

Compromise

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[0:00] The theme is really compromise. God called the children of Israel out of Egypt. Egypt speaks of the world. So get that in your thoughts if you can.

Egypt represents the world. And then the Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, represents Satan. So looking at the issue of compromise, and I speak of compromise, it's a word that you could define as a settlement of difference by a sacrifice of principles.

It's yielding up what you believe and know is right and allowing certain things which you know are wrong. Okay? Sacrificing principles, yielding up what you believe and know is right and allowing certain things that you know are wrong.

So the Lord gave Moses specific orders, we see, in Exodus 3, verse 18. Here's Moses at the burning bush. The Lord tells him specifically what he is to do and how he is to address Pharaoh. And it reads there in part, Exodus 3, verse 18, Our Lord says, You shall say unto him, The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us, and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.

[1:23] Notice there's clear instructions here. Pharaoh was to let all of God's people go, three-day journey into the wilderness, there to sacrifice to the Lord their God.

It wasn't for Moses to pick and choose what he would say or to water it down or change it. It was God's word. It's the same for us today, isn't it? We don't change God's word.

We take it as read. We act upon it. It's true for us that God's word requires our obeying it. One hundred percent obedience. There's no room for compromise. So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh, as we pick it up in Exodus 5, we're just picking some salient verses through here. Exodus 5, verse 1, and it reads, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, as they address Pharaoh, Moses and Aaron say, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. They declared what God had told them to tell Pharaoh. Let my people go. Next we'll see how Pharaoh tries, and he tries this over and over again, to get God's people to compromise.

[2:36] So we'll take that up further as we see what happens next. I'm skipping through, as I say, in the context God sends numbers of plagues, various plagues, one, water turned to blood, two, frogs, three, lice, four, flies.

So we've got emphasis here over and over again. God's emphasising, Let my people go. And Pharaoh's very hard-hearted, very resistant.

And it reads on further in Exodus 8, 25, Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land.

So Pharaoh proposes a compromise. Pharaoh here is willing for them to worship, but only if they would do it in the land.

In the land. So we're going to have four different compromises. This is number one. Number one, sacrifice to your God in the land. It was contrary to God's direction.

[3:43] Which was to go out of Egypt. Pharaoh seeks to get them to compromise. Pharaoh says he's willing for them to worship, but only if they would do it in the land.

And it's the same we could think of compromising Christianity, that it's carnal. Stay in the land. Stay in the land. Stay in the land. In other words, stay carnal.

Remain in the world. Egypt speaks of the world. Verse 25, Pharaoh says, Go ahead, sacrifice in the land. Sacrifice to your God in the land.

So here's the compromise. Go ahead and believe in God if you want to, but don't leave the world. Some would try to have it that way, wouldn't they?

In other words, be carnal. Some would say, you can be a worldly Christian and still serve the Lord. Just be the same kind of person that you used to be when you were in the world.

[4:47] Stay in Egypt. Don't separate from the Egyptians. In a church kind of way, you could say, join the Cairo Interchurch Council. We're all one in the Spirit. There's many paths to God.

You know, the interfaith kind of thinking. But Moses wouldn't budge. He knew that they had to leave Egypt. They couldn't sacrifice in the land.

God's will was that Israel would leave Egypt to worship the Lord. So Moses said they would sacrifice as the Lord would command. So he goes back to what God told him to say.

That we will go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the Lord our God as he shall command us. In other words, the God's command, we're not going to budge from it.

We're not moving from that. So Moses was not going to offer just any sacrifice to the Lord. And it's the same for you and me, isn't it? In our faith. That we must not compromise what God tells us to do.

[5:44] We must obey God's commands and follow them. Because he is the one to be worshipped and to be pleased with our worship. So the problem was that if they had worshipped, if they had sacrificed in the land, there'd be no temple there in Egypt.

