

Confession Vs. Profession - Exodus 9:22-25

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *The Bricklayer's Accident*

1. Some people seem to be accident prone.
2. Here's an accident report filed by an English bricklayer.
3. It was re-printed in the newsletter of the British equivalent of the *Workers' Compensation Board*.

Dear Sir;

I am writing in response to your request for additional information in Block #3 of the accident reporting form. I put "Poor Planning" as the cause of my accident. You asked for a fuller explanation and I trust the following details will be sufficient.

I am a bricklayer by trade. On the day of the accident, I was working alone on the roof of a new six-story building. When I completed my work, I found I had some bricks left over which when weighed later were found to be 240 lbs. Rather than carry the bricks down by hand, I decided to lower them in a barrel by using a pulley which was attached to the side of the building at the sixth floor.

Securing the rope at ground level, I went up to the roof, swung the barrel out and loaded the bricks into it. Then I went down and untied the rope, holding it tightly to insure a slow descent of the 240 lbs of bricks. You will note on the block number 11 of the accident reporting form that my weight is 135 lbs.

Due to my surprise at being jerked off the ground so suddenly, I lost my presence of mind and forgot to let go of the rope. Needless to say, I proceeded at a rapid rate up the side of the building.

In the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel which was now proceeding downward. This explains the fractured skull, minor abrasions and the broken collarbone, as listed in Section 3 of aforementioned accident reporting form. Slowed only slightly, I continued my rapid ascent, not stopping until the fingers of my right hand were two knuckles deep into the pulley. Fortunately, by this time I had regained my presence of mind, and was able to hold tightly to the rope in spite of my pain.

At approximately the same time, however, the barrel hit the ground, shattered, and spilled the bricks onto the ground. Devoid of the weight of the bricks, the barrel now weighed approximately 50 pounds. I refer you again to my weight in block number 11. I began a rapid descent down the side of the building.

In the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel coming up. This accounts for the two fractured ankles and the lacerations on my legs and lower body. The encounter with the barrel slowed me enough to lessen my injuries when I landed on the brick pile and, fortunately only three vertebrae were cracked.

I am sorry to report, however, that as I lay there on the bricks, I again lost my presence of mind and let go of the rope. The empty barrel, weighing more than

the rope, plummeted down on me and broke both my legs. I hope I have furnished you with the information you require.

4. Poor guy!
5. But you know, each injury that bricklayer endured was the result of his own foolish actions.

B. Pharaoh

1. Today, we're taking a look at the story of a man who must have been an early ancestor that that bricklayer.
2. He was Pharaoh, the King of Egypt, who ruled at the time of the Exodus.

II. TEXT

A. Set The Scene

1. This is a story most of us are familiar with.
 - a. God sent Moses to Egypt to deliver the children of Israel from cruel bondage and return them to the land of Promise.
 - b. but Pharaoh refused to let the people go, and God sent 10 plagues that devastated the nation, revealed the impotence of the Egyptians deities, and manifested the power of Yahweh – the God of Israel.
2. As we come to v. 22, 6 plagues have already ravaged the nation.

B. Vs. 22-26

22Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt—on man, on beast, and on every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.” **23**And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. **24**So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. **25**And the hail struck throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field. **26**Only in the land of

Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail.

3. Moses had given Pharaoh ample warning of this plague.
 - a. he told him that if he refused to let the Hebrews go, a terrible hailstorm would come
 - b. but Pharaoh responded as he'd previously done; he arrogantly rebuffed Moses and sent him away.
4. So Moses went out, stretched out the rod the Lord had given him as the symbol of his calling – and the hail fell.
 - a. with it came great bolts of lightening and deafening booms of thunder.
 - b. this was a truly terrifying storm.
5. As Moses had earlier warned – any man or beast caught in the melee was killed by the hail.
6. Finally, Pharaoh had enough and called for Moses.
 - a. the messengers must have put together some kind of covering to protect them–
 - b. as they were dispatched from the palace to go round up Moses & his brother Aaron.

C. V. 27

27 And Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, “I have sinned this time. The LORD is righteous, and my people and I are wicked.

