

Suz's Summer Study Notes



Class 1: Exodus 14

Slide

Introduction: the first page in the booklet. “Arrive”! Be patient with yourself. Laugh off distractions.

Context

Creation→Fall→Flood. Table→Tower→Shift: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph (book of Genesis).

The people grew in number; a new Pharaoh [Pharaoh is a title like “President” or “Prime Minister”] enslaved them, worked them ruthlessly, and made their lives bitter with hard labor. They found solace in each others’ arms and their population grew quickly. Pharaoh issued an edict to kill all the baby boys. Moses was miraculously spared. When the Pharaoh’s daughter opened a mysterious basket stuck in the reeds of the Nile where she bathed, her heart opened and melted with Moses’ cry. She pulled him from the Nile and raised him as one of her own.

At age 40 Moses went out to watch his own people at labor and ended up murdering an Egyptian slave master who was beating a Hebrew. News got out, Moses fled, and for the next forty years, Moses learned in obscurity how to shepherd flocks of sheep in the desert, a skill that would soon come in handy.

At age 80 God sent him back to Egypt to lead His people out of their bondage. This was a cosmic confrontation: God vs the gods of Egypt. One by one the God of the Hebrews defeated the gods of Egypt in plagues:

Slide

Nile to blood: **Hapi**, the god of the Nile. Magicians copied. **Osiris** was the god of vegetation which indicated renewal and growth and was thought to be responsible for the fertile flooding and vegetation around the banks of the Nile.

Frogs: **Heket**, goddess. Frogs were not to be intentionally killed, punishable by death! Magicians did it too, but only Moses could make the frogs leave.

Gnats - **Geb**: god of the earth. Dust from the earth became gnats .. ugh! Also described as the Father of Snakes, Geb represented crops and healing. “This is the finger of God.” **Thoth** was considered as the master of both physical and divine laws, and along with his counterpart **Ma’at**, he maintained the universe by his mastery of calculations. The ancient Egyptians acknowledged him as an author of science, philosophy, and magic. But they couldn’t out-calculate the actions of God.

——— Separation ———

Flies - **Uatchit**, the fly god of Egypt, guarded the life of the Nile Delta. Psalm 78:45 says the flies were bugs that feasted; they were blood-sucking flies. Pharaoh tries to bargain.

Livestock plague - **Hathor**, goddess of love and protection. Economic disaster! “There was one animal that stood out for the Egyptians and that was the cow. They saw the cow as sacred and a manifestation of the goddess Hathor. Hathor was a mother goddess in form of a cow who represented love, protection and fertility.” - sixnoteslcothing.com

Ashes into Boils - **Isis** - goddess of medicine and peace. OR Imhotep, goddess of medicine. Now the Egyptian people were “unclean.”

Hail and fire - **Nut**, goddess of the sky. Crops were devastated; monuments we’ve been smashed.

Locusts - **Seth** or Set - god of protecting crops from disasters and storms. Food supply. Psalm 105:34-35!

Darkness - Sun god **Ra**. 3 days of complete, palpable darkness!

Firstborn - **Pharoah**, the ultimate power of Egypt as a living god, and his successor. Pharoah was considered to be the son of Ra. Leading and protecting the pharaohs during war, **Sekhmet**, the daughter of Ra, is depicted as a lioness and is known for her fierce character. She is also known as the Powerful One and is capable of destroying the enemies of her allies. "God shows complete power over Pharoah."
...Until God wins completely through the Passover.

The people of God were on the move! Pharoah let God's people go, so they left in a hurry. God's judgment had fallen on Pharoah and the Egyptians, but freedom and worship beckoned God's people. Then Pharoah realized he had lost his labor force and, with his hardened heart, went after the Hebrews. In the context of our passage, Pharoah and his forces are bearing down on the Hebrews, who are stuck between the sea and Pharoah. It's a logistical disaster, a hopeless situation, an earthquake for every trembling Hebrew.