There'd be no temple. There'd be no priesthood. There'd be no altar. No sacrifice of lambs to the Lord. You know, we talked about the Lamb of God this morning. The lamb sacrifice is essential. But sheep sacrifices were an abomination to Egypt, to Egyptians. It was something they didn't allow. They didn't accommodate it. So they couldn't sacrifice in the land in the way that God wanted them to.

So, if they'd stayed in the land, Israel would have stayed as slaves to Pharaoh's government and still be in that ungodly Egyptian culture. It's the same today that men want a little bit of religion, but they want to keep the world and its sin.

Wesley said, to define the world, he says, whatever cools my affection towards Christ is the world. If it cools my affection to the Lord, it's the world.

[6:56] Do we give Christ that first place? Satan is not against religion. Satan is quite religious himself. He's an angel of light after all, isn't he?

He encourages people to be religious, to be broad-minded, tolerant of other religions. Yet, if we are to serve the living God, we are called to a separated life.

We see the very strong exhortation here in 2 Corinthians 6, 17. It says, Wherefore, come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you.

Compromise. Staying in that carnal state. It's when we look like the world, act like the world, talk like the world, how can we be an effective witness for Christ?

How can we? We're called to be separate from the world and its sinful culture and its ways, its control. But Pharaoh didn't want that. He said, Stay in the land.

[7:58] Stay in the land. God's people are called out. We're not to stay in it. We're called out of it, aren't we? And he tells us to come out, come out and be separate. So there can be no compromise with the works of darkness.

We have no fellowship with that, with evil. There can be no compromise. As it reads in Ephesians 5, verse 11, it says, And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

We think of gravity. There's a downward pull from the world, even in the physical senses, and that gravity that pulls us to the ground, it pulls us downwards.

But the further out you go from planet Earth, there's less attraction, there's less pull that that gravity force has on you. It's the same as God's people too, isn't it?

God wants us to be out of the world in that sense that it loses its attraction, that magnetic force.

James tells the church, quoting Simon Peter, he talks about how God wants to take out of the Gentiles a people for his name.

[9:09] We're called out. We're the called out people of God. So you're called out, brother, sister. Leave the world behind. Go out into the wilderness and sacrifice not in the land, but truly.

We see another compromise next, number two. Compromise number two here in Exodus 8, verse 28. And Pharaoh said, I will let you go. This is after much further persuasion and working on his hard heart.

He says, I will let you go that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness, only you shall not go very far away. You shall not go very far away.

So here's the second compromise. Be comfortable. Don't go very far away. It's the same for us today, isn't it? We can have that temptation.

Don't go too far with your Christianity. Don't go too far. Be comfortable with the world. It's saying here in verse 28, Exodus 8, 28, Pharaoh's effectively saying, okay, you can go, but don't go very far away.

[10:22] Don't go three days' journey. It's kind of a compromise of lukewarmness, isn't it? Don't put any effort in. This is the commitment-free zone, the comfort zone.

It tells us to be a friend of the world is to be an enemy of God, in James 4, verse 4. So the devil would say to you today, don't go too far. Don't take your Christianity too serious.

Don't get too fanatical about it. Don't go overboard. Keep one foot, at least, in the world. Straddle the fence kind of thing. It's like, be a borderline Christian.

And these ones, they had their eyes fixed on Egypt instead of Canaan. It's probably a lot of people might have voted for accept this compromise, Moses. You know, we can have a bit of Egypt and a bit of Canaan.

But no, it's one or the other, isn't it? And we see this kind of idea of worldliness here. And Lot is a perfect example of such a one.

[11:22] He is a borderline believer. He pitched his tent towards Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot played on the edge of sin and worldliness. Damaged his testimony.

He dishonoured the name of his Lord. And Satan ruined his life and testimony. Things didn't go that well for Lot, did they, and his family? Because he had those close ties, those worldly influences in unbelieving, prideful Sodom amongst the sinful Sodomites.

Lot looked over all the land and he thought the land that looked best was Sodom with the plain of the fruitful soil. And he probably thought this is going to be a good business decision.

