

The Question of the Cynic & the Seeker

Exodus 5

Exodus: Out of Slavery

Week 4: March 1, 2015

Intro/welcome

If you're just digging out from the snow and joining us after a couple of weeks away or if it's your first time

we're a couple of weeks into a series on the book of the Bible called Exodus
it's the second book of the Bible, a couple of thousand years before Christ

In the Bible, this Exodus story is one of the most important events that happens
because it's the FIRST place where the nation of Israel as a group and
collectively meet God.

And what you find is that throughout the Bible, this Exodus story gets echoed and
cited over and over and over again

Including and especially Jesus who will re-enact this story several times in his life
and in many ways will be the perfect fulfillment of this Exodus story

And last week, my partner in crime Steve Tamayo opened up Exodus 3 and 4 and we
saw Moses, the hero in this book, get his call from God to go back to his people, the
Israelites and deliver them from Pharaoh.

And we saw how Moses wrestled with God and resisted that call to go

This week, we're going to see what happens as Moses finally obeys God and takes
his stand against Pharaoh

and as we'll see, it doesn't exactly feel like God's going ahead of him and
clearing the way for him to do what God's asked him to do

And this is going to lead us into a very relevant conversation about our own lives
and how we think about and understand whether or not we're in line with what God
wants us to be doing.

Because as Christians we believe that God is actually pretty involved in our lives,
that he guides and directs our path and that sometimes he's got very specific work
or decisions he wants us to do or make

And a couple of weeks ago we talked about how sometimes we have the right
impulses or want the right things

but we do it in the wrong way or at the wrong time

Most of us have some experience of this in our lives when we see something that we want to fix or get involved in or do something about

But when we step in, it backfires on us

And not always but SOMETIMES we can look back and see that in retrospect it backfired either because

 HOW we approached it was wrong or off or bad OR
 it just wasn't quite the right time to step in and try to do that intervention

But today, Moses is going to do the right thing at the right time—everything this time around is exactly right

 and everyone except for God is going to think that the result is the wrong kind of outcome

Moses acts completely in line with God's will and in God's power and the initial returns are all painful and hard and difficult

And if you're not a Jesus person, maybe this will sound weird to you but if you're a Jesus-person, good chance that you've experienced something like this yourself

Where you act and do something that you're about as sure as you can be was God's desires for that situation

 you made a decision that you felt was about as prayerful and open-handed as you could possibly be

And yet the outcome at least initially is confusing or it even seems to make the situation worse, not better.

Today we're going to wrestle with all of that as we continue in our journey with Moses in Exodus 5—Bible/no Bible: screen/free Bibles

Moses has received the call from God to go back to Egypt and go to Pharaoh and tell him to let God's people go.

Moses has met with his brother Aaron and the other leaders of the Hebrew people and told them the good news that God has heard their cry and has sent him to set them free

And then here's what happens next in Exodus 5:1:

Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the wilderness.'"

² Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go."

³ Then they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Now let us take a three-day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the Lord our God, or he may strike us with plagues or with the sword."

⁴ But the king of Egypt said, "Moses and Aaron, why are you taking the people away from their labor? Get back to your work!" ⁵ Then Pharaoh said, "Look, the people of the land are now numerous, and you are stopping them from working."

About a year ago I did a message from the book of Proverbs about sex. And two things happened:

One, we told people the two weeks leading up to it that we'd be talking about sex and it was going to be a PG-13-ish rated message
and as a result, we had one of the largest attendance Sunday mornings we've ever had here at CCC.

Someone suggested we should talk about sex every week!

The second thing that happened was I suggested a way of thinking about Christian sexual ethics that has probably been one of the things that I hear back from people more than almost anything else I've ever said

And what I said at the very beginning of the message was this: if you're not a Jesus-follower or if you weren't following Jesus for some chunk of your life then I don't expect you to follow or obey or trust Christian teaching about sexuality

My wife and I didn't sleep together before we got married. It was one of the most difficult things I've ever NOT done in my life!

If we didn't know Jesus, love Jesus, trust Jesus, and if I hadn't experienced him to be loving, good, wise, perfect, just, and wonderful
then there is no way on God's green earth we wouldn't have slept together before we got married.

