

"And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away." Exodus 8:28

NOT SO FAR MOSES

by Craig Marlatt

"Whatever happened to the days when people would serve God and trust Him to provide for their needs?" A friend of mine recently posed this question to me and I don't mind telling you it's got me a bit stirred up. It does seem like people are less and less willing to go beyond personal convenience these days when it comes to the Lord's work. With all of the teachings on financial prosperity and the rights that we have as Christians no wonder people would rather take the high road to heaven. As one pastor's wife so clearly put it, "*Why serve God on a paper plate when you can serve him on a silver platter?*"

Like Pharaoh's statement to Moses, we'd all like to go and serve God, but we don't want to get too far from Egypt while we're doing it. Just in case there isn't any 'milk and honey' out there we still want to be within arms reach of the leeks and onions of Egypt. We trust God, but what if He doesn't come through?

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I remember one day when I was trying to have the morning Bible reading with my children and getting quite a struggle from them in the process. It seemed perfectly right to them that since they were now out of school for the summer they should be able to watch cartoons on TV in the morning instead of reading the Bible. When I asked why they felt that way my youngest daughter Kristy said, "Because we can see cartoons Dad. We can't see Jesus".

I guess that's why we tend to stay so close to Egypt if we can: because we can't see God, but rather are called to believe in him by faith; while Egypt is right there in front of us all the time bombarding us daily with enticements and promises. On the other hand biblical Christianity has always called for a clear separation from the world unto a life of following the Lord. No doubt it is often following him off into places and things to which we are not accustomed, but always with the promise that He will be with us.

Although much contemporary teaching tends to scoff at this kind of Christianity as idealistic and reckless, history proves that those men and women who shook the world for God usually did so at great personal sacrifice. And rarely did it without first having to forsake worldly provisions and pleasures.

Like Pharaoh, the world never wants us to get too far away. "A little religion is good for you but don't get too involved. The desert is dry and nothing grows there. How will you eat? What will you live on? Why not stay here with us and we will take care of you? Practice your religion, only do it here where you can be safe and warm." The truth is that Satan wants to keep us bound in Egypt making bricks to build his kingdom. He wants to keep us as his slaves and he knows that if we ever get too far out there with God we will become dangerous enemies to his own plans and schemes.

Serving God is risky business indeed! But it is right. I know several people whom God has called and empowered for his work, but they have never left their Egypt because of fear and doubt. Some are afraid that they will fail and be embarrassed. Others are simply not willing to lay down the comfortable lifestyles to which they have become

accustomed. Still they feel unworthy or unable, not knowing that God requires commitment, not talent.

Today we may be living on the brink of the greatest revival that the world has ever known. The Bible teaches that in the last days God is going to shake this world like never before to prepare a people who will love and serve him. And He is calling those of us who are willing to leave the comforts of Egypt to come out and follow him. If we are willing He will show us great and mighty things, but it is certainly not for the timid or the fearful. Many will choose to stay close to their own provision and will never know the freedom of trusting God as their source.

If in your heart you have heard the voice of God calling you to follow him all the way, do so and He will reward you with peace, purpose and fullness of joy. While the world around us cries out for deliverance God is looking for those who are willing to take the necessary journey far from Egypt to receive the hidden manna and be made vessels of God's provision for the hungry souls of the world. If you are willing He is able.

Don't waste your life just filling a church pew, hearing messages, but never doing anything with what you learn. And don't let anyone tell you that God isn't hiring. Get up and snub your nose at Pharaoh and go follow God. The minute you do your chains will fall off forever. Don't think you have to spend the rest of your life making bricks for Pharaoh. God has a better plan for you if you will only take courage and step out into the challenge. It's not always easy, and it's certainly not without sacrifice and resistance, but you can do it if you want to. If you don't . . . you deserve everything you get for hanging around Egypt! It may look like the good life now, but it won't be long before all of Pharaohs servants feel the weight of their chains.

God is looking for someone who will go all the way with Him. It is not a life without cost, but the benefits are greater than that which we are called to give up. Who could say it better than the Apostle Paul did when he wrote these words in the epistle to the Romans: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).