



Throughout the book of Exodus, Pharaoh represents rebellion against God. We saw it last week and are about to see it again. Here's the reality that each of us must face – we all begin at a place of rebellion against God. As much as we want to read this story and look down upon Pharaoh, today, we will consider our own lives as we look through his rebellion. The title of today's study is "The Pharaoh in Me". What is about to unfold over the next few weeks is that the judgment of God is about to be poured out upon both Pharaoh and Egypt. These are what the Bible calls the ten plagues that are about to bring Pharaoh to rock bottom, where he will finally release the Israelites out of captivity. These move in a progression from being bad to devastating. It is a wild story of God pouring out His wrath.

**Key Passage:** Exodus 7:14-9:7

**Discussion Questions:**

1. How does the repeated hardening of Pharaoh's heart impact the progression of events in today's passage? What does this reveal about the nature of rebellion against God?

Here's the reality that each of us must face – we all begin at a place of rebellion against God. As much as we want to read this story and look down on Pharaoh, we must look at our lives through the lens of Pharaoh's rebellion. The judgment of God against Pharaoh's rebellion through the ten plagues moves in a progression – from being pretty bad nuisances to devastating realities. Rebellion against God leads to the escalation of tragedy.

2. The title of today's study is "The Pharaoh in Me." Can you identify moments where you might have exhibited characteristics similar to Pharaoh's rebellion?

Last week, we talked about the danger of a hardened heart. You see this pattern in Pharaoh's life repeatedly – he hardened his heart and would not listen to God. Is that you today? Are you in a mode of hardening your heart to God? Are you refusing to listen to the voice of God?

3. Discuss the pattern of compromise seen in Pharaoh's responses. How does compromise hinder spiritual growth, and in what ways do people compromise with God in their lives today? Can you share personal experiences where compromise hindered your spiritual journey?

Pharaoh tries to go halfway; he seeks a compromise. He doesn't want to do exactly what God has commanded; he just wants to do part of it. We do the same thing. A spirit of compromise marks the Pharaoh in me. How often does God bring us to a point where we know exactly what to do? At the moment, we're ready to obey God, but then we choose to compromise. Partial obedience is disobedience.

4. How do you explain the distinction between the plagues affecting the Egyptians and sparing the Israelites? What message might this convey about God's protection and provision for His people?

**EXODUS 8:20-24** – Marks a distinction between the Egyptians and the Israelites: the Israelites will not experience a swarm of flies!

**EXODUS 9:1-5** – Again, there is a distinction between the Egyptians and the Israelites: Go to Pharaoh, tell him tomorrow all the livestock of Egypt will die (horses, donkeys, camels, herds, flocks), but Israel's livestock will not die.

5. Reflect on the idea that the Pharaoh in us might only turn to God in times of trouble. Have you experienced this in your life, and how can one cultivate a consistent relationship with God?

Think about those times you've gotten desperate with God, moments of pain, worry, or uncertainty in your life. The problems of your life caused you to get desperate. You didn't miss church. You were praying a lot more than usual. You were reading your Bible intentionally to glean something from God. You even joined a small group! Then there was a respite – relief came, and you lost your urgency to walk closely with God. Maybe that's where you are today. Let this be an encouragement not to abandon the things that bring you close to God and help you grow spiritually. Don't only walk with God in the bad times, but walk with Him when times are good.

6. The concept of a hardened heart is a recurring theme in today's passage. How does a hardened heart affect an individual's ability to hear and respond to God?

A hardness of heart marks the Pharaoh in you. Is this you? Are you refusing to listen to God? Do you need God to bring about a softening work on your heart? Maybe you recognize your hardness of heart and don't want to be that way. Ask God to do a fresh work of the Holy Spirit in your life.

7. How can we practically pursue full obedience, full submission, and full surrender in our daily lives? What obstacles might we face in trying to live this way?
8. What's one personal takeaway from today's study you can focus on this week?