If I didn't already know God and trust that his ways were good
then why on earth would I have picked out this ONE random command and tried to obey it?

Several years ago I was going to a wedding and we loved the couple and the couple weren't Jesus people and one of my Christian friends said to me, "You know they're living together, right?"

And I said to him, "OF COURSE they're living together! What else would they do?
What reason would they have to NOT live together if there's no larger connection to God and the Scriptures

And especially without the belief that the God who made us and designed us, gave us the gift of sex and sexuality has a purpose for it that includes limits around it.”

Listen, if I wasn't Jesus person and I was going to recreationally pick just ONE thing out of the Bible and apply it to my own life

That whole command would probably NOT be the first one I'd pick just for the fun of it—in fact, it might be the very LAST thing I'd pick!

Obedience to the Lord's commands flows from a relationship with and knowledge of who the Lord is

Pharaoh here in v. 2 summarizes this for us brilliantly:

² “Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go.”

Moses says that Yahweh-God has declared that his people should be set free to go to worship in the desert

Pharaoh doesn't know this Yahweh-God so he's not going to let his slaves have a long weekend out in the desert!

He's not going to obey or listen to a God he doesn't know

If you or others don't know the Lord, then in many ways I don't expect you to do what the Lord commands!

Lots of his commands aren't going to make any sense to you from the outside, they only make sense from the INSIDE

In the context of a loving relationship with a God we know and trust has provided for us

And Christians, we make this mistake all of the time in our relationships with individuals and family members and co-workers

where we get all hung up and bent out of shape around stuff people are doing

That from a biblical perspective we say is wrong but from their worldview and given their understandings of course makes complete sense to them

There's a tension here that we need to unpack and talk about and that I think is important for us to talk about

because we have people here at all different stages on their journey

and we're having to figure out how to be in community together in a way that is both gracious and generous and also holy and accountable to one another

There are these two poles and a tightrope right between them and I want to invite us to live right on this tightrope because both of these things are true

And stick with me because chances are you won't like one side of this tension but you'll like the other one

On one pole of this tension summarizes what we've just been talking about: ***we should not expect distinctly Christian behaviors from people who do not know the Lord***

Now this gets tricky because there's lots of commands in the Bible that most of our world agrees with: don't murder, for example, most of us are down with that!

Don't steal, we're all down with that.

Don't commit adultery—that's also generally frowned upon even in the broader culture although we're conflicted about it

So there's a whole set of behaviors and ethics that we have in Christianity that are shared by a good many people in our culture

But the deeper you get into Christian ethics and behaviors and biblical commands and the more seriously you take them

the more you realize that there's a whole set of commands in there that only make sense if it's rooted in the larger picture of knowing God! Trusting God.

Believing that he's good and real and that he's the one in charge and who designed us

Especially the ones that are corrective over and against our most basic impulses or instincts

There's a number of places where this plays out: obviously of sex and sexuality, but also money and how we use our time and other resources

I was having this conversation with a woman this week who was talking about the value of modesty in dress which is a great and important Biblical value

But it's not a part of the larger culture's values and for folks who don't follow Jesus they might not see or understand why this matters!

There are some distinctly Christian behaviors that cannot be wrenched out of context and turned into rules that we go around and club people over the head with!

What that means for those of us who are Jesus-followers is this: in our discussions about faith with those who do not know the Lord we keep the main thing the main thing!

Is the essence of Christianity and the most important thing about it our sexuality or how we dress?

NO! Those things matter, they matter greatly, but they're not the main thing!

We focus our prayer and conversations and attention with people who do not know the Lord on the goodness of God's work in our lives, his love towards them, and especially in God's gift to us in Jesus, not on non-Jesus-following behaviors

The people around us, including some of you, are not behaving like a Jesus-follower because you're not!

So Christians, don't go trying to apply behavior modification and rules
God will deal with that stuff eventually, with people who don't know Jesus,
but we **start with** the goodness and power of Jesus
not the morality associated with following Jesus

And a corollary for that for some of us is that we need to apologize to some folks who we've had conversations with that have been the wrong conversations to have given where they were in their faith-commitments.

Like literally this afternoon you need to go home and write an email apologizing for addressing some sort of behavior that you felt was wrong but it just wasn't the most important thing!

