

Campus-Wide Bible Study Fall 2013
Week 7
Exodus 18

For an opening prayer and introductory notes to the leader, see the OPTIONAL supplemental material document on the website.

Read Exodus 18 and pages 72-74 in Goldingay aloud.

Leaders: Use the following questions as guides to your study of the text. You can choose which questions to focus on—some are better for groups who have new believers or first time Bible study participants, others are for people who have a good knowledge of the Bible. You do not need to answer all the questions! Your role as the leader is to keep the conversation focused on the Bible passage or on the application of the passage to the lives of the members of your group.

Discussing the Text:

Exodus 18:1 describes Jethro as a priest of Midian, but was he a priest of the Lord? The Midianites were descended through Abraham after all. Look closely at 18:7-12. Goldingay writes that Jethro “is the first person whose detailed conversion story we are told” (74) but others wonder whether this is simply a further acknowledgement of the Lord who he already knew and worshipped.

- What is your opinion based on a close reading of the text?
- Was the God of Israel known outside of Israel?

Look closely at Exodus 18:13-23. Describe Moses’ intentions and the difficulties that arise as he attempts to carry out God’s will for God’s people.

- What is the problem with what he is doing and who will be affected?

Look again at verses 8-9. Moses clearly attributes all of Israel’s deliverance to God and sees God’s hand with unquestionable clarity. In Exodus 33:11 we hear, “The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend.”

- Are there any clues in chapter 18 as to why Moses, who could apparently hear God’s voice so clearly, needed the help of Jethro in order to adjust his behavior?

Linking to Christ

- In the Gospels when Jesus is tempted by Satan he rejects the Devil’s invitation to exploitative power and submits himself fully to God’s will. The book of Hebrews tells us, “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help

in time of need” (4:15-16). Thus, Jesus has been tempted by the desire for power and control and has resisted this temptation to the benefit of God’s people. How have you experienced Christ’s strength to overcome your desires for power and control?

Discussing the World:

Sometimes we are surprised by the claims people make about God and their relationship to God. Presidents in the United States often talk about “God” or invoke God. People say things like, “God told me to tell you,” and, more likely than not, we know lots of people who identify as Christian. Sometimes when we hear people explicitly invoke the name of God we have certain expectations about their life and beliefs.

- Talk about a time when God surprised you by speaking to or directing you through a source you might not have expected?

It has been said that busyness is either pride or laziness: pride in thinking you can do too much and not recognizing your own limits or laziness because you fail to manage your time well and allow your life to passively happen to you.

- What do you think of that claim? Are you too busy?
- How do you feel and what do you achieve when you are rested and relaxed?

Describe a time in your life when a person has been able to see your “blind spots” for you and speak truth and life to you.