

Sermon for August 23, 2026 – The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 6:2-8 (EHV)

Theme: Even if it invites trouble, trust in the LORD.

- 1) *He does not forget His promises (2-4)*
- 2) *He knows your problem (5,6)*
- 3) *He will deliver you (6-8).*

²Then God spoke to Moses, telling him, “I am the LORD. ³I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name, the LORD, I was not known to them. ⁴I also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land where they were residing as aliens. ⁵I certainly have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians have enslaved, and I have remembered my covenant. ⁶“Therefore, tell the Israelites, ‘I am the LORD. I will bring you out from under the forced labor of the Egyptians. I will deliver you from being their slaves. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. ⁷I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. You will know that I am the LORD your God, the one who brought you out from under the forced labor of the Egyptians. ⁸I will bring you to the land which I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.’ ”

People often think that, if they follow God’s will, things will automatically go well for them. Is that true? I don’t know about you, but there are times in my life when my faithfulness to the LORD often resulted in more trouble – not less. Haven’t you experienced this yourself, as fellow students or coworkers made fun of you for your faith in Christ? Or perhaps a family member avoids you because you tried to talk to them about their relationship with Jesus.

But if doing the LORD’s will often leads to more earthly conflict, why does God command us to do things that seem to invite trouble? Let us listen to the LORD answer that question for us this morning, under the theme: **Even if it invites trouble, trust in the LORD.** 1) *He does not forget his promises.* 2) *He knows your problem.* 3) *He will deliver you.*

Part One: He does not forget his promises.

Before we dive into our sermon text, let us consider the situation surrounding it. For 40 years Moses had been living in exile – away from his people in Egypt – until the day the LORD appeared to Moses in a burning bush. And what did God want of Moses? To ask Pharaoh to allow God’s people to worship him at Mount Horeb (located outside the borders of Egypt). Now, having grown up in Pharaoh’s house and knowing how he would react, Moses was quite reluctant to do what God asked. But, because the LORD commanded it, Moses obeyed.

How did the initial meeting go? Humanly speaking, terrible. Even though Moses did everything the LORD had commanded him to do, Pharaoh did not release the people. Rather, he increased the workload and beat the Israelite foremen for being lazy. This, in turn, made the Israelites angry with Moses. Cursing him, they said: *“May the LORD look at you and judge you, because you have*

made us a stench to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword into their hand to kill us.”ⁱ Yes, it seemed as if the Israelites now hated Moses more than Pharaoh – blaming him for their increased hardship. So, *Moses went back to the LORD and said, “LORD, why have you brought trouble on this people? Why did you send me? Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble on this people, and you have not rescued your people at all.”ⁱⁱⁱ*

Can you hear the confusion in Moses’ prayer? He did exactly what the LORD told him to do. Now the situation was worse than before! It almost seemed as if this was God’s intent. Was the LORD reneging on his promised deliverance?

No, the LORD wasn’t reneging on anything. Everything was going according to plan. *The LORD said to Moses, “Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh. Because of a mighty hand he will send them away, and because of a mighty hand he will drive them out of his land.”ⁱⁱⁱ* Yes, God’s almighty hand would cause Pharaoh to free the Israelites. Why? Because the LORD keeps his promises.

²Then God spoke to Moses, telling him, “I am the LORD. ³I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name, the LORD, I was not known to them. ⁴I also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land where they were residing as aliens.

When addressing Moses’ complaint, the first thing God does is remind him of his name. “*I am the LORD,*” He says. His name “Lord” - Yahweh in Hebrew, rendered “Jehovah” in some older English Bibles – comes from the Hebrew verb “to be.” At the burning bush God explained it Himself: “I AM WHO I AM.” He is God in the purest sense of the word – the source of all that exists. Not only that but along with his name comes his loving reputation. He is the God who mercifully appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – graciously choosing their descendants to be his dearly loved people. He made a covenant (that is to say, a contract or promise) with them - promising to be their God and to give their descendants the land of Canaan. More importantly, he promised the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, And Jacob) that the Saviour of the world would come from them. The LORD reinforces the fact that he never forgot his promise to the patriarchs. He did not forget the Israelites in Egypt.

Like Moses, there are times when our troubles seem to increase because we do the right thing. Why is that? I mean, shouldn’t we expect things to get better instead of worse? Well, what did Jesus promise his disciples: an easy, pain-free life for following him? No, Jesus said, “*In this world you are going to have trouble,*”^{iv} and, “*You will be hated by all people for my name’s sake.*”^v

Notice that Jesus does not promise that doing the right thing will lead to physical comfort and blessings. Rather, he warns that faith in him often leads to conflict and trouble.