My herds and my flocks are going to do better down there. I can grow better crops down there. And that would be best for my family. You could think how he could have excused it as, yeah, it makes economic sense.

And so, we see that it tells of him in Genesis 13. It says, Lot lifted up his eyes. He lifted up his eyes and he beheld all the plain of Jordan that was well watered everywhere before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

[12:33] Even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. So, it looked like a very fruitful place. It was lovely and lush and green and it looked very fertile.

It was well watered. So, Lot was looking. It got the sense that he was looking and he was longing. You know, maybe he stood there for a while just really, mmm, that really does look good.

It really does look good. And he chose that land. He totally disregarded God and he moved near the city of Sodom and we know the result, don't we?

Lot chose what pleased himself. We can do that as God's people. We can choose what pleases ourself instead of being motivated to pleasing the Lord. Satan's going to try the same thing with us, brother and sister.

He says, be a Christian but don't go too far. Don't go too far. You know, just tone it down a bit. You know, just don't be too fanatical. Pharaoh says, leave but don't go too far.

[13:34] It's as if Pharaoh's saying, stay close to the border. So you're still under my reach and control, isn't it? Like he still wanted to exert control. Some will follow God but they don't go too far away from the world.

Some churches are a bit like this that it's really just maybe some song or Bible lesson away from being like a rotary club. They're just like a social club. There's not much word, there's not much truth, there's not much substance.

But God expects us to be out of Egypt, to leave it, to be all in for him, not to compromise with the desires of the world.

The devil would say, you can enjoy the idols of the world and its vain pleasures and entertainment and we could think about that for ourselves. What's the focus in our church?

Is it God's word or is it appealing to the world? Worldly philosophies and ways and methods and ways of working and thinking. Some would say, preach what is popular, what people want to hear.

[14:36] Tickle the ears. Don't talk about the blood, about commitment, about repentance, about truth. Keep the rock music. Just change the words a bit. Just put Jesus in there a little bit and it'll make all the difference.

That's how some people think. Use the new Egyptian version of the Bible. Some are staying too near to Egypt and the world, the leeks and the flesh pots. It seems as if someone is genuine in their faith, the world will call that person a fanatic.

Oh, you've joined that lunatic church that actually believe the Bible. Yet we see on the other side we see some people they adorn themselves with their team colours.

You know, we've got the World Cup coming up, whatever it be, whatever your favourite sport is and they'll go all out, won't they? They'll pull out all the stops, they might wear some funny wigs and a funny hat and put on all their team colours and they'll brave all kinds of weather to barrack for their team and enthusiastically they'll sing all the songs and join the anthems and they'll be one really loyal fan.

And that's kind of acceptable but to get too enthusiastic about faith in Christ, to get enthusiastic about being in a godly church assembly, that's something that's, oh no, we'd better not go that far.

[16:00] And it seems that some people are more concerned about what people think than what God thinks. And that was the case in John 12. It reads of some, they were among the chief rulers, also many believed on him but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him lest they should be put out of the synagogue for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

It's like they wanted the approval of men and so they didn't confess their faith. You know, the devil would say don't become one of those people who actually reads their Bible and aims to live the way it says.

But we need to leave the world, don't we? We need to see the world for what it is, the enemy of our God. Leave the world, and the ways of the world and go further in faith.

Don't just go a little way, go all the way. Let's be a people zealous in our faith. We think, for example, as it reads in James 5 of prayer. It says, the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

We should be fervent. Our prayer should be fervent. We should have a fervency. And we see another reference is in 2 Kings 13, another example where King Joash of Israel came to Elisha the prophet and he wanted to harness the power of God.

[17:19] He wanted the help of God as he faced the enemy, the army of Syria. And Elisha told him to take some arrows and strike them on the ground as a kind of picture of how he's going to work.

And Elisha gave him the arrows and it says that Joash smote thrice. Just went one, two, three. And then he stopped.

