

# Heed The Word Of The Lord      Exodus 6:9-13

“Are you listening?”

Teachers say this when students aren't paying attention to something they believe is important, which is almost everything, according to them! Parents say this when their children don't respond to instructions, which ought to be quite infrequent, but sadly it's all too common, because of a lack of consequences for disobedience. Our woke culture says this—or rather screams it—again and again, but truth be told, there is little, if any, substance to what they are screaming at us, so we usually disregard it.

We are continually summoned by those in authority to listen to what we're told—but as we have seen, we usually don't. Why? Sometimes because we don't believe it matters; often because we don't believe what we're being told is true; and almost always, we don't bother to hear and respond because we know there won't be any consequences.

But can that be said of the word of the Lord? Are we safe to ignore and disregard and disobey what God says in His word? Can we say God's word is not very important? Is it true that it often proves false? Are we safe to think there will be no consequences? Isa. 45:18-23 gives a clear answer: every word of God is of utmost importance, in contrast with the words of men and the idols they create, v20-21; all God's words are truth and righteousness, v18-19; all His words are powerful—it is futile to resist them, v22-23. As Peter quotes from Isa. 40 in 1 Pet. 1:24-25, “the word of the Lord endures forever”.

Can you see that hearing and heeding God's word is the only wise thing to do? These are not words you can afford to ignore or neglect. They are all important. They are all true. They are all powerful. They will all come to pass in their every detail. You cannot resist the words of the Lord. You cannot escape them. The day of reckoning is most surely coming.

Yet so many do neglect, ignore, resist, and reject the word of the Lord. And because of this, many churches are reluctant to proclaim this word. How we need, as ministers and as churches, to speak forth the word of the Lord—even when it is rejected—because this word will endure when all other words are forgotten. This very subject is addressed in Ex. 6:9-13.

## **1) Israel's Inability to Heed the Word of the Lord (v9)**

Many in the world fail to heed God's word. They think it's not important. They persuade themselves it's not true. They believe there will be no consequences. But surely a Christian wouldn't say those things; to us the word of the Lord is our life, our hope, our rock, our assurance. We know it's vital, true, real. It manifests to us Christ and His salvation.

And yet, all too often, we don't heed it, even as believers. Think about all the ways we fail to hear and to follow the word of the Lord: every time we manifest unbelief in Christ, listen to Satan's lies, disobey God's commands, fall into despair, think God has forsaken us; and most clearly, every time we hear the preaching of the word and fail to put it into practice.

But why? Why do we, as believers, fail to heed the word of the Lord. One of the key reasons is outlined here in Ex. 6:9, where we read that the Israelites “did not heed Moses, because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage.” Hamilton notes that the “exciting, good news about what God is going to do falls on deaf ears, not because of unbelief or sin, but because of severe oppression-induced exhaustion.” The Hebrew phrase for “anguish of spirit” is literally “shortness of breath.” They were so pressed they could hardly breathe, let alone listen.

We are integrated beings comprised of many parts (unlike God, who is a simple being): we comprise physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual facets. When we feel pressure in one area, it impacts the others. Whether it's the lingering effects of childhood afflictions rendering us vulnerable and fearful and distrusting of others; grief from losing a loved one upon whom we depended, especially if they are taken prematurely; chronic illness, for which we see no reason, and where there is no hope of relief, preventing us from serving the Lord; spiritual disappointment, especially at the hands of church leaders who fail us; and most debilitating of all, when we disappoint ourselves, when we fail yet again, when we find that besetting sin tightening its enslaving grip upon us, confirming that we have Egypt in our soul – we cannot even hear the word of the Lord then!

But it doesn't have to stay that way for us. Why? Because of Jesus Christ. He always heeded the word of his Father, even when stretched beyond measure. When accused, betrayed, misunderstood, falsely charged, and crucified—he clung to the word. In every instance, he lived out the Scriptures that he has heard and heeded, no matter how severe his experience. Even on the cross, it was the word of Psa. 22 that sustained Him; even as he cries out in agony concerning his experience of God-forsakenness, He does so using the very word that he continued to hear and heed, even as he suffered. Thus, even his despair is framed by faith in the word of the Lord.

And we are **in Him**, being united to Him by grace, through faith. We are filled with His Spirit, enabled by His power, strengthened by His living word. His victory is our victory, and he is able to reach into our frailty and fragility, no matter how broken we might be. So are you listening to the words of this Jesus which speak to you? Mt. 11:28-30.

## **2) Moses' Reluctance to Speak the Word of the Lord (v10-13)**

It's not just that we struggle to *hear*—we also hesitate to *speak*, as Moses found in v12. Why speak a word that seems to lack power? Why speak when it's not being heeded, especially by God's people? Why speak when it feels like we're inadequate, unworthy, ineffective? These are temptations for every minister. When God's people don't respond, it deeply discourages the preacher. Is **your** failure to heed the word causing your ministers to doubt their calling?

But it's not only ministers: as churches, we fear speaking out against the culture; as brethren, we fear confronting sin in one another; as parents, we fear others seeing the struggles we are facing with our children, so we stop speaking God's word to them. In each case, we stay silent when we ought to speak the word of the Lord.

All this is the fruit of forgetfulness, v13. We forget what comes next—God's mighty deliverance through signs and wonders. Indeed, we forget what God has already accomplished through the Lord Jesus Christ. He not only *heard* and *heeded* the word—He *spoke* it. Over and over again. In each instance when he applies the word of the Lord to his own experience, he speaks it out as well. We thought earlier about his meditation upon Psa. 22 when on the cross – he not only meditated upon it himself, but he also spoke it out. How do we know he was exercising faith in his hour of need? He spoke the word of the Lord.

And so must we. Don't be deceived—there is a power in the word of the Lord that cannot be defeated. So... are you listening? It's true you can choose not to listen now. But the day is coming when you will have no choice (Isa. 45:23). So hear and heed the word that is spoken now: "Turn to me and be saved... for I am God, and there is no other" (Isa. 45:22).