that God will catch you and guide you safely down. Now the question I want to interact with in our text today is where does power come from to make those kinds of choices? Where does power come from, to make a radical decision for Christ, even when you are scared, feeling incapable, and unsure if obedience is even going to work? Here is my main point from my text today are you read?

**MAIN POINT:** The power for radical obedience comes from knowing God, so focus on Him!

**SETTING THE CONTEXT:** Today we are back in the book of Exodus, please open your bibles to Exodus chapter 6. For those of you who were here for last weeks message, you know that the narrative arc of our story has just reached fever pitch intensity. Israel is living as slaves in Egypt. The Pharaoh who reigns over the nation, is threatened by the rapidly increasing population of the 12 tribes. And his response was to impose hard slave labor upon the adults and infant genocide, commanding all the people of Egypt to participate in putting all newborn Jewish males to death. And in the midst of all this darkness and all this depravity, God appears to Moses in the wilderness and reveals Himself as Yahweh, the God who is who He is and creates what He creates and wills what He wills for the universe. And this Yahweh tells Moses...I have heard and remembered.

I have heard the cries of my people in Egypt under their oppression and I have remember my covenant with their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And because of this I am coming to redeem my people and to bring them out of their slavery and into the land of Promise. And so Moses, despite some sincere protestation, goes to the people, tells them what Yahweh had said... and everyone was ecstatic that their slavery was coming to an end. And Moses and Aaron finally worked up the courage and went and said to Pharaoh, the Lord says let my people go that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness. Leap out of the airplane. And rather than floating safely to the ground...Pharaoh asks the single most important question of the book of Exodus...WHO IS YAHWEH that I should listen to Him!?! And rather than letting the people go, Pharaoh imposes harder work on them, frustrating work...and says you are lazy you are lazy you are lazy, that's why you want to go out into the wilderness. It's because of what YOU said Moses not because of what God said. And at the sunset of chapter 5, Pharaoh is laughing and mocking...the people are angry, dispirited and frustrated...and Moses is gasping for faith in prayer...saying God why have you allowed this? Why haven't you done what you said you were going to do? And when the story has reached it's darkest and most anxious hour...that God once again speaks...let's now humble our minds and open our hearts for the reading of the Word of the Lord.

**READING:** [1] But the LORD said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will send them out, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land." [2] God spoke to Moses and said to him, "I am the LORD. [3] I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them. [4] I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land

in which they lived as sojourners. [5] Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant. [6] Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. [7] I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. [8] I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.'" [9] Moses spoke thus to the people of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses, because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery.

[10] So the LORD said to Moses, [11] "Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the people of Israel go out of his land." [12] But Moses said to the LORD, "Behold, the people of Israel have not listened to me. How then shall Pharaoh listen to me, for I am of uncircumcised lips?" [13] But the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron and gave them a charge about the people of Israel and about Pharaoh king of Egypt: to bring the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

**PRAYER:** God I have no doubt that there are people in this room this morning who feel like Moses, overwhelmed and discouraged by how difficult it is to obey you in their life circumstances. I have no doubt that there are people in this room who are like Israel, wondering in their heart if they should even try to keep hoping in you, given their broken spirit. There are others in this room who are not discouraged or doubting...but are ministering to someone who is. God I pray for all of us...that you would show us yourself this morning. That you would remind us WHO you are, what you are like, and how you work in the WORLD...and all of us would focus and behold...that we would meditate on and consider your glory...and in doing so we would draw upon fresh power from the infinite well of your glory...and be strengthened to do all that you have commanded us in Christ...for the glory of your great name. In the name of Jesus our Lord, Amen.