1. This is the *first time* Pharaoh has admitted his error.
 - a. with a couple of the previous plagues, he asked Moses to end it,
 - b. but up till now, he's never admitted he's in the wrong.
2. Now he says, “Okay Moses, *this time* I blew it.”
3. Yet this is the *7th time* he's refused to let the people go.
4. A whole series of calamities has come on Pharaoh, but it's taken *this long* for him to come to his senses and admit it's more than just unfortunate circumstances.
 - a. what had he been thinking up to this point,
 - b. that the Nile turning to blood, the frogs and lice were just *bad luck*?
 - c. was he really so foolish as to think that the plague of flies, the pestilence on the livestock, and the boils that had afflicted everyone in Egypt were all just *weird coincidences*?

5. More likely, he blamed all that had happened in the first 6 plagues *on Moses* and on his court magicians who hadn't been able to turn back the plagues.
6. Yeah, that's it – the trouble was *someone else's fault*.
7. No – *Pharaoh* was the problem. It's just that he wouldn't admit it until the 7th plague.
 - a. God had been trying to get his attention in and through each of the previous plagues, but Pharaoh was too proud to listen
 - b. so God makes His voice crystal clear to the king; every time the thunder boomed and shook his little palace and rocked his throne, Pharaoh knew it was the voice of God.
 - d. look at v. 28; Pharaoh said to Moses -

28 Entreat the LORD, that there may be no more mighty thundering . . .

- e. the words translated “mighty thundering” are literally “voices of God.”
 - f. as the storm broke on Egypt, every time the lightening flashed and the thunder boomed, the king heard God say – “Pharaoh, Let My people go!”
 - g. he's had enough. He admits his error. He says,
I have sinned this time.
8. It was Pharaoh's duty to lead and *protect* the kingdom.
 - a. he knew the children of Israel, working as a slave-force, had brought much wealth and benefit to Egypt.
 - b. he had plans for them, further work projects and monuments to his glory as the visible manifestation of the gods of Egypt.
 - c. up to this point, he was not about to surrender to some petty deity who claimed to be the God of a bunch of slave, and whose spokesman was some ragged shepherd dragged in from the backside of the desert.
 - d. until now, Pharaoh's resistance has been driven by pride – he, PHARAOH! Was not going to yield to the demands of a *nobody* like Moses!
 9. I wonder if there's anyone here whose whole world seems to have turned upside down – it's been one calamity after another.
 - a. it seems no matter what you do, it backfires, fails, falls apart.
 - b. then, on top of that, you seem to pass through one trouble after another.

- c. you're *plagued* by calamity and loss.
 - d. you might be a modern Pharaoh
10. Like that bricklayer in the story at the outset of the message, all that had happened to Pharaoh and Egypt from the first plague till now was the result of his own foolish choices.
 11. The wounds he had were self-inflicted.
 12. Pharaoh finally woke up and realized what was happening wasn't coincidence, bad luck or someone else's fault – *He* was to blame – it was *his* sin that had landed him where he was.
 13. Moses wasn't the enemy; he was his own worst enemy.
 14. And the quickest way out of his distress was to repent; to admit his error.
 - a. "I have sinned → *this time*."
 - b. true! But he'd sinned the *other* times as well.
 15. He goes on in v. 27 -

The LORD is righteous, and my people and I are wicked.

16. Pharaoh not only admitted his error in refusing to let the children of Israel go at God's command, he acknowledged that all God had done had been right.
17. The trouble he and his people had endured was deserved for their ill-treatment of God's people & refusal to obey Him.
18. Wow! This is fantastic! It sounds as if Pharaoh is becoming a believer!
 - a. what a great convert he would make!
 - b. the ruler of the world's mightiest nation, converting to Judaism!
 - c. imagine the testimony he would have.
 - d. he could go and speak to the other kings and rulers of the day, sharing his story of how he'd opposed God, saw His mighty miracles, then repented and became a believer.
 - e. just imagine what an impact he would have.
19. People get so excited when they hear about the supposed conversion of some well-known figure or celebrity.
 - a. they think, "what a great catch for God!"
 - b. "now all their fans will come to Christ and they'll be able to reach their peers."
 - c. but you know it rarely works that way.
 - d. over the last 30 years I've heard promising reports of dozens of celebrities and public figures who supposedly came to Christ.