And it was a kind of half-hearted effort. King Joash just think, oh, okay, I'll do what you say, prophet, and, you know, just hit the arrows on the ground kind of half-heartedly.

And Elisha became angry and he said, you should have struck the ground many times. Now you're going to only strike the Syrians three times. So it was a reflection that King Joash's heart wasn't committed.

He wasn't fervent in his faith. It was a demonstration of a lack of zeal and so he was rebuked for that. Think of it for ourselves, brothers and sisters. Are we lukewarm, borderline Christians, living like the world, taking it easy?

[18:28] It's a trap, isn't it? The devil wants you to stay there. Don't go too far. Don't go so far with your faith. Just hold it back. Just contain yourself. Here's an article I read.

It's called No Half Measures. No Half Measures. It's by R.A. Torrey, who's an old-time preacher. And it reads like this. It says, There is no very great measure of joy in a half-hearted Christian life. Many so-called Christians have just enough religion to make them miserable. They can no longer enjoy the world and they have not entered into the joy of the Lord.

There they stand, deprived of the leeks and the onions and the garlic of Egypt and without the milk and honey and the finest of the wheat of Canaan. That is a wretched place to be in.

The way out is simple. Absolute surrender to God. Then your joy will be fulfilled. A surrendered life. No half measures. It's true, isn't it? It's like the children of Israel, even when they were in the wilderness there, they still had this, they must have had the smell in their memories of the garlic and the leeks and the onions and they didn't realise the milk and the honey of the Canaan land.

[19:42] It was like they were still drawn back to where they'd come out of and so we can have that same mistake as believers too. Next up, we see the several more plagues hit as again, I'm skipping through here.

There's plague number five and moraine which is sores on the cattle. Number six, there was boils. Number seven, there was this great hail and number eight, there was locusts. So thirdly, we're going to see another compromise happened.

We see that the people were careless. It was a careless kind of partial commitment. That's what the devil wants to do for you. He wants you to be careless.

He wants to make you careless about others, about your family, about fellowship. It reads in Exodus 10 verse 11, Pharaoh says, Go now ye that are men and serve the Lord for that ye did desire.

Pharaoh's saying, yes, you can go, but just the men. Just the men. Leave the women and the children behind. Not all God's people, just the men. Pharaoh was saying, the men could go, but they were to leave their little ones in the context that describes them as little ones.

[20:58] We see the compromise here of undedicated families. The devil doesn't want you to bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Leave the little ones.

You know, parents, the devil wants to leave the little ones. The devil doesn't want you as parents to teach your children the word of God. And some would say they're too young to go or they've got too much homework to do.

You know, they've got sports to play and things that are going on. They can't let the team down. It's like, it's the same today. Leave the little ones behind. Neglect the children. That's a big problem in churches where the children get neglected.

Moses would not compromise. It says, we will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds.

Will we go? For we must hold a feast unto the Lord. So the children of today are the church of tomorrow. So we encourage families to come. We'd like to see more families coming in our night time and in our morning.

[22:04] We've got the whole family to church as much as we can. We should teach our children by precept and by example. Bring them up in the faith. So Moses says, you may go, but leave your sons and daughters in Egypt.

That's what the devil wants, doesn't he? He wants your sons and daughters to stay behind in Egypt. Leave your wives and children behind in Egypt with all its idolatry. But no, don't leave your family behind.

Men of God, husbands, fathers, don't leave your children behind. You know, I think of myself, I think of my children, that I'd wish that they were in a better place than they are at the moment.

So Pharaoh knew that if they left their families behind in Egypt, their heart would still be there. And sooner or later they'd be going back to their wives and their children, of course. Satan is saying effectively to us today as the compromise we face today is be a Christian, go serve your God, but leave the children in the world.

We don't want that, do we? Do we want our children to be exposed to the world and get used to that, get acclimatised to that, to have that worldly thinking?