**ROAD MAP:** 1.) What God is about to do, 2.) How God is going to do it. 3.) How God expects His servants to respond.

#### WHAT GOD IS GOING TO DO?

1. Let's jump into our text, what is God going to do. And I want to start with what God is not going to do. At the end of chapter 5, Moses says why God why have you brought all of this upon your people? And chapter 6:1 "God says Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand he will send them out, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land."
2. SO Moses says why God why...and God says...I'm not going to respond to that. And the reason I think is that God basically told Moses that this is what was going to happen. Flip back to chapter 3. In verse 18, God says I'm going to send you to Israel, they are going to listen to you. And then you are going to go to Pharaoh and give him my message. But verse 19...but I KNOW that the king of Egypt WILL not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. You'll go to Israel, they'll believe you...you'll go to Pharaoh and he wont. And

because of that...when he refused verse 20 I will stretch out my hand against Egypt with all wonders that I will do in it; and AFTER THAT...After I have done mighty wonders...he will let you go.

3. So at the end of chapter 5, things look dark, things look worse, things look like they haven't worked out...but in the end we have to be honest...this is basically what God said was going to happen. You were going to go to Pharaoh, he is going to say no, and I will have to compel him by a mighty hand. And once I do...then you will go. So the question I had was...why isn't Moses reminding the people of this...why isn't he reminding Himself...okay pharaoh has rejected the request...the next thing that will happen is God is going to bring wonders upon the land of Egypt? And I think the reason is, selective listening. That's not a technical term but I think it's something most of us are familiar with.
  1. Someone says something to you, and you lock on to the bit of information that matters to you and you fail to hear the rest of what the person is saying.
  2. It's like when someone gives you feedback on something...and they give you five compliments and one criticism. What do you tend to lock onto? The criticism right. You heard the other things...but you didn't really hear them. What you heard was the negative. It's bad when we fail to hear one another...but it's worse when we fail to hear our God.
  3. It like when people hear Jesus say follow me and you will find life. And then they start following him and they are shocked that they encounter suffering, or hardship, or defeats in their battle against sin. And the reason they are shocked is because that's not what Jesus said. Jesus said, deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me for whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. He said **ALL** of that. Not just the stuff about following and life.
  4. And this is one of the reasons I think it is so so so so so so important to be in the Word regularly. We can all struggle with selective listening, but when we do this with God's Word it can be damaging and discouraging to ourselves and others. When we create high expectations in life that don't align with God's promises or purposes...we set ourselves up for a mighty fall. **Don't be a selective listener with each other...and especially especially especially don't be a selective listener when it comes to God.** Take all of it or none of it...don't waffle in the middle.
4. But God in His grace continues His patience with Moses. And in response to all that Pharaoh has done...God meets Moses with a profoundly encouraging word...**NOW YOU SHALL SEE.** Your faith Moses, is about to become sight. Your hope is about to be manifest in the earth. My promises are about to become reality...now you shall see. One day God is going to say that to all of you who believe...did you know that. A day is coming soon where God will say...now you shall see the son of man on his throne...now you shall see the new heavens and the new earth which I have prepared for all who have loved my appearing.
5. What God is going to show Moses is what he promised...I will compel Pharaoh to send you away. He will send them out, he will drive them away. There is something deeply important about this. God's not going to take his people away. That's not what it says. God is going to compel Pharaoh to do it himself. And that distinction is important.