Slide
Slide
Slide

Out to Listen: 10:15/6:45

Back to Discuss: 10:55/7:25

Testimony: 11:15/7:45

Slide

Conclusion: 11:20/7:50

Who or what are the Pharaohs in our lives? What has us knotted up in fear and anxiety, spinning and unsure what to do next? What is coming against you? What wants to enslave you? Can God, our God, defeat our Pharaohs? Is He enough? YES, more than enough. He can defeat all of our false gods — actually, He can thrash them! — and then He will bring us through if we cooperate with Him.

What are your false gods? What or who is too important to you, more important than God? In Bible terms, that's an idol, and God will deal firmly with you on anything you set up as an idol, a false god, in your life.

God doesn't mind backing you into a corner. He doesn't mind putting you in a situation where you have nowhere else to turn but to Him. When we have nowhere else to turn, He can show off His love and power. Everything else is stripped away; there is no other savior, no other way out, except through His hands. You have to face your faith: is God real? Is this going to work out? Is God going to rescue me? What if God's idea of rescue is different than mine? Is God going to come through?

To God, nothing was falling apart. Everything was falling into place: Pharoah and his gods were soundly defeated, God's fame spread throughout the land, and no one was going to mess with His children as they approached the Promised Land. It's the same in your life and mine: God defeats our gods. He gets famous. We delight in talking about how amazing He is, and our faith grows so we can face the next challenge. Their panic attack ends up as a worship night (see next chapter)! Is God enough to do that for us? MORE than enough!

Next thought: In what context do we need to hear these words of encouragement from Moses?

"Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today.

The Egyptians you see today you will never see again.

The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still."

In what situation do you and I need to STAND FIRM?

“Be still” = hold your peace, keep still, keep silent, hold your tongue. Stop verbally thrashing about in unbelief! Stop bad-mouthing God’s plan! Quiet your soul, hush your mouth, stop saying faithless things.

Who is facing a big, scary Pharaoh situation in their lives, and they need a faithful friend to remind them that God is more than enough? Who do you need to encourage? Remember deliverance. God did not fail them.

Notice that Moses tells them to have faith, hush their mouths and still their souls, but God says they need to move their feet.

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on.”

God may be asking you to move forward into something that looks completely irrational, irresponsible, and impossible. “Move *where?*” we sputter. “There’s no way out of this!”

The Trust Fall with Grant and Keyshawna/Cashten

My husband, Grant, 9-year-old Keyshawna, 11-year-old Cashten and I were in the kitchen. Keyshawna giggled and said, “My turn, my turn!” She and Grant were doing the Trust Fall. She was at ease falling back into his strong catch, and giggled through the whole thing. In fact, when she was back on her feet and steady, she would just laugh out loud.

Cashten, on the other hand, kept looking back over his shoulder, asking if Grant was ready, if Grant could do it, if Grant would do it — he was so nervous and scared! He never fully fell back, never fully let go. Not once. Each time he would buckle and put back his foot, lowering himself to the ground. “You weren’t going to catch me!” he would accuse, and Grant would patiently say, “Yes, I will, but you’ve got to trust me and not try to save yourself.”

Slide

Are you more like Cashten or Keyshawna when you face the impossible, when God says **MOVE?** Still your soul. Move your feet. Trust God and do it. We are children of light, and we walk by faith, not by sight. We say *YES, LORD*, even when we don’t understand, because we can Trust Fall into His love. “Every time we need Him, we’re met by love,” no matter what rescue looks like. We trust in His rescue, we listen to His Spirit, and we take that step. That’s who we are in Christ!

We are not enough to do this, but *God* is more than enough. **Rescue is His way.** He has control over all things natural; over all things physical; over all things elemental. He is determined to show Himself faithful to His people and He is able to keep what you’ve entrusted to Him until it’s your turn to go to Heaven. So turn down your stress level. Still your soul, move your feet.

Give Him glory for the great things He has done, joining the chorus of His faithful people through the ages. Is this life easy? No. Is it dirty, scary, and hopeless? Yes, sometimes, in human terms. But God moves, your faith grows, and now you’re moving forward, eyes on Him. Praise God! He is **more** than enough! [6 min]

————— Let’s pray.

Slide

Reminders for next week:

CHALLENGE: daily listening, 40 minutes. We’re doing it!

CLASS: come as you are, when you can; brings friends; elementary-age kiddos too!

