How To Cope When the Rules Change February 5, 2023

*Exodus 1:1-22 Series: How God Shapes a Person for Impact*

When it was hard to be a Jew, people stayed Jewish. – Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

Intro: Dizzying changes

1. The good life has hidden dangers
2. God blessed the Israelites

v. 5 *the descendants of Jacob were seventy persons*

v. 7 *But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them.*

1. Good times can lead to amnesia

Genesis 15:18 *To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates …*

Deuteronomy 8:13-14 *when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied … you forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery*

1. Good times can breed complacency

Revelation 3:17 *For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.*

Luke 12:19 *And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.”*

* Why did people stay Jewish when it was hard to be a Jew?
* Why do we tend to forget God when times are good?
* When life is easy, where do you see your faith slip?

1. The hard life has hidden blessings
2. Your world can change in an instant

v. 8 *Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph.*

v. 9 *And he said to his people, Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us.*

v. 10 *Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.*

v. 11 *Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens.*

1. A hostile world can’t frustrate God’s purposes

v. 12 *But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad.*

1. God’s people trust God’s plan even when it’s invisible

2 Corinthians 12:10 *For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

Romans 5:3-4 *Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope …*

1 Peter 4:19 *Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.*

* Why did people believe Pharoah’s words in vv. 9-10 even though they were untrue?
* Why was Paul content with the painful circumstances he endured in 2 Corinthians 12:10? What does that mean?
* Why is suffering essential to refine our character and produce qualities like endurance and hope?

1. The fear of God is our power to overcome
2. When we’re asked to sin, it’s time to take our stand

vv. 15-16 *Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, “When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live.”*

1. Pressure forces us to ask whom we most fear

v. 17 *But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live.*

Proverbs 3:7 *Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.*

Matthew 10:28 *And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.*

1. There is blessing in the fear of God

vv. 20-21 *So God dealt well with the midwives. And the people multiplied and grew very strong. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families*

Proverbs 19:23 *The fear of the Lord leads to life, and whoever has it rests satisfied; he will not be visited by harm.*

* Why did the people choose this point to disobey Pharoah? Why might they have been tempted to disobey sooner?
* What does the fear of the Lord mean? Why is it so important to God and the Christian life?
* How do we fear God and still love God?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Exodus 2:1-10

Notes