6. I will talk more about this in future messages but consider what is happening in this interchange between Pharaoh and God. God sends Moses into Pharaoh's house and tells him...do what I say. Give me your labor force. What is happening there? What is happening is God is speaking to Pharaoh like a servant. He is ordering Him to obey. But is Pharaoh a servant? No Pharaoh is the king of Egypt. Except He's not. The Most High rules the kingdoms of men and gives it to whom he will. God's dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom endures from generation to generation according to the humbled, pagan King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4:34.
  1. God is saying...you're not the true king of Egypt Pharaoh, I am. And the plagues will fall upon Egypt until Pharaoh finally...obeys God's voice. Until Pharaoh in his pride and reckless resistance concedes...Yahweh and NOT Pharaoh is the king of kings and the Lord of lords.
  2. Exodus 6:1 what I will do to Pharaoh is cause him to send them out...cause him to drive them away. Because I am Yahweh the Most High, King of heaven and earth.
7. And we are told in verse 2-3 what God is doing by handling things this way. It says "God spoke to Moses and said to Him, "I am Yahweh. I appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as El Shaddai (God Almighty), but by my name YAHWEH, I did not make myself known to them."
  1. So there is some debate about what this verse means, and I think god-fearing people can have different views on this, but I will tell you what I think it means. I think what God is saying here is that in the past I have revealed myself as the God who is able. El Shaddai. Throughout Genesis I have revealed myself powerfully as the God who can bring promise from curse, who can bring worship from fallen creation, who can bring life from barrenness, and who can take what man means for evil and use it for good.
  2. However there is another glorious aspect to who I am that I— up to this point—have not begun to fully reveal. And that is what it means that I am Yahweh. I am who I am, and I cause what I cause.
  3. I think what God is saying is in the past I revealed myself as God the creator, sustainer and provider...I revealed myself as the God of promise, that is what El Shaddai implies. But I have not yet revealed myself as Yahweh, God the redeemer, the one saves His people from their bondage in sin and brings them into relationship with Himself.
  4. The generations of Abraham and his seed have seen glimpses of this...but they haven't really seen what it means for me to be YAHWEH...King of heaven and earth...and the God of your salvation.
8. Now there are intelligent people who would say that all this verse means is that God never used the name Yahweh before now, and so this must be another revelation story like Exodus 3 told from a different vantage point. I can respect where folks are coming from with that view but it seems more likely to me given all that has come before, and all that will come after, that this statement is in continuity with God's intentions to reveal Himself to His people. And that is the most important thing to say about this. Something that has not yet been known...is about to be made known.
9. He says in verse 2...I AM YAHWEH. That is who I am. In the past I have only revealed myself as El Shaddai. But to see me with greater fullness, you need to know what it means

that my name is Yahweh. And I think that is everything He is going to go on to say in the rest of this speech. So we are asking the question, what is God going to do...

10. Save His people? Yes. Judge Pharaoh? Yes. Bring his people to the land? Yes. He is going to do those things. But what is he doing by doing those things? He is revealing what it means that His name is Yahweh. So God wants to reveal Himself. He wants to show us who He really is. How is God going to do it?

#### HOW GOD IS GOING TO DO IT

1. Answer by His own faithfulness and power. I want to read this to you again...and as I do, I just want you to listen to what God says HE HAS DONE and what HE IS going to do. And I want you to count how many things the people are going to do to effect this mighty salvation by the hand of Yahweh.
2. [4] I also *established* my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners. [5] Moreover, *I have heard* the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and *I have remembered* my covenant. [6] Say therefore to the people of Israel, '**I am the LORD**, and *I will bring* you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and *I will deliver* you from slavery to them, and *I will redeem* you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. [7] *I will take you* to be my people, and *I will be your God*, and you shall know that **I am the LORD** your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. *I will bring you into the land* that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. *I will give it to you* for a possession. **I am the LORD.**'"
3. What is Moses going to do? Verse 1...Moses is going to watch and see. What is God going to do? Everything. From beginning to end...salvation is of the Lord. Do you believe that? I mean really. When you see the ways that you fall short of what you have been commanded...do you start questioning whether you are really saved? When you see the ways that you fall short of what God calls you to...do you start acting like he's not going to save you unless you fix it?
  1. Brothers and sisters listen to me, you will not be saved delivering yourself from slavery to your sins...you will not be saved the power of your own outstretched arm...you will be saved because HE IS THE LORD...and He has reached down in His own strength by the grace of the Incarnation. Christ the Son entered into the darkness of our fallen world, and at the cross, took the fullness of death, curse and the judgement for sin upon His back. And under it's burden was crushed unto death, but not before all of it was exhausted upon Him.
  2. And in the grave...laying under the full weight of sins rebuke...Christ laid silent for three days. But on the morning of the third day...what was sown in weakness was raised in power! Christ rose from death by the power of God, never to die again.
  3. And he offers salvation to all who recognize that they are enslaved to sin and are powerless to set themselves free. And His salvation does not come the demand to try harder and do better...it's comes with the promise that I know you are weak...I know you are like sheep with out a shepherd. I know you are weak and heavy laden by the

burden of sin...and I have risen to give you rest...and to give you strength by the power of the Spirit. Why? Because HE IS THE LORD. The God of your salvation.