- e. Larry Flynt was one, Little Richard, Stevie Wonder, Jane Fonda, Darryl Strawberry.
 - f. a recent president, when beset with calamity after calamity because of his own questionable moral choices, called for several well-known and respected church leaders to meet with him privately in the White House.
 - g. oh – there was such excitement at the potential this man might come to Christ, and many who said he had!
20. Pharaoh's words will soon prove to be hollow –
 21. And it reminds us that we must exercise caution about turing worldly celebrities into Christian celebrities.
 22. Let their conversion by proven – let their confession be demonstrated in their profession.

D. V. 28

28 Entreat the LORD,

1. Pray! For what?
. . . that there may be no more mighty thundering and hail, for *it is enough.*
2. Remember when you were a kid and you'd wrestle with a brother or sister or a friend?
 - a. one would eventually get the other in a hold he/she couldn't break out of
 - b. so when you gave up you'd say, "UNCLE!"
3. God's got Pharaoh pinned – and Pharaoh says, "Uncle! Enough! No more thundering voice. No more hail. Enough judgment."
I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer."
4. "I give in Moses. You can go as you've asked. Only pray to Yahweh and end the storm."

E. V. 29

29 So Moses said to him, "As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the LORD;

1. This is the posture of prayer.
 2. Moses is saying that just as in all the previous plagues, he will intercede before the Lord on behalf of Pharaoh and the judgment will cease.
- . . . I will spread out my hands to the LORD; the thunder**

will cease, and there will be no more hail, that you may know that the earth is the LORD's.

3. Moses wants the king to be convinced that the end of the calamity, coming as it does by his prayer, is *another* evidence that Yahweh is God, not just of a bunch of slaves, but of the entire Earth!
4. He is no impotent local petty deity as the gods of Egyptians had proven through the plagues to be;
 - a. He was no Imhotep, Nut, Set, or Heqt.
 - b. He was YAHWEH – Lord of the Earth.
 - c. *Egypt* may belong to *Ra* – but the *Planet* belongs to *Yahweh*!

F. V. 30

30But as for you and your servants, I know that you will not yet fear the LORD God.”

1. Moses had been told by God just how far Pharaoh's rebellion would go, and they weren't there yet.
2. So for all Pharaoh's promising words, Moses knows they're empty.
3. In vs. 31-33, we're given a few details about the extent of the damage done to the crops and how Moses prayed and the storm ended.

G. Vs. 34-35

34And when Pharaoh saw that the rain, the hail, and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet more; and he hardened his heart, he and his servants. ³⁵So the heart of Pharaoh was hard; neither would he let the children of Israel go, as the LORD had spoken by Moses.

1. As soon as the calamity passed, Pharaoh reverted to form and once again dug in his heels in opposition to Moses and Moses' God.
2. He'd done his job as king and protector and brought relief.
3. Yes, the land was in ruins from the 7 plagues, but he knew it would recover.
4. “In fact, wait a minute – we can't let those slaves go *now*! Why, look at all the work there is for them to do cleaning up, repairing, and replanting.”

H. Confession V. Profession

1. All of this will happen yet again with the 8th plague.
 - a. locusts will come and Pharaoh will once again be saying the right words, admitting his error and asking Moses to intercede.
 - b. he says the right words, but as soon as the consequences for his sin have passed, he's right back to his former rebellion.
2. Many people do what Pharaoh did when they're beset with trouble.
 - a. they say the right things and sound like they are coming to faith,
 - b. but it is only a *regret* at the *consequences* of their sin.
 - c. they try to *buy God off* with a stab at religion.
 - d. they mouth the *right words*, but they are spoken from a *wrong heart*.
 - e. they think God is fooled by their *feigned sorrow* and sudden interest in spiritual things.
3. But the real question is: What *changes* are made?
4. Look at Pharaoh here – His words were right, but there was *no follow through* when He had the chance.
 - a. his words proved he knew what he *should* do,
 - b. but when it came down to it, he *wouldn't* do it.
5. Look – he admits, “I’m a sinner and God is righteous!”
 - a. but all he can say is, “Pray for me!”
 - b. NO! *You* pray, Pharaoh!
 - c. if your repentance is real, it'll be coupled to faith, and that will move YOU to pray.
 - d. your words about God may be technically right, Pharaoh, but words *about* Him are not enough – they must be *too* Him.
6. Talk, when all it is words, isn't enough. Our talk must be converted into our walk.
7. There must be a follow through from our *confession* into our *profession*.
8. It's not enough to *say* you believe – you must *do it* = trust, obey, live!
9. I remember my first trip to the Museum of Natural History in Chicago when I was a young-un. It was incredible!
 - a. they had many displays of animals, all stuffed of course and set in glass cases that were made to look like their natural settings.
 - b. in front of every case was a bronze plaque bearing the name of the animal.