Class 2: Rebekah on Luke 6:27-36

Class 3: Jeremiah 17:7,8

Introduction: “Arrive”! Be patient with yourself. Laugh off distractions. Listen, be perceptive.

Context

Creation—>Fall—>Flood ... —> prophets. Have the sheets available.

What does it look like to be blessed, not cursed?

Blessings and cursing, Biblically understood, are a cooperative effort:

God tells us how to live a blessed life, or a cursed life. Examples: Deuteronomy 30. Exodus 18.

We make our choices.

He follows through, but very patiently.

God blesses our choice of Him, He curses our independence from and disregard of Him, all as a loving and patient Father, a good Shepherd, preferring mercy over judgment.

These choices are made in the dailies of life, not just our “big moments.”

Slide **Out to Listen: 10:10/6:40**

Slide **Back to Discuss: 10:50/7:20**

Slide **Testimony: 11:10/7:40: Marilyn Butler**

Conclusion: 11:15/7:45

Slide God often speaks in **images** to help us understand His truth.

This image from Jeremiah gives us a picture of what it looks like to be blessed by the LORD in our everyday life:

- Confident in Him. Trusting in Him.
- No worries in times of heat or drought.
- Not fearful.
- Planted, rooted, solidly by a water source.
- Green leaves, fruitful without fail.

It's lovely!

What am I confident about?

I am confident ...

You will take care of me

You are sovereign and good

You see me and know me, You love me

You will care for me and bring me to Yourself when I die

You are enough for my daily problems

You have good plans for me

You will teach me about Yourself

You will show me what to do

You will bring good from my life

You will help me forgive etc!

But I appreciate Jeremiah’s realism. He also acknowledges that heat and drought will come, that worry and fear assail us. What is bringing heat and discomfort and pressure on you right now? What are you worrying about?

What does a “year of drought” look like in your life? Are you in one right now, or are you in a lush and full time of “green leaves”?

Roots

This passage makes me wonder, What practical things can I do to increasingly trust the LORD, to send out deepening roots? What makes roots deepen? DROUGHT. Roots go deeper little by little, one cell at a time, searching for nutrients and water, all that they need to grow and sustain life.

I want to complete the image Jeremiah gives his people by referring back to verses 5 and 6 in contrast to verses 7 and 8. Turn there in your Bible

Slide

Curses 5,6	Blessings 7,8
Trusts in people	Trusts in God
Depends on flesh for strength	Depends on God
Heart turns away from the LORD	Heart turns toward the LORD, confidence in Him
Image: bush in wastelands, parched, alone in salted land [Interesting: most weed killers are based on salt. Too much destroys the plant.]	Image: Tree by the stream, rooted there, stable
Blind to prosperity	Green, leafy, fruitful

If you are in a year of drought: don’t be afraid. Send your roots deeper. Find the Holy Spirit, the living water, as your stream, and plant yourself there in the good dirt of trust. Stop depending on yourself and choose instead to cry out to God and depend on Him. Turn toward Him as sunflowers follow the sun.

Water

Are you thirsty? When did you have your last sip of something?

My Aunt Mary said the next world war would be fought over water. We are coming to a global crisis about water: cities like Chennai, India, and Cape Town, South Africa, are running out of water. In the US, Phoenix, El Paso, Los Angeles, Miami and Atlanta are in critical discussions about their weakening water supplies. Water plays a strong part in the last days. Listen to these Scriptures.

Isaiah 49:10

They will neither hunger nor thirst,
 nor will the desert heat or the sun beat down on them.
 He who has compassion on them will guide them
 and lead them beside springs of water.

Rev 7:17 For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; ‘He will lead them to springs of living water’ ‘and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’”

If you are the tree planted by a stream, you have a daily, consistent supply of water. You have what you need. A daily, consistent supply of the Holy Spirit is exactly what we need as women who live lives rooted in this world while looking forward to the next world. I can't drink a lot this morning/evening and be satisfied the rest of the week; I have to keep on drinking throughout each day, little by little. I need daily drinks of water, daily time with Jesus, daily communion with the Holy Spirit. Listen to these Scriptures:

John 7:37-39 On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were later to receive.