4. There is a glorious chiasm in verses 3-8 similar to the chiasm, from last week when Moses was speaking with Pharaoh. For those of you who weren't here, a chiasm is a literary device that Hebrew authors would use to emphasize something. And the way it works is the first thing he says mirrors the last thing he says...the second thing he says will mirror the second to last thing he says...and the goal of doing this is to emphasize what is in the middle.
5. So in verses 3-4 we start with the patriarchs and the land. In verse 8 we close with the patriarchs and the land. In verses 5-6 we have Egyptian captivity and God's plan to bring them out. IN the second half of verse 7 you have the Egyptian captivity and God's plan to bring them out.
6. And the middle of the chiasm...what Moses wants to emphasize about God's salvation is this...the beginning of verse 7 I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God.
7. You will be mine, and I will be yours and we will be together in relationship forever.
  1. This is so so so significant. I'm not rescuing you from slavery because slavery is bad (even though it is), I'm not bringing you to the land just so that you will have a more comfortable life. I am not judging Egypt just so that everyone can see how strong I am. All of these things will happen...but they are not ultimately the reason I am doing this, I am doing this so that you will be mine...and I will be yours.
  2. I am not ultimately doing these things for all of those other reasons...I am ultimately doing these things because I want you. This is how Yahweh glorifies Himself. Reveals Himself...shows who He is and what He is like. By setting His steadfast love upon His people and redeeming them through salvation and judgement.
  3. This is why you should WANT God to glorify Himself in everything. Because this is how he does it?! By showing His eternal, electing love for His bride, His people, and showing His justice to those who reject Him.
  4. That is what God wants His people to know about Him in verse 7. When we enter into relationship, you will know w that I am the YAHWEH your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I am not only the God who creates and sustains, I am not only the God of promise...I am the God of your salvation. I am the God who redeems His people...I AM THE LORD.

The heart of this promise is the heart of the gospel. God doesn't save us so that we will behave better. God doesn't save us because He needs something. God saves us that we might be reconciled into a relationship of love. Christ died once, the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God. That is why when Paul thinks of departing this life to go be with Jesus...he thinks of one word...GAIN.

1. And when God reconciles us into this relationship, this isn't really a point from my text but I want to say it. God reconciles us into a family of adopted children. Every child is the most important child in the family. Every child is a full heir, a beloved son or daughter, a firstborn in Jesus Christ.
2. God's aim is to glorify Himself through salvation and judgment, so that He can be our God, and we will be His people.

3. And this is what HE DOES...not what WE DO. This IS WHAT HE ACCOMPLISHES...and what we receive by faith.

So what have we seen, we have seen that what God intends to do is to reveal Himself as Yahweh in a way that He has not yet done in terms of biblical history. And the way He is going to do it, the how, is through salvation and judgment, and bringing His people into relationship with Himself. The way God is going to glorify Himself is by revealing His covenant love for His people through salvation, judgement and redemption. Now in conclusion we need to ask, how does God expect His people to respond to this knowledge?

