

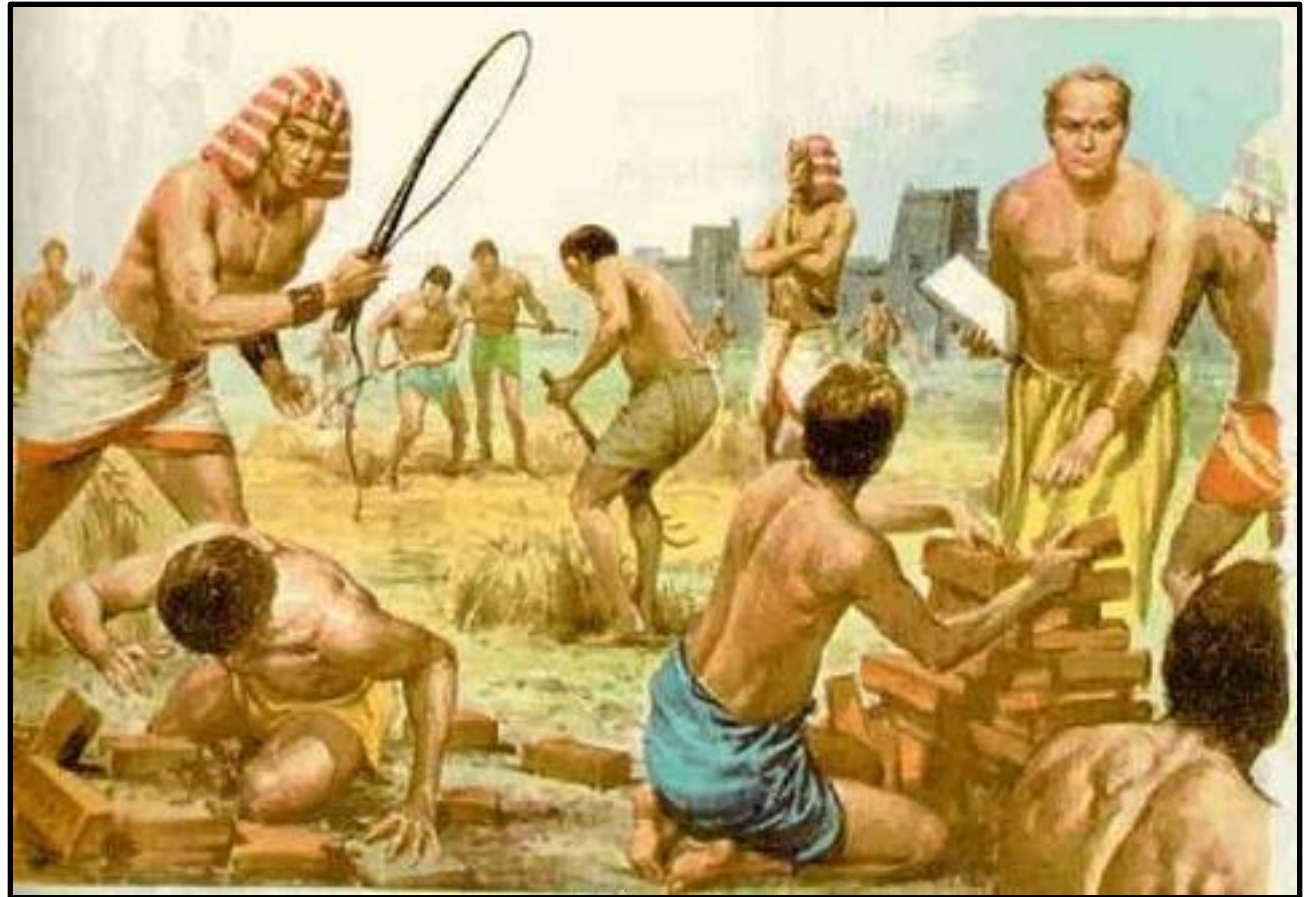
Making Bricks Without straw: Persevering in the midst of opposition

Ex 5:1-21; 2 Cor 4:1, 6-10

SJSM Sermon | 26-27 Jan 2025 | Ven. Wong Tak Meng

The Israelites groaned under Egyptian oppression

Ex. 2:23 ...the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. 23 ...Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God.



God saw, God heard, God remembered and God knew

Ex. 2:24 And **God heard** their groaning, and **God remembered** his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 **God saw** the people of Israel—and **God knew**.

Ex. 3:8 “... **I have come down to deliver** them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, **a land flowing with milk and honey...**”



