

## **“A Case of ‘Simple’ Neglect” Exodus 4:24-26 Oculi Midweek 2023**

In the Name of the Father & of the ✠ Son & of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters, what do you think Moses was thinking when he neglected to circumcise his son? Because of how Zipporah responded to Moses, calling him a “bridegroom of blood,” it would seem that she was opposed to the idea of circumcision. If you ask most mothers, they seem to oppose it, and certainly we in the New Testament may rest assured from the book of Acts that we are not bound to the OT law of circumcision. Remember that God used circumcision as the sign of the covenant in the lives of Abraham & Sarah - each Jewish boy was to be circumcised when he was eight days old. By the time that it comes to Moses, this had been the Hebrew/Israelite practice for well over the 400 years that Israel had been in captivity in Egypt

When I try to put myself in Moses’ shoes, I think I can imagine that there are two reasons why Moses did not circumcise his boy. One, he probably had not been circumcised himself since he was born during Pharaoh’s order that all male babies amongst the Hebrews be killed at birth. In Moses’ case, you’ll recall, his mother hid him for 3 months until she put him in a basket in the river to be discovered by Pharaoh’s daughter. He was then brought into the Pharaoh’s household. Was he ever circumcised? The Egyptians certainly wouldn’t have done it, and I’d guess that Moses’ mother would not want her son to be positively identified as a Hebrew. I can’t prove it, and it’s purely speculation on my part, but I’d guess that he was never circumcised – so it wouldn’t be a part of his thinking as he grows up

Two, It’s not as though Moses doesn’t have a lot of things on his mind at the juncture in his life when Zipporah circumcises their son. God had called him to his work via the burning bush. God has revealed His name to Moses. Despite Moses’ refusal & then his excuses (which God has answered), Moses is on his way back to Egypt. I’d certainly say that he has a lot on his mind, doesn’t he?

So, we ask, why doesn’t God cut him a little bit of slack? I mean, if God should excuse anyone for a lapse, it surely ought to be Moses whom the Lord is calling back to work in Egypt, shouldn’t it? The Lord is going to use Moses to do great things! So, c’mon, God, why don’t You just lay off of him a little bit?! AND as we are thinking & saying that to God, or about God, with respect to Moses – we’re also thinking that

surely God ought to cut us some slack, too, for those times when we're busy, overwhelmed by life, distracted, or whatever else it is which keeps us from doing His will. BUT . . . God's response to our excuses and our looking for loopholes is pretty clear: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." – Ezek. 18:20 That's harsh! So is sin harsh! So is death harsh! So are the Commandments harsh! And so is the death of the Christ at Calvary to pay for our sins: it's plain harsh! Inflexible.

I'm sure that God wants us to know Him as inflexible. Please don't misunderstand me for, to be sure, He is full of mercy & pity, But sin is sin is sin, and death is death is death. The judgment against ALL sin can not be "flexible" -- and the payment for our sins is likewise inflexible. There is no other way about it. There is no other way that there can be! But you also know that God in His mercy has granted us forgiveness . . . for Jesus' sake! And you & I are learning to rejoice in that wondrous gift of forgiveness!!

Let's switch gears here, and consider Jesus at Golgotha. He is nailed to His cross. His body is torn, bruised, and nearing death. He has been beaten, kept up for two-three days on end. He has been tormented by His detractors. He had to drag the instrument of His own death through the streets of the city. Then they drove nails through His hands & His feet. Now He merely hangs there with His life ebbing out of Him.

The Lord Jesus Christ is bearing the full weight & burden of sin! Every single sin! Every excuse! Every lapse in memory! It is all placed upon Him, and He is paying as the only one who is truly innocent of sinning. So what does His heavenly Father do? God the Father harshly turns His back on His Son. Because sin is sin is sin and it must be punished. There's no wiggle room for sin. God is holy & righteous. There is no sin in Him! He will not tolerate it!

As Saint Paul writes, in 2 Cor. 5:16-21 – <sup>16</sup> From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard Him thus no longer. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of

Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> For our sake He made Him to be sin Who knew no sin, so that in Him WE might become the righteousness of God.

Yes, this too is Harsh! Why should the totally innocent Son of God have to die? Because He has identified with poor, miserable sinners, and someone MUST pay for sin! And Jesus is the substitute for Moses' seeming lapse, for Zipporah's seeming bitterness over having to circumcise their son, . . . and for your lapses, excuses, bitterness, failure to keep God's ten commandments, impatience, fits of rage, outbursts of anger, and everything else...even the wicked thoughts in your heart!

Harsh! And yet it seems inadequate somehow when you consider all which has happened for our salvation! And thanks be to God that He harshly punished His Son for you!

In Christ . . . you have the forgiveness of your sins. In Christ, you experience the tender mercies of God instead of His just punishment for your sins. In Christ, you look beyond the grave to resurrection on the Last Day. In Christ, you live confidently before God since you know that God has done the job of reconciling you to Himself through His son Jesus Christ! This is God's work of salvation! In the Name of the Father & of the ✠ Son & of the Holy Spirit. Amen.