“Then why follow his commands?” Simply put: out of thanks and praise for all God has done for you. We keep the LORD’s commands because He gave up His only Son to save us from sin. Through Holy Baptism, God has adopted us as his dearly loved children and heirs of heaven. Because of God’s great love for us in Christ, we do the right thing out of thanksgiving for the

deliverance He has won for us. We do the right thing out of love for our neighbours – just as Moses did it out of love for his fellow Israelites. Sadly, as the Israelites misunderstood and mistreated Moses, so we too might suffer contempt from our fellow countrymen, when all we desire is their salvation.

But just as the trouble Moses experienced was not the end of the matter regarding Israel's promised deliverance, so also the trouble we experience for Christ's sake is not the end of the matter for us. It is all part of God's plan to show his power and grant our deliverance. He will never forsake us. As the LORD was patient in His dealings with Pharaoh, so he is patient with this world. But don't confuse the LORD's patience with him forgetting his promise to deliver us. No, just as God finally demonstrated his power to Pharaoh and rescued His people, so the LORD will keep his promise and powerfully deliver us on the Last day.

Part Two: He knows your problem

But let's go back to our text: The Israelites had been suffering under the Egyptians for quite some time. Moses was already 80 years old when God called him to ministry, and the Israelites' bondage began well before he was born. At times they must have felt as if either God had forgotten them, or that he was so far removed from them, that he had no clue how they were suffering.

God dispels such thoughts by telling Moses: *⁵I certainly have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians have enslaved, and I have remembered my covenant. ⁶"Therefore tell the Israelites, 'I am the LORD. I will bring you out from under the forced labor of the Egyptians. I will deliver you from being their slaves. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment.*

Yes, The LORD saw every whip that came down upon the backs of his people. He heard their cries of pain. He felt the depression and despair of the mothers who lost their baby boys when Pharaoh demanded that all male children be killed. The LORD knew it all and was about to act. He was going to free his people and judge the nation that oppressed them in the most unforgettable of ways.

Like the Israelites, there might be times when we wonder whether God sees our trouble and hears our cries because we've suffered for so long. Does the LORD know and care? He absolutely does! He most certainly sees Satan relentlessly driving us – enticing us to sin, only to scourge us with guilt after we fall. God knows all about the problems we face in this life – and their source! For this very reason, he sent Jesus – his only begotten Son – into the world to redeem us from our slavery to Satan. What price did he pay? Not gold or silver. Rather, he used his holy precious blood and innocent suffering and death. He bought us back so that we might be his own, free people, who would live under him in everlasting righteousness and holiness. Yes, with outstretched arms, and mighty acts of judgment, Jesus has redeemed us from all sin. Because he has done this, we can be sure that he will deliver us from every other evil that threatens our soul.

Part Three: He will deliver you

After demonstrating to Moses that He remembered His promise to bless Israel and saw their plight, the LORD now reaffirms his promise to deliver them. ⁷*I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. You will know that I am the LORD your God, the one who brought you out from under the forced labor of the Egyptians.* ⁸*I will bring you to the land which I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.*'''

What a promise! The LORD would adopt the Israelites to be His people and He, the almighty creator of the universe, would be their God. He promised to bring them out of Egypt -not by sparking a revolution or by asking the Israelites to fight for their freedom. No, the LORD would do it all himself so that they might know his power and trust in Him as their God. Then they would know the LORD does exactly what he says and graciously blesses His people with everything He promises.

The LORD has also kept his promise to redeem us from our slavery to sin. With an uplifted hand that was pierced for our transgressions and a body that was crushed for our iniquities,^{vi} Jesus purchased our peace through his death on the cross. Through the sacrament of Holy Baptism, he clothed us with His righteousness and adopted us as his own. We are no longer slaves of the devil. We belong to God. And because he has already kept His promise to redeem us from our sins, we are confident that he will keep his other promise to safely deliver us from this life, home to the paradise He is even now preparing for us.^{vii}

Brothers and sisters in Christ: following the LORD can mean that things seem to get worse instead of better. Sometimes it seems to mean suffering and not rejoicing. When the Pharaohs we face in life (our sinful flesh, the world and the devil) make our life miserable for following the LORD and try to get us to blame God for the evil we experience, remember the LORD's wonderful comfort in our text: *I am the LORD. . . I will deliver you. . . . I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. You will know that I am the LORD your God. Amen.*

ⁱ Exodus 5:21 EHV

ⁱⁱ Exodus 5:22-23 EHV

ⁱⁱⁱ Exodus 6:1 EHV

^{iv} John 16:33 EHV

^v Luke 21:17 EHV

^{vi} Cf. Isaiah 53:5

^{vii} Cf. John 14:1-3 & 2 Peter 3:13