NOW, one caveat before we move to the other side of this tension and that is this whole conversation CHANGES if we're talking about a fellow follower of Jesus

We're obviously still called to be gentle and humble towards one another, but when we give our lives to Jesus, we also give our lives to each other for mutual encouragement and accountability

And so that means that there are plenty of times and places where we speak the truth in love to one another, and often that's a word of encouragement
but SOMETIMES we're called to gently and lovingly talk to someone about an issue or area of life where something is out of sync and we come alongside and gently encourage or challenge

So that's one side of this tension but there's this other side that's also true.
Which is this: ***God's commands and the larger realities connected with him are true, whether we recognize or believe it or not.***

Pharaoh here declares that he does not know the Lord and therefore he will not obey the Lord's command.

But here's the problem with that: God didn't ask him his opinion before he issued his decree.

God IS God, whether Pharaoh knows it or not, and whether he likes it or not
and his commands are not options, his words are true and good and will come to pass
and if Pharaoh disregards the commands of God, there will be consequences

In fact, Pharaoh's going to get some first-hand opportunities to know the Lord and to respond to his commands over and over again as he experiences the consequences of his rejection of this command to let God's people go

God's commands and the larger realities connected with him are true, whether we recognize or believe it or not.

It has not been given to us mere humans to decide larger eternal cosmic realities—those realities are real and in place and if we ignore them then like Pharaoh, we, too suffer the consequences.

I've been in seminary and in grad school taking classes for literally somewhere around 14 years. It's the longest ever slog to a master's degree

And several weeks ago I wrapped up my class for the fall and submitted my final paper. It was supposed to be a 10-page paper, mine was a fat 12 pages with a rather large table inserted into it

A little bit over the page limit, didn't think that it would be that big of a deal

But then I got the grade! And there was this big grading chart on it where I got points for how I did in terms of my thesis and argument and if I included and cited enough sources and if I did what the assignment was in all these different categories

And one of the categories was page-length. I had no idea this was going to be a part of the grading, I thought maybe it was just there to make sure you had at least 10 pages

But for my paper in this category it said: exceeded page limit, -10 points per page, and since my paper was 12 pages, I got -20 points overall on the paper.

20 points off my overall grade on the final paper that determined 40% of my overall grade for the class because I'd exceeded the page limit

And I went back and looked at the syllabus which I should have done before I wrote the paper and sure enough, there it was: -10 points for every page over on the final paper

See, just because I hadn't read the syllabus didn't mean that there weren't penalties for my behavior. I acted in my ignorance but my actions still had consequences

Just because I hadn't read the syllabus didn't mean that the rules in the syllabus didn't apply to me.

This is true about God and God's actions and his commands and decrees

Change the illustration and God's laws are like the laws of physics: you don't get a vote, nobody asked you what they should be, they just are

And if you violate them there will be consequences, even if you don't fully know or understand them.

You don't have to believe in gravity for it to have an effect on you if you jump off the roof!

So we hold this tension that we don't expect people who, like Pharaoh, to obey God's commands

and the same time we recognize that much of the damage in people's lives and in this world comes because when we do not obey the Lord's commands and there will be consequences eventually

In fact, our world is FULL of the shrapnel of people's lives and in our society because we do not know the Lord and therefore we do not do what he tells us to do

I'm not saying that to be smug or arrogant, I experience the consequences too!

I turned 41 this past week and I spent some time in my journal reflecting over the past year—the good and the bad and the ugly

And I didn't spend forever on this part, but I did spend some significant and honest time looking back over the sins of the past year

and asking forgiveness from God for the things that I do that cause damage because I've ignored his commands in the Scriptures or the promptings of his Spirit.

If we keep falling down because we refuse to believe in gravity we can either get all angry and upset about this stupid gravity thing—stupid gravity!

OR we can begin to trust, enjoy, rest in, and respect the fact that there's something at work in the world called gravity. And if I attempt to live as if it wasn't there, then there's going to be consequences.

And in the same way, there's this larger Person in play in the cosmos called God.

And he designed us and made us and gives us his love and his kindness and mercy

And in that love and kindness and mercy he's given us commands that if we will obey them they will bear good fruit in our lives

and if we ignore them there will be consequences

It's nothing personal and God's not out to get us, it's just like gravity, it's just how things were made to work!