Revelation 22:1,2 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Plant yourself in this stream ladies, and drink daily and continually of it. Then you will be fearless and confident in His goodness, able to do His work, and at rest within. In other words, you will be living a blessed life. Your green leaves will be used for the healing of your family, your community, and your nation.

Revelation 22:17: The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes, take the free gift of the water of life.

HE IS MORE THAN ENOUGH!

Class 4: Ecclesiastes 5

Introduction: “Arrive”! Be patient with yourself. Laugh off distractions. Listen, be perceptive.

Context

Creation—>Fall—>Flood ... —> Solomon. Have the sheets available.

Out to Listen: 10:10/6:40

Back to Discuss: 10:50/7:20

Testimony: 11:10/7:40:

Conclusion: 11:15/7:45

Solomon gives us some cautions and permissions about wealth.

Slide

Wealth. It can be ...

Worrisome and wearisome and bothersome — upsetting!

Cumbersome and burdensome and troublesome — we’re fretting!

Or ...

Hopeful possibilities, joyful liberalities, God’s infallibility — let’s follow His lead!

Social vulnerability, humbly with civility, provision and stability — this is no place for greed!

So what to do, and how to be?

Jesus said live generously.

Life’s too short to be controlled

By wealth’s cold and deceptive hold.

There is a wholesome path to take;

It’s not just money you should make.

Elusiveness of satisfaction;

Grasping wealth yields soul subtraction.

The winsome way to spend your cash?

Build God’s Kingdom! Spread it fast.

Community and church will share

Jesus’ Name and love and care.

Love a stranger, open up, visit others, fill their cup.

Joy comes as you give away

What you’ve earned to Kingdom play.

Lighten up, and don’t be fooled:

Give wealth away as God’s good tool

Don’t hoard it; it will wound your soul.

Keep open hands, use self-control.

Solomon and Jesus on Wealth

Jesus offers us perspective on wealth.

“From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.” Luke 12:48. Refers to all disciples, especially those with privilege and ability.

“You fed Me when I was hungry, gave Me drink when I was thirsty, welcomed Me when I was a stranger, clothed Me when I was naked, helped Me when I was sick; visited Me when I was in prison,” Matthew 25. Good ways to spend time and wealth.

“The last shall be first and the first shall be last.” Matthew 20:16.

“Take up your cross daily and follow Me.” Luke 9:23. Notice Jesus doesn’t emphasize, “Take up your wallet daily, and that’s enough”; in fact, Jesus let Judas take care of the moneybag, and Judas stole from it (John 12:6).

2 “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ... “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, ... 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Mt 6

[context of parable of the sower]

18 “Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: **22** The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. **23** But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.” Matthew 13:18-23

Under these terms, the care of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of this life, or the lusts of other things, our Saviour comprehends all that which St. John calls the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. ~ Matthew Poole [1 John 2:17-19]

Paul and James on Wealth

Has God not chosen the poor of the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? James 2:5

Let no one seek his own, but each one the other’s well-being. 1 Corinthians 10:24
Your riches are corrupted. James 5:2

11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. **12** I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. **13** I can do all this through him who gives me strength. Phil 4

7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. **8** What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ.... Phil 3. [What was the “garbage”? Awards, accolades, heritage, titles, education, community status, intellectual and spiritual respect.]

Having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and drown men in destruction and perdition. 1 Timothy 6:8-9

What is ‘the deceitfulness of wealth?’ Matthew 13:18-23

I don't have a definitive/scientific answer, but based on my experience and what I read in Scripture, it includes:

- a false sense that everyone is okay because we are okay
- a tendency to over-provide for ourselves
- lack of concern for the poor or marginalized, because you're safe and well and don't see them
- the promise of ease and luxury and extreme, costly products for “beauty”
- a lifestyle of privilege that seems ordinary, expected, normal, and reasonable
- the sense that wealth will continue forever
- the strengthening of our self-centeredness and self-satisfaction, rather than our dying to self
- independence, rather than dependence, on God
- trust in wealth and all the options and networks it presents rather than trust in God
- lack of concern for others and more concern for ourselves vs increase of concern for others and a decrease in ourselves (John 3:30)
- increased spending on self rather than increased generosity
- being able to pay for others becomes an issue of pride
- a fear of losing wealth; preoccupation with your accounts
- the suspicion or reality that people are friends because you pay for everything
- a tendency to hoard, to gather, to collect things that are trinkets and useless in the Kingdom
- quick solutions dependent on money (Just go buy another one)
- individualism vs community-mindedness
- a sense that writing a check is enough, that's all God has called me to (vs relationship)
- not grasping the qualifier that all must be done in LOVE
- workaholism: justifying neglect of people (especially family) and God's mission in the name of providing/earning, or using work as an escape from the harder relational parts of life but still saying you're a great provider, that's “your role”, everything's fine