#### HOW DOES GOD EXPECT US TO RESPOND?

1. By jumping out of the plane. He expects radical obedience. So verse 9, Moses went and said these things to be the people but they did not listen to Moses because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery.
2. So in verse 9, because of the way things have played out, no one believes Moses. So Moses...is now back in Egypt, he's just insulted Pharaoh to HIS face...and now his own people have turned their back on Him. I can imagine being Moses...and feeling pretty alone right now.
3. But God doesn't see this as a problem. He just tells Moses, Go back to Pharaoh, and say it again. Tell him to let the people of Israel go out of his land. But Moses protests in verse 12, But Moses said to YAHWEH, Behold the people have not listened to me. How then shall Pharaoh listen to me, for I am of uncircumcised lips.
4. What Moses says is...I can't even convince our own people to believe me...how am I possibly going to convince Pharaoh!? He then makes a comment about his mouth that I'm still not positive how to interpret. I think he is saying...my mouth does not appear fit to bring about the fulfillment of your covenant purposes. But I'm not positive. Whatever it is...Moses still seems to think that the problem is him. It's because I'm not good enough. But look at this...
5. Verse 13 says But Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron and gave them a charge about the people of Israel and about Pharaoh king of Egypt: to bring the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt.
6. So what is going on here? It seems to me like the Lord simply expects Moses to obey despite his fears, despite his sense of ineptitude, and despite the fact that he doesn't think this has any chance of working. God back and face the most powerful man on earth, whom you just insulted, and who has just made life even more difficult for Israel...and basically insult him again. Yahweh commands you to let his people God. You aren't king Pharaoh...God is. Do it again.
7. Now the question is why does God expect Moses to obey? And why does Moses ultimately do it, in chapter 7? I think the answer is...because of who God has revealed Himself to be in verses 4-8. He says three times in that I AM YAHWEH. In verse 6, 7 and 8 as He proclaiming what he is about to do.
8. I know we are sitting with our feet dangling out of an airplane at 10,000 feet, I know human beings can't fly...but I want you to jump...not because of what you think is possible, not because it isn't scary...but because of WHO I AM. I AM YAWEH, the God who saves. I am

greater than the military trained jump instructor with 20 years of experience. And if I tell you I will catch you I will catch you...because that is the kind of God I am.

9. And once Moses has stopped protesting and received what God has said...when He has considered who God is, all that God has revealed of Himself and what God has promised to do...He finds power for radical obedience. He IS going to walk back into Pharaoh's house and insult him again...not because he is brave, not because he believes he is capable or even that it's going to work...but because of who God is, HE IS THE LORD.
10. Where is God calling you to radical obedience today? Where is he calling you to obey...even though it seems impossible...even though it seems like it won't even work...even though you feel incompetent to do it well? You won't find real power in trying to will yourself into action...real power comes from knowing God, knowing Him, who He is and what he's like.
  1. Radical obedience of finally confessing your sin to someone...because you know Him...that his love is tender and merciful, he gives grace to the humble and lifts up the downcast...and a broken spirit God will not despise. Psalm 51
  2. Radical obedience of finally forgiving the one wronged you or let you down...because you know Him...His love is a forgiving love. "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another...how as God in Christ forgave you. There be imitators of God, as beloved children."
  3. Maybe you are here, and you know deep down in your heart that you are not following Jesus, that you have not put your faith in Him, but you sense Him calling you, maybe even as I have been talking you have felt the influence of Spirit working upon your heart...maybe for you radical obedience is to finally stop teetering on the fence and go all in. To give yourself to Him. To say I will follow you Lord Jesus no matter what that means or what it might cost me. I might lose friends, I might upset family, it might mean making a fundamental change in the course of my life...if that is YOU I'm not asking you to jump out of the plane with someone you cannot know...the LORD IS YAHWEH, and His way is love.
    1. And His Son was crucified and buried to bring forgiveness for all your sins and was raised to give you ever blessing in the heavenly places. Don't wait for things to be less scary. They will never be less scary. But God can be trusted to save you.
    2. Don't wait another day...repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved!!
  4. Radical obedience of love...choosing to pursue the blessing of others at the expense of yourself. To love your neighbor as yourself.

**COMMUNION:** At this table you have the visual picture of what it means for Yahweh to be our God. He is the God of our salvation...who redeems us not with the blood of bulls and goats...but with the life of His own Son.