[23:16] You know, some would say today don't force religion on your children, don't force religion on your family. What's the opposite? Just let the world have them, let the devil have them in other words.

Yeah, because the devil will force his religion on them, amen, that's true. Some would say, well they're too young to understand such things, just let them go, but as time goes by they'll you'll lose that concept, you'll lose that opportunity.

So it's a good thing, as the word tells us, train up your child, train up a child in the way that he should go. When he is old he will not depart from it. So parents, be careful for your children's sake. If your children determine what's right and what's wrong, they can lack the wisdom and maturity to make sound decisions. That's why God gave them parents. So parents, be responsible.

The enemy would say, you go and worship the Lord but leave your children with me. It's not good, is it? Fathers, it's our call, mums and dads.

[24:21] Don't make serving God a family affair, the devil would say. Just, yeah, leave your family out of it. But no, we should be like Joshua who says, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

He determined that. So God wanted a total deliverance, a complete exodus, male, female, young and old, the whole family to get out of Egypt. Pharaoh wanted to keep the women and the children in bondage.

Some would say, just take care of your own spiritual matters. Leave the little ones behind. But no, the little ones matter. The Lord Jesus says, let the little children, the little children come to me. Next up, there was another plague, number nine, of darkness. Pharaoh's heart still hardened. And then we see another compromise that he proposes here. The fourth one, the fourth compromise of Pharaoh.

It says, And Pharaoh called unto Moses and said, Go ye, serve the Lord, only let your flocks and your herds be stayed. Let your little ones also go with you. So he allowed the little ones to go in this last compromise.

[25:22] But he said, Leave your flocks and your herds behind. In other words, you can go and worship the Lord, but don't go sacrificing to your God. He sought to send them forth empty-handed without the ability to serve the Lord.

It's the same for you and me today, brothers and sisters. The devil would say to you, settle for a watered-down, wimpy, sugar-coated Christianity. Cheap, with no cross, no costs, no demands. A weak kind of Christianity. There's no sacrifice. There's no devotion. But we should be willing to sacrifice, to give up our pride, our false gods, our materialism, our self, our ambitions, our vain pursuits.

Pharaoh wanted them to leave their possessions behind. We see that in verse 25 there. It says, And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God.

And so he stands up to Pharaoh here and he says, Our counsel also shall go with us. There shall not an hoof be left behind. There's not even going to be a hoof left behind.

[26:34] Everything's coming with us, he says. He stood up to Pharaoh and it says, For thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God and we must know not with what we must serve the Lord until we come thither.

But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not let them go. Pharaoh said, Just leave your possessions behind. Leave your herds. Leave your flocks.

And sometimes we can have it where part of us is left behind. We're still holding on to the world in some way. Like Christians can sometimes pile up the money in the bank but they do not put it to the work of the salvation of souls.

And the message here as some have compared it is how we should trust God with our stuff. Let us lay everything at the Master's feet to advance the Kingdom of Heaven.

All that we are, all that we have to sacrifice unto the Lord, to be a sacrifice, to make sacrifices. It's almost like if it's a little bit of hard work or a bit of extra devotion, some Christians just cry off and they just don't want to go that extra mile.

[27:46] But really all that we have, all that we are, our very selves, we're a living sacrifice that we should be unto Him. Pharaoh was really

looking for a way to hold them in Egypt, to leave your stuff behind so that they would end up going back there.

They wouldn't go far. He wanted them back. He wanted them to stay in Egypt and he wanted them back. He says, go and serve the Lord. Just leave your staff, your flocks, your herds, here. Leave your heart here in Egypt, in the world. Leave your heart here. And it was another compromise really, wasn't it? But in all these compromises that Pharaoh offered, Moses made no compromise with him.

Moses basically said, we're leaving Egypt to worship God and we're taking everything with us. We're not going to leave anything behind. And it's the same for you and me, brothers and sisters, as believers here today, that we can have the heart that all my relationships, everything that I am, I yield to God.