- c. they looked so real, and they were set in poses natural to them in their native habitat.
 - d. but not one of them ever moved – they had no life – they were just stuffed animals.
 - e. there are a lot of so-called Christians very much like those stuffed animals in the museum.
 - f. they claim the label *Christian* – but they do not live the life of faith.
 - g. they are full of straw & old newspapers, they have not the Spirit of God inside them.
10. The new birth results in new life!
11. Romans 10 says this –

9 . . . if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

- a. heart & mouth are linked;
 - b. the mouth is not enough, words alone don't cut it.
12. In Matthew 7, Jesus said,

21“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²²Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

- a. they make grand claims at all they'd done for God
- b. but God isn't fooled *by their words* – He sees their *hearts*.
- c. God is in the hypocrite's *mouth*, but the world is in his *heart*.

24“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

26“**But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”**

13. Listen, it isn't about going to church, or listening to Christian radio.
14. It's not about sitting in Bible study week after week – the question is, are you *doing* what you're *hearing*?
15. Jesus didn't say those who heard and did what He said would be *exempt* from the trials and storms.
16. He said that when the storms came, they wouldn't be shaken.
17. There may be some here today who've been rocked by trouble and are *scared* into church.
 - a. maybe your marriage is stormy,
 - b. it might be that your being plagued with money problems,
 - c. your physical health may be the source of your distress.
18. Like Pharaoh, you've blamed everything else.
 - a. bad luck, coincidence, circumstances,
 - b. or you've blamed others; your spouse, the IRS, the mortgage company.
 - c. but now, you've finally come to realize *you're* the problem.
 - d. it's been *your* choices that have brought the trials.
19. And having exhausted all the other means of escape, you're giving God a shot.
 - a. oh, the words are right.
 - b. but if we were to look into the heart, what would we find?
 - c. a longing to be MADE RIGHT – or *just a desire to escape* the consequences of your sin?
20. God is good and He'll deliver you from your trouble when you call on Him.
 - a. but don't make the same foolish error the King of Egypt did and go back to your sin and rebellion as soon as the heat's off.
 - b. it's not how you go down when you bend you knees, but how you walk when you get back up again.
 - c. it's not how long you lie on the ground showing God you really mean it this time, but where you take your stand when you get up off the floor.

- d. it's not whether you lift your hands in worship at church, but if you lift your heart in surrender to God at home, at work.

III. CONCLUSION

A. *Danger! Hard Heart Ahead*

1. Have you seen those signs at the entrance to construction sites, “Danger • Hard Hat Area”?
2. That would make a good heading for this passage – “Danger • *Hard Heart* Area.”
3. Look at the last two verse of ch. 9 and the first verse of ch. 10.
34When Pharaoh saw that the rain, the hail, and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet more; and he hardened his heart, he and his servants. **35**So the heart of Pharaoh was hard; neither would he let the children of Israel go, as the LORD had spoken by Moses. **1**Now the LORD said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants, that I may show these signs of Mine before him.”
4. Many are disturbed by v. 1; they don't like the idea of God hardening Pharaoh's heart, it seems so unfair.
5. But they miss the point: the hardness of his heart began with his own repeated refusal to listen or yield to the Lord.
 - a. he did it again and again, through seven obvious proofs of God's presence and power.
 - b. Pharaoh had even come to the place of *admitting* his error and God's righteousness.
 - c. to resist now, shows a heart that is just simply gone!
 - d. so v. 34 says that once more he hardened his heart, then in v. 35, that his heart *became* hard, and finally in v. 1, God accepted Pharaoh's repeated choice and *granted him what he wanted* – a hard heart.
6. I hope there are no *Pharaoh's* here, no man or woman who knows what he/she *should* do, but keeps hesitating, holding back, stalling.
7. You see -
*There is a time we know not when, a line we know not where,
That marks the destiny of men 'twixt sorrow and despair.
There is a line, by man unseen that once it has been crossed*

Even God Himself and all His love has sworn that all is lost.