**Exodus 5:22-23**

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*Moses was upset by the confrontation with the foremen and the possible repercussions. He prayed to the LORD, asking why He caused things to be worse for His people. In other words, Moses blamed the LORD for his failure and for the Israelites’ situation going from bad to worse.*

To say that the Moses was upset by the meeting with the foremen is a gross understatement. Verses 22 – 23 contains Moses’ complaint about the failure of delivering the Israelites and why the LORD chose him for the job in the first place. It is also an accusation that the LORD allowed this failure to happen.

Soon after his run-in with the foremen, *Moses returned to the Lord*. Though this is the right thing to do, what Moses said shows his faith to be immature. This is understandable, given his initial reluctance, and that this is his first big test. However, as we will see in chapter 6, God does not chastise Moses in this instance. He will just tell Moses that this is exactly what He had in mind. It seems that so long as Moses brings the concern to God instead of trying to take things into his own hands God is pleased. Perhaps this is a reason God chose Moses. As we shall see, Moses will be chastised severely by God later, after his faith has matured, for acting apart from a complete dependence upon God. At this point Moses has no problem depending on God. In fact he seems somewhat incapable of acting any other way. Perhaps there is a major lesson for us here.

Moses’ complaint begins with two questions. The first question, *O Lord, why have You brought harm to this people?*, shows that Moses blames the LORD for making things worse for His people. Again, Moses addressed Him as “Lord” (Heb. *adonay*, “master”), not LORD (Heb. *Yahweh*, the God of Israel, discussed in more detail in chapter 6). The use of “adonay” might imply that Moses did not yet know the LORD as a friend, as he shall in the future.  At this point he just knows God is the “master” and is in control, but events are not going according to how Moses understood God to said they would go.  “So what’s wrong God?”  The phrase “brought harm” is literally “done evil.” This evil is in the form of pain, suffering, and trouble. The LORD said he would deliver the Israelites’ and bring relief from their suffering, but instead it is as if He brought “evil” upon them.

The second question is *Why did You ever send me?* Here, Moses questioned the LORD’s wisdom in choosing him. He could also be thinking that his objections in 3:11 – 4:13 might have some validity after all.

Moses ended his complaint/prayer by using very emphatic language to accuse the LORD of not doing what He said He would do. He was upset because, from the beginning of his endeavors on the LORD’s behalf, there has been nothing but failure. From his perspective, nothing good has happened *since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name*. Note how Moses claims the LORD had failed in two ways. First, *he has done harm to this people*. The “he” refers to Pharaoh, and Moses is complaining to the LORD that He has done nothing to prevent Pharaoh from inflicting pain and suffering upon the Israelites. Second, Moses states that *You have not delivered Your people at all*. The phrase “at all” in Hebrew conveys the idea that the LORD had not done one thing to bring about the promised deliverance of His people Israel.

In other words, Pharaoh has succeeded in doing evil (the phrase “done harm” is similar to the “done evil” in the previous verse), and the LORD had failed in delivering His people. By not doing anything, to Moses, it is as if the LORD was the source of evil by proxy. You could say Moses is questioning the LORD’s sovereignty and omnipotence. But that does not seem to be the way God takes it. Moses complains that it does not appear that God is doing what He said He would do. God will now correct that impression.

**Biblical Text:**

**22Then Moses returned to the Lord and said, “O Lord, why have You brought harm to this people? Why did You ever send me? 23Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done harm to this people, and You have not delivered Your people at all.”**