“If you have more than you need, build a longer table, not a higher fence.”

Adapted from The Woodbine Chronicles, Nov 11, 2017 (Suz's self-sanity journal)

What is the deceitfulness of wealth?

1. Being bloated: overfed, over-entertained, wealthy, self-important, and exclusive
2. Being blind: blind to our own privileges and power, blind to other points of view, blind to third culture vantages and beauties; blind with safety rather than seeing with faith
3. Being naive: thinking everyone will have a similar level of ease in navigating the white male systems of our nation, city, culture, and marketplace
4. Being deceived: by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life

Lessons from the Poor

1. Wealth is in friendship.
2. Loyalty and laughter are currency (we want more of that!).
3. Dependence on each other creates community; it's not a bad thing. One body, many parts.
4. The power of prayer, song, and community are almost indestructible.
5. Food is part of community; "thickness" [not being thin] is a sign of provision.

God-style riches

Riches of His kindness (Romans 2:4). Riches of His glory. Overflowed in the wealth of their liberality (2 C 8:2). Surpassing riches of His grace (Ephesians 1:7). Riches of Christ (Ephesians 3:8). Moses: Being identified with God even in disgrace was better than the treasures of Egypt (Hebrews 11:26). Power and riches and wisdom (Revelation 5:12).

There is a cost to discipleship. We die to self — our sin, our self-rule — and agree to His Lordship. We put our lives and our bodies and our safety and our hopes and dreams and our children and our cash in His hands. We choose to agree that whatever He does is ultimately for the good of His Kingdom, and we consent to it. Our money is His money, and "He adds no trouble to it" (Proverbs 10:22). In fact, being wealthy is a happy thing as you share your wealth **and watch it diminish for the Kingdom's sake**. It's something to celebrate, even though the world says you're crazy! ["Yay! More riches in heaven! More Kingdom happening on earth!"]

Tests that signal a right relationship with wealth:

1. We are *not worried*. Our trust in God is increasing, our fears about provision are decreasing.
2. We live with open hands, ready to do whatever God says with our cash and stuff.
3. Our dependence centers around God, not our financial accounts.
4. We are growing in spiritual riches: godly character, Christ-infused relationships, wealthy in giving and living in grace.

Jesus is our greatest wealth. All He has in Himself is more than enough for all of our needs, until it's time for us to take our final breaths. And then ... then we will see what He's been preparing for us.

I'd rather depend on Jesus
than the stock market,
the NASDAQ index,
the DOW,
the bond market,
the government,
and the cash in my wallet.

He is more sure, more steady, has better perspective, has holy plans, and cares for us.
As we gaze at Him, I am confident that we will agree, HE IS MORE THAN ENOUGH!

Reminders for next week:

CHALLENGE: Do Not Worry: Luke 12:22-34
daily listening, 40 minutes. We're doing it!

FACEBOOK INTERACTION

Class 5: Acts 9:10-17

Introduction: Pray.

Context

Creation—>Fall—>Flood ... —> Acts. Have the sheets available.

Saul/Paul [name] approved Stephen's martyrdom. Young star rising in the world of religious men as a zealous extremist, eventually becoming Christianity's first terrorist.

Jesus spoke to him after a flash of light forced him to the ground: "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." Jesus then blinded Saul; Saul's quaking men took him into Damascus.

Then our story with Ananias begins.

Out to Listen: 10:10/6:40

Back to Discuss: 10:50/7:20

Testimony: 11:06/7:36: Danielle Norman

Conclusion: 11:13/7:43

Ananias' Risk

A **disciple** is a *learner*, a follower, a pupil, and Ananias is identified simply as a disciple of Jesus. He knew and recognized God's voice. Do we?