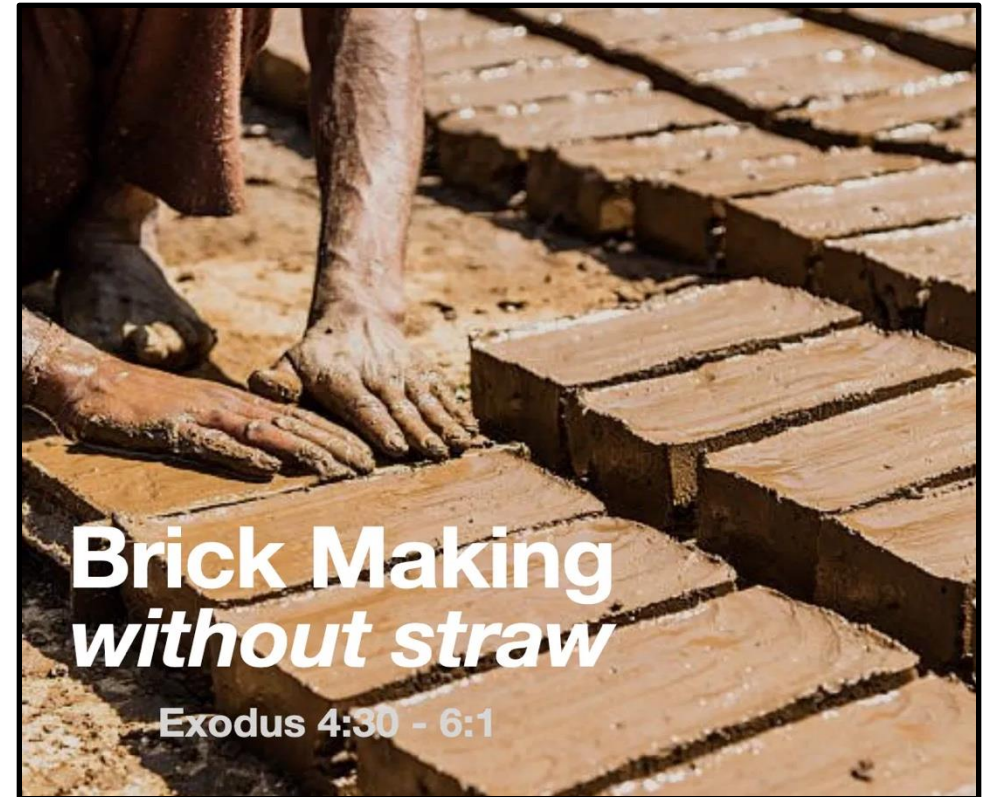
The Israelites heard God's Word, believed, bowed and worshipped

Ex. 4:30 Aaron spoke all the words that the LORD had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people. 31 And **the people believed**; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, **they bowed their heads and worshiped.**



Pharaoh refused, and further oppressed them to make bricks without providing straw

Ex. 5:6 The same day Pharaoh commanded... 7 “You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks, as in the past; **let them go and gather straw for themselves.** 8 But the number of bricks that they made in the past you shall impose on them... 9 Let heavier work be laid on the men that they may labor at it and pay no regard to lying words.”



Brick Making
without straw

Exodus 4:30 - 6:1

The Israelites complain, and Moses poured out his frustration to God

Ex. 5:19 The foremen 21 ... said to (Moses and Aaron), “The LORD look on you and judge...”

Ex. 5:22 Then Moses turned to the LORD and said, “O Lord, **why** have you done evil to this people? **Why** did you ever send me? 23 For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and **you have not delivered your people at all.**”



Three Questions we often ask when the going gets tough:

1. **Why** are we in this situation?
2. **Why** is this happening to us?
3. **Why** should we persevere?



The Ways of Man

- **Why this?** We cried out to God because we wanted Him to solve our problem, to lessen our suffering, to bring us back to the good times of Joseph as Prime Minister (Gen 50).
- **Why us?** We made the mistake of following this ambitious Moses who went too far by asking Pharaoh to release us from slavery.
- **Why persevere?** We should not continue this disastrous path; let's just go back to being obedient slaves.

The Ways of God: Why This?

- Because **God has a bigger plan** than our limited minds can imagine or understand.
 - Gen. 12:1 Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go... 2 **And I will make of you a great nation**, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 **...in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”**
 - Gen. 15:13 Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that **your offspring will be sojourners** in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and **they will be afflicted** for four hundred years. 14 But **I will bring judgment** on the nation that they serve, and afterward **they shall come out with great possessions ... 16** **And they shall come back here in the fourth generation...”**

The Ways of God: Why Us?

- Because **we are chosen by God's faithful covenant love**, to receive His mercy and blessings, to be instruments of His glory and salvation purpose.
 - Ex. 2:24 **God remembered his covenant** with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.
 - 1Pet. 2:9 But **you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession**, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now **you are God's people**; once you had not received mercy, but now **you have received mercy**.
 - 2Cor. 4:1 Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, **we do not lose heart**.

The Ways of God: Why Persevere?

- Because **we will see God's mighty hand** not only delivering and sustaining us, and making us a people for His own glory
 - 2Cor. 4:7 But we have this **treasure in jars of clay**, to show that the surpassing **power belongs to God** and not to us. 8 We are **afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10** always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the **life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.**

God Moves in Mysterious Ways



William Cowper (1731-1800) – Suffered from depression and suicide ideation, found Christ in mental asylum, met Rev John Newton, used his poetic gifts to compile the Olney Hymnal.

Wrote “**God Moves in Mysterious Ways**”

God Moves in Mysterious Ways

1. God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform.
He plants his footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.
Deep in the dark and hidden
mines,
With never-failing skill,
He fashions all his bright designs
And works his sov'reign will.

Refrain:
So God we trust in you.
O God, we trust in you.
When tears are great and
comforts few,
We hope in mercies ever new,
We trust in you.

God Moves in Mysterious Ways

2. Oh, fearful saints, new
courage take:
The clouds that you now dread
Are big with mercy and will
break
In blessings on your head.
Judge not the Lord by feeble
sense,
But trust him for his grace.
Behind a frowning providence,
He hides a smiling face.

3. God's purposes will ripen
fast,
Unfolding every hour.
The bud may have a bitter
taste,
But sweet will be the flower.
Blind unbelief is sure to err
And scan his work in vain.
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain..

God moves in mysterious ways

- https://youtu.be/yjPR09kdCgc?si=Ql_urt3oxldZGZu7 to 1:23
- <https://youtu.be/2DN3L2FQMLg?si=8N9U6-8h9JgJxAdK&t=10>

When the going gets tough:

- Don't give up; look up.**
- Don't trust in flesh; count on Him.**
- Don't look around; look deeper into God's marvelous ways.**