Look, when Exodus begins, NOBODY knows who Yahweh God is—that's a new name that God introduces himself by in the Scripture passage just before this:

Moses doesn't know who this God is, the Hebrew people don't know who this God is,

the Egyptians don't know who this God is, and Pharaoh doesn't know who this God is

By the time this story is all done, EVERYONE will know who this God is

and in fact, when the Israelites leave Egypt they're described as a "mixed multitude"

meaning it's very likely that there are some Egyptians who see what God has done and they decide they want to go with the Israelites and leave their own homes and their old gods behind

Moses and Pharaoh both basically ask the same question: "who is God?"

Moses asks it open-handedly and open-heartedly and it leads to a life-changing and life-giving encounter with the living God

But Pharaoh is not asking the questions of a seeker, he's asking the questions of a cynic

and he will pay price upon price for that

with perhaps the greatest price being that he continues to refuse to know the Lord, even after all the consequences he experiences.

None of us approach this God-business with a strictly neutral posture: we're cynical or interested, we're ambivalent or curious, we're looking for answers or shut down the possibility that there are any answers

I want to invite you this morning to consider the heart posture underlying your presence here today. Are you asking questions like Moses or are you asking questions like Pharaoh?

Pharaoh is a cynic and he'll feel the weight of the consequences of that posture

But before he gets those consequences, he's going to make a hard situation even more difficult for the Israelite people

6 That same day Pharaoh gave this order to the slave drivers and overseers in charge of the people: 7 "You are no longer to supply the people with straw for making bricks; let them go and gather their own straw. 8 But require them to make the same number of bricks as before; don't reduce the quota. They are lazy; that is why they are crying out, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.' 9 Make the work harder for the people so that they keep working and pay no attention to lies."

... 12 So the people scattered all over Egypt to gather stubble to use for straw.

13 The slave drivers kept pressing them, saying, "Complete the work required of

you for each day, just as when you had straw.”¹⁴ And Pharaoh’s slave drivers beat the Israelite overseers they had appointed, demanding, “Why haven’t you met your quota of bricks yesterday or today, as before?”

¹⁵ Then the Israelite overseers went and appealed to Pharaoh: “Why have you treated your servants this way? ¹⁶ Your servants are given no straw, yet we are told, ‘Make bricks!’ Your servants are being beaten, but the fault is with your own people.”

¹⁷ Pharaoh said, “Lazy, that’s what you are—lazy! That is why you keep saying, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to the Lord.’ ¹⁸ Now get to work. You will not be given any straw, yet you must produce your full quota of bricks.”

*¹⁹ The Israelite overseers realized they were in trouble when they were told, “You are not to reduce the number of bricks required of you for each day.”
²⁰ When they left Pharaoh, they found Moses and Aaron waiting to meet them,
²¹ and they said, “May the Lord look on you and judge you! You have made us obnoxious to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.”*

So a couple of weeks ago we looked at a passage where Moses has these great, God-given impulses and instincts but he acts in the wrong way at the wrong time and it all backfired on him

And we used the illustration of kids on the playground playing double-dutch
If you jump in at the wrong time, you get all tangled up, and it’s a mess;

But the implication then is if you jump in at the right time, if you hit the window right, then everything should come up roses!

That if we’re acting in line with God’s desires for our lives, that we should catch this good rhythm and things should go well with us

But Moses here, he’s doing exactly what God wants him to do, in exactly the right way in exactly the right time

And in our understanding and the way that most of us think about this and how I think life SHOULD work, if I’m doing God’s stuff the way God wants me to do it, then things should just be falling into place

If God’s really with Moses, then Pharaoh’s heart should have been soft, not hard, and his response should have been a surprising YES, not an angry NO
and instead of making life harder then they should be on their way out to the desert for the three day festival

But this doesn't happen. And the people are angry at Moses and Aaron for making their lives that much harder—and if I had been there I probably would have been ticked off at Moses and Aaron too!

When those of us who act in line with what we think God's will is, it often comes with expectations that God will do something to make it work!

Now, these aren't entirely unreasonable expectations to have!