He hears the Lord speak his name in a **vision**:

Strong's Concordance

horama: that which is seen

Phonetic Spelling: (hor'-am-ah)

Definition: a spectacle, vision, that which is seen.

HELPS Word-studies

Cognate: 3705 *hórama* (a neuter noun derived from **3708 /horáō**, "to see, spiritual and mentally") – a vision (spiritual seeing), focusing on the impact it has on the one beholding the vision (spiritual seeing).

So on one hand you have Saul thinking that persecuting Christians was God's business and being wrong about that, in other words blind to God's true will. Saul was **spiritually** blind so God struck him **physically** blind to make a point. On the other hand, you have Ananias **spiritually seeing** a vision from God about blind Saul. What a picture: Ananias with spiritual sight, Saul, spiritually blind. Ananias the simple disciple; Saul, the self-righteous religious terrorist. Ananias able to see spiritual truth and hear spiritually. And Saul began to see and hear when he became blind!

What does God have to do to get your attention? to restore your sight of who He is?

The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

God is better than Siri, GPS, Bing, and Google Maps. Friend, you are located. God can drop a pin on your location any time. He knows where you are and He knows where He wants you to go. **Where is He telling you to go on His behalf? What directions is He giving you today?**

Some examples:

Go to Thrive Lonsdale, go home to your family, go spend an hour alone with Him.

Go be gentle with that mean woman at work.

Go buy some groceries for a friend in need.

Go text that friend who's going through a divorce,

go sit with that lady in the hospital,

go into that meeting with some fresh ideas for the CEO,

go work at that orphanage in Haiti,

go create some microfinance jobs in Ethiopia.

Listen and discern His GO for your life. It may be very different from someone else's but it's still *your* GO.

And friends, it might involve some **risk**. It may cost you. It may be scary. So keep this in mind:

God has specific knowledge of the world and of His people, and He also has specific tasks for you to do. Ephesians 2:10. Ananias was supposed to lay hands on Saul and restore his sight. **Are we always eager to do what God asks? Are we permitted to raise objections? Can we trust Him with our fears or tentativeness?**

Ananias was acknowledging his concerns to God about the **risk** involved in seeing Saul. Would Ananias end up bound and compelled by force? Would he go to jail, or worse, be stoned to death, like Stephen? "That's not safe!" you say. "God wouldn't ask me to do something that doesn't seem safe, would He?"

We hear in God's response that God can handle our worries, our doubts, and our questioning. Be honest with God; you're not surprising or shocking Him. But He may not change His plans to accommodate our misgivings.

But the Lord said to Ananias, **"Go!** This man is My chosen instrument to proclaim My Name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel."

God's command came through loud and clear: GO. But He did kindly give Ananias more insight into his task and a bit of comfort by letting him know what was going on. God is not heartless. I don't think He minds our questions as long as we obey Him, even if our faith is small and our hands are trembling. Does that describe you with your GO?

He will supply what we need to do what He asks. What did Ananias need? Backbone. Guts. Words. Time. Compassion. God interrupted his life and requested that he restore sight to an unsafe terrorist. That's rough. Would you go?

Saul's Risk

This man is my **chosen** instrument ...

Strong's Concordance

eklogé: a (divine) selection

Phonetic Spelling: (ek-log-ay')

Short Definition: a choosing out, selecting, choice by God

HELPS Word-studies

Cognate: 1589 *eklogé* (from 1537 /ek, "out from and to" and 3004 /légō, selection out of and to a given *outcome*).

Saul was selected **out** of his former life into a new life for a totally different outcome which God was directing. Is God doing that in your life today? He's **selecting** you **out of what you know** and asking you, telling you, to **go into a new plan**.

This man is my chosen **instrument** ...

Strong's Concordance

skeuos: a vessel, implement, pl. goods

Phonetic Spelling: (skyoo'-os)

Definition: a vessel to contain liquid; a vessel of mercy or wrath;

God told Ananias that He selected Saul to be His vessel to contain ... what liquid? My thoughts go immediately to living water (John 7), the Holy Spirit, to pour Him out on the Gentile world. He was to be a vessel in God's hand.