My treasures, my heart, my relationships, my stuff, that He has the first place and I'll entrust myself to Him.

[29:00] So let the Lord have all of you, all your possessions, your wives, your children. He is Lord. Give everything to Him.

So just to recap, we can think of those different compromises that Pharaoh offered. Pharaoh, representing Satan, sought to keep them in the land, sacrifice in the land.

It's a carnal thing, isn't it? Just stay worldly, stay carnal, stay fleshly, stay in the land, stay in Egypt. The Egypt's still in your heart and your heart is still in Egypt.

It's carnality, isn't it? Second one is to stay near the land. Don't go very far. Just settle for a comfortable kind of Christianity. Be comfortable.

Look after yourself and don't put yourself out. Just be comfortable, casual. Then we see another one is to be careless. That part would stay in the land.

[30:06] So your family, your children. We shouldn't do that, brother and sister, should we? We want our children, our whole family, to follow the Lord. God helping us and we know they'll make their individual choices for good or bad when they're older.

But do your part, fathers, mothers, for your family. Don't be careless. It's not a compromise you want to make. And then we see he sought to send them forth without an ability to serve the Lord. Your flocks and herds would stay behind. You can't offer a sacrifice in the land. Some would settle for a Christianity that has no sacrifice. There's no cross.

There's no discipleship. It's very weak. Satan says, give yourselves to God but do not consecrate yourself to him.

But we must not compromise. We must refuse compromise. And when you think about compromise, it can start with just little things in our lives. Just small things. It tells us there, a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

[31:13] Paul's talking about just a little thing. Just a little bit of yeast affects the whole batch of dough, doesn't it? So rather, let's refuse, absolutely refuse any compromise. Don't be carnal.

Don't be comfortable. Don't be careless. Don't avoid the cross. Carry it. Take up your cross. Be a disciple. Make a clean break with the past life. Don't let Egypt hang on to you.

The good news is that Israel was freed from Egypt. We see, as it declares here, that the Lord God brought the people out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

And we too, as God's people, we can be liberated from the power of sin, the power of darkness, the power of the enemy, from the bondage of the devil. Just like Israel, with God's help, we can be a victorious Christian, as we referred to earlier today.

And the Lord will give you that victory. He'll take you out of Egypt. And so, being like Moses, he kept refusing all of those compromises.

[32:18] He said, no, we're all going and we're going to sacrifice to our God outside of the land. God brought his people out of Egypt. He set them free out of the house of bondage.

How? By the blood of the Lamb. It was by the blood of the Lamb. As we know, the occasion, I know I've really just grabbed little bits here and there, but of course it was the Passover as they acknowledged the blood on the lintel and the doorpost of the home.

It was the blood of the Lamb. It was Christ's finished work, wasn't it? It was the sacrifice of Christ in picture form as they looked towards the cross that Passover reflected his passing over and his covering over and the deliverance from God's wrath.

And that's what we can trust in today because of the blood of Christ shed for us. And so let's be like Moses in that he refused to compromise. Refused to compromise.

Avoid spiritual compromise and have the courage to stand and keep on standing for your faith.

Amen? Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that your word tells us of Moses and of this repeated message that he had.

[33:31] Let my people go. Let my people go. Lord, and we pray that we'd have that heart as Moses had to follow you strongly, not to accommodate anything that is outside of your will.

Help us, Lord, to be strong and to have the courage to refuse the compromise of this world and its ways. To not settle for carnality or worldliness or comfortable, casual, careless Christianity, but rather to have that love, that zeal, that fervour, that enthusiasm, that grace, that wonder of the cross that that would so move us that we'd want to serve, to live, to be yours in a fulsome way, in an uncompromising way and all for your glory and praise.

We pray that each one might know that heart's trust to know you as their saviour and their Lord and that we'll walk in that truth and be fervent Christians. Lord, as we see the day approaching we'll be ever more so.

All to your praise and glory we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.