There's all kinds of stories in Scripture and throughout history of people doing ridiculous and crazy things for God
and as they do them, they experience incredible miracles and God just paving the way for all kinds of great things to happen

And I think among most of us church-type people this is part of how we understand if we're in God's will, if we're doing what God wants us to be doing—that he's opening up doors and making a way

And God working in our circumstances to pave the way IS ONE way that God makes his will known to us and sometimes confirms our steps or our actions

But sometimes you hear from God that you need to go to Pharaoh and tell him to let God's people go

And instead the doors opening up for this to happen, Pharaoh responds with bricks without straw.

And we have to decide how to process, interpret or understand when we hit that kind of resistance.

At one point many years ago as I was working with college students I prayerfully accepted a job move that I felt with almost total certainty was what God wanted me to do—left one campus I was serving and went to another campus

And I knew that I was coming into a situation that was in many ways in transition and struggling

And I knew that there would be some bumps and it might take some time to get things going in the right direction and get it healthy again

And I got there and got to work and my first year, things didn't get better, they got worse. Second year they got even worse. Third year, still no improvement. Fourth year, still struggling—it was four years of discouragements, set-backs, and struggles

And some of it was stuff that I look back on and I made some mistakes; but at points I was like,

“Lord, I’m doing everything I know to do here and I think you called me here to do this—so where are you? Why aren’t you DOING something here?”

I’m doing what I’m almost positive that you want me to do—so where are you? Are you going to help me?

Ever pray something like that before?

Sometimes you obey and what you get is not life getting easier but life getting harder

sometimes it’s commands to make bricks without straw or to slug away for four years or more at a job where you feel like you’re just getting no where.

And God seems no where to be found

And when we’re in that place, there’s one of two things to consider:

1. We’re doing the right thing, we just need to persevere or
2. We’re doing the wrong thing and we need to go in a different direction.

So how do we know? How do we know when we hit difficulties if we’re supposed to persevere or if we’re supposed to go in a different direction?

We don’t get simple formulas or solutions to this question, what we do get is exactly what Moses shows us to do in this last section of Scripture

Right after Moses gets chewed out by his fellow Israelites—remember, they will reject him and re-reject him throughout this whole story—here’s what Moses does:

22 Moses returned to the Lord and said, “Why, Lord, why have you brought trouble on this people? Is this why you sent me? 23 Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble on this people, and you have not rescued your people at all.”

Kelly and I got married at age 24 in June, 1998. And we decided to write our own vows and the one that we’ve come back to again and again was simply this:

I promise to turn TOWARD you, not AWAY from you through difficulty and hardship as long as we both shall live

Putting a flag in the sand at that point and saying that we wanted to be about this *habituated* turning towards one another and not away from each other whenever the hard stuff comes was really, really important for us.

Moses here, does the exact same thing.

He acts in line with the command from God to do something. But the outcome stinks for his people and everyone’s mad at him

So he could do a couple of things:

he could go off and sulk by himself, that's the introverts temptation
he could walk around and tell everyone how God has set him up and done him wrong and complain to everyone about how he's a victim and trying to do the best he can! That's the extrovert's temptation!

Or he can turn TOWARD God, in difficulty and hardship, all the days of his life, starting right here, starting right now.

And as Steve talked about last week as he talked about wrestling with God, that's exactly what Moses does. He RETURNS to the Lord in the face of disappointment and attack.

He RETURNS to the Lord, and he prays a very honest, raw, angry prayer about how God hasn't showed up and Moses is frustrated with im.

And as Steve pointed out last week, we'll see that pattern of raw, honest RETURNING to the Lord continue throughout Moses's life and leadership.

What about you? What do you do when you hit up against a road-block when you thought you were doing what God wanted you to do?

Sulk and pout? I'm really good at that. Complain to other people? I'm gifted at that, too.

But Moses here invites us into the Godward life. A life where we turn toward God and not away, through difficulty and hardship all of our lives

Even when HE'S the one calling us into the difficulty and hardship.

One of the enduring questions over our relationship with God is whether we like him and trust him only when things are smooth
or only when there's a crisis out there that we can't control and we need his help on

Or if he calls us to endure some sort of hardship, will we continue to trust and believe that he's good?

Pharaoh and Moses are both faced with different issues and challenges but both of them essentially are faced with the same the same question: "Who is the Lord?"