You, too, are a vessel in God's hand. **Where are you pouring out living water, even if it's risky?** You have been selected to do so somewhere, somehow, in this city, in your neighborhood, in your job, in your home. What does He want you to do? You've been chosen, selected by Him, made and created by Him to do something for His kingdom. **What has God chosen you to do?**

God revealed to Ananias that part of Saul's destiny was to suffer:

I will show him how much he must **suffer** for my name."

Strong's Concordance

paschó: to suffer, to be acted on

Original Word: Πάσχω

Transliteration: paschó

Phonetic Spelling: (pas'-kho)

Short Definition: I am acted upon, suffer

paschal: of or relating to Easter or Passover

Definition: I am acted upon in a certain way, either good or bad; I experience ill treatment, suffer.

HELPS Word-studies

3958 *pásxō* (a primitive verb) – properly, *to feel heavy emotion, especially suffering; affected, experiencing feeling; "the feeling of the mind, emotion, passion"* (J. Thayer).

3958/*pásxō* ("to *experience* feeling") relates to any part of us that feels strong emotion, passion, or suffering – especially "*the capacity* to feel suffering" (J. Thayer).

Saul was destined to carry a heavy emotional load. He was going to experience strong emotions, passion, and affections, just as Jesus did. In his ministry this bears out to be true. He did suffer the weight of caring for the well-being of so many churches, and he experienced so much physical suffering it was almost outrageous. Others did "act upon" Saul with rods and lashes and beatings and suffering of other kinds, even shipwrecks! *In what ways are you carrying a heavy emotional load lately? How are you suffering? Learn to suffer as Christ did.*

Then we hear Ananias call Saul "brother": Ananias had trusted the Lord to move in Saul/Paul and had the risky but holy honor of welcoming him into the faith.

Strong's Concordance

: furnish, accomplish, fill, supply

Phonetic Spelling: (play'-tho)

HELPS Word-studies

4130 *pléthō* (or *pimplēmi*) – properly, *fill to the maximum (full extent), "the limit"* (CBL). **4130** /*pléthō* ("full") implies "*filled to one's (individual) capacity.*"

[This root (*plē-*) expresses *totality*, and implies *full quantity* ("up to the max").

with the Holy Spirit."

Strong's Concordance

pneuma: wind, spirit

Original Word: Πνεῦμα, ατοϋ, τό

Part of Speech: Noun, Neuter

Transliteration: pneuma

Phonetic Spelling: (pnyoo'-mah)

Short Definition: wind, breath, spirit

Definition: wind, breath, spirit.

Strong's Concordance

hagios: sacred, holy

HELPS Word-studies

40 *hágios* – properly, *different (unlike), other ("otherness"), holy*; for the believer, **40** (*hágios*) means "*likeness of nature with the Lord*" because "*different from the world.*"

The fundamental (core) meaning of **40** (*hágios*) is "different" – In the NT, **40** /*hágios* ("holy") has the "technical" meaning "*different from the world*" because "*like the Lord.*"

[**40** (*hágios*) implies something "set apart" and therefore "*different (distinguished/distinct)*"

"Be filled to your capacity with the sacred breath, the different Spirit, the holy wind." Saul was going to experience the holy wind of God blowing through his life, clearing out any misunderstandings of who God was or what He wanted Saul to do. God Himself was coming to sweep through His life, breath into his soul, and set him apart for a sacred work. **Have you experienced being filled with the Holy Spirit? Is He blowing through your life, unsettling certain parts of your life, and settling other parts down?**

So back to the cost of obeying God:

Saul was ignorantly out of God's will ... blinded ... given true sight ... blown through ... redirected and given a mission.

Ananias was interrupted ... located ... challenged ... brave ("Brother") and obedient ... and witness to true transformation.

Which person do you identify with most?

Where is He calling to you to GO?

What do you need from Him to obey?

Are you filled with the Holy Spirit, different from the world, a willing and set-apart vessel for God to use for His Kingdom? Through the Holy Spirit, we can say boldly, "Bring on the risk. Bring on the challenges! MY God can handle it, and He is faithful and will see me through."

Amen!