Is he good, is he real, does he exist, is he faithful, is he powerful, is he just, is he able to do something

Moses here again returns to the Lord with an honest, open, wrestling posture, because he continues to need more answers to this question: "Who is the Lord?"

And this question doesn't go away for all of God's people all throughout the Scriptures and right up to you and me today, does it?

Who is the Lord? We can either ask that question cynically or openly. We can either turn toward God or away from him in the midst of difficulty and hardship

A couple of summary take-homes for you this morning as you leave, some questions to think about:

1. If you're a Jesus-person this morning, what does it mean to love and bless and serve people around you who do not know the Lord and to keep your focus on Jesus, not on behaviors?
 - a. Anyone you need to apologize to? For having expectations that they'll lead some sort of Christian life without connection to Jesus?
2. Are you asking/seeking/questioning like Moses or questioning like Pharaoh?

Moses asks genuine questions and gets real answers and ends up in a real relationship with the real God. Pharaoh asks only cynical questions and the results are predictable.

3. When things do not go well as you attempt to obey the Lord, what kind of response are you habituating? Are you sulking solo, complaining loudly, or turning towards the Lord and not away?

And the good news is this: the same God who calls Moses to endure hardship, and who sometimes calls US to endure hardship

Has endured it himself in Jesus Christ. And that's what we turn our hearts and our attention to this week as we move towards the Lord Supper

In Jesus, God himself has come in the flesh to endure hardship, to suffer and die and to be raised back to new life so that you and I might live

See, the Scripture says that because of the problem of sin in all of our hearts, we're all cut off from God, all of us are asking this question: "Who is the Lord?"

And just like Moses needed God to reveal himself to him in order to answer that question

and just like Pharaoh needed God to reveal himself to him in order to answer that question

WE needed God to come and reveal himself to us, to come and get us, because left to ourselves we'd never make our own way to God.

And so to answer our question, “who is God” he reveals himself in Jesus.

And what we see in Jesus is this man full of wisdom, courage, and love—he does what no one else can do, he teaches like no one else teaches, he serves the hurting and afflicted, he challenges the proud and arrogant

And then he submits to the call on his life to endure hardship as the Father calls him to walk the way of the cross

Jesus does the exact right thing at the exact right time and it leads him to pain and suffering on the cross

And three days after his death, he is raised again, same Jesus, but new body, and a new kind of life

And after all of this goes down, his followers understand what Jesus came to do: he comes to answer the question “Who is God” by showing us his character

And then his death is the perfect sacrifice that takes away our sins that block us from personally experiencing and knowing the answer to that great question and our deepest longing

Our own sin would have kept us in slavery! Jesus has come to lead the single greatest Exodus out of slavery and into salvation, redemption

Out of eternal death and separation from God and into eternal life and union with God

So Jesus leads us out of slavery by washing us clean, taking away our sin, so that we might be free to know the Lord, to know who God is and to know our place with him.

And what we celebrate here today is the great event that makes this knowing God experience possible

On the night he was betrayed, Jesus gathered in a small room with his closest followers and celebrated the Passover meal

And he took common elements like bread and said “this is my body, broken for you—eat this in remembrance of me.”

And he took a cup and he said, “this is my blood poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins—drink this in remembrance of me”

This morning, we take and eat and drink and remember his sacrifice that makes a way for us to answer this great question from the passage today: “Who is the Lord?”

We're going to move into a time of worship now, and whenever you're ready you can come to one of these stations and eat and drink before the Lord

The bread is gluten free

This table is not our table, it's the table of Jesus Christ and if you're a follower of his then it's open to you

If you're here and you're not a Jesus follower, we invite you to use this time to sing, reflect, maybe ask yourself what kind of heart posture you're bringing with your questions about God.

For everyone, there will be prayer ministers in the back—these are folks who would just be glad to pray for you and with you during communion

The prayer room will be open afterwards, but if you feel like you need some prayer this morning before you can take communion, they'll be available for you

And if you're here this morning and you're ready to make a decision to follow Jesus, they would love to pray for you and with you and walk with you through that decision

My friends, good news: God has made himself known through Jesus, the Son of God who comes and endures hardship as he obeys the Father